



SEE ME

THE AKEIDA AND FOSTER CARE

Second Nurture Adult Education for Rosh Hashana



Genesis 27:1

וַיֹּאמֶר אֶל־אָבִיו אֶת־עַשֵּׂנִי מִרְאַת עֵינֵי בְּנֵךְ אֲלֹהִים וְאָמַר אֶל־יְהוָה רַקְנָנִי

When Isaac was old and his eyes were dimmed from seeing, he called his older son Esau and said to him, "My son." He answered, "Here I am."

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Bereishit Rabbah 65:10

The biblical verse above is a mirror image of an earlier verse (Genesis 22: 7), which took place as Isaac was walking with his father toward the top of Mt Moriah, where Abraham would bind him on the alter.

וַיֹּאמֶר אֶצְחָק אֶל־אָבְרָהָם אָבִי וַיֹּאמֶר אָבִי וַיֹּאמֶר הַנְּפָרֵךְ בְּנִי

Then Isaac said to his father Abraham, "Father!" And he answered, "Yes, my son"

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"From seeing"—from the strength of that vision, when Abraham bound Isaac his son to the altar

מִרְאַת, מִכֶּן אָזְהָה רָאָה, שְׁבָשָׁעָה שְׁעָקָד
אָבְרָהָם אָבִינוּ אֶת בֶּן־עַל אָבִי הַמִּזְבֵּחַ



We read that in his old age, Isaac's eyes were weak "from seeing".

- In what ways did Abraham see and not see Isaac at the time of the Akeida?
- What blinded him to his son?
- How does "seeing" play out in each context?
- Do you think these two verses shed light on each other? If so, how?
- What does it mean to "see" another person?
- What does the midrash say about that strange language, "from seeing"?

The Kotzker Rebbe asked his students, "What was the most difficult part of the Akeidah for Abraham?" Climbing the mountain?" suggested one student. "Building the altar," said another. "Raising the knife," offered a third. "No," said the Rebbe. "The hardest part was walking back down the mountain."

Why would the descent afterward be hardest?
Was Abraham able to "see" what happened in a new way? If so, why?

Genesis 24:62-65

(62) Isaac had just come back from the vicinity of Beer-lahai-roi for he was settled in the region of the Negeb. (63) And Isaac went out to meditate in the field toward evening and, raising his eyes, he saw camels approaching. (64) Raising her eyes, Rebekah saw Isaac....

סב) ויצחק בָּא מִבְּאָר לְפִי רַאי וְהוּא יֹשֵׁב בָּאָרֶץ הַנֶּגֶב (סג) וַיַּצְאֵ אַצְקָק לְשָׂוֹת בְּשָׂבָה...
לִפְנֵות עָרֵב וַיַּשְׂאֵ עַיְןָו וַיַּרְא וְהַנֶּה גַּמְלִים בָּאִים (סד) וְתַשְׁאֵ רַבָּה אֲתִ עַיְלָה וְתַרְא אֲתִ אַצְקָק



Bereishit Rabbah 45

אתה אל ראי, אמר רבי איבו אתה הוא רואה בעלבון של עלבון. כי אמרה נגמ כלם ראייתך אחריך ראי

You are El Roi' - said Rabbi Aivu: You are the one who sees the sufferings of the persecuted.
'Since she said: also, here [halom], I have seen after the One Who sees me.'

Between the Akeida and this moment, Isaac was in a place called: "The Well of the God Who Sees" It has family history. Hagar, fleeing harsh treatment by Isaac's parents, goes there. God sends an angel to Hagar who then bestows this name, meaning that she was seen by God which, in turn, enabled her to see.

What did Isaac seek in Be'er-Lahai-Roi?

Did his time there enable him, now, to raise his eyes and see Rebekah—and to be seen by her?

How does being seen allow one, in turn, to see?

65%
of children in foster care experience seven or more school changes from elementary to high school.

85%
of prisoners have spent at least part of their childhood in the foster system.

25%
of youth will be in prison within 2 years of leaving foster care.
40-50% will become homeless.



Have there been times in your life you felt unseen?

What was the cause?

What was the impact?

Do the stories of Isaac and Hagar shed light on your experience?

How does your experience help you understand them?

How do the stories of Isaac and Hagar shed light on kids in the foster system?

Where is their Beer-lahai-roi?



Our community can be a place in which fostering and adoption are a norm. Whether you want to foster, adopt, or be part of our community support system, there is a role for you.

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- Families are supported before, during, and after the licensing and adoption processes
- Foster and adopted children have peers in our community with similar backgrounds
- The values of foster and adoption are integrated into our community culture
- Our whole community wraps around the families in support as they become foster and adoptive parents
- We partner with the best and most well-aligned local social service partners
- We are all enriched—both by our new, young members and our growing capacity as a synagogue to support our foster and adoptive families



Second Nurture creates a community within our community — and expands our vision of what family and belonging truly mean.
- Cohort Member

