

## And an Angel of Hashem called to him... For now I know that you are a G-d-fearing man, since you have not withheld your son, your only one, from Me. (22:11,12)

The angel said to Avraham, “Since you have not withheld your son, your only one, from Me.” The *Gaon, zl, m’Vilna*, wonders what the angel meant with the words, “From Me”. If he meant Hashem, he should have said so. “Me” implies that he was talking about himself. *Horav Yitzchak Zilberstein, Shlita*, cites *Maadanei Yosef*, who explains that every *mitzvah* a person performs catalyzes the creation of an angel. The quality, perfection of this angel, depends upon the quality of the *mitzvah*. A strong *mitzvah*, ie, one performed solely for the sake of Heaven, with alacrity and the proper intentions, creates a Heavenly angel that will be on a sublime level. If, however, the *mitzvah* that one performs is, at best, passable, but lacks spiritual substance, stability and energy, the angel will lack those same characteristics.

This is why we say in the *Tefillah*, prayer, *U’Nesaneh Tokef*, “Let us proclaim (the mighty holiness of this day),” “The angels tremble, fear and dread seize them.” Why do the Heavenly angels tremble? It is not as if they have Torah and *mitzvos* to study and perform. What did they do wrong that would give them reason to tremble? When the angels consider that they are the products of the *mitzvah* performance of man – they worry. If the *mitzvah* was performed listlessly – and the man repents, does *teshuvah*, they have nothing to worry about. The man has saved them. If, however, the man goes about his *Rosh Hashanah* and *Yom Kippur* in much the same manner as before, his *mitzvos* are executed perfunctorily, almost as if he were compelled to do so – no love, no passion, no excitement, no life – then the *Malach* has reason to tremble.

“We now understand,” explains *Rav Zilberstein*, “what the angel intimated to Avraham: *Mimeni*, ‘from Me,’ I can tell from myself, from my lofty spiritual plateau, that you, Avraham, did well. You acted with alacrity to fulfill Hashem’s Will. You did not deviate one iota from what He asked you to do. You imbued this *mitzvah* with fear of G-d, love and pure intention for the sake of Heaven. How do I know? I look at myself – *mimeni* – as the greatest indicator. I am the product of your *mitzvah!*”

This is something to consider when we next perform a *mitzvah*, such as going to *shul* to *daven*. When, how and what attitude we manifest determines the angel that we create. We might need that angel one day to be on our side, to support us in a critical time. The last thing we want is an angel that is too “weak” to help us. We will have no one to blame but ourselves.