

## Please take your son, your only one, whom you love, Yitzchak. (22:2)

Much has been written concerning *Akeidas Yitzchak*, the Binding of Yitzchak. It was Avraham Avinu's final test, yet it is called *Akeidas Yitzchak*. Undoubtedly, Avraham Avinu telling his son that he had to relinquish his life for Hashem was an extremely demanding and challenging request. Yitzchak's submission to his father's request represents what I would call turbulent submission. This is especially true, considering that it was a father talking to a son, unlike concerning Avraham, when it was Hashem talking to a father. Can we imagine the heart-wrenching conflict that Avraham, the *Amud HaChesed*, Pillar of Kindness and compassion, experienced when Hashem instructed him to slaughter his only son, the future of his life's work? The spiritual anguish of being torn between his love for his son and adherence to Hashem's command represents obedience at its pinnacle. Yet, it seems to be all about Yitzchak. It is not called *Akeidas Avraham*.

I think the term, *Akeidas Yitzchak*, encompasses both Yitzchak's *nisayon* and his father's. This was not merely a challenge of action: Would Avraham act faithfully? – it was also a test of his ability to educate and transmit his belief and conviction to Yitzchak. If Yitzchak faltered, if he had said, "No," even if he had hesitated momentarily, it would have been a negative reflection on Avraham's transmission. He somehow would have failed to instill his fiery *emunah* into his son. It is called the Binding of Yitzchak because Yitzchak's success is Avraham's triumph.

The *Akeidah* was a dual test: the *mesiras nefesh* of the son; and the *chinuch* of the father. *Akeidas Yitzchak* was a binding of values, unwavering faith and commitment to Hashem, passed from father to son. The extraordinary devotion and self-sacrifice which Yitzchak manifested had been forged years earlier in Avraham's home.

During World War II some Jewish children were rescued by Christian families. This rescue often came at the price of the gentile parents raising the child as one of their own. One young Jewish boy had been raised by a kind gentile family where he was sent to a Christian school and was expected to attend weekly church services. One day, it was decided that too much conflict existed between his biological lineage and that of his new parents. The time had come to have the youth baptized. As he was being led to the church for the ceremony, a memory flashed in his mind: his father's Friday night passionate singing, "*Shabbos Shalom U'Mevorach*." The melody, rooted in his family's *Shabbos* spirit, awakened a dormant yearning for his true identity, which, in turn, ignited a fiery inner resistance to being baptized.

At that moment, despite years of Christian schooling and inculcation, he refused to enter the church. The song was but a memory, but it was etched in his heart and engraved in his soul. The memories of his Jewish home slowly surfaced, and his true identity emerged from the clouds of ambiguity. That is the power of Torah *chinuch*. The *Akeidah* was a dual test – the *mesiras nefesh* of the son and the *chinuch* of the father. *Akeidas Yitzchak* was the binding of values, conviction

and unwavering faith passed from father to son. Whatever spiritual triumphs Yitzchak achieved were the products of an exemplary education in the home of the first Patriarchal family. He saw first-hand in action what he had been taught. This is Torah *chinuch* at its apex.