

THE SHOFAR WE DID NOT BLOW

Avraham's Command, Yitzchak's Mesorah

Rosh Hashanah 5787 — First Day, Shabbos, between Mincha and Maariv

Westmount Shul

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Today was the first day of Rosh Hashanah—the day on which the mitzvah of shofar is min haTorah—and we did not blow. Tomorrow is the second day—the day established for us through Chazal—and we will blow and make the brachah. אשר קדשנו במצוותיו וצונו לשמוע קול שופר

To understand what is unusual about this year, we must first understand the permanent structure that exists in every year. Normally we blow on both days. The first day's shofar is the direct Torah mitzvah. The second day itself, and therefore its shofar, come to us through Chazal. Only after that structure is clear can we appreciate what Shabbos has added this year: Chazal instructed us not to blow even on the first day.

It is said in the name of Rav Hutner:

“One who lacks emunas chachamim has no real connection to the Akeidah of Yitzchak.” מי שאין לו אמונת חכמים אין לו שייכות כלל לעניינה של עקידת יצחק

That is an exceptionally strong statement. Why should emunas chachamim be the entrance requirement to understanding the Akeidah? Avraham was commanded by Hashem Himself. Where do Chazal, rabbinic authority, and received tradition enter the story?

Let us make one point clear at the outset. Emunas chachamim does not mean surrendering the ability to think, nor does it turn every informal comment made by a rabbi into binding halachah. Yitzchak himself will teach us otherwise: he asked a real question before he accepted the answer. The issue is not whether we may think and ask. The issue is whether, after thinking and asking honestly, we remain capable of receiving Torah through those entrusted to transmit and apply it.

That question will give us the key to today's silence, tomorrow's sound, and the transition from Avraham Avinu to Yitzchak Avinu.

Question One: What Was Yitzchak's Distinct Nisayon?

The Gemara in Rosh Hashanah 16a says:

תקעו לפני בשופר של איל כדי שאזכור לכם עקידת יצחק בן אברהם ומעלה אני עליכם כאילו עקדתם עצמכם לפני

“Sound before Me the horn of a ram, so that I will remember for you the binding of Yitzchak son of Avraham, and I

will regard you as though you had bound yourselves before Me.”

The Akeidah was one event, but it contained two very different acts of avodah.

Avraham heard a direct command from Hashem:

קח נא את בנך את יחידך אשר אהבת את יצחק והעלהו שם לעולה

“Please take your son, your only son, whom you love—Yitzchak—and bring him there as an offering.”

Avraham’s nisayon was to surrender everything—his love for his son, his future, and even his understanding of Hashem’s earlier promise—to a command that he personally heard from Hashem.

Yitzchak’s position was different. The Torah does not record Hashem giving Yitzchak that command. Yitzchak learned what was being asked of him through his father.

At first Yitzchak asks:

הנה האש והעצים ואיה השה לעולה

“Here are the fire and the wood; where is the lamb for the offering?”

Avraham answers:

אלקים יראה לו השה לעולה בני

Rashi explains that Avraham was telling him: Hashem will choose the lamb—and if there is no lamb, בני לעולה my son will be the offering. Yitzchak now understood. Only then does the Torah repeat:

וילכו שניהם יחדו בלב שוה

“The two of them walked together—with the same heart.”

Yitzchak was therefore not an unaware child being carried along. He asked, he understood, and then he continued voluntarily.

The Midrash makes his participation still more explicit. Avraham builds the mizbe’ach while Yitzchak hands him the wood and stones. It compares Avraham to a father preparing the wedding canopy for his son, and Yitzchak to a groom preparing his own chuppah. Yitzchak then asks Avraham to bind him securely, lest an involuntary movement invalidate the korban.

Avraham’s greatness was obedience to the word he heard directly. Yitzchak’s greatness was that he accepted that word as it reached him through Avraham—and then made it his own.

This is the force of the teaching said in Rav Hutner’s name. Without Yitzchak’s emunas chachamim, there would have been no completed Akeidah. Avraham could build the mizbe’ach, prepare the wood, and raise the knife. But Yitzchak had to

give himself. The entire act depended upon Yitzchak treating the command transmitted by his father as the word of Hashem addressed to him.

This leads to a foundational formulation: one basis of Torah's transmission from generation to generation is the child's conviction that a father does not knowingly hand falsehood to his son—אב לא מנחיל שקר לבנו We possess a mesorah because one generation gave Torah to the next, and the next generation received it with trust.

Avraham teaches us how to obey a command from Above. Yitzchak teaches us how to receive that command through the faithful human chain that carries it into our lives.

Question Two: What Is the Two-Day Pattern in Every Year—and What Has Shabbos Added This Year?

We can now suggest a beautiful structure for the two days of Rosh Hashanah. The basic structure does not depend

upon Rosh Hashanah falling on Shabbos. It exists in an ordinary year, when we blow the shofar on both days.

On the first day, the mitzvah of shofar is min haTorah. Hashem commanded it directly. This corresponds to Avraham's dimension of the Akeidah: Hashem spoke to Avraham, and Avraham obeyed the command he heard from Hashem.

On the second day, we blow again. But the entire second day of Rosh Hashanah is observed through the enactment and mesorah of Chazal. This corresponds to Yitzchak's dimension: Yitzchak did not hear the command directly; he received Hashem's will through Avraham and acted upon it with complete emunah.

This correspondence is offered as a derush, not as an explicit statement of the Gemara. But the essential point must be perfectly clear:

The first day is Avraham and the second day is Yitzchak even in a normal year when the shofar is sounded on both days. Shabbos does not create this structure. Shabbos intensifies it.

In a normal year:

- Day One is Avraham: we blow because Hashem commanded the Torah mitzvah directly.
- Day Two is Yitzchak: we blow because the mitzvah of the rabbinic day reaches us through Chazal.

Now consider what happened this year.

Day One was still the Avraham day. Its essential shofar obligation was still min haTorah. But when we asked what to do with that Torah command on Shabbos, we could not act upon the Written Torah alone. We needed Torah Shebe'al Peh. Chazal told us: do not blow.

In other words, Yitzchak's form of avodah—receiving Hashem's will through the chachamim—entered the very day that fundamentally represents Avraham's direct

command. The Yitzchak principle reached backward and occupied the Avraham day as well.

Tomorrow is the Yitzchak day in its ordinary sense. The second day and its shofar come to us through Chazal, and therefore we will blow.

Of course, the first day of Rosh Hashanah itself remains min haTorah. We must not say that the kedushah or observance of both days has become entirely rabbinic. But regarding our actual shofar avodah this year, everything we do on both days is determined through Chazal:

- Day One: Chazal tell us to be silent. • Day Two: Chazal tell us to blow.

This year, the entire two-day experience of the shofar is an exercise in emunas chachamim. Yitzchak has not erased Avraham's command; but Yitzchak's way of receiving the command has spread across both days.

That is why the Gemara's formulation עקידת יצחק בן אברהם is so suggestive. It is Yitzchak receiving from Avraham until—וילכו שניהם יחדו the direct command and the received command walking together.

And this makes the halachic question far sharper.

Question Three: How Can Chazal Both Silence Today's Shofar and Create Tomorrow's Shofar?

The background begins with two pesukim. One calls Rosh Hashanah, יום תרועה a day of sounding. The other calls it, זכרון תרועה a remembrance of sounding. The Gemara in Rosh Hashanah 29b initially associates זכרון תרועה with Shabbos and יום תרועה with a weekday.

But Rava makes clear that the Torah itself did not prohibit blowing shofar on Shabbos. Blowing is—חכמה ואינה מלאכה a skill, not one of the forbidden melachos. In the Beis Hamikdash the shofar was in fact sounded on Shabbos. The Gemara therefore concludes:

מדאורייתא מישראל שרי ורבנן הוא דגזור ביה

“By Torah law it is permitted; it was the Sages who decreed against it.”

Rabbah explains the decree:

הכל חייבין בתקיעת שופר ואין הכל בקיאים בתקיעת שופר גזירה שמא יטלנו בידו וילך אצל הבקי ללמוד ויעבירו ארבע אמות ברשות הרבים

Everyone is obligated, but not everyone is expert. Someone may take a shofar to an expert to learn and carry it four amos in a reshus harabim.

But legally, how can Chazal direct us not to fulfill a mitzvas aseh from the Torah?

The Gemara in Yevamos 90b names shofar and lulav as examples of the rule:

שב ואל תעשה שאני

Chazal have authority, when necessary to protect Torah, to require non-action rather than an active violation. They did not uproot the mitzvah of shofar. They directed Klal Yisrael not to perform it under this circumstance in order to safeguard Shabbos.

The Rambam opens Hilchos Mamrim by defining the role of the central beis din:

בית דין הגדול שבירושלים הם עיקר תורה שבעל פה והם עמודי ההוראה ומהם חק ומשפט יוצא לכל ישראל

“The Great Beis Din in Yerushalayim is the foundation of Torah Shebe’al Peh and the pillars of halachic instruction;

from them statute and judgment go forth to all Israel.”

The Torah itself commands— לא תסור מן הדבר אשר יגידו לך ימין ושמאל not to depart from the authorized Torah ruling.

So today’s silence was not Torah defeated by the rabbis. It was Torah being lived through the authority that Torah itself

established.

Tomorrow presents the reverse side. We will recite וצונו over a mitzvah whose present obligation comes through Chazal. The Gemara in Shabbos 23a asks exactly this regarding Chanukah lights:

“— והיכן צונו Where did Hashem command us?”

One answer is. לא תסור The other answer is even more directly connected to our theme:

שאל אביו ויגדך זקניך ויאמרו לך

“Ask your father and he will tell you; your elders, and they will say to you.”

Hashem commanded not only individual mitzvos. He commanded a system of transmission: ask your father; ask your elders; receive Torah from the generations before you.

Today Chazal expressed Torah by taking the shofar out of our hands. Tomorrow Chazal will express Torah by placing the shofar back into our hands. The same emunas chachamim produces both the silence and the sound.

Question Four: What Kind of Danger Justifies Silencing the Shofar of All Klal Yisrael?

Let us not pass quickly over Rabbah’s concern. We need to appreciate how statistically remote the scenario appears.

Imagine a large city with hundreds of thousands of Jews. One person owns a shofar but does not know how to blow. Another person knows how to blow but has no shofar. The owner decides specifically on Rosh Hashanah, which must also fall on Shabbos, to carry the shofar through a genuine reshus harabim to reach the

expert. Because such a combination might occur, the shofar is silent in every Jewish community.

Nor is this an isolated gezeirah. The same concern appears regarding lulav and Megillah. Chazal repeatedly protected Shabbos even at the price of suspending a beloved public mitzvah.

There are two levels to understand.

The halachic level is that Chazal legislate for Klal Yisrael across countries and generations. A gezeirah is not recalculated by every shul based upon its own streets, population, or estimate of risk. Torah life requires national rules, not private probability tables.

But there is an additional mussar conclusion. Chazal possessed an extraordinary sensitivity to even a remote possibility of an issur—even an accidental issur by an unknown individual. They considered guarding one Jew from one act of chillul Shabbos sufficient reason for the whole nation to surrender the shofar that day.

We should be cautious in how we state this. The Gemara gives a binding legal gezeirah, not merely an inspirational

lesson. Yet once the gezeirah exists, it reveals the scale on which Chazal measured the seriousness of an aveirah.

The astonishing element is not only how far Chazal could see, but how far we may be from their sensitivity. We tend to calculate: How likely is it? How serious could one isolated mistake be? Chazal teach that Torah responsibility begins before the aveirah occurs, even at the edge of probability.

A nation willing to lose the sound of the shofar rather than become careless about one possible aveirah has understood that listening to Hashem matters more than having the religious experience it desires.

That was today's avodah. We wanted the shofar. The mitzvah is precious. Yet the very desire to serve Hashem had to submit to the way Torah told us to serve Him.

Question Five: What Does Yitzchak-Like Emunas Chachamim Require From Us?

Emunas chachamim does not mean credulity, intellectual laziness, or declaring every rabbi's casual opinion to be binding halachah.

Yitzchak himself asked ואיה השה לעולה He noticed the difficulty and articulated it. His question did not weaken his emunah. The decisive words come afterward: וילכו שניהם יחדו He asked honestly; he understood what Avraham was telling him; and then he walked together with him. בלב שוה

Pirkei Avos itself shows us that emunas chachamim does not mean turning off the mind. Among the forty-eight ways

Torah is acquired, the Mishnah includes—אמונת חכמים trust in the chachamim. But in that very same list it includes שימוש חכמים learning closely from them;

דקדוק חברים careful analysis with colleagues; פלפול התלמידים probing discussion with students; and, שואל ומשיב asking and answering.

The Mishnah is therefore demanding two things at once. We must work to understand Torah—listen carefully, analyze, challenge, ask, and answer. But after bringing an honest question to a qualified chacham, we must also be capable of receiving an answer that did not originate in our own minds. A person who refuses to think is not acquiring Torah properly. But neither is a person who asks questions only so that he will never have to accept an answer.

Emunas chachamim does not ask us to abandon our minds. It asks us not to make our own minds the highest authority. That was Yitzchak: first—ואיה השה לעולה a real question; then—ויילכו שניהם יחדו a real willingness to follow the answer.

A Contemporary Picture: Rabbi Sacks and the Rebbe

Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks told a remarkable first-person story about the Lubavitcher Rebbe.

As a young man, Jonathan Sacks did not intend to become a rabbi. He was considering three very different careers: economics, law, or academic philosophy. He presented those possibilities to the Rebbe. The Rebbe crossed out all three and directed him toward the rabbinate—and not only to become a congregational rabbi, but eventually to train other rabbis.

Rabbi Sacks followed that direction. It was not simple. The structure of Anglo-Jewry did not allow a congregational rabbi to hold even a small paid teaching position outside his congregation. When Rabbi Sacks reported the problem to his own rav, Rabbi Nachum Rabinovitch—who was not a Lubavitcher chassid—Rabbi Rabinovitch responded in substance: If the Rebbe said this is what you must do, then the institutional rule will have to change. He contacted Chief Rabbi Lord Immanuel Jakobovits, and the rule was changed.

Years later, in 1990, Rabbi Sacks was being considered for the position of Chief Rabbi of Britain and the Commonwealth. He was uncertain. The responsibility was enormous; the public exposure would affect his entire family.

Before writing to the Rebbe, he asked his wife Elaine for permission. Rabbi Sacks explained why: “When you ask the Rebbe, you do what he says.” This was not a request for an interesting opinion that could later be placed beside other opinions. If they were going to ask, they had to be prepared to follow the answer. Elaine agreed.

Rabbi Sacks then wrote the Rebbe a full letter presenting the reasons for accepting and the reasons against. He concluded with the question: “Should I, if offered the position, accept it?”

The Rebbe returned the letter without adding a sentence. He simply placed the proofreader’s mark that reverses word order around the words “should I.” The question “Should I?” became the answer: “I should.”

Rabbi Sacks accepted the position and served as Chief Rabbi for twenty-two years. He became one of the most influential Jewish teachers of the modern era. Looking back, he said that the most transformative moments in life occur when someone else believes in you more than you believe in yourself.

We should describe the nature of this example precisely. Rabbi Sacks was not presenting the Rebbe with a formal

halachic she'eilah whose answer was binding upon every Jew. He and Elaine voluntarily chose to seek personal direction from a Torah leader whose judgment and vision they trusted—and they decided before asking that they would treat his answer as direction for their lives.

This is emunas chachamim without caricature. Rabbi Sacks did not turn off his mind. He weighed the issue, involved his wife, articulated the pros and cons, and asked someone whose Torah judgment and global vision he trusted. But he also understood that a sincere question carries a responsibility: do not ask unless you are prepared to follow the answer.

***Yitzchak asked, “Where is the lamb?” Rabbi Sacks asked, “Should I?”
In both cases, the question was genuine— but so was the willingness
to walk after the answer.***

The distinction is between questioning in order to understand and questioning in order never to be obligated. It is the

difference between bringing a she'eilah and shopping for a heter; between wanting the Torah's answer and wanting religious approval for an answer already chosen.

For us, that produces several practical obligations:

First, when asking a real halachic question, we must give the rav all the material facts—including the facts that may produce the answer we do not want.

Second, once a genuine psak has been given by someone qualified and responsible for the matter, we may ask for its reasoning and seek clarity. But we do not treat every unwelcome answer as permission to keep shopping until the original preference wins.

Third, we must distinguish a psak from informal advice. Emunas chachamim becomes distorted if every observation, preference, or passing remark is presented as binding Torah. Trust is strengthened by precision.

Fourth, the mesorah does not live only in formal rulings. שאל אביך ויגדך זקניך ויאמרו asks whether we receive the Torah practices, priorities, and sensitivities handed to us—and whether we transmit them faithfully to our own children. אב לא מנחיל שקר לבנו carries an obligation on both sides: children must be capable of trust, and parents and teachers must make themselves trustworthy transmitters.

This is also the meaning of the pasuk that frames our subject:

הנסתרות לה' אלקינו והנגלות לנו ולבנינו עד עולם לעשות את כל דברי התורה הזאת

“The hidden things belong to Hashem our God; the revealed things belong to us and to our children forever, to perform all the words of this Torah.”

Torah is entrusted לנו ולבנינו to us and to our children. It is not merely information preserved in books. It is a life received, lived, and handed onward.

Returning to the Question We Asked Last Shabbos: What Kind of Year Will This Be?

Last Shabbos, before Rosh Hashanah, we discussed the unsettling history of years that begin without the shofar. Some such years became years of terrible tragedy; others became years of extraordinary blessing. We emphasized that this is not a predictive formula. The reason is hidden; the avodah is revealed. We cannot read the future from the calendar.

But tonight’s idea adds an important layer to that discussion.

When the first day falls on Shabbos, the missing shofar creates an intensified nisayon of emunas chachamim. In an

ordinary year, Day One expresses Avraham’s direct command and Day Two expresses Yitzchak’s received command. This year, Yitzchak’s avodah extends across both days: we accept Chazal’s silence today and Chazal’s sound tomorrow.

The absence of shofar can therefore remain merely an absence—a religious experience that we lost—or it can become a positive act of submission. If we hear nothing today but disappointment, then there is a vacuum. If through the silence we hear the authority of Torah Shebe’al Peh, then the missing shofar itself becomes an avodah.

This does not allow us to promise that emunas chachamim mechanically guarantees an easy year, or to explain tragedies after the fact. We already said last Shabbos that the reasons remain hidden. But it does identify the special demand of this Rosh Hashanah and the vessel for its blessing.

And perhaps two events from our history sharpen that demand. I am not presenting them as the only explanations for either the Churban or the forgiveness of the Eigel. Chazal give us many dimensions of both events. I am suggesting that, for our subject tonight, they reveal two opposite responses to Torah authority.

The Biryonim: When People Will Not Receive the Judgment of Chachamim

Last Shabbos we noted that the year of the destruction of the Second Beis Hamikdash began with the first day of Rosh Hashanah on Shabbos. What was happening beneath that calendar fact?

The Gemara in Gittin describes Yerushalayim under Roman siege. The city possessed enough provisions to endure for years. The Chachamim said to the biryonim:

“ — ניפוק ונעביד שלמא בהדיהו Let us go out and make peace with them.”

The biryonim refused to allow it. They answered:

“ — נִפּוּק וְנַעֲבִיד קֶרֶבָּא בְּהֵדִיָּהּ — Let us go out and wage war against them.”

The Chachamim warned them:

“ — לֹא מַסְתִּיעָא מִלִּתָּא — It will not succeed.”

But the biryonim did not merely reject the judgment of the Chachamim. To force the population into battle, they burned the storehouses of wheat and barley, and famine followed.

That distinction matters. The catastrophe was not simply that laypeople disagreed with rabbanim. The biryonim prevented the Chachamim's course from being pursued and then destroyed the community's food in order to force everyone else into their own decision.

Rabban Yochanan ben Zakkai later became the great embodiment of the Chachamim's alternative path—escaping the city, meeting Vespasian, and preserving Yavneh and its chachamim. But the Gemara's first language is broader: the Chachamim urged peace, and the biryonim would not permit them to act.

There were many sins surrounding the Churban, and it would be careless to reduce it to one cause. But within the Gemara's narrative, the refusal to accept the Chachamim's judgment became part of the human road to destruction. The people who believed that their own religious passion was more authentic than the measured judgment of Torah leadership burned the very food that could have kept Yerushalayim alive.

The Levi'im: When People Answer the Call of Moshe

Last Shabbos we also noted the opposite example: the year of the second luchos and the forgiveness granted after the Eigel likewise began with the first day of Rosh Hashanah on Shabbos. Now look beneath that calendar fact as well. After the Eigel, Moshe stood at the entrance of the camp and called:

מִי לֵה' אֵלַי וְיֹאסֶפּוּ אֵלָיו כָּל בְּנֵי לֵוִי

“Whoever is for Hashem, come to me”—and all the sons of Levi gathered to him.

This scene followed another decisive act for which Moshe had received no command: he shattered the luchos. The Gemara says explicitly that Moshe broke them—מִדַּעְתּוֹ on his own judgment—and Hashem agreed with him: שְׂשִׁיבֶרֶת יִישָׁר כַּחךְ

The same distinction is critical in what followed. Hashem did not give Moshe a new, situation-specific command, “Go and kill these worshippers of the Eigel.” Moshe applied a law Hashem had already placed in the Torah to the

crisis before him. Moshe said, כֹּה אָמַר ה' אֱלֹקֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל and Rashi asks, —וְהֵיכָן אָמַר — where had Hashem said this? Rashi answers: in the earlier Torah law. זִכְרוּ לֵאלֹהִים מִיָּמֵינוּ Moshe learned the halachah, determined that it governed this moment, and stated its application in Hashem's name.

That is precisely where the emunas chachamim of the Levi'im enters. They had not heard Hashem issue this ruling about these people. They heard it from Moshe.

They trusted that Moshe had understood and applied Hashem's Torah correctly, and they acted upon his judgment.

The Levi'im responded. Later, Moshe praised Levi precisely because — כי שמרו — אמרתך ובריתך ינצורו they guarded Your word and preserved Your covenant." And only after the open rebellion had been confronted did Moshe tell the people, — ועתה אעלה אל ה' אולי אכפרה בעד חטאתכם Now I will ascend to Hashem; perhaps I can secure atonement for your sin."

We should state the chiddush honestly. The Torah does not say in one sentence, "Because the Levi'im obeyed Moshe,

Klal Yisrael was forgiven." But the sequence permits us to suggest an important layer: forgiveness could not mean leaving open avodah zarah unchallenged. Before Moshe could ascend to seek kapparah, there had to be people below who would answer, מי לה' אלי receive Moshe's Torah judgment, and defend the covenant.

That gives us two models for a year in which the first-day shofar is silent. At the Churban, the biryonim said in effect:

We know better than the Chachamim; we will force the nation onto our path. At the Eigel, the Levi'im said: Moshe has called; we will stand with him. In one case, religious certainty overrode Chachamim and burned Yerushalayim's lifeline. In the other, loyalty to Moshe helped restore the possibility of covenant and forgiveness.

A year without the first-day shofar requires extra emunas chachamim, because this year both the silence and the sound come to us through Chazal. The way to transform the silent shofar from a loss into a zechus is to become a people who can receive, trust, and act.

Perhaps that is why a year such as this can hold such opposite possibilities. The calendar does not tell us which year this will be. It asks us which people we will become. Will we be people who substitute our heat for the judgment of Chachamim, or people who can hear מי לה' אלי and respond? Will we experience the absence of shofar as emptiness, or fill that silence with the avodah of Yitzchak — ילכו שניהם יחדו בלב שוה —

Conclusion: From Silence to Sound

We are standing between the two days.

In every year, the first day carries Avraham's dimension: the direct command of Torah. The second day carries Yitzchak's dimension: the Divine will received through the chain of mesorah.

But this year, because the first day was Shabbos, Yitzchak's avodah entered Avraham's day. Fidelity to Torah required us to hear the authority of Torah Shebe'al Peh and remain silent. Tomorrow, on Yitzchak's own day, that same fidelity will require us to lift the shofar and blow.

The two days are not competing. Torah Shebiksav and Torah Shebe'al Peh are not competing. Avraham and Yitzchak are not competing. The completion of the Akeidah required both.

In an ordinary year, Avraham's direct command and Yitzchak's received command divide the two days. This year, Yitzchak's emunas chachamim fills them both. Today it meant surrendering the shofar. Tomorrow it will mean listening to it. That intensified emunas chachamim is the special avodah—and the special opportunity—of this Rosh Hashanah.

When the shofar sounds tomorrow, we should hear not only the ram caught in the thicket. We should hear the second

participant in the Akeidah: Yitzchak, who asked, understood, trusted, and joined his father.

וילכו שניהם יחדו בלב שוה

Principal Sources

1. Rosh Hashanah 16a: עקידת יצחק בן אברהם and the ram's horn. 2. Bereishis 22:2, 7-10; Rashi to 22:8: Avraham's command, Yitzchak's question, the repeated, וילכו שניהם יחדו

and. 3. Midrash Tanchuma, Vayera 23, and parallel Midrashim: Yitzchak's willing and active participation in the

Akeidah. 4. Rosh Hashanah 29b: זכרון תרועה / יום תרועה as the sugya's background; ורבנן הוא דגזור ביה חכמה ואינה מלאכה

5. and Rabbah's concern that one may carry to an expert. 6. Rambam, Yevamos 90b: Shofar and lulav as examples of. 7. Rambam, Hilchos Mamrim 1:1-2; Devarim 17:8-11: The authority of the central beis din and. 8. שאל אביך ויגדך. 9. Shabbos 23a; Devarim 32:7: לא תסור. 10. Pirkei Avos 6:6: אמונת חכמים together with learning, analysis, questioning, and answering. 11. Devarim 29:28: הנסתרות לה' אלקינו והנגלות לנו ולבנינו לעשות את כל דברי התורה הזאת. Rabbi Jonathan Sacks, "Taking the Lead: The Lubavitcher Rebbe" Rabbi Sacks's first-person account of

the Rebbe's direction toward the rabbinate and his later decision to accept the Chief Rabbinate; Rabbi Sacks Legacy. 12. The statement is said in the name of Rav Hutner in Sefer Doresh Tov, Shlussberg edition, edited by Yaakov

Posen, pp. 202-203. That source also presents the formulation אב לא מנחיל שקר and the two-day Avraham/Yitzchak structure. The precise original location in Rav Hutner's own writings is not given there.

13. The Avraham/Day One and Yitzchak/Day Two correspondence is explicitly presented as a derush, not as an

explicit statement of Chazal. 14. The return to the drash delivered on the Shabbos before Rosh Hashanah draws upon Rosh Hashanah 16b, Tosafos,

Rosh Hashanah 29b, and the discussion attributed to Rav Yaakov Ettlinger in Minchas Ani, Haazinu. As in that earlier pre-Rosh Hashanah drash, the historical contrasts are not presented as a predictive formula. 14. Gittin 56a: The Chachamim urged making peace with the Romans; the biryonim refused, demanded war, and

burned the food stores, producing famine. The Gemara speaks of the Chachamim collectively at this point. Rabban Yochanan ben Zakkai subsequently embodied their preservation strategy through his meeting with Vespasian and request for Yavneh and its chachamim. 15. Shemos 32:19, 26-30; Rashi to 32:27; Shabbos 87a; Shemos 34:1 with Rashi; Devarim 33:9 and Rashi:

Moshe's breaking of the luchos מדעתו with Divine approval, his call, מי לה' אלי the response of Levi, Moshe's ה' כה אמר Rashi's connection to the prior law, זבח לאלהים יחרם the later praise of Levi, and Moshe's subsequent ascent to seek atonement. 16. The contrast between the biryonim and the Levi'im is this drash's suggested application to emunas chachamim.

It is not presented as Chazal's exclusive explanation for the Churban or as an explicit statement that the Levi'im's response alone produced forgiveness.