

Parsha Plug: Chagim Edition First Day Rosh Hashanah

Rabbi Chaim Jachter, *The Keriat HaTorah of Rosh Hashanah*

The purpose of the Torah reading for Rosh Hashanah fundamentally differs from the purpose of the Torah readings for the other Yamim Tovim. On every other Yom Tov, the purpose of the Torah reading is to read about a relevant theme of that Yom Tov. However, it seems that the purpose of the Torah reading of Rosh Hashanah is to supplement our Tefillot to Hashem on this awesome day.

Bereshit 21:9-21

9 And Sarah saw the son of Hagar the Egyptian, whom she had borne to Avraham, making merry. **10** And Sarah said to Avraham, "Drive out this handmaid and her son, for the son of this handmaid shall not inherit with my son, with Yitzchak." **11** But the matter greatly displeased Avraham, concerning his son. **12** And God said to Avraham, "Be not displeased concerning the lad and concerning your handmaid; whatever Sarah tells you, hearken to her voice, for in Yitzchak will be called your seed. **13** But also the son of the handmaid I will make into a nation, because he is your seed." **14** And Avraham arose early in the morning, and he took bread and a leather pouch of water, and he gave [them] to Hagar, he placed [them] on her shoulder, and the child, and he sent her away; and she went and wandered in the desert of Beersheva. **15** And the water was depleted from the leather pouch, and she cast the child under one of the bushes. **16** And she went and sat down from afar, at about the distance of two bowshots, for she said, "Let me not see the child's death." And she sat from afar, and she raised her voice and wept. **17** And God heard the lad's voice, and an angel of God called to Hagar from heaven, and said to her, "What is troubling you, Hagar? Fear not, for God has heard the lad's voice in the place where he is. **18** Rise, pick up the lad and grasp your hand upon him, for I shall make him into a great nation." **19** And God opened her eyes, and she saw a well of water, and she went and filled the pouch with water and gave the lad to drink. **20** And God was with the lad, and he grew, and he dwelt in the desert, and he became an archer. **21** And he dwelt in the desert of Paran, and his mother took for him a wife from the land of Egypt.

בראשית כא: ט-כא

ט וַתֵּרָא שָׂרָה אֶת-בֶּן-הָגָר הַמִּצְרִית, אֲשֶׁר-יָלְדָה לְאַבְרָהָם--מִצְחָק. י וַתֹּאמֶר, לְאַבְרָהָם, גֵּרֶשׁ הָאֵמָה הַזֹּאת, וְאֶת-בְּנָהּ: כִּי לֹא יִירָשׁ בֶּן-הָאֵמָה הַזֹּאת, עִם-בְּנֵי עַם-יִצְחָק. יא וַיִּרַע הַדָּבָר מְאֹד, בְּעֵינֵי אַבְרָהָם, עַל, אוֹדֹת בְּנוֹ. יב וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹקִים אֶל-אַבְרָהָם, אֵל-יִרַע בְּעֵינֶיךָ עַל-הַנְּעֹר וְעַל-אִמְתְּךָ--כֹּל אֲשֶׁר תֹּאמֶר אֵלֶיךָ שָׂרָה, שְׁמַע בְּקוֹלָהּ: כִּי בִיִּצְחָק, יִקְרָא לְךָ זָרַע. יג וְגַם אֶת-בֶּן-הָאֵמָה, לְגוֹי אֲשִׁימוּנוּ: כִּי זָרְעֶךָ, הוּא. יד וַיִּשְׁכֶּם אַבְרָהָם בְּבֶקֶר וַיִּקַּח-לָחֶם וְחֶמֶת מִיַּם וַיִּתֵּן אֶל-הָגָר שֵׁם עַל-שִׁכְמָהּ, וְאֶת-הַיָּלֵד--וַיִּשְׁלַחָהּ; וַתֵּלֶךְ וַתֵּתַע, בְּמִדְבַר בְּאֵר שָׁבַע. טו וַיִּכְלוּ הַמַּיִם, מִן-הַחֶמֶת; וַתִּשְׁלַךְ אֶת-הַיָּלֵד, תַּחַת אֶחָד הַשִּׁיחִים. טז וַתֵּלֶךְ וַתֵּשֶׁב לָהּ מִנְּגֵד, הַרְחֵק כַּמֶּטְחָוִי קִשְׁת, כִּי אָמְרָהּ, אֵל-אֶרְאֶה בְּמוֹת הַיָּלֵד; וַתֵּשֶׁב מִנְּגֵד, וַתִּשָּׂא אֶת-קֹלָהּ וַתִּבְדֹּ. יז וַיִּשְׁמַע אֱלֹקִים, אֶת-קוֹל הַנְּעֹר, וַיִּקְרָא מֵלֶאךְ אֱלֹקִים אֶל-הָגָר מִן-הַשָּׁמַיִם, וַיֹּאמֶר לָהּ מֶה-לְךָ הָגָר; אֵל-תִּירָאִי, כִּי-שָׁמַע אֱלֹקִים אֶל-קוֹל הַנְּעֹר בְּאֲשֶׁר הוּא-שָׁם. יח קוּמִי שְׂאִי אֶת-הַנְּעֹר, וְהַחֲזִיקִי אֶת-יָדְךָ בּוֹ: כִּי-לְגוֹי גָדוֹל, אֲשִׁימוּנוּ. יט וַיִּפְקַח אֱלֹקִים אֶת-עֵינֶיהָ, וַתֵּרָא בְּאֵר מַיִם; וַתֵּלֶךְ וַתִּמְלֵא אֶת-הַחֶמֶת, מַיִם, וַתִּשְׁק, אֶת-הַנְּעֹר. כ וַיְהִי אֱלֹקִים אֶת-הַנְּעֹר, וַיִּגְדֵּל; וַיֵּשֶׁב, בְּמִדְבַר, וַיְהִי, רֹבֵה קִשְׁת. כא וַיֵּשֶׁב, בְּמִדְבַר פָּאָרָן; וַתִּקַּח-לוֹ אִמּוֹ אִשָּׁה, מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם.

Masechet Megillah 31a	מסכת מגילה לא.
<p>On Rosh Hashanah we read “On the seventh month”, and for haftarah, “Ephraim a precious son to me” (Jeremiah 31:1-19). According to others, we read “And the Lord remembered Sarah” and for haftarah the story of Hannah (I Samuel 1:1-2:10). Nowadays that we keep two days, on the first day we follow the ruling of the other authority, and on the next day we say, “And God tested Avraham”, and for the haftarah we read “Ephraim is a precious son to me.” On Yom Kippur we read “After the death” (Leviticus 16) and for haftarah, “For thus said the high and lofty one” (Isaiah 57:14-58). At minhah we read the section of forbidden sexual relationships (Leviticus 18:1-30) and for haftarah the book of Jonah. Rebbe Yohanan said: Wherever you find [mentioned in the Bible] the power of the Holy One, blessed be He, you also find His humility. This fact is stated in the Torah, repeated in the Prophets, and stated a third time in the [Sacred] Writings. It is written in the Torah, “For the Lord your God, He is the God of gods and Lord of lords,” and it says immediately afterwards, “He executes justice for the orphan and widow” (Deuteronomy 10:17). It is repeated in the Prophets: “For thus said He Who high aloft forever dwells, Whose name is holy” and it says immediately afterwards, “I dwell on high, in holiness yet with the contrite and lowly spirit” (Isaiah 57:15). It is stated a third time in the [Sacred] Writings, as it is written: “Extol Him that rides the clouds, the Lord is His name,” and immediately afterwards it is written, “A Father of orphans and a judge of the widows” (Psalms 68:5-6).</p>	<p>בראש השנה בחדש השביעי, ומפטירין הבן יקיר לי אפרים, ויש אומרים וה' פקד את שרה, ומפטירין בחנה. והאידינא דאיכא תרי יומי, יומא קמא - כיש אומרים, למחר והאלקים נסה את אברהם, ומפטירין הבן יקיר. ביום הכפורים קורין אחרי מות ומפטירין כי כה אמר רם ונשא, ובמנחה קורין בעריות ומפטירין ביונה. אמר רבי יוחנן: כל מקום שאתה מוצא גבורתו של הקדוש ברוך הוא אתה מוצא ענוותנותו; דבר זה כתוב בתורה ושנוי בנביאים ומשולש בכתובים. כתוב בתורה - כי ה' אלקיכם הוא אלקי האלהים ואדני האדנים, וכתוב בתורה עשה משפט יתום ואלמנה. שנוי בנביאים - כה אמר רם ונשא שכן עד וקדוש וגו', וכתוב בתורה ואת דכא ושפל רוח. משולש בכתובים דכתיב סלו לרכב בערבות ביה שמו, וכתוב בתורה אבי יתומים ודין אלמנות.</p>

Rashi on Bereshit 21:17	רש"י על בראשית כא:יז
<p>“Where he is”: According to the deeds that he does now he is judged and not according to what he is destined to do (Rosh Hashanah 16b). For the ministering angels were accusing and saying, “O Lord of the Universe, for one who is destined to kill Your children with thirst, You are bringing up a well?!” And He answered them, “What is he now, righteous or wicked?” They replied, “Righteous.” He said to them, “According to his present deeds I judge him” (Gen. Rabbah 53:14). And that is the meaning of “where he is.”</p>	<p>באשר הוא שם: לפי מעשים שהוא עושה עכשיו הוא נדון ולא לפי מה שהוא עתיד לעשות, לפי שהיו מלאכי השרת מקטרגים ואומרים רבונו של עולם, מי שעתיד זרעו להמית בניך בצמא אתה מעלה לו באר. והוא משיבם עכשיו מה הוא, צדיק או רשע, אמרו לו צדיק, אמר להם לפי מעשיו של עכשיו אני דנו וזהו באשר הוא שם.</p>

Rebbe Menachem Mendel of Vorka	אדמו"ר ר' מנדיל מווארקה
<p>“God heard the voice of the boy”: But it does not say at all</p>	<p>"וַיִּשְׁמַע אֱלֹקִים אֶת-קוֹל הַנְּעָר" הרי לא נאמר</p>

<p>that the boy made his voice heard. Rather, there was a cry without a sound and it is a cry that breaks through the heavens. Only a person who examines his hearts hears it. [Rebbe Menachem Mendel of Vorka] used to say: Three things constitute an elevated person (Jew?)-- a cry without sound, dance without movement, and kneeling upright.</p>	<p>בכלל שהנער השמיע את קולו. אלא יש צעקה בלי קול והיא- היא הבוקעת שחקים, ורק הבוחן לבות שומע אותה. הוא היה אומר: ג' דברים מיוחדים לבני עלייה, צעקה בלי קול, ריקוד בלי נוע, וכריעה בראש זקוף.</p>
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<p>From KeMotzei Shalal Rav on Rosh HaShanah Leining</p>	<p>כמוצא שלל רב על קריאת התורה לראש השנה</p>
<p>Ribbono Shel Olam, You saved Hagar, but what about Rachel? Hagar sat down from afar and she lifted up her voice and cried...and an angel of God called to Hagar from the heavens and said to her, "What is wrong Hagar? Do not cry": One Rosh Hashanah before the blowing of the shofar, the author of Shefa Chayim from Sanz-Klausenberg [Rebbe Yekusiel Yehudah Halberstam] said, "It was my intention to now say an in-depth study in accordance with the halacha, as is customary for us from long ago, but when Sarai was in distress, you gave her spirit relief, whereas our mother Rachel, who for thousands of years has already been shouting and crying bitterly for her children who are restrained in exile, but still You do not redeem them? How can this be?" (From a publication in Tamuz 1999)</p>	<p>רבנו של עולם, את הגר הושעת, ומה עם אמנו רחל? וַתֵּשֶׁב מִנֶּגֶד, וַתִּשָּׂא אֶת-קוֹלָהּ וַתִּבְכֶּה וַיִּקְרָא מְלַאֲךְ אֱלֹקִים אֶל-הַגֵּר מִן-הַשָּׁמַיִם, וַיֹּאמֶר לָהּ מַה-לָּךְ הָגֵר אַל תִּבְכִּי: שָׁנָה אַחַת בְּרֵאשׁ הַשָּׁנָה לִפְנֵי הַתְּקִיעוֹת פֶּתַח הָאֲדָמוֹר"ר בַּעַל "שִׁפְעַת חַיִּים" מִצְאֲנָז-קְלוֹיִזְנֶבֶרְגַּ וְכֵּה אָמַר: היה בכונתי לומר עתה פלפול כהלכה, כנהוג אצלנו מקדמת דנא, אולם כאשר שרי היתה במצוקה, שלחת אליה חיש מהר שני מלאכים, שירגיעו את רוחה, ואילו אמנו רחל, שכבר אלפי שנים זועקת ובוכה תמרורים על בניה הכבושים בגולה, ועדיין לא פדית אותם! היתכן? "צאנז", גליון תמוז תשנ"ט</p>

Ari Sacher, *Farther and Closer: Rosh Hashanah 5775*

The Yishmael that Avraham throws out of his house is most deserving of death. He has committed the most heinous of crimes and it is decreed that he pay for his crimes by dying of thirst. But then his mother, Hagar, does something that completely changes the equation: When she first moves away from her son, she is the benefactor. She cannot bear to see him die. But the second time she moves away, she does so not for herself, but for her son, so that he should not have to see her cry. By moving away she actually draws closer, and the two of them metamorphose from two individuals into one community. When this happens, Yishmael cannot be judged on his own merits any more. He must be judged together with the community, and this community deserves to live. As soon as this change occurs, Hashem sees Yishmael *in the place where he is*. He and his mother have become something different, something new, something pure and innocent. And so they are granted life.

Parsha Plug: Chagim Edition Second Day Rosh Hashanah

Bereshit 22:1-14	בראשית כב:א-יד
<p>1 And it came to pass after these things, that God tested Avraham, and He said to him, "Avraham," and he said, "Here I am." 2 And He said, "Please take your son, your only one, whom you love, yea, Yitzchak, and go away to the land of Moriah and bring him up there for a burnt offering on one of the mountains, of which I will tell you." 3 And Avraham arose early in the morning, and he saddled his donkey, and he took his two young men with him and Yitzchak his son; and he split wood for a burnt offering, and he arose and went to the place of which God had told him. 4 On the third day, Avraham lifted up his eyes and saw the place from afar. 5 And Avraham said to his young men, "Stay here with the donkey, and I and the lad will go yonder, and we will prostrate ourselves and return to you." 6 And Avraham took the wood for the burnt offering, and he placed [it] upon his son Yitzchak, and he took into his hand the fire and the knife, and they both went together. 7 And Yitzchak spoke to Avraham his father, and he said, "My father!" And he said, "Here I am, my son." And he said, "Here are the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for the burnt offering?" 8 And Avraham said, "God will provide for Himself the lamb for the burnt offering, my son." And they both went together. 9 And they came to the place of which God had spoken to him, and Avraham built the altar there and arranged the wood, and he bound Yitzchak his son and placed him on the altar upon the wood. 10 And Avraham stretched forth his hand and took the knife, to slaughter his son. 11 And an angel of God called to him from heaven and said, "Avraham! Avraham!" And he said, "Here I am." 12 And he said, "Do not stretch forth your hand to the lad, nor do the slightest thing to him, for now I know that you are a God fearing man, and you did not withhold your son, your only one, from Me." 13 And Avraham lifted up his eyes, and he saw, and lo! there was a ram, [and] after [that] it was caught in a tree by its horns. And Avraham went and took the ram and offered it up as a burnt offering instead of his son. 14 And Avraham named that place, The Lord will see, as it is said to this day: On the mountain, the Lord will be seen.</p>	<p>א וַיְהִי אַחֲרֵי הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה וַהֲאֱלֹקִים נִסָּה אֶת־אַבְרָהָם וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלָיו אַבְרָהָם וַיֹּאמֶר הִנְנִי ב וַיֹּאמֶר קַח־נָא אֶת־בְּנֶךָ אֶת־יִצְחָק אֲשֶׁר־אַהֲבָת אֶת־יִצְחָק וְלַךְ־לְךָ אֶל־אֶרֶץ הַמֹּרְיָה וְהַעֲלֵהוּ שָׁם לְעֹלָה עַל אֶחָד הַהָרִים אֲשֶׁר אֹמַר אֵלֶיךָ ג וַיִּשְׁכֶם אַבְרָהָם בַּבֹּקֶר וַיַּחֲבֹשׁ אֶת־חֲמֹרוֹ וַיִּקַּח אֶת־שְׁנֵי נַעֲרָיו אֹתוֹ וְאֵת יִצְחָק בְּנֵוֹ וַיִּבְקַע עֵצִי עֲלָה וַיִּקֶם וַיֵּלֶךְ אֶל־הַמָּקוֹם אֲשֶׁר־אָמַר־לּוֹ הָאֱלֹקִים ד בַּיּוֹם הַשְּׁלִישִׁי וַיֵּשֶׂא אַבְרָהָם אֶת־עֵינָיו וַיִּרְא אֶת־הַמָּקוֹם מֵרָחֹק ה וַיֹּאמֶר אַבְרָהָם אֶל־נַעֲרָיו שְׁבוּ־לָכֶם פֹּה עִם־הַחֲמֹר וְאֲנִי וְהַנֶּעֱר וְנִלְכֶה עַד־רֹפֵא וְנִשְׁתַּחֲוֶה וְנָשׁוּבָה אֵלֵיכֶם ו ז וַיִּקַּח אַבְרָהָם אֶת־עֵצֵי הָעֹלָה וַיִּשֶׂם עַל־יִצְחָק בְּנֵוֹ וַיִּקַּח בְּיָדוֹ אֶת־הָאֵשׁ וְאֶת־הַמַּאֲכָלֶת וַיֵּלְכוּ שְׁנֵיהֶם יַחְדָּו ח וַיֹּאמֶר יִצְחָק אֶל־אַבְרָהָם אָבִיו וַיֹּאמֶר אָבִי וַיֹּאמֶר הֲנִנִּי בְנִי וַיֹּאמֶר הֲנִי וַיֹּאמֶר הֲנִה הָאֵשׁ וְהָעֵצִים וְאִיֶּה הִשָּׂה לְעֹלָה ח וַיֹּאמֶר אַבְרָהָם אֵלֵקִים יִרְאֵה־לּוֹ הִשָּׂה לְעֹלָה בְנִי וַיֵּלְכוּ שְׁנֵיהֶם יַחְדָּו ט וַיָּבֹאוּ אֶל־הַמָּקוֹם אֲשֶׁר אָמַר־לּוֹ הָאֱלֹקִים וַיִּבֶן שָׁם אַבְרָהָם אֶת־הַמִּזְבֵּחַ וַיַּעֲרֹךְ אֶת־הָעֵצִים וַיַּעֲקֹד אֶת־יִצְחָק בְּנֵוֹ וַיִּשֶׂם אֹתוֹ עַל־הַמִּזְבֵּחַ מִמַּעַל לְעֵצִים י וַיִּשְׁלַח אַבְרָהָם אֶת־יָדוֹ וַיִּקַּח אֶת־הַמַּאֲכָלֶת לְשַׁחֵט אֶת־בְּנֵוֹ יא וַיִּקְרָא אֵלָיו מִלֶּאךָ ה' מִן־הַשָּׁמַיִם וַיֹּאמֶר אַבְרָהָם אַבְרָהָם וַיֹּאמֶר הִנְנִי יב וַיֹּאמֶר אֶל־תִּשְׁלַח יָדְךָ אֶל־הַנֶּעֱר וְאַל־תַּעַשׂ לוֹ מְאוּמָה כִּי עִתָּה יָדַעְתִּי כִּי־יִרְא אֱלֹקִים אֶתָּה וְלֹא חִשַׁכְתָּ אֶת־בְּנֶךָ אֶת־יִצְחָק מִמֶּנִּי יג וַיֵּשֶׂא אַבְרָהָם אֶת־עֵינָיו וַיִּרְא וְהִנֵּה־אֵיל אַחֵר נֹאחַז בְּסִבְךָ בְּקִרְבּוֹ וַיֵּלֶךְ אַבְרָהָם וַיִּקַּח אֶת־הָאֵיל וַיַּעֲלֵהוּ לְעֹלָה תַחַת בְּנֵוֹ יד וַיִּקְרָא אַבְרָהָם שֵׁם־הַמָּקוֹם הַהוּא ה' ירְאֵה אֲשֶׁר יֹאמֶר הַיּוֹם בְּהָר ה' יִרְאֵה:</p>

Rabbeinu Bachya on Bereshit 22:7	רבינו בחיי על בראשית כב:ז
There are those who say that the strength of Avraham was greater than that of Yitzchak, because it is much easier to surrender oneself to be killed than for a father to kill his son with his own hands.	יש שאמרו גדול כחו של אברהם יותר מיצחק, לפי שהמפקיר עצמו ליהרג נקל הוא מאד מן האב שבא לשחוט את בנו בידיו...
Midrash Aggadah on Bereshit 22:4	מדרש אגדה (בובר) על בראשית כב:ד
On the third day: Why wait until the third day? The place was close! Rather this comes to teach us that the satan came and made himself like a river before him. Avraham said, 'I will enter into the river, and I will see if the water is deep'. As he slowly started to drown, Avraham raised his eyes to God that He should save him from the water so that he should not drown. Immediately God berated the satan and found Avraham standing on the dry land.	ביום השלישי. למה עכב ג' ימים והלא מקום קרוב היה, אלא מלמד שבא שטן ועשה עצמו כנהר לפניו, אמר אברהם אני אכנס בנהר ואראה אם יש מים עמוקים, וכמעט נטבע אברהם נשא עיניו להקב"ה שיצילנו מן המים שלא נטבע בהם, מיד גער הקדוש ברוך הוא בשטן ונמצא אברהם עומד ביבשה:
Midrash Aggadah Bereshit 22:10	מדרש אגדה (בובר) בראשית כב:י
"He took the knife": When they were walking, the satan came to Avraham and said to him, "Old man, what are you thinking? The son whom God gave to you when you were one hundred years old, you are now taking to slaughter? It is I who led you astray and said to you, 'Take your son, your only son'. Avraham responded, 'God forbid! God is the One Who said this to me'.	ויקה את המאכלת... וכשהיו מהלכין בא שטן אצל אברהם אמר לו זקן אן דעתך, בן שחננך הקדוש ברוך הוא למאה שנים אתה הולך לשחטו, אני הוא שהתעתי אותך ואמרת לך קח נא את בנך את יחידך, אמר לו אברהם חס וחלילה האלהים אשר אמר לי.
Musaf for Rosh Hashanah Zichronot	מוסף לראש השנה זכרונות
Our God and God of our fathers, remember us favorably and visit us with merciful deliverance from the eternal high heavens. Remember in our favor, Lord our God, the covenant, the kindness, and the solemn promise which You made to our father Avraham on Har Moriah. Be mindful of the time when our father Avraham bound his son Yitzchak on the altar, suppressing his compassion that he might do Your will wholeheartedly. May Your mercy likewise hold back Your anger from us; in Your great goodness, may Your wrath turn away from Your people, Your city, Your land, Your heritage...You Who remembers all forgotten things, for there is no forgetting before Your throne of glory, may You on this day mercifully remember the binding of Yitzchak in favor of his descendants. Blessed are You, God, Who	אלקינו ואלהי אבותינו זכרנו בזכרון טוב לפניך ופקדנו כפקדת ישועה ורחמים משמי שמי קדם. וזכרנו ה' אלקינו את הברית ואת החסד ואת השבועה אשר נשבעת לאברהם אבינו בהר המריה. ותראה לפניך עקדה שעקד אברהם אבינו את יצחק בנו על גבי המזבח וכבש רחמיו לעשות רצונך בלבב שלם. כן יכבשו רחמך את כעסך מעלינו ובטובך הגדול ישוב חרון אפך מעמך ומעריך ומנחלתך...כי זוכר כל הנשכחות אתה הוא מעולם ואין שכחה לפני כסא כבודך. ועקדת יצחק לזרעו היום ברחמים תזכור.

remembers the covenant.	ברוך אתה ה' זוכר הברית.
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Rav Shimshon Raphael Hirsch on Bereshit 22:13-14

Yitzchak's life and the life of his children are to form an eternal Akeidah...By the name ה' יראה Avraham bequeathed the הוראה which Moriah is to bring to his descendants by the remembrance of this event, ה' יראה, God sees. Even when we, and where we, do not see, God sees, freely and willingly have we to subordinate our own judgment to His...[T]oday this great Truth is not expressed by the general term 'God sees' but that each one of us 'is seen by God' and has to present himself repeatedly on this Mount 'to be seen' to be testingly inspected...[Everyone who] vows to do his part of the Akeidah task which his ancestor undertook for his son and his descendants on that spot, and in accomplishing it himself has pilgrimed up to the heights of Moriah as an example for all time.

Rabbi Joseph Telushkin, A Code of Jewish Ethics Volume 1: You Shall Be Holy

Because we all have flaws, the most important struggle in which we must engage is with ourselves...[T]he Rabbis defined a hero not as someone who leads people into battle or who prevails in a fight, but as 'one who subdues his [evil] inclination' (Pirkei Avot 4:1). Thus, while popular culture defines heroism as prevailing over others, the Rabbis define it as prevailing over oneself...In order to struggle successfully with yourself, you must know your character intimately, and be aware of your faults. To achieve this self-awareness, sit down with a pen and paper-- this exercise will be painful-- and write down what you feel are your most obvious character flaws and weaknesses...Once you have drawn up your list, do not become discouraged even if you find that you have many weaknesses. Drawing up a list is the first and most important step in changing your character for the better.

Parsha Plug: Chagim Edition Yom Kippur

Vayikra 18:1-30	ויקרא יח:א-ל
<p>1 And the Lord spoke to Moses, saying: 2 Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them: I am the Lord, your God. 3 Like the practice of the land of Egypt, in which you dwelled, you shall not do, and like the practice of the land of Canaan, to which I am bringing you, you shall not do, and you shall not follow their statutes. 4 You shall fulfill My ordinances and observe My statutes, to follow them. I am the Lord, your God. 5 You shall observe My statutes and My ordinances, which a man shall do and live by them. I am the Lord. 6 No man shall come near to any of his close relatives, to uncover [their] nakedness. I am the Lord. 7 You shall not uncover the nakedness of your father or the nakedness of your mother; she is your mother; you shall not uncover her nakedness. 8 You shall not uncover the nakedness of</p>	<p>א וידבר ה', אל-מֹשֶׁה לֵאמֹר. ב דַּבֵּר אל-בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל, וְאָמַרְתָּ אֲלֵהֶם: אֲנִי, ה' אֱלֹהֵיכֶם. ג כַּמַּעֲשֵׂה אֶרֶץ-מִצְרַיִם אֲשֶׁר יִשְׁבַתֶּם-בָּהּ, לֹא תַעֲשׂוּ; וְכַמַּעֲשֵׂה אֶרֶץ-כְּנָעַן אֲשֶׁר אָנֹכִי מְבִיא אֶתְכֶם שָׁמָּה, לֹא תַעֲשׂוּ, וּבַחֲקֵיהֶם, לֹא תִלְכוּ. ד אֶת-מִשְׁפָּטֵי תַעֲשׂוּ וְאֶת-חֻקֵּי תִשְׁמְרוּ, לְלַכֵּת בָּהֶם: אֲנִי, ה' אֱלֹהֵיכֶם. ה וּשְׁמַרְתֶּם אֶת-חֻקֵּי וְאֶת-מִשְׁפָּטַי, אֲשֶׁר יַעֲשֶׂה אִתְּכֶם הָאָדָם וְחֵי בָהֶם: אֲנִי, ה'. ו אִישׁ אִישׁ אֶל-כָּל-שָׂאֵר בְּשָׂרוֹ, לֹא תִקְרְבוּ לְגִלּוֹת עֶרְוָה: אֲנִי, ה'. ז עֶרְוַת אֲבִיךָ וְעֶרְוַת אִמְךָ, לֹא תִגְלֶה: אִמְךָ הוּא,</p>

your father's wife; it is your father's nakedness. **9** The nakedness of your sister, whether your father's daughter or your mother's daughter, whether born to one who may remain in the home or born to one who must be sent outside you shall not uncover their nakedness. **10** The nakedness of your son's daughter or your daughter's daughter you shall not uncover their nakedness, for they are your own nakedness. **11** The nakedness of the daughter of your father's wife, born to your father she is your sister: you shall not uncover her nakedness. **12** You shall not uncover the nakedness of your father's sister; she is the close relative of your father. **13** You shall not uncover the nakedness of your mother's sister, for she is the close relative of your mother. **14** You shall not uncover the nakedness of your father's brother you shall not come near his wife; she is your aunt. **15** You shall not uncover the nakedness of your daughter in law; she is your son's wife you shall not uncover her nakedness. **16** You shall not uncover the nakedness of your brother's wife: it is your brother's nakedness. **17** You shall not uncover the nakedness of a woman and her daughter; you shall not take [in marriage] her son's daughter or her daughter's daughter, to uncover her nakedness they are close relatives, it is evil counsel. **18** And you shall not take a woman with her sister [in marriage] as rivals, to uncover the nakedness of one upon the other, in her lifetime. **19** And to a woman during the uncleanness of her separation, you shall not come near to uncover her nakedness. **20** You shall not lie carnally with your neighbor's wife, to become defiled by her. **21** And you shall not give any of your offspring to pass through for Molech. And you shall not profane the Name of your God. I am the Lord. **22** You shall not lie down with a male, as with a woman: this is an abomination. **23** And with no animal shall you cohabit, to become defiled by it. And a woman shall not stand in front of an animal to cohabit with it; this is depravity. **24** You shall not defile yourselves by any of these things, for the nations, whom I am sending away from before you, have defiled themselves with all these things. **25** And the land became defiled, and I visited its sin upon it, and the land vomited out its inhabitants. **26** But as for you, you shall observe My statutes and My ordinances, and you shall not do like any of these abominations neither the native, nor the stranger who sojourns among you. **27** For the people of the land who preceded you, did all of these abominations, and the land became defiled. **28** And let the land not vomit you out for having defiled it, as it vomited out the nation that preceded you. **29** For anyone who commits any of these abominations, the persons doing so shall be cut off from the midst of their people. **30** And you shall observe

לֹא תִגְלֶה עֲרוֹתָהּ. ח עֲרוֹת אִשְׁתְּ-אָבִיךָ, לֹא תִגְלֶה: עֲרוֹת אָבִיךָ, הוּא. ט עֲרוֹת אַחֲוֹתֶיךָ בֵּית, אוֹ מוֹלְדֹת חוּץ--לֹא תִגְלֶה, עֲרוֹתָן. י עֲרוֹת בֶּן-בְּנִיךָ אוֹ בַת-בְּתִיךָ, לֹא תִגְלֶה עֲרוֹתָן: כִּי עֲרוֹתֶיךָ, הֵנּהּ. יא עֲרוֹת בֶּת-אִשְׁתְּ אָבִיךָ מוֹלְדֹת אָבִיךָ, אַחֲוֹתֶיךָ הוּא--לֹא תִגְלֶה, עֲרוֹתָהּ. יב עֲרוֹת אַחֲוֹת-אָבִיךָ, לֹא תִגְלֶה: שְׂאֵר אָבִיךָ, הוּא. יג עֲרוֹת אַחֲוֹת-אִמְךָ, לֹא תִגְלֶה: כִּי-שְׂאֵר אִמְךָ, הוּא. יד עֲרוֹת אֲחֵי-אָבִיךָ, לֹא תִגְלֶה: אֶל-אִשְׁתּוֹ לֹא תִקְרַב, דְּדִתֶךָ הוּא. טו עֲרוֹת כַּלְתֶּךָ, לֹא תִגְלֶה: אִשְׁתְּ בְּנִיךָ הוּא, לֹא תִגְלֶה עֲרוֹתָהּ. טז עֲרוֹת אִשְׁתְּ-אֲחִיךָ, לֹא תִגְלֶה: עֲרוֹת אֲחִיךָ, הוּא. יז עֲרוֹת אִשָּׁה וּבִתָּהּ, לֹא תִגְלֶה: אֶת-בֶּת-בְּנִיהָ וְאֶת-בֶּת-בִּתְּהָ, לֹא תִקַּח לְגִלוֹת עֲרוֹתָהּ--שְׂאֵרָהּ הֵנּהּ, זָמָה הוּא. יח וְאִשָּׁה אֶל-אֲחֹתָהּ, לֹא תִקַּח: לְצִדּוֹ, לְגִלוֹת עֲרוֹתָהּ עָלֶיהָ--בַּחַיִּיהָ. יט וְאֶל-אִשָּׁה, בְּנִדַת טַמְאָתָהּ--לֹא תִקְרַב, לְגִלוֹת עֲרוֹתָהּ. כ וְאֶל-אִשְׁתְּ עֵמִיתֶךָ--לֹא-תִתֵּן שְׂכַבְתֶּךָ, לְזֹרַע: לְטַמְאָהּ-בָּהּ. כא וּמִזְרַעֲךָ לֹא-תִתֵּן, לְהַעֲבִיר לְמִלְךָ; וְלֹא תַחֲלִיל אֶת-שֵׁם אֱלֹהֶיךָ, אֲנִי ה' כב וְאֶת-זִכְרִי--לֹא תִשְׁכַּח, מִשְׁפָּכֵי אִשָּׁה: תוֹעֵבָה, הוּא. כג וּבְכָל-בְּהֵמָה לֹא-תִתֵּן שְׂכַבְתֶּךָ, לְטַמְאָהּ-בָּהּ; וְאִשָּׁה, לֹא-תַעֲמֵד לְפָנַי בְּהֵמָה לְרִבְעָה--תִּבְלֵה הוּא. כד אֶל-תִּטְמְאוּ, בְּכָל-אֵלֶּה: כִּי בְכָל-אֵלֶּה נִטְמְאוּ הַגּוֹיִם, אֲשֶׁר-אֲנִי מְשַׁלֵּחַ מִפְּנֵיכֶם. כה וּתְטַמְאוּ הָאָרֶץ, וְאִפְקֹד עוֹנֵה עָלֶיהָ; וְתִקַּח הָאָרֶץ, אֶת-יְשֻׁבֵיהָ. כו וּשְׁמֵרְתֶם אֹתָם, אֶת-חֻקֵּי וְאֶת-מִשְׁפָּטַי, וְלֹא תַעֲשׂוּ, מִכָּל-הַתּוֹעֵבוֹת הָאֵלֶּה: הַאֲזַרְחָה, וְהַגֵּר הֹגֵר בְּתוֹכְכֶם. כז כִּי אֶת-כָּל-הַתּוֹעֵבוֹת הָאֵל, עֲשׂוּ אֲנִישֵׁי-הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר לְפָנֵיכֶם; וּתְטַמְאוּ, הָאָרֶץ. כח וְלֹא-תִקַּח הָאָרֶץ אֹתְכֶם, בְּטַמְאֶכֶם אֹתָהּ, כְּאִשֶּׁר קָאָה אֶת-הַגּוֹי, אֲשֶׁר לְפָנֵיכֶם. כט כִּי כָל-אֲשֶׁר יַעֲשֶׂה, מִכָּל-הַתּוֹעֵבוֹת הָאֵלֶּה--וּנְכַרְתּוּ הַנְּפֹשׁוֹת הַעֲשׂוֹת, מִקְרַב עַמְּם. ל וּשְׁמֵרְתֶם אֶת-מִשְׁמֵרְתֵי, לְבַלְתִּי

<p>My charge, not to commit any of the abominable practices that were done before you, and you shall not become defiled by them. I am the Lord your God.</p>	<p>עֲשׂוֹת מִחֻקֹּת הַתּוֹעֵבֹת אֲשֶׁר נַעֲשׂוּ לְפָנֶיכֶם, וְלֹא תִטְמְאוּ, בָּהֶם: אֲנִי, ה' אֱלֹהֵיכֶם.</p>
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<p>Mishnah Berurah 622:7</p>	<p>משנה ברורה סימן תרכב ס"ק ז</p>
<p>The section of forbidden sexual relationships is read on Yom Kippur because the soul of a person desires them. If there is one who has become impure [in this way], he should return in teshuvah. We then read from Sefer Yonah for it speaks about teshuvah and also illustrates that no one is able to run from God.</p>	<p>עריות: משום שנפשו של אדם מחמדתן ואם יש אחד שנטמא יחזור בתשובה ומפטיר ביונה שמדבר מן התשובה ועוד שאין יכולין לברוח מן הש"י.</p>

<p>Hadar Zekeinim on Vayikra 18:3</p>	<p>הדר זקנים על ויקרא יח:ג</p>
<p>‘Like the practice of the land of Egypt’: This is like a princess who had two neighbors, one who was a witch, and one who was an adulteress. The king said to her, ‘My daughter, do not conduct yourself like the way of this one or that one’. Thus said God.</p>	<p>כמעשה ארץ מצרים וכו'. משל לבת מלך שהיו לה ב' שכנות א' מכשפה וא' מנאפת אמ' לה המלך לא תעשי בתי לא כמעשה זו ולא כמעשה זו כך אמר הקדוש ברוך הוא:</p>

<p>Rabbeinu Bachya on Vayikra 18:5</p>	<p>רבינו בחיי על ויקרא יח:ה</p>
<p>(Based on Yoma 85:) ‘Through them you shall live’, meaning that you shall not die through them. For the mitzvot are pushed off in order to save a life. A person should transgress the mitzvot rather than die, with the exception of three: idol worship, forbidden sexual relations, and murder. For the rabbis taught us that a person should suffer death rather than transgress them.</p>	<p>(יומא פה ב) "וחי בהם", ולא שימות בהם, שהרי המצות נדחות מפני פקוח נפש ובכולם נפסקה ההלכה יעבור ואל יהרג, חוץ משלשה, ואלו הן: עבודה זרה, גלוי עריות, שפיכות דמים, שעליהן אמרו יהרג ואל יעבור.</p>

<p>Rabbi Yaakov Beasley, <i>Arayot of Achelei Mot, Arayot of Kedoshim</i></p>	
<p>Based on the structural understanding of Sefer VaYikra...we can suggest another rationale for the reading of Chapter 18 on Yom Kippur. After 17 chapters dedicated to preserving the sanctity of the Mishkan, the text now directs its attention towards achieving holiness outside the Mishkan. Similarly, having spent the better part of a day within the sacred walls of the synagogue, engaged in repentance and fasting, the Torah reading for Mincha must direct us how to engage the outside world with the second part of our mission – to become “a holy nation”.</p>	

<p>Rabbi Jonathan Sacks, <i>The Koren Yom Kippur Machzor</i>, p.992-997</p>
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The fundamental difference between the life of the Abrahamic covenant and that of pagan societies is the presence in one, and the absence in the other, of a sexual ethic: an ethic of the sanctity of marriage and of sexual fidelity. Nor is it accidental that the sign of the Abrahamic covenant, Brit Mila, is circumcision. The sign of holiness is intimately connected with sexuality. Why so? Sexuality is a fundamental theme of ancient myth. There were male gods of power and potency and female goddesses of fertility and allure, and the relations between them were amoral. They fought, conquered, schemed, sired. Often they killed one another; at times they killed their own children. It was a world of conflict and betrayal, of sexual lawlessness and anomie (or lack of social norms). Judaism was and is opposed to this world, whether in its ancient forms of myth, or its more modern pseudo-scientific or philosophical counterparts, the neo-Darwinian myth (the “selfish gene”) that the fundamental driver of behavior is the desire to hand on one’s genes to the next generation, or the Nietzschean “will to power.” Against this, Judaism sets forth an ethic of love and loyalty, concretized in the idea of covenant, whereby two parties, each respecting the integrity of the other, come together in a bond of mutual commitment and fidelity. The human counterpart of the covenant between God and humanity is marriage as a covenant between husband and wife. A sexual ethic is therefore not just one among many features of Judaism. It is of its essence, for there is the closest possible connection between the way we relate to God and the way we relate to those to whom we are closest: our husband or wife, and our children. That is why Genesis, the story of our beginnings, deals only cursorily with the creation of the universe, and briefly with politics (a key theme of Exodus and Deuteronomy). Instead, it is a series of narratives about families, marriage partners, parents, children, and siblings...[T]he Torah passage we read on Yom Kippur afternoon, despite its seeming remoteness from the themes of the day, is telling us a fundamental truth about Judaism as a whole. Holiness is expressed in our most intimate relationships within the family: in the love that is loyal and generous, self-sacrificing and kind, in the sensitivity of marriage partners to one another and their needs, and in our ability to recognize the integrity-of-otherness that lies at the heart of love.