בס"ד

# THE RASHI OF THE WEEK

Week of

# Parshas Vayeiro

20 Cheshvan, 5787 – October 31, 2026

Compiled from the works of
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# An Outline of the Rebbe's Explanation of Rashi

# Parshas Vayeiro

**Likkutei Sichos Volume 30, Pages 76 – 81**

## Rashi in His Own Words

**בראשית כ"ב, י"ג:** וַיִּשָּׂא אַבְרָהָם אֶת עֵינָיו וַיַּרְא וְהִנֵּה אַיִל אַחַר נֶאֱחַז בַּסְּבַךְ בְּקַרְנָיו וַיֵּלֶךְ אַבְרָהָם וַיִּקַּח אֶת הָאַיִל וַיַּעֲלֵהוּ לְעֹלָה תַּחַת בְּנוֹ׃

**רש"י ד"ה תחת בנו:** מאחר שכתוב ויעלהו לעולה, לא חסר המקרא כלום, מהו תחת בנו, על כל עבודה שעשה ממנו היה מתפלל ואומר יהי רצון שתהא זו כאלו היא עשויה בבני, כאלו בני שחוט, כאלו דמו זרוק, כאלו הוא מופשט, כאלו הוא נקטר ונעשה דשן׃

**Bereishis 22:13:** And Avrohom lifted up his eyes, and he saw, and behold, there was a ram. After that it was caught in a tree by its horns. And Avrohom went and took the ram and offered it up as a burnt offering instead of his son.

**Rashi Heading - instead of his son:** Since it is written: "and offered it up for a burnt offering," nothing is missing in the text. Why then does it say, "instead of his son"? Over every sacrificial act that he performed, he prayed, "May it be Your will that this should be considered as if it were being done to my son. As if my son were slaughtered, as if his blood were sprinkled, as if my son were flayed, as if he were burnt and reduced to ashes."

### Synopsis

In this week's Torah portion, Vayeiro, Rashi explains the verse, [1] "And Avrohom lifted his eyes, and he saw, and behold, there was a ram. After that, it was caught in a tree by its horns. Avrohom went and took the ram and offered it up as a burnt offering instead of his son."

Rashi explains what is meant by offering the ram instead of his son. Yitzchok was not offered. Obviously, the ram was offered in his place. Rashi explains that Avrohom prayed to Hashem that each step of offering the sacrifice should be considered as if he were offering his son.

However, Rashi does not seem to explain why Avrohom needed to offer a ram. G-d had already *promised* him that the nation which he would father would come through his descendants from Yitzchok. Yitzchok was childless at the time. Since G-d did not want Yitzchok to be offered as a sacrifice, what need was there to offer the ram in his place?

The answer is that Avrohom wanted it to be considered as if Yitzchok was actually offered as a sacrifice. We saw earlier that when Noach brought an offering after the flood, Hashem swore never to destroy the world by flood again. Avrohom realized that bringing a sacrifice in connection with this test would also bring about that

1. Our Parshah, Bereishis 22:13.

G-d would swear, [2]"that I will surely bless you, and I will greatly multiply your seed as the stars of the heavens and as the sand that is on the seashore, and your descendants will inherit the cities of their enemies." Obviously, Hashem keeps his word with or without an oath. However, an oath makes the blessings eternal. Even if at some point in the future Avrohom's progeny were to sin, G-d would never renege on his promise.

**Rashi's Explanation**

In this week's Torah portion, Vayeiro, Hashem commanded Avrohom to bring his beloved son Yitzchok up to the mountain. It seemed as though Hashem had commanded him to offer his son as a sacrifice. At the last minute, an angel told Avrohom, [3] "… Do not stretch forth your hand to the lad, nor do the slightest thing to him, for now I know that you are a G-d-fearing man, and you did not withhold your son, your only one, from Me." The Torah then tells us that "And Avrohom lifted up his eyes, and he saw, and behold, there was a ram. After that it was caught in a tree by its horns. And Avrohom went and took the ram and offered it up as a burnt offering instead of his son." Rashi comments on the words "instead of his son." Once the Torah tells us that he offered the ram as a burnt offering, what need is there to tell us that it was offered "instead of his son?" Obviously, the ram was being offered in his son's place.

Rashi explains that "over every sacrificial act that he performed, Avrohom prayed, 'May it be Your will that this should be considered as if it were being done to my son. As if my son were slaughtered, as if his blood were sprinkled, as if my son were flayed, as if he were burnt and reduced to ashes.'"

**Difficulties in Understanding Rashi**

Earlier, at the beginning of this incident, Hashem told Avrohom to "Please take your son, your only one, whom you love, Yitzchok, and go away to the land of Moriah and bring him up there for a burnt offering …" Rashi explains there that "He did not say to him, 'Slaughter him,' because the Holy One, blessed be He, did not wish him to slaughter him, but rather to bring him up to the mountain, to prepare him for a burnt offering. As soon as he brought him up to the mountain, He said to him, 'Take him down.'" Hashem also informed Avrohom of this, as Rashi himself tells us. [4] Rashi says that "The Holy One, blessed be He, said to Avrohom[5], 'I will not profane My covenant, nor will I alter the utterance of My lips.' When I said to you 'Take,' I was not changing what I had said earlier. I did not say to you 'Slaughter him,' but, 'Bring him up.' You have brought him up; now take him down."

2. Our Parshah, Bereishis 22:17.
3. Our Parshah, Bereishis 22:12.
4. Our Parshah, Bereishis 22:12.
5. Tehillim 89:35.

Avrohom knew that G-d did not want him to slaughter Yitzchok. Actually, he knew that it would be *impossible* for Hashem to want him to slaughter his son. Hashem had told him that "I will not alter the utterance of my lips." G-d had *promised* him that [6] "for in Yitzchok will be called your progeny." In other words, the great nation which was to be descended from Avrohom was to be descendants of Yitzchok. At this point, Yitzchok was still childless. With that in mind, why did Avrohom need to offer the ram *instead* of his son? Why did Avrohom need to pray that his offering the ram should be considered *as if* his son was slaughtered, etc.? He already knew that Hashem did not want him to offer his son! The act of offering the ram was purely something that Avrohom had taken upon himself.

We cannot explain it by saying that, because he found the ram at that precise time, he felt Divine Providence was pointing to the need to offer it in place of his son. This might seem like a proper explanation according to *Rashi*, who says the ram *ran*[7] to Avrohom! Even if that points to Hashem wanting him to offer the ram, it says nothing about offering it in place of his son.

Some commentaries explain that Avrohom brought the ram instead of his son to fulfill what he had intended to do. This is in keeping with the verse [8] "… and speaks truth in his heart." Since he intended to offer his son as a sacrifice, he felt that he needed to offer the ram in his place. However, Rashi does not support this answer. Rashi does not allude to such an explanation anywhere. If this were Rashi's understanding, he would have said so clearly. Rashi writes his commentary clearly, so that there is no need to consult other commentaries to understand what he means.

**The Explanation**

The explanation will become clear after answering a different question in these verses. Furthermore, it is a seemingly obvious question in Peshat, yet Rashi does not seem to deal with it. After first telling us how[9] "Avrohom stretched forth his hand and took the knife, to slaughter his son," an angel stops him. The angel calls to him, saying, [10] "Do not stretch forth your hand to the lad, nor do the slightest thing to him, for now I know that you are a G-d-fearing man, and you did not withhold your son, your only one, from Me." Following this, Avrohom offers the ram instead of Yitzchok. Immediately thereafter, [11] "An angel of the Lord called to Avrohom a second time from heaven. And he said, 'By Myself have I sworn, says the Lord, that because you have done this thing

6. Our Parshah, Bereishis 21:12.
7. Our Parshah, Bereishis 22:13.
8. Tehillim 15:2.
9. Our Parshah, Bereishis 22:10.
10. Our Parshah, Bereishis 22:12.
11. Our Parshah, Bereishis 22:15-18.

and you did not withhold your son, your only one, that I will surely bless you, and I will greatly multiply your seed as the stars of the heavens and as the sand that is on the seashore, and your descendants will inherit the cities of their enemies. And through your children shall be blessed all the nations of the world, because you listened to My voice.'" The question is, why did the angel call him a second time? Why did he wait until the second time he called to him to give him all of the blessings which he deserved "because you have done this thing. You did not withhold your son."? Why did he not give Avrohom these blessings the first time he called to him? These verses imply that Avrohom deserved all of these blessings because he did not withhold his son. However, Hashem did not actually grant him these blessings until after he brought the sacrifice. Why?

The explanation is that something different and special happened when the angel called to Avrohom a second time. Seemingly, they are all blessings that Avrohom has already received. [12] However, what is different here is that Hashem says, "*By Myself have I sworn*, says the Lord, that because you have done this thing and you did not withhold your son, your only one, that I will surely bless you." What is advantageous about G-d swearing to bless Avrohom? We know that Hashem will keep His word. However, once Hashem has sworn to give a blessing, He will never retract it. Because of sin, a blessing may not be fulfilled. However, once Hashem has sworn to bless someone, the blessing will never be retracted, no matter what.

For this reason, it is no wonder that Rashi does not explain why Hashem swore only the *second* time Avrohom was called. We find a similar example earlier in the Torah, when G-d swore for the first time. In the Torah portion of Noach, after the flood, we are told that, [13]"And Noach built an altar to the Lord, and he took all the clean animals and of all the clean fowl and brought up burnt offerings on the altar. And the Lord smelled the pleasant aroma, and the Lord said to Himself, "I will no longer curse the earth because of man, for the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth, and I will no longer smite all living things as I have done." Rashi cites the words "I will no longer … and I will no longer," and explains that "He repeated the words to denote an oath." Rashi makes it explicit that Hashem swore never to destroy the world again with a flood because of the "pleasant aroma" of the sacrifices he brought.

The same is true here. The fact that G-d swore to give Avrohom his blessings came about after he sacrificed the ram. This is why the oath was mentioned only the second time Avrohom was called: after he brought the offering. This is also why Avrohom offered the ram instead of Yitzchok. For the great blessings that would come from this test, the sacrifice had to relate to the test. That was the case with the sacrifices which were offered by Noach. They were brought from animals that were saved on the ark. The same is true here. The ram stood in

12. Parshas Lech Lecho, Bereishis 12:2-3, 13:16, 15:5, 17:6.

13. Parshas Noach, Bereishis 8:20-21.

place of Yitzchok. Avrohom prayed that each part of the service be considered as if it were being done to Yitzchok. Ultimately, Yitzchok was the sacrifice.

As a result of Hashem's oath, we will attain the blessings that Hashem "will greatly multiply your seed as the stars of the heavens and as the sand that is on the seashore, and your descendants will inherit the cities of their enemies. And through your children shall be blessed all the nations of the world, because you listened to My voice. These blessings will be completely realized with our redemption through our righteous Moshiach. [14]

*(Adapted from a talk given on Shabbos Parshas Vayeiro 5737)*

**I hope you gained as much by reading this as I did by translating and adapting it.**

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14. Note that the Pirkei D'Rabbi Eliezer writes at the end of chapter 31, that the right horn of the ram which was offered by Avrohom will be sounded with the coming of the complete redemption.

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