

After אברהם prepares to perform the עקדה, actually placing יצחק אבינו on the מזבח, we have the famous line where the מלאך calls to אברהם (22:11): וַיִּקְרָא אֱלֹהֵי מִלְאָךְ ה' מִן הַשָּׁמַיִם וַיֹּאמֶר: אַבְרָהָם אַבְרָהָם וַיֹּאמֶר הֲנִי: The תורה tells us that the מלאך called אברהם twice. The first time, it says וַיֹּאמֶר אֵל תְּשַׁלַּח יָדְךָ אֶל הַנֶּעֱר וְאַל תַּעַשׂ לוֹ מְאוּמָה כִּי עֵתָה יָדַעְתִּי כִּי יִרְאֶה אֱלֹקִים אֶתְּהָ וְלֹא חֲשַׁכְתָּ אֶת בְּנֶךְ אֶת: (22:12) The מלאך tells him: “Don’t harm him, because now I know that you are אלקים, for you did not withhold your son מִמֶּנִּי.”

Then, the מלאך calls out to אברהם a second time (22:15): וַיִּקְרָא מִלְאָךְ ה' אֶל אַבְרָהָם שְׁנִית מִן הַשָּׁמַיִם: (22:16-17): What does the מלאך say the second time?

וַיֹּאמֶר בִּי נִשְׁבַּעְתִּי נְאֻם ה' כִּי יַעַן אֲשֶׁר עָשִׂיתָ אֶת הַדָּבָר הַזֶּה וְלֹא חֲשַׁכְתָּ אֶת בְּנֶךְ אֶת יְחִידְךָ: כִּי בְרַךְ אֲבִרְכְּךָ וְהִרְבֵּה אֲרִבְּךָ אֶת וְרַעֲךָ...

There is a massive difference between the first calling of the מלאך to אברהם and the second. In the first, as the Vilna Gaon points out, the מלאך says, “You did not withhold your son מִמֶּנִּי - from me.” Who is speaking here? The מלאך is speaking. But in the second ברכה, it says it is given *in the name of* ה'.

The גר"א asks a phenomenal קושיא: Why would the מלאך say מִמֶּנִּי, from me? Was אברהם offering יצחק to the מלאך? Certainly not. How could the מלאך say, “You did not withhold your son from me”?

The גר"א provides an answer that almost only the גר"א could say. We know that every time a person does a מצוה, it creates a מלאך, and the quality of that מלאך corresponds to the quality of the מצוה itself. What qualities contribute to a מצוה? אהבה, זריזות, יראה, כוונה - these aspects, and possibly others, influence the quality of the מלאך created by the מצוה.

So who is speaking to אברהם now? The מלאך that was created through the מצוה of the עקדה. It is this מלאך who says, “Now I know that you are אלקים, for you did not withhold your son מִמֶּנִּי - from me.” The מלאך is effectively saying, “Look at the level I represent; from my high מדרגה, you can see the greatness of the יראת שמים of אברהם אבינו.” How do you know that I know? מִמֶּנִּי - from me”. The quality of the מלאך created by the עקדה reflects the greatness of this מצוה.

This teaches us a profound מוסר. When we do מצוה, we should invest in them to elevate their quality. The מדרגה of our מצוה reflects the greatness of our achievements. If we put more כוונה, more time, more יראה and אהבה ה', it translates into a greater מצוה. Whether or not our מצוה create a מלאך is not the main point - although if the מדרש says so, we believe it. The lesson is about the quality of our מצוה. Our מצוה should express our deep כוונה, our יראה and אהבה ה', and that way, they will be of the highest quality. In the זכות of those מצוה, may הקדוש ברוך הוא grant us ביאת גואל צדק במהרה בימינו אמן, and נחמות, ישועות

