

WHEN THE HEART IS FULL

by Rabbi Label Lam

...And Abraham took the ram and offered it up as a completely consumed offering in place of his son. And Abraham called the name of that place "HASHEM Yireh" - as it is said this day, on the mountain HASHEM will be seen. (Breishis 22:13-14)

HASHEM Yireh: HASHEM will choose... and see as fitting for Himself this place to rest His Divine Presence in and to have offering brought here. (Rashi)

Why did Abraham name the Temple Mount at that time? Why didn't he name it before the ram was offered? Being willing to offer his beloved Isaac was clearly the most dramatically difficult thing he would ever attempt to do. What then is the accomplishment of the ram? What is the relationship between the future offerings that would be brought there and this one-time event? Perhaps the answer is obvious. The "Akeida" - The Binding of Isaac is the paradigm of the sacrificial process and our model for drawing close to G-d. How so?

I received a phone call a few years ago just after the school year had begun. The conversation started like this: "Hello, this is Rabbi So and So!" I had never heard of him. "Yes, how can I help you?" I asked. "I had your son... this summer in camp." I became nervous and the Rabbi must have sensed it. "It's not bad news. It's actually a nachas call." He continued to explain. "You know the camp is a charity sponsored camp and tipping is forbidden." Where he was going with this? I had been out the country on visiting day and I was sure that I had not violated that principle and tipped the Rebbe inadvertently. What was he driving at? I wondered.

"On the last day of camp your son ... came to me and sheepishly handed me an envelope. I took it and tucked it away. Today I opened it up. There was a single dollar inside. I was mystified. I knew I should not be accepting a tip but who gives a single dollar? Then it dawned on me. Your son, on his own, took his precious canteen money and put it in an envelope and quietly handed it to me. I'm so touched and impressed. I just wanted to let you know how special he is!" Boy was I relieved!?

What was so pleasing and charming about that gift? It was only a dollar! It's obviously not the dollar amount. Neither is it a hollow gesture. It seems there are two parts in a gift. Both are necessary components. 1) The gift itself. 2) The heart.

What can we offer HASHEM? "Give to Him what is His, because you and what's yours belong to Him", the Mishne in Pirke Avos advises. Abraham was willing to give "his all". Isaac was "his all". Even though he only succeeded in delivering a ram he is considered as if he had actually given "his all".

"HASHEM wants the heart".

Similarly, a father gives his child a mega-lollipop. Soon-after he asks for it back. The child stretches out his hand to give it back. The father refuses. He doesn't need a lollipop. He instead kisses the hand that stretched to him. The child then reaches into his pocket and pulls out a jelly bean. The father takes the tiny offering and tenderly kisses his head. That tiny bean is considered like a jumbo lollipop, a dollar- a treasure trove and even a single ram can stand for a nation for all time, if we do the best we can **when the heart is full**. Text Copyright © 2005 by Rabbi Label Lam and **Torah.org**.