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Parshat HaShavua sheet**

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Parshat Vaera

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*Latest time for Kriyat Sh'ma – 9:07*

**BLESSING IN DISGUISE**

*By Rabbi Mordechai Kamenetzky*

In Pashas Vayera, Sora, the 90-year-old wife of Avraham, receives a most surprising piece of information from an even more surprising source. She is told by Arab nomads, who had found obliging accommodation in Avraham's house, that in one year she will have a child. Instinctively, she reacts in disbelief to this prediction. She laughs.

Immediately, Hashem appears to Avraham He is upset. "Why did Sora laugh? Is there something that is beyond the Almighty? At the appointed time I shall return, and behold Sora will have a son (Genesis 18:12-13).

Hashem's ire must be explained. After all, Sora was not told by Hashem that she will have a baby. She was informed by what appeared to be Arab wanderers. And though the Talmud explains that the three nomads were indeed angels sent by the Almighty, they did not identify themselves as such. So what does G-d want from Sora?

*A man once entered the small study of the revered the Steipler Gaon, Rabbi Yaakov Yisrael Kanievski with a plea. "I'd like a blessing from the Rav. My daughter has been looking to get married for several years. All her friends are married and she would like to get married too, but nothing is working. Can the Rosh Yeshiva bless her to find her bashert? (appropriate one)," he asked. The Steipler turned to the man and asked, "Is this your first daughter?" "No," replied the distraught parent, "Why do you ask?" "When she was born did you celebrate with a kiddush?" The man was perplexed. "No. But, that was 27 years ago," he stammered, "and she was my third girl. I may have made a l'chayim while the minyan was leaving shul, but I never made a proper kiddush. But what does a missed kiddush 27 years ago have to do with my daughter's shidduch (match) today?" "When one makes a kiddush at a festive occasions," explained Rav Kanievski, "each l'chayim he receives is accompanied by myriad blessings. Some are from friends, others from relatives, and those blessings given by total strangers. Among those blessings are definitely the perfunctory wishes for an easy time in getting married. By not making a kiddush for your daughter, how many blessings did you deprive her of? I suggest you make your daughter the kiddush that she never had." The man followed the advice, and sure enough within weeks after the kiddush the girl had met her mate.*

At the bris (circumcision) of his first son (after ten girls), my uncle, Rabbi Dovid Speigel, the Ostrove-Kalushin Rebbe of Cedarhurst, Long Island, quoted the Ramban (Nachmanides) in this week's portion.

The reason that Hashem was upset at Sora was that even if an Arab nomad gives the blessing, one must be duly vigilant to respond, "Amen." One never knows the true vehicle of blessing and salvation. Hashem has many conduits and messengers. Some of those messengers' divinity is inversely proportional to their appearance.

We have to do is wait, listen, and pray that our prospective exalter is the carrier of the true blessing. And then, we have to believe.

Quite often, we have ample opportunities to be blessed. Whether it is from the aunt who offers her graces at a family gathering or the simple beggar standing outside a doorway on a freezing winter day, blessings always come our way. Sometimes they come from the co-worker who cheers you on at the end of a long day or the mail carrier who greets you with the perfunctory "have a nice day" as he brings today's tidings. Each blessing is an opportunity that knocks. And each acknowledgment and look to heaven may open the door to great salvation. The only thing left for us to do is let those blessings in.

**“He lifted his eyes and saw, and, behold, three men were standing before him. He saw, and he ran towards them from the entrance of the tent and bowed to the ground” (18:2)**

Avraham loved to do mitzvos and actively pursued opportunities to a mitzvah even when it was difficult. He was in great pain after his circumcision – Chazal say that the angels saw him unwrapping and rewrapping his bandages out of discomfort – but he did not take it easy. Just like a mother, whose love for her child enables her to wake up multiple times in the middle of the night to care for her child, Avraham’s love for mitzvos enabled him to overcome his pain and run to help others. The posuk describes how he ventured out into the blistering heat to look around and scout for anyone who could use his hospitality. When he saw people, he ran to offer his assistance. When he served them, he stood over them like a waiter. All of this shows the diligence and alacrity that we must have when doing a mitzvah. The Gemara (Kiddushin 32b) tells the story of Rabban Gamliel who served drinks to his fellow rabbis at his son’s wedding. R’ Yehoshua allowed Rabban Gamliel to serve him, but R’ Eliezer did not. R’ Eliezer questioned how R’ Yehoshua could allow the greatest sage of the generation to wait upon him and R’ Yehoshua answered that Avraham was the greatest of his generation yet he served his guests. Doing a mitzvah is not beneath the dignity of any person.

**“Hashem said: Because the outcry of Sodom and Amorah has become great and because their sin has been very grave” (18:20)**

The Yalkut Shimoni says that Hashem set earthquakes and thunder upon Sodom for 22 years prior to its destruction in order to warn the evildoers of their impending doom and to convince them to repent from their wicked ways, but they did not listen. This warning system of natural disasters is part of Hashem’s great mercy toward mankind. He sends messages before punishing people so that they should take notice and inspect their ways. Hashem gave the people of Sodom many years to heed the messages and to act on them. This is because He is not interested in destruction, but in helping people to improve their ways and return to Him. This is a tremendous gift and we should have an awareness of it so as to recognize it when necessary.

**“He urged them very much, so they turned toward him and came to his house; he made a feast for them and baked matzos, and they ate” (19:3)**

The angels refused Lot’s initial offer of assistance, but Lot would not take no for an answer. He insisted that they come to his home and he would not relent until they agreed. We can learn from Lot that when someone needs something but they decline all overtures to help them, one cannot walk away and say that he tried to help. He has to be aggressive if he knows that the person needs it badly. Ramban says that this persistence was a tremendous merit for Lot. We live in a world where people look down on persistence as “pushy,” but when it comes to mitzvos, we see that we have to feel otherwise. Hashem put us in this world to help other people, so we must find creative ways to get help to those who might be uncomfortable receiving it.

**“Avraham called the name of his son who was born to him - whom Sarah had borne him - Yitzchak” (21:3)**

What does the meaning of the name Yitzchak, “to laugh,” signify? Rav Samson Raphael Hirsch explains in Parshas Lech Lecha that the continuation of the Jewish people is nothing short of a pure miracle. For Avraham, at 100, and Sarah, at 90, to have a child that would be the future of the Jewish people seemed laughable. Sarah said “kol hashomeia yitzachak li,” “all who hear will laugh for me,” because one would laugh upon hearing about the birth of Yitzchak. The survival of the Jewish nation is what characterized the Jewish people throughout history. The laughter at the unlikely chances of their very survival, let alone their prosperity, has followed them all through the generations. Yitzchak’s birth represents the birth of the Jewish people. Hashem instructed Avraham to name the child who would be the beginning of the Jewish people “Yitzchak” to signify the supernatural nature of his birth, which would be a foreshadowing of the miraculous existence of his descendants throughout the generations. Hashem wants the survival of the Jews to be miraculous so that they will always defy common sense and prove Hashem’s existence to the world.

**“After these things, Hashem tested Avraham, and said to him: Avraham! He said: Here I am” (22:1)**

Ramban writes that the purpose of testing Avraham was not to see whether he would pass or fail. Rather, Hashem knew that Avraham had a good heart, but He also wanted to him to earn a greater reward for good actions. The goal was to bring his inner potential into actuality. This is a tremendous lesson for us. Every person is gifted with potential but if each of us fail to do something with our potential, then the benefits from it are limited. What are we doing with the greatness each of us has? Our task in life is to do develop our potential and do something with it.

*by Rabbi Mayer Friedman*

## **Do You Believe in Miracles? Yes (No, Maybe So)**

*By Sheldon Stern*

That unforgettable line, sans what's in the parenthesis, was uttered by the legendary broadcaster Al Michaels, after the US Olympic Hockey team stunned the seemingly invincible Russian squad at the 1980 Olympics in Lake Placid NY. But not everyone believes in miracles. In June 2007, I was at a shul event commemorating the 40th anniversary of the Six Day War which the President described as, "The only miracle I've ever seen in my life." (apparently he wasn't a hockey fan.) Such a statement flies in the face of the fact that we thank Hashem at least three times a day in Davening for all the miracles He does for us. This week's Parsha goes a long way in solving this difficulty.

Verse 19:24 states that Hashem rained down burning sulfur (fire and brimstone sil vous plait) from the L-rd, out of the Heavens. The phrase, "From the L-rd" seems superfluous since the Posuk mentioned Hashem at the outset. A Rabbinic joke comes to mind, "A great Rabbi passed away and he was being eulogized by a colleague, " The Niftar's Hasmadah was otherworldly and I can't even begin to speak about his acts of Chesed." Sensing that the speech was coming to an end, the casket opened and the late Rov whispered to his friend, "You forgot to mention my Anivus." It's pretty safe to say that Hashem has no need nor inclination to toot His own horn so why did the Torah cite His Name twice? Let's look at the aforementioned Six Day War. In its immediate aftermath, there were no shortage of encomiums for Hashem. To borrow from Fiddler on the Roof, "Wonder of Wonders, Miracle of Miracles." But in short order, "reason" set in. "Boy those Arabs are boobs," "Israel has the greatest army in the world", "Eli Cohen" provided invaluable information." were some of the things I remember hearing (I was ten at the time.) And it didn't take long before G-d's role fell by the wayside. (in 1973 we got a frightening wakeup call as to Israel's vulnerability.) But why do people think that these two approaches are incompatible? In 2024, Israel literally emasculated Hezbollah with its pager attack. Certainly this was an indication of Mossad's ingenuity, but that doesn't mean that we should ignore Hashem's contribution. Psalm 34 begins, "Of Dovid when he "changed his mind" before Avimelech." Let's share, as the late great Paul Harvey said, "The rest of the story." The Warrior Poet was kidnapped by that ruthless monarch. As was often the case for Moshiach's prototype his life hung in the balance, but he seized upon an idea. Dovid knew that Avimelech had a deranged daughter and so he put on a show feigning insanity. The king took the bait, "It's enough that I have to have to deal with my daughter, get this maniac out of my presence." And with this, our hero was saved. Rather than credit himself, the Psalmist used this incident as an opportunity to thank Hashem for giving him the notion."

I'll add one more story. It was sometime in the late 1980's. I was in the Stanton St. Synagogue on the Lower East Side and someone came over to me, "G-d is really doing a number on those gays with AIDS, right? I nodded and then another bloke attacked me, "I can't believe that you, a doctor, thinks that AIDS is a punishment from G-d. Don't you know that AIDS is a virus?" I never respond to such people but I thought to myself, "AIDS is "A Virus" or Aveiros?" Again it was both. And so too for Covid. It's possible that the virus came from a Chinese lab, but nothing would happen without G-d's assent. So now we can understand why Hashem's Name had to be repeated in the verse. Initially, everyone was astounded by Sodom's devastation. Lot's two daughters felt obliged to ply their father with wine, because they were certain that no one had survived that cataclysm. Of course it was from Hashem. What other possibility could there be? But then the scientists, of that, or any time, weigh in, and before you know it, this and any other apocalypse is explained away as a "natural" event. The classic example was Superstorm Sandy. Natural law wasn't violated, but there was a confluence of events that screamed, "This is from G-d, but it fell on deaf ears." I don't hear it lately but when I was young there was a constant refrain, "Why doesn't G-d do miracles today like He did in the Bible?" The implication was that if He violated or changed natural law people would believe in Him. No we wouldn't. Napoleon Hill said in 1937, "What the mind can conceive, man can achieve." Perhaps today we should say, "What the mind can conceive, man will use to deceive." That is we'll do anything to avoid acknowledging Hashem's omniscience.

To this point we've discussed how people dismiss miracles on the grand stage, but what I find more interesting is how this happens on the micro level, that is to each of us. I had a friend who passed away several years ago. I don't recall why but I once asked him, "Have you ever felt G-d's influence in your life?" Without blinking he said, NO, thereby ending the discussion. Let me share a story. Asarah Beteves is the one fast which, if it falls out on a Friday, isn't shunted to a different day. When I was part of Rabbi Friedman's yeshiva, I generally went there on Tuesday and Friday mornings. I don't recall which year it was but it was on a Friday and the Mesechta we were learning was Eruvin 40B (we'd normally cover an Amud at each class). The Gemara explained that there's a verse which teaches that we don't push off Asarah Beteves even when it comes out on a Friday. Rabbi Friedman was giddy like a schoolgirl, because that day, in fact, was Asarah Beteves. There are over 14,000 pages of Gemara and this subject came up on the actual Friday that we were fasting. It was totally amazing. We were all so excited because we took it as a sign that Hashem was paying attention to our learning. Couldn't we have racked this up as a mere coincidence? So again we invoke Dylan's great line, "We all see the same things we just start out from a different point of view." Rabbi Friedman was and is and always will be totally devoted to Hashem. I once went to his office (he's an allergist) and the sign on his desk read, "I keep Hashem before me at all times." That's right, Dovid Hamelech again. So it meant everything to him and to us, his students, that Hashem cared about us. I have no doubt that my friend had similar experiences but he brushed them off. But why? And it's for the same reason that we write off miracles. If a theme emerges from the early chapters of Breishis, it's the central role of the Yetzer hora. What I find fascinating is that the imp can convince us of one thing, and then stop on a dime

and do a total 180. Let me explain. Last week we discussed how the Yetzer hora tries to persuade us that we're nothings and nobodies, as Kansas wrote, "Dust in the wind, all we are is dust in the wind." He'll tell you "Why are you wasting your time trying to learn? Rav Moshe already knew two Mesechtas by heart when he was six years old. What can you accomplish, starting at 30?" Of course, he doesn't allude to a certain fellow named Rabbi Akiva. But after training his prey to see himself as a nonentity, he'll use the exact opposite ploy, "The reason you've done so well in the market, is because of all the research you've done." We have a Moshol. The Nazi fiend Goebbels, at once promoted the canard that Jews run the world because we own all the banks, but at the same time we're sub-humans on the level of lab mice. The Yetzer hora just wants to get his message across and he doesn't care what blandishments he has to use. The point is that the last thing Satan wants is for people to recognize Hashem and so, if need be, he'll convince you that you're the cat's meow (showing my age) or just the opposite. In 1968 Dusty Springfield had a hit with "Love Power." One day you're up, one day you're down." As I stated in a different piece, "The Yetzer hora is man's best enemy." When things are going well he tells us that we deserve the credit. And when things go sideways there's always someone else to blame. And we believe his lies. As the Doobie Brothers sang, "What a Fool Believes." Chazal tell us (Chad Gadya?) that in the ultimate future Hashem will slaughter the Satan and he'll appear to the righteous as the highest mountain, but to the evildoer he'll be a thick as the width of a hair. What does that mean? The Tzaddik will recognize how hard it was to withstand all the smokescreens the Yetzer hora devised, but the Rosho will realize that his arguments were paper thin and he'll wonder how they swayed him. John put it beautifully in Strawberry Fields, "Living is easy with eyes closed. Misunderstanding all you see." Let's explain the enigmatic Beatle's intent. Clearly the person doesn't have blinders on his eyes or he wouldn't see anything. Rather his mind doesn't allow him to properly process what he's seeing. Again that's because of the little yellow man in our heads. And why is Satan so determined to keep us in the dark with regard to Hashem? Ask 100 people why they want Moshiach and you may very well get a 100 different answers. But Chazal give us the true reason, "When Moshiach comes, the world will be filled with the knowledge of Hashem." And when that happens Beelzebub will not only be out of a job, but he will, as Golden Earring sang, "Feel what happens when the bullet hits the bone." (or blade) and it won't be pretty. And this is why Hashem works diligently to keep the Prince of Darkness out of the loop. Think of another theme in Breishis, the Moshiach thread. Why does Hashem use such unseemly ways to bring about the world's ultimate redeemer? He chooses an apparent ne-er-do-well called Lot to be the progenitor. Then He arranges for the scoundrel to impregnate his daughters. Later, we have the story of Yehuda and Tamar, mixed in with Er and Onan, definitely not G-rated material. So the answer is that G-d is "afraid" of Satan, kivyochol, and so He's constantly trying to fool him, because Hashem knows that the Devil will fight with his last breath to keep Moshiach from coming. And when he fights, people suffer and so Hashem is trying to thwart his evil plans by tricking him. We'll use another Moshol. When the Allies were planning the D-Day invasion they put out a false report that the attack would take place at Calais and not Normandy. Again, looking to fool Satan, who took the form of the Nazis. But why do so many fall for his lies? There are two reasons. First, we like the Yetzer hora's suggestion that we're the Master of our own fate. Southside Johnny and the Asbury Jukes sang, "All I Want is Everything." People don't believe that G-d will comply with their wishes and they think they can make it on their own. But there's a second reason. If we realize that Hashem is in control of our lives we have to follow His rules. And that's a bitter pill for many to swallow.

But what's the big deal about the world being filled with the knowledge of G-d? Presently there's a Rabbi who's making the rounds with the notion that doing Mitzvohs is optional. When Moshiach comes, as Robert Plant sang in Kashmir, "All will be revealed." We'll understand what the Mitzvohs are all about and there won't be a thought of violating or not keeping them. This is why Satan is so deathly afraid of him. And so he'll use everything in his arsenal to prevent him from coming. I got the idea for this piece on Shabbos Parshas Lech Lecha. I immediately started thinking of songs with the word "miracle." Two came to my mind, "Miracles" by the Jefferson Starship, and "All I Need is a Miracle" by Mike and the Mechanics. The latter was a hit in 1985 and once I thought of it I couldn't get it out of my head. I wrote this essay on Monday, November 3rd (2025). That morning I went to Key Food to buy something. They were playing the song, "All I Need is a Miracle." I kid you not. Do I Believe in Miracles? As Tug McGraw, the late great Mets reliever said, Ya Gotta Believe." I'd like to end with the chorus of a song I wrote some years back. I think it fits the subject.

Fool me once shame on you  
Fool me twice well I'm just a fool  
For trusting you  
You led me down to the brink of destruction  
There's no one like you  
So skilled at seduction  
And now my soul needs a total reconstruction

## How to Save Sodom

*By Rabbi Berel Wein*

Our father Avraham pleads for the forgiveness and survival of Sodom. He strikes the best bargain he apparently can with God, so to speak. If there are ten righteous people in Sodom then the city will be spared. There is a sizable population living in Sodom so Avraham is somehow confident that he has saved the city once the number of necessary righteous inhabitants has been reduced to ten. This is perhaps the reason that Avraham does not bargain for a number lower than ten. But Avraham is sadly disappointed. Sodom does not contain even ten righteous people and the avenging angels do their work of retribution and destruction.

My teachers often pointed out to my colleagues and me during our yeshiva years that Sodom was not destroyed because of its tens of thousands of evildoers. It was destroyed because it lacked ten good people. Once again, here in the story of Sodom, the Torah reiterates to us the value of an individual, of a good person, of a good deed performed for its own sake, how in the eyes of Heaven goodness always trumps evil. Therefore Judaism places great responsibility upon the individual and his or her personal behavior. Rambam makes this point when he states that before doing an act in life one should always consider that the whole world is evenly balanced at that moment between good and evil, salvation and destruction. The act about to be performed if it is one of goodness can save the entire world. And if it is wrong and evil, selfish and uncaring, it can doom all of humankind.

A second lesson inherent in the story of Sodom is that even the most righteous person in the world our father Avraham cannot save other people simply with his blessings and entreaties. People, communities, nations, have to save themselves. Avraham can guide and teach, serve as an example and role model, influence and lead, but in the last analysis only Sodom can save Sodom, only Lot can save Lot. There is a great reliance in the religious and general world upon others to somehow pull us through. People are willing to invest a great deal of time, effort and money to obtain the blessings of a righteous person to solve their problems. The same effort invested in their own personal attempts to improve themselves in their daily behavior would perhaps produce greater and more beneficial results than blessings from others, no matter how great those others are. The rabbis of the Talmud when asked for blessings often asked the supplicant: What good deed have you done in your lifetime? A blessing can have no good effect if the person receiving it has no personal merit. The Talmud stated the great rule in life: Your behavior will bring you closer [to God and humans] and in the alternative your behavior will distance you from them. Avraham is powerless to save Sodom without the cooperation of the inhabitants of Sodom. This is truly the bitter and telling lesson of this week's parsha. It is one that should be studied and internalized by us all.

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## Yishmael and the Binding of Isaac

*by Rabbi Yehonasan Gefen*

**Bereishis, 22:1-2:** “And it was after these matters, and God tested Avraham, and he said to him, Avraham, and he said I am here. And He said, please take your son, your only son, who you love, Yitzchak...”

**Rashi, Bereishis, 22:1, Dh: Achar Hadevarim:** ...“And some say [it refers to] after the words of Yishmael, who was glorifying himself over Yitzchak because he was circumcised aged thirteen years of age, and he did not protest. Yitzchak said to him, ‘you are glorifying over me because of one limb? If the Holy One, Blessed Is He, would tell me, ‘slaughter yourself before Me’, I would not refrain.”

One of the less discussed aspects of the Binding of Isaac is the presence of Yishmael along with Eliezer as one of the men who accompanied Avraham on his way to Mount Moriah. Avraham needed two men to come with him and it makes sense for Eliezer and Yishmael to be those men. However, Yishmael had been banished from Avraham's home many years earlier and we do not see any explicit mention of when he returned. Indeed, Tosefot says that Yishmael only returned to Avraham on the very day of the Binding itself. Clearly, this was not a coincidence, and it seems that there was a specific reason that Yishmael returned that day in order to accompany Avraham to the Binding.

Interestingly, Yishmael's name also arises in our Sages' explication of the beginning of the Torah's description of the Binding of Isaac. God tells Avraham, “Please take your son, your only son, who you love, Yitzchak”. Rashi, based on the Talmud, elaborates on this conversation: When God said ‘your son’, Avraham replied that he had two sons – Yishmael and Yitzchak. God then added, that it is your only son, but again Avraham responded that both are the only son from different wives, so God specified further that He was referring to ‘the one you love’, but yet again Avraham said that he loves them both, until God explicitly said ‘Yitzchak’.

Rashi explains that God did not just immediately say Yitzchak as people might say that Avraham would have been startled by such a sudden dramatic instruction and he therefore acted rashly. Accordingly, God gradually gave the command in order to give Avraham time to think and consider. However, Rabbi Daniel Glatstein points out that there are many ways to break news in a manner that would not be startling, so why did God deliberately say the command in such a way as to confuse Avraham as to which son he meant?

A further question, is how could Avraham reasonably thought that God meant Yishmael instead of Yitzchak as he already knew that Yishmael was wicked, while Yitzchak was righteous.

One of the purposes of the Binding of Isaac was to establish Yitzchak as the sole spiritual heir to Avraham, and to the Land of Israel. Up to that point, even though Yishmael had been expelled from Avraham's home many years earlier, there had been no definitive rejection of him as one of Avraham's heirs. Therefore, God brought back Yishmael on that day so that he would explicitly be rejected and Yitzchak would be chosen. However, Avraham did not know this; rather he only saw that Yishmael returned on the very day of the Binding and his immediate reaction to Yishmael appearing suddenly on that day meant that he was the one to be offered up. Accordingly, God deliberately used all the adjectives (your son, your only son, whom you love) to convey to Avraham that He considers only Yitzchak to be the son upon whom to shower his love and upon whom the future depends.

In particular, God wanted to show Avraham that only Yitzchak had a deep connection to the location of the Temple on Mount Moriah where the Akeidah ultimately took place: When Avraham approached Mount Moriah, the *Daat Zekeinim* explains that he saw the Shechinah, the Divine Presence, represented by a cloud covering the mountain. He then asked Yitzchak if he also saw the same thing and he replied in the affirmative. He then asked Yishmael and Eliezer what they saw and they replied that they did not see anything. Avraham then tells them, "Stay here with the donkey". He was conveying to them that they are on the same spiritual level as a donkey and have an equally low level of connection to the place of the Temple. This showed Avraham that since Yishmael had no appreciation of the sanctity of the Temple, he could obviously have no claim to Eretz Yisrael as he was not on the level to value it.

All this teaches that the Akeidah was not just about establishing Yitzchak as the sole spiritual heir to Avraham and to Eretz Yisrael but to also explicitly reject Yishmael as having any real connection to the area of the Temple and indeed, the whole of the land of Israel. In this vein Rabbi Glatstein make a fascinating point with regard to how the other Monotheistic religions relate to the Akeidah. Christians do not tamper with this story at all or any other part of the Torah, rather they call it the Old Testament and falsely claim that it was replaced by something else. However, Moslems do tamper with the Torah and change the narrative of the Akeidah by replacing Yitzchak with Yishmael. They do this because they know that the Torah's account of the Akeidah proves the ascendancy of Yitzchak over Yishmael, which thereby gives the Jewish people the rightful claim to the Temple Mount. The Moslems realize this and therefore change the story to make Yishmael the chosen son and to assert their right to the land of Israel and the Temple mount, something which they fight for to this very day. Yet in truth, it is evident in their own book, the Koran, that they have no real connection to Jerusalem and the Temple mount as they are not mentioned even once. In contrast, Jerusalem is mentioned over seven hundred times in Tanach.

We have seen how relevant the message of the Akeidah is to this very day. And it is this message that causes the great hatred that many Moslems have for the Jewish people, as it shows that they will never attain the Holy Land. In this vein, Rabbi Yitzchak Hutner was once kidnapped by Arab terrorists. When he was released, he told Rav Moshe Feinstein that he was struck by the hatred of the Arabs towards them because of the fact that they would never inherit the land.

One lesson that can be derived from these ideas, is that in order to really merit the Land and the Temple mount, we must approach it with the due reverence, realizing that it is essential in our connection to God.