

"On the third day, Avraham raised his eyes and perceived the place from afar. And Avraham said to his young men, 'Stay here by yourselves with the donkey.'" (22:4,5)

Chazal tell us that when Avraham approached the mountain, he saw a cloud hovering over it. He immediately recognized this as a signal of Hashem's Presence. He asked Yitzchak, "My son, do you see what I see?" "Yes, Father," he responded. This served as an indication that Yitzchak had achieved the degree of spiritual perception making him worthy to serve as a *korban*. Avraham subsequently turned to his two young men and questioned them concerning what they had seen. Their response was negative. They saw nothing. Hence, Avraham told them, "The donkey sees nothing, and you see nothing. Stay here with the donkey!"

We may question Avraham's somewhat harsh rejoinder to the young men. After all, they were not ordinary "youths." The *Midrash* tells us that these two servants were none other than Eliezer, Avraham's faithful servant, and Yishmael, his son who had already repented and been welcomed back to his home. This two "young men" were in reality not so young and had attained great spiritual heights. Why then does Avraham refer to them as donkeys?

Horav Yisrael Lubshensky, zl, infers from this *Midrash* a profound lesson. We can draw a great distinction between the individual who studies *Torah* and grasps its profundities, but does not see beyond the *Torah* to its Divine Author, and the individual who senses *kedushah*, holiness, in every word of *Torah*. It is not sufficient simply to study; one must see beyond the *blatt Gemorrah* to the *kedushah* of Hashem. Otherwise, study is nothing more than an exercise in *Talmudic* jurisprudence. A *ben Torah* must mold his life with the *Torah* that he studies. It must refine his *tzelem Elokim*, G-dly image, as it purifies his soul. If the learning does nothing for him, he remains a donkey.