



**RABBI JUDAH**

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Dedicated L'IluY Nishmas HaChaver  
Shlomo Michael ben Meir z'l

## Hashem's Problem

Reb Yosef Friedensohn, z'l, was a man of faith, Jewish hero and a Holocaust survivor. He had metaphorically “earned seven diplomas from seven German universities of murder and atrocity” — having survived seven camps, and embodied the indestructibility of Klal Yisrael. As the editor of “Dos Yiddishe Vort”, a publication of Agudas Yisroel, Reb Yosef represented Torah values and Yidishkeit to the world for close to 70 years.

Reb Yosef recounted his memories as a young man in the Warsaw Ghetto, a harrowing description of suffering and hunger, with children roaming the streets, crying out for food. He and his siblings also suffered privation, and knowing the cupboards were empty, always wondered what, if anything, they would eat in the morning. However, this was the context for a precious instruction in Emunah and *mesirus nefesh*. “*Oif morgen, vet G-tt zorgen,*” his father would say, “Tomorrow is Hashem’s concern.”

Within their cramped apartment looking down on the pitiful scene street below, Reb Yosef’s father would sometimes take the family’s small ration of bread, cut it into little pieces, wrap them individually in paper, and drop them from the window to starving Jews.

In this week’s sedra, at the *Akeidas Yitzchak*, the test of all tests, the Ribono Shel Olam continued to measure our forefather’s faith and *mesirus nefesh*, inner and outer sacrifice. Employing the same language as when Avraham embarked on his original journey, Avraham Avinu’s *temimus*, simplicity and wholeheartedness, is put to the test: “*Lech lecha*, go to the Land of Moriah, *veha’alehu sham le’olah*, and offer him there as an *olah*, a burnt offering, on one of the heights that I will show you” (Bereishis, 22:2).

Of all the *korbanos*, the offerings brought in the Beis haMikdash, the *olah* was unique, in that when placed on the altar, it was to be fully consumed in fire. Nothing was to be left. An *olas tamim* is a ‘whole’ offering; a perfect, unblemished gift to Hashem in which not a trace is left over. Reb Shlomo Carlebach, zy’a, explained in the name of the Beis Ya’akov of Ishbitz, that for Avraham Avinu there was no difference between the first test, leaving

his birthplace, and the last one, taking his son up to the altar. It was all one continuous *lech lecha*, a single process of cultivating *temimus* wholeheartedness with Hashem. When summoned to holiness, Avraham Avinu responded to each calling with his '*lecha*', his entire self.

When Yitzchak asked, *Ayeh ha-seh l'olah*, "Where is the lamb for the *Olah* offering?" it is clear that the search for *temimus* had been transmitted, for *vayel'chu shneiheim yachdav*, "Avraham and Yitzchak walked together," with all their hearts, fully engaged, completely present. Together, Avraham and Yitzchak went 'all in' on the altar of sacrifice, without making *cheshbonos*, calculations or letting their own feelings and opinions get in the way.

Rebbe Simcha Bunim of Peshischa

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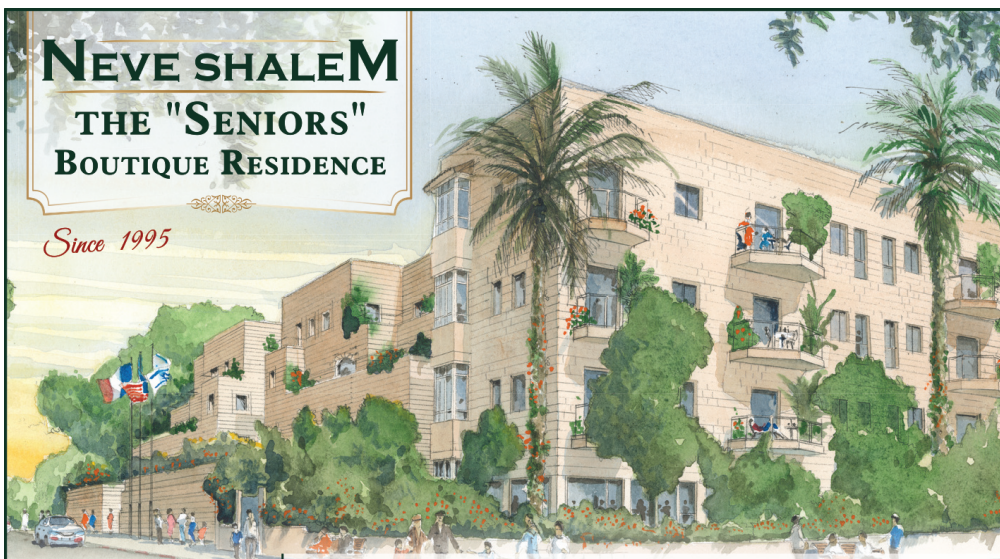
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imagines the internal debate of Avraham Avinu on the way to Akeidas Yitzchak, and paints a picture of the conversation between our forefather and his *yetzer ha-ra*, evil inclination.

The *yetzer ha-ra* appears to Avraham Avinu with the following claim: “Hashem promised that a great nation would arise from you through Yitzchak your son. After years of waiting, the promise was fulfilled and Yitzchak was born by a miracle. If you go through with the Akeida, and sacrifice Yitzchak, Hashem’s promise won’t be fulfilled, and then what will become of the Jewish story? What about tomorrow?”

Avraham answered the *yetzer ha-ra*: “The Ribbono shel Olam told me to sacrifice my son, and so that is what I will do. The fact that He made a promise that from Yitzchak there would rise a great nation is His problem, not mine.”

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Rebbetzin Henny Machlis, a’h, was a modern Jewish hero, a *tzadeikes* renowned for her incredible Emunah, boundless

giving and acts of *chesed* and *hachnasas orchim*, hosting guests. There were many Friday afternoons when the Rebbetzin knew that they would be hosting more than one hundred guests for Shabbos meals, and did not have the money to buy the food and cover expenses. But the Machlis family was ‘all-in’, and Hashem provided.

Over the years I had the great privilege of spending time with the Rebbetzin, and *yibadel l’chaim*, the great teacher of Torah, Rav Mordechai Machlis, *shlit’a*. In our last conversation, I shared the feeling of being overwhelmed with balancing professional obligation and family commitments, the desire to give to others and personal aspirations in *avodas Hashem*. It was becoming more difficult and unrealistic to keep up the pace of giving which he and the Rebbetzin had modelled, and which I had hoped to achieve.

“Emunah means that we believe Hashem is *hakol yachol*, He can do everything and anything,” replied Rebbetzin Machlis. “If you have done your best and reached your limit in whatever way, it is Hashem’s job to take care of the rest of the situation. He has infinite ways to get the job done”

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*Mesirus nefesh* is in our National and spiritual DNA, and we all feel we have our part to do. We just need to remember that we are called upon simply to fulfill Hashem’s will as we understand it, to go ‘all in’, with *temimus*, today, and do our best — while knowing that the rest is “Hashem’s problem”. ■



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