



# Vayera

## The Akeida was a major misunderstanding

That is how Rashi explains this epic event, which is presented to us in Parshat Vayera. Rashi cites the Midrash in Bereshit Rabbah, suggesting that after Hashem said to Abraham, 'Okay, don't kill Isaac', Abraham then turned to God and said 'Please, God, make up your mind!'

'First of all, my wife and I can't have children, and then miraculously when I am 100 and she is 90, You give us a child and tell us that through him we will have future generations. Then You say to me: 'take *this* very child and slaughter him.' So, I make all the preparations, and now You say, 'No, don't do that.'

'Please God, won't You make up Your mind?!' Hashem replied to Abraham, 'I've been absolutely consistent, I have not deviated from my intentions, nor from my instructions to you. Did I ever once say to you, Avraham-slaughter your child, kill him? Not at all!'

'What I said was 'Veha'alehu sham le'olah', bring him up, place him on an altar, and then wait for further instructions.'

So, what emerges here is that actually this was a major misunderstanding!

But then what we have to ask is – what was this all about?

Was God just marching Abraham up to the top of a hill in order to march him down again without any purpose whatsoever?

Actually, there was a deep purpose.

It was in order that for the rest of time people would be talking about the fact that there was an opportunity, the potential for human life to be taken, and God said: 'Halt! That is not the way of moral and ethical life. Put down your knife Avraham'.

The message of the Akeidah is that as much as sometimes there may be an urge to kill, we need to promote life. We need to champion the value of life. We need to cherish the preciousness of life. That must be right at the core of everything that our faith stands for, and what we live for.

Shabbat Shalom.