
פרשת וירא

פרק כב פסוק ג

וַיִּשְׁלַח אַבְרָהָם בְּבֹקֶר וַיִּתְחַבֵּל אֶת-תְּמִלּוֹ וַיִּקָּח אֶת-שָׁנָי נְעָרָיו אֹתוֹ וְאֵת יִצְחָק בְּנֵוֹ וַיִּבְקַע עֲצָי עֲלֵה נִינְקָם וַיִּלְדוּ אֶל-הַמָּקוֹם אֲשֶׁר-אָמַר-לּוֹ הָאֱלֹהִים:

חז"ל

"וביום השמיני ימול בשר ערלתו" ותניא כל היום כולו כשר למילה, אלא שזריזין מקדימים למצוות שנאמר "וישכם אברהם בבקר" (פסחים ד.)

מושג

זריזים מקדימים למצוות.

Translation:

Those who are extremely careful¹ do Mitzvos as early as possible².

Explanation:

One should show how much they love to do Mitzvos and do them as soon as possible and not delay³. We learn this from Avrohom Aveinu who woke up early in the morning to fulfil the command of Hashem. The command of Hashem to sacrifice his son was certainly a most difficult, and even confusing, task. And yet, Avrohom did not hesitate. Because of his love for Hashem, he woke up early in the morning to do Hashem's will⁴. *How* he would go about keeping Hashem's command was the most important part of the test.

If this holds true for difficult Mitzvos, most certainly it should hold true for easier Mitzvos.

Looking in the Pasuk:

The Pasuk does not say ויקם (ק.ו.מ) אברהם בבקר, but rather וישכם (ש.כ.מ) meaning he got up early⁵.

Musag Learning Outcomes:

Know: Difference between ק.ו.מ and ש.כ.מ, between אהבת ה' ויראת ה' & meaning of זריז.

Understand: How Avrohom's love for Hashem was being tested by seeing how quickly Avrohom would move to fulfill Hashem's command despite reasons to do otherwise.

Think: How verb usage can completely change Pasuk meaning.

1 The word זריזים in חז"ל does not usually mean one who acts quickly, but rather one who is extremely careful.

2 See note #1

3 See note #2

4 See note #3

5 See note #4

NOTES

1. A corollary concept is the well known *זו"ל* which states מצוה הבאה לידך אל תחמיצנה. The only source for this idea is found in the Mechiltah⁶ (quoted by Rashi in Shmos 19:17):

ושמרתם את המצוות: רבי יאשיהו אומר, אל תהי קורא "את המצוות" אלא 'את המצוות', כדרך שאין מקמיצין את המצוות כד אין מקמיצין את המצוות, אלא אם באה לידך עשה אותה מיד (מכילתא - פרשה ט)

An interesting question is why do we need two different *זו"ל* to tell us basically the same point?

Upon analyzing the concept of *זריזים* מקדימין למצוות one could wonder that the message here seems obvious. Of course one who acts carefully does Mitzvos at the first opportunity, why wouldn't they? And, why do I need a Pasuk about Avrohom's actions to prove what seems to be a rather obvious idea?

Perhaps we might answer that the two concepts do not apply to the same situations. Rather, the concept of מצוה הבאה לידך refers to a situation in which the מצוה is in front of you (אם באה לידך), in such a case you may not turn your back on the מצוה but rather you must do it immediately⁷. However, when the Mitzvah is not yet 'in your hand', I might think you can wait. And, waiting may even be preferred! The possible reason is another concept of נראה עליו כמשוי, *It appears as a burden to him*.⁸ I might have therefore thought that one should not do a Mitzvah immediately so that it should not appear as if he wants to rid himself of the obligation. Thus, the concept of *זריזים* מקדימין teaches us that those who are extremely careful with Mitzvos do not make such calculations but rather do the Mitzvah immediately⁹. The proof of the correctness of this type of action is from Avrohom Avinu, who could, and maybe should, have waited for further instructions from Hashem (see Note #2&3) but his love for Hashem told him to act immediately.

2. The source of this Mitzvah is אהבת השם. One who does something out of fear will do the minimum, as they only want to avoid punishment. But when someone does something out of love they do the most they can, as quickly as possible, in the best way possible.

3. There is a well known question regarding the test of Avrohom to sacrifice Yitzchok. After all, it is asked, Avrohom knew of Hashem as the creator of the world whose power was without limits. Therefore, what real options did Avrohom have other than to do the will of Hashem?

One of the answers is that Avrohom's only option was to delay. After all, Hashem had previously told him זרע לך and now Hashem had seemingly changed his mind and asked Avrohom to sacrifice his son. Avrohom could have reasoned if I were to delay fulfilling this command maybe Hashem will change his mind again. But Avrohom not only did not delay, he actually awoke early to quickly do Hashem's will.

Thus, the test was not to see if Avrohom would sacrifice Yitzchok, but how quickly he would act, would he act out of fear or out of love. According to this understanding, the fact that Avrohom awoke early was not an addition to him passing the test, but was the way in which he passed the test.

The Mishnah in Avos (פרק ה משנה ג) which mentions the tests tells us:

עשרה נסיונות נתנסה אברהם אבינו ע"ה ועמד בכלם. להודיע פמה חבתו של אברהם אבינו ע"ה

6 5. The exact wording of מצוה הבאה לידך אל תחמיצנה is not found in the Mechiltah. The earliest source for such wording (that I could find) is in Rashi in (וי) מסכת מגילה which reads: ומצוה הבאה לידך אל תחמיצנה

7 This concept is used as a proof for the הלכה of המצוות על המצוות, which only applies when the Mitzvos are in front of you. An example of this is that even though a man should put on his Tallis in the morning before his Tefillin, if he picked up his Tefillin first, he may not put them down and put on his Tallis. This would be a slight to the Tefillin. Rather in such a case he must complete the Mitzvah in his hand (Tefillin) and put on his Tallis afterwards.

8 An example is found in the הלכה that when one enters a Shul he or she should not start davening immediately by the door, but should first enter a few steps (two doorway widths). The reason explained by Rashi in מסכת ברכות ה. is that נראה עליו כמשוי עיכוב בית הכנסת by standing at the door and davening immediately

9 See ראש השנה לב: where the Gemorah preferred הלל to be said later in the day (מוסף) so that more people might be present (ברוב עם הדרת מלך) but instead concluded that it should be said earlier (שהרית) because of זריזין מקדימין.

The purpose of the tests was להודיע חבתו של אברהם אבינו. This could mean how much Hashem loved Avrohom, or as we understand it, to show how much Avrohom loved Hashem.

4. The Pasuk also consists of 5 other shorashim (ח.ב.ש, ל.ק.ה, ב.ק.ע, ק.ו.מ, ה.ל.כ) which show how active Avrohom was.

5. Additional questions:

- a. What else did Avrohom do to show his love for Hashem during this test?
- b. If what Avrohom did showed his deep love for Hashem, why does the Pasuk say עתה ידעתי כי ירא אלקים אתה?
- c. Why do we laud Avrohom's מסירת נפש, do we not find thousands of examples of מסירת נפש in our history?