

And Avraham picked up the knife to slay his son. Then an angel of Hashem called to him from heaven: “Avraham! Avraham!” And he answered, “Here I am.” And he said, “Do not raise your hand against the boy, or do anything to him. For now I know that you fear Hashem, since you have not withheld your son, your favored one, from Me.” (Bereishis 22:10-12)

The Akeidah was the greatest expression of love for Hashem imaginable. It would seem proper for Hashem to say, “Now I know that you *love* Me.” Why does Hashem instead say, “Now I know that you *fear* Me?” This question is even more pressing according to one of the Abarbanel’s explanations of the Akeidah. He notes that the wording of Hashem’s message to Avraham regarding the Akeidah is, “*Please take your son, your favored one, etc.*” (ibid. 22:2) He explains that Hashem wasn’t requiring Avraham to sacrifice his son, it was rather a non-obligatory request of him. According to this we definitely see from the Akeidah Avraham’s love for Hashem as opposed to his fear of Him.

The answer lies in the explanation of “fear of Hashem” we have mentioned in the past in the name of the Shla”h and others. They explain that the highest form of fear of Hashem is in fact the fear of our doing something that may compromise our loving relationship with Him. This is how we explained Rashi’s statement (*Shir HaShirim* 1:1) that “*Shir Hashirim* is completely words of fear of Heaven,” when we see it speaks solely of the infinite love between Hashem and His children. For the highest form of love is the dread lest we compromise this other worldly experience.

