



RABBI SHALOM

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Love and Awe

וְאֵלֶּה תּוֹלְדֹת יִצְחָק בֶּן־אַבְרָהָם אֲבִירָהּ הוֹלִיד
אֶת־יִצְחָק:

These are the descendants of Yitzhak, son of Avraham; Avraham begot Yitzhak (Bereishit 25:19).

Many commentaries note the seemingly redundant language of this pasuk. Why does the Torah need to state both that Yitzhak was the son of Avraham and that Avraham was the father of Yitzhak? The *Tov HaPeninim*, citing the *Arugat HaBosem*, derives a profound lesson from this repetition.

LOVE AND AWE

There are two primary ways in which a Jew serves Hashem: **Ahavah** (love) and **Yirah** (awe). *Yirah* expresses itself through restraint — taking care not to violate the prohibitions of the Torah, the *mitzvot lo ta'aseh*. *Ahavah*, on the other hand, is expressed through action — enthusiastically performing positive commandments, the *mitzvot aseh*, as an outpouring of love and desire to fulfill the Divine will.

HONOR AND REVERENCE

A similar dynamic appears in connection with the mitzvah of honoring one's parents (*kibbud av va'em*). The Torah commands both *kibbud* — כבד את אביך ואת אמך “Honor your father and your mother” (Shemot 20:12)—and *morah* — איש אמו ואביו תיראו “Every man shall revere his mother and his

father” (Vayikra 19:3). *Kibbud* reflects love, demonstrated through positive acts of care, such as bringing a parent food or assisting them. *Morah* expresses awe and respect, reflected in refraining from actions that diminish their honor, such as sitting in their seat or contradicting them.

A complete relationship—with parents or with Hashem — requires both aspects. Some people, cautious by nature, focus primarily on *yirah*, being scrupulous to avoid transgression. Such individuals may need to work on cultivating *ahavah*, performing mitzvot with joy, warmth, and enthusiasm. Others, naturally exuberant and optimistic, may excel in *ahavah* but must strengthen their sense of reverence and discipline, deepening their awareness of Hashem's omnipresence.

AVRAHAM AND YITZHAK

The *Zohar* teaches that the great personalities of Tanach embody specific spiritual attributes. Avraham personifies *ahavah*, as the verse states: זרע אברהם אוהבי - “Seed of Avraham, My beloved” (*Tehillim* 105:6). Avraham served Hashem with boundless love. Even the command of the Akeidah—so emotionally wrenching and incomprehensible — was met with eagerness. The Torah records that Avraham “arose early in the morning,” eager to fulfill God's will despite the personal cost.

Yitzhak, by contrast, represents *yirah*, as Yaakov is referred to as “*Pahad Yitzhak*” — “the Fear of Yitzhak” (*Bereishit* 31:42).

Yitzhak's life embodies awe, self-discipline, and total submission to Hashem's will.

True spiritual perfection, however, lies not in one quality alone, but in the *harmony* between them. The Torah describes Avraham and Yitzhak journeying together toward the Akeidah: וילכו שניהם יחדו — “The two of them walked together.” Each internalized the other's trait: Avraham's *ahavah* was tempered by *yirah*, and Yitzhak's *yirah* was infused with *ahavah*. Only through that balance could they fulfill Hashem's command in its fullest sense. At the conclusion of the Akeidah, Hashem declares, עתה ידעתי כי ירא אלוקים אתה, — “Now I know that you are a God-fearing man” — Avraham had achieved a perfect integration of love and awe.

THE LEGACY OF YITZHAK

Throughout *Parashat Toldot*, Yitzhak retraces his father's footsteps—digging the same wells and traveling through the same places. He is not merely repeating Avraham's actions but internalizing his father's quality of *ahavah* to complement his own *yirah*. This, perhaps, is why the Torah emphasizes: אברהם הוליד את יצחק - *Avraham begot Yitzhak*. Yitzhak was not only Avraham's biological son but also his spiritual heir, completing and perfecting both attributes within himself.

THE RHYTHM OF WORSHIP

It is striking that only Jews *shuckle*—swaying back and forth—while praying. Perhaps this movement reflects the dual rhythm of our relationship with Hashem. We lean forward in *ahavah*, yearning to draw close, and then we gently retreat in *yirah*, recognizing His infinite greatness. Our very posture embodies the sacred dance between closeness and awe, passion and humility.

CONCLUSION

A life of *avodat Hashem* requires the graceful interplay of *ahavah* and *yirah*. Love without awe can become casual; awe without love can become cold. But when they join together, the soul burns steadily — alive with reverence, yet warmed by affection.

May we, like Avraham and Yitzhak, walk together with Hashem, harmonizing joy and trembling, love and awe. Then we will truly fulfill the statement in Tehillim: 'עֲבַדוּ אֶת־ה' — “Serve Hashem with awe and rejoice with trembling” (*Tehillim* 2:11). ■



Mazal Tov to



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