

## Rosh Hashanah, Second Day 5775: Akedah ("Binding of Isaac") in Poetry

### **Beresheit Rabbah 65,10 on Genesis 27:1**

Another version: When our father Abraham bound his son Isaac, the ministering angels wept, as it says, "Behold, their valiant ones cry without, the angels of peace weep bitterly (Isa. 33:7): tears dropped from their eyes into his, and left their mark upon them, and so when he became old his eyes dimmed, as it is written, AND IT HAPPENED WHEN ISAAC WAS OLD, THAT HIS EYES GREW TOO BLEARY TO SEE (Gen 27:1)

ד"א שבשעה שעקד אברהם  
אבינו את בנו על גבי המזבח בכו  
מלאכי השרת, הה"ד (ישעיה לג)  
הן אראלם צעקו חוצה וגו', ונשרו  
דמעות מעיניהם לתוך עיניו והיו  
רשומות בתוך עיניו וכיון שהזקין  
כהו עיניו הה"ד וַיְהִי כִּי־זָקֵן  
יִצְחָק וַתִּכְהֶיז עֵינָיו מִרְאֵת וגו',

### **"Heritage" Hayim Gouri, Compass Rose**

יְרֵשָׁה / חיים גורי

The ram came last of all. And Avraham did not know that it came to answer the boy's question- first of his strength when his day was on the wane.

הָאֵיל בָּא אַחֲרוֹן. וְלֹא יָדַע  
אֲבָרָהָם כִּי הוּא מְשִׁיב לְשֵׁאלַת  
הַיֶּלֶד, רֵאשִׁית-אוֹנוֹ בְּעַת יוֹמוֹ  
עָרַב.

The old man raised his head. Seeing that it was no dream and that the angel stood there- the knife slipped from his hand

נָשָׂא רֵאשׁוֹ הַשֵּׁב. בְּרֵאוֹתוֹ כִּי לֹא  
חָלַם חֲלוֹם וְהַמֶּלֶךְ נָצַב –  
נִשְׂרָה הַמֶּאֱכֶלֶת מִיָּדוֹ.

The boy, released from his bonds, saw his father's back.

הַיֶּלֶד שֶׁהִתַּר מֵאֲסוּרָיו רָאָה אֶת  
גֵּב אָבִיו.

Isaac, as the story goes, was not sacrificed. He lived for many years, saw what pleasure had to offer, until his eyesight dimmed.

יִצְחָק, כַּמִּסְפָּר, לֹא הֶעֱלָה  
קֶרְבֵּן. הוּא חֵי יָמִים רַבִּים, רָאָה  
בְּטוֹב, עַד אוֹר עֵינָיו כָּהָה.

But he bequeathed that hour to his offspring. They are born with a knife in their hearts. (Translation: 1981, T. Carmi)

אָבֵל אֶת הַשָּׁעָה הַהִיא הוֹרִישׁ  
לְצִאֲצָאִיו. הֵם נוֹלָדִים וּמֵאֲכֶלֶת  
בְּלִבָּם.

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Two lovers lie together like Isaac on the altar  
and it feels good. They don't think about the knife  
or about the burnt offering --

she thinks about the ram and he about the angel.

Another version: He is the ram and she is the thicket.

He will die and she will go on growing wild.

Another version: The two of them get up and disappear  
among the revelers

- Yehuda Amichai, Open Closed Open