Putting the Akeidah on Trial

Exhibit A—Child Sacrifice is Wrong!

דברים יב:כט - לא

כִּי־יַכְרִית֨ יְקֹוָ֜ק אֱלֹהֶ֗יךָ אֶת־הַגּוֹיִם֙ אֲשֶׁ֣ר אַתָּ֣ה בָא־שָׁ֔מָּה לָרֶ֖שֶׁת אוֹתָ֑ם מִפָּנֶ֙יךָ֙ וְיָרַשְׁתָּ֣ אֹתָ֔ם וְיָשַׁבְתָּ֖ בְּאַרְצָֽם׃
הִשָּׁמֶ֥ר לְךָ֛ פֶּן־תִּנָּקֵ֖שׁ אַחֲרֵיהֶ֑ם אַחֲרֵ֣י הִשָּׁמְדָ֔ם מִפָּנֶ֙יךָ֙ וּפֶן־תִּדְרֹ֤שׁ לֵאלֹהֵיהֶם֙ לֵאמֹ֔ר אֵיכָ֥ה יַעַבְד֛וּ הַגּוֹיִ֥ם הָאֵ֖לֶּה
אֶת־אֱלֹהֵיהֶ֑ם וְאֶֽעֱשֶׂה־כֵּ֖ן גַּם־אָֽנִי׃ לֹא־תַעֲשֶׂ֣ה כֵ֔ן לַיקֹוָ֖ק אֱלֹהֶ֑יךָ כִּ֣י כָל־תּוֹעֲבַ֣ת יְקֹוָ֗ק אֲשֶׁ֤ר שָׂנֵא֙ עָשׂ֣וּ לֵאלֹהֵיהֶ֔ם
כִּ֣י גַ֗ם אֶת־בְּנֵיהֶם֙ וְאֶת־ בְּנֹתֵיהֶ֔ם יִשְׂרְפ֥וּ בָאֵ֖שׁ לֵאלֹהֵיהֶֽם׃

Deuteronomy 12:29–31

When the Lord your God cuts off the nations whose land you are coming to possess, and you dispossess them and dwell in their land — take care lest you be ensnared following them, after they have been destroyed before you, and lest you inquire after their gods, saying: How did these nations serve their gods? I will do likewise. You shall not do so to the Lord your God, for every abomination that the Lord hates they did for their gods — for they even burned their sons and their daughters in fire for their gods.

ירמיהו יט:ד - ה

יַ֗עַן אֲשֶׁ֤ר עֲזָבֻנִי֙ וַיְנַכְּר֣וּ אֶת־הַמָּקוֹם֮ הַזֶּה֒ וַיְקַטְּרוּ־בוֹ֙ לֵאלֹהִ֣ים אֲחֵרִ֔ים אֲשֶׁ֥ר לֹא־יְדָע֖וּם הֵ֣מָּה וַאֲבוֹתֵיהֶ֑ם וּמַלְכֵ֤י
יְהוּדָה֙ וּמָלְא֣וּ אֶת־הַמָּקוֹם֮ הַזֶּה֒ דַּ֣ם נְקִיִּ֔ם׃ וּבָנ֗וּ אֶת־בָּמ֤וֹת הַבַּ֙עַל֙ לִשְׂרֹ֣ף אֶת־בְּנֵיהֶ֔ם בָּאֵ֖שׁ עֹל֣וֹת לַבַּ֑עַל **אֲשֶׁ֤ר**
לֹא־צִוִּיתִי֙ וְלֹ֣א דִבַּ֔רְתִּי וְלֹ֥א עָלְתָ֖ה עַל־לִבִּֽי׃

Jeremiah 19:4–5

Because they have forsaken Me and made this place strange, and burned incense in it to other gods whom they did not know — they, their ancestors, and the kings of Judah — and they have filled this place with the blood of the innocent; and they built the high places of Baal to burn their sons in fire as burnt offerings to Baal, **which I did not command and did not speak, and which never entered My mind.**

Exhibit B—Avraham Passed this Test!

בראשית כב:טז - יח

וַיֹּ֣אמֶר בִּ֤י נִשְׁבַּ֙עְתִּי֙ נְאֻם־יְקֹוָ֔ק כִּ֥י יַ֛עַן אֲשֶׁ֥ר עָשִׂ֖יתָ אֶת־הַדָּבָ֣ר הַזֶּ֑ה וְלֹ֤א חָשַׂ֙כְתָּ֙ אֶת־בִּנְךָ֣ אֶת־יְחִידֶ֔ךָ: כִּֽי־בָרֵ֥ךְ אֲבָרֶכְךָ֖ וְהַרְבָּ֣ה אַרְבֶּ֑ה אֶת־זַרְעֲךָ֙ כְּכוֹכְבֵ֣י הַשָּׁמַ֔יִם וְכַח֖וֹל אֲשֶׁ֣ר עַל־שְׂפַ֣ת הַיָּ֑ם וְיִרַ֣שׁ זַרְעֲךָ֔ אֵ֖ת שַׁ֥עַר אֹיְבָֽיו: וְהִתְבָּרֲכ֣וּ בְזַרְעֲךָ֔ כֹּ֖ל גּוֹיֵ֣י הָאָ֑רֶץ עֵ֚קֶב אֲשֶׁ֣ר שָׁמַ֔עְתָּ בְּקֹלִֽי:

Genesis 22:16–18

And He said: By Myself I swear, declares the Lord, that because you have done this thing and have not withheld your son, your only one — I will greatly bless you and greatly multiply your seed, as the stars of the heavens and as the sand on the shore of the sea, and your seed shall inherit the gate of its enemies; and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed through your seed, because you heeded My voice.

שופטים יא, ל-לב, לד-מ

וַיִּדַּ֥ר יִפְתָּ֛ח נֶ֖דֶר לַיקֹוָ֑ק וַיֹּ֣אמַר אִם נָתוֹן תִּתֵּ֥ן אֶת בְּנֵ֖י עַמּ֥וֹן בְּיָדִֽי: וְהָיָ֗ה הַיּוֹצֵ֞א אֲשֶׁ֤ר יֵצֵא֙ מִדַּ֣לְתֵי בֵיתִ֔י לִקְרָאתִ֖י בְּשׁוּבִ֣י בְשָׁלֹ֑ום מִבְּנֵ֤י עַמּוֹן֙ וְהָיָ֣ה לַיקֹוָ֔ק וְהַעֲלִיתִ֥הוּ עוֹלָֽה: פ וַיַּעֲבֹ֤ר יִפְתָּח֙ אֶל בְּנֵ֣י עַמּ֔וֹן לְהִלָּחֶ֖ם בָּ֑ם וַיִּתְּנֵ֖ם יְקֹוָ֥ק בְּיָדֹֽו:... וַיָּבֹ֣א יִפְתָּח֩ הַמִּצְפָּ֨ה אֶל בֵּיתֹ֜ו וְהִנֵּ֣ה בִתֹּ֗ו יֹצֵאת֙ לִקְרָאתֹ֔ו בְּתֻפִּ֖ים וּבְמְחֹלֹ֑ות וְרַ֥ק הִ֛יא יְחִידָ֖ה אֵ֣ין לֹ֑ו מִמֶּ֙נּוּ֙ בֵּ֣ן אֹו־בַ֔ת: וַיְהִ֕י כִּרְאֹותֹ֖ אֹותָ֑הּ וַיִּקְרַ֣ע אֶת בְּגָדָ֔יו וַיֹּ֣אמֶר אֲהָהּ֙ בִּתִּ֔י הַכָרֵ֥עַ הִכְרַעְתִּ֖נִי וְאַתְּ֣ הָיִ֣ית בְּעֹכְרָ֑י וְאָנֹכִ֞י פָּצִ֤יתִי פִי֙ אֶל יְקֹוָ֔ק וְלֹ֥א אוּכַ֖ל לָשֽׁוּב: וַתֹּ֣אמֶר אֵלָ֗יו אָבִ֛י פָּצִ֥יתָה אֶת פִּ֖יךָ אֶל יְקֹוָ֑ק עֲשֵׂ֥ה לִ֛י כַּאֲשֶׁ֥ר יָצָ֖א מִפִּ֣יךָ אַחֲרֵ֔י אֲשֶׁ֣ר עָשָׂ֔ה לְךָ֖ יְקֹוָ֑ק נְקָמֹ֗ות מֵאֹיְבֶ֙יךָ֙ מִבְּנֵ֣י עַמּ֔וֹן: וַתֹּ֤אמֶר אֶל אָבִיהָ֙ יֵעָשֶׂ֣ה לִ֔י הַדָּבָ֥ר הַזֶּ֖ה הַרְפֵּ֣ה מִמֶּ֑נִּי שְׁנַ֤יִם חֳדָשִׁים֙ וְאֵלְכָ֣ה וְיָרַדְתִּ֔י עַ֖ל הֶהָרִ֑ים וְאֶבְכֶּ֥ה עַל בְּתוּלַ֖י אָנֹכִ֥י ורעיתי וְרֵעוֹתָֽי: וַיֹּ֖אמֶר לֵ֑כִי וַיְשַׁלַּ֣ח אֹותָ֔הּ שְׁנֵ֥י חֳדָשִׁ֖ים וַתֵּ֣לֶךְ הִ֔יא וְרֵעוֹתֶ֖יהָ וַתֵּ֥בְךְ עַל בְּתוּלֶ֖יהָ עַל הֶהָרִֽים: וַיְהִ֣י מִקֵּ֣ץ שְׁנַ֔יִם חֳדָשִׁ֖ים וַתָּ֣שָׁב אֶל אָבִ֑יהָ וַיַּ֤עַשׂ לָהּ֙ אֶת נִדְרֹ֣ו אֲשֶׁ֣ר נָדָ֔ר וְהִ֥יא לֹא יָדְעָ֖ה אִ֑ישׁ וַתְּהִ֣י חֹ֔ק בְּיִשְׂרָאֵ֖ל: מִיָּמִ֥ים יָמִ֖ימָה תֵּֽלַכְנָ֥ה בְנ֛וֹת יִשְׂרָאֵ֖ל לְתַנֹּ֣ות לְבַ֣ת יִפְתָּ֣ח הַגִּלְעָדִ֑י אַרְבַּ֥עַת יָמִ֖ים בַּשָּׁנָֽה: ס

Judges 11:30–32, 34–40

And Yiftah made a vow to the Lord and said: If You will indeed give the children of Ammon into my hand — then whatever comes out of the doors of my house to meet me when I return in peace from the children of Ammon shall belong to the Lord, and I will offer it up as a burnt offering. And Yiftach crossed over to the children of Ammon to fight against them, and the Lord gave them into his hand.

…And Yiftach came to Mitzpah to his house, and behold — his daughter was coming out to meet him with timbrels and with dancing, and she was his only child; he had no other son or daughter. And it came to pass when he saw her that he tore his garments and said: Alas, my daughter — you have brought me very low and you have become my trouble, for I have opened my mouth to the Lord and I cannot turn back. And she said to him: My father, you have opened your mouth to the Lord — do to me as it came out of your mouth, after the Lord

has wrought vengeance for you from your enemies, from the children of Ammon. And she said to her father: Let this thing be done for me: leave me alone for two months, and I will go and descend upon the mountains and weep over my virginity, I and my companions. And he said: Go. And he sent her away for two months, and she went — she and her companions — and wept over her virginity upon the mountains. And it came to pass at the end of two months that she returned to her father, and he did to her his vow which he had vowed, and she had not known a man. And it became a statute in Israel: From year to year the daughters of Israel would go to lament the daughter of Yiftach the Gileadite, four days in the year.

מלכים ב ג, כו-כז

וַיַּרְא מֶלֶךְ מוֹאָב כִּי חָזַק מִמֶּנּוּ הַמִּלְחָמָה וַיִּקַּח אוֹתוֹ שְׁבַע מֵאוֹת אִישׁ שֹׁלֵף חֶרֶב לְהַבְקִיעַ אֶל מֶלֶךְ אֱדוֹם וְלֹא יָכֹלוּ: וַיִּקַּח אֶת בְּנוֹ הַבְּכוֹר אֲשֶׁר יִמְלֹךְ תַּחְתָּיו וַיַּעֲלֵהוּ עֹלָה עַל הַחוֹמָה וַיְהִי קֶצֶף גָּדוֹל עַל יִשְׂרָאֵל וַיִּסְעוּ מֵעָלָיו וַיָּשֻׁבוּ לָאָרֶץ:

II Kings 3:26–27

And the king of Moab saw that the battle was too strong for him, and he took with him seven hundred men who drew the sword to break through to the king of Edom, but they could not. And he took his firstborn son who would have reigned in his place and offered him up as a burnt offering upon the wall. And there was great wrath against Israel, and they departed from him and returned to their land.

מיכה ו, ו-ח

בַּמֶּה אֲקַדֵּם יְקֹוָק אִכַּף לֵאלֹהֵי מָרוֹם הַאֲקַדְּמֶנּוּ בְעוֹלוֹת בַּעֲגָלִים בְּנֵי שָׁנָה: הֲיִרְצֶה יְקֹוָק בְּאַלְפֵי אֵילִים בְּרִבְבוֹת נַחֲלֵי שָׁמֶן הַאֶתֵּן בְּכוֹרִי פִּשְׁעִי פְּרִי בִטְנִי חַטַּאת נַפְשִׁי: הִגִּיד לְךָ אָדָם מַה טּוֹב וּמָה יְקֹוָק דּוֹרֵשׁ מִמְּךָ כִּי אִם עֲשׂוֹת מִשְׁפָּט וְאַהֲבַת חֶסֶד וְהַצְנֵעַ לֶכֶת עִם אֱלֹהֶיךָ:

Micah 6:6–8

With what shall I come before the Lord, bow before God on high? Shall I come before Him with burnt offerings, with yearling calves?
Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, with tens of thousands of rivers of oil? Shall I give my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my womb for the sin of my soul?
He has told you, O man, what is good — and what the Lord requires of you: only to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God.

Exhibit C—Avraham's Actions are not a Model for Us

ספרי דברים פרשת שופטים פיסקא קמח
רבי יוסי אומר אלעזר בני אומר בו שלשה דברים "אשר לא צויתי" בתורה, "ולא דברתי" בעשרת הדברות, "ולא עלתה על לבי" שיקריב אדם את בנו על גב המזבח
אחרים אומרים "אשר לא צויתי" על יפתח, "ולא דברתי" על מישע מלך מואב, "ולא עלתה על לבי", **שיקריב אברהם בנו על גבי המזבח**

Sifrei Devarim, Parashat Shoftim, Piska 148
Rabbi Yosi says: Elazar my son says there are three things stated in it — "which I did not command": in the Torah; "and did not speak": in the Ten Commandments; "and which never entered My mind": that a person would offer his son upon the altar.
Others say: "Which I did not command" — referring to Yiftach; "and did not speak" — referring to Mesha king of Moab; "and which never entered My mind" — **that Abraham would offer his son upon the altar**.

ספר מורה הנבוכים חלק ב פרק מה
המדרגה יא שיראה המלאך ידבר עמו במראה, **כאברהם בשעת העקדה**, וזאת אצלי **העליונה שבמדרגות הנביאים** אשר העידו הספרים בעניניהם

Maimonides, Guide for the Perplexed, Part II, Chapter 45
The eleventh degree is that a person should see an angel speaking with him in a vision — **as with Abraham at the time of the Binding**. This, in my view, is **the highest of the prophetic degrees** attested in the texts regarding those in whom it occurred.

Exhibit D—Invoking the Akeidah in Prayer

קבלת עול מלכות שמים, תפלת הבוקר
…מָה אֲנַחְנוּ… הֲלֹא כָּל הַגִּבּוֹרִים כְּאַיִן לְפָנֶיךָ, וְאַנְשֵׁי הַשֵּׁם כְּלֹא הָיוּ, וַחֲכָמִים כִּבְלִי מַדָּע, וּנְבוֹנִים כִּבְלִי הַשְׂכֵּל. כִּי רֹב מַעֲשֵׂיהֶם תֹּהוּ, וִימֵי חַיֵּיהֶם הֶבֶל לְפָנֶיךָ, וּמוֹתַר הָאָדָם מִן הַבְּהֵמָה אָיִן, כִּי הַכֹּל הָבֶל:
אֲבָל אֲנַחְנוּ עַמְּךָ, בְּנֵי בְרִיתֶךָ, בְּנֵי אַבְרָהָם אֹהַבְךָ, שֶׁנִּשְׁבַּעְתָּ לוֹ בְּהַר הַמּוֹרִיָּה, זֶרַע יִצְחָק יְחִידוֹ, שֶׁנֶּעֱקַד עַל גַּבֵּי הַמִּזְבֵּחַ…

Kabbalat Ol Malkhut Shamayim, Morning Prayers
What are we?... Are not all mighty men like nothing before you, the great ones as if they had never been, the wise as those without knowledge and the intelligent as those without understanding? For most of their actions are worthless and the days of their lives are like breath before you. The advantage of humans over beasts is naught.

And yet, we are your people, members of your covenant, the descendants of Avraham who loved you, to whom you made promises on Mount Moriah, the offspiring of Yitzhak, his only son, who was bound on the altar…

תפילת מוסף, ראש השנה
ותראה לפניך עקדה שעקד אברהם אבינו את יצחק בנו על גבי המזבח וכבש רחמיו לעשות רצונך בלבב שלם כן יכבשו רחמיך את כעסך מעלינו ובטובך הגדול ישוב חרון אפך מעמך ומעירך ומנחלתך… ועקדת יצחק היום לזרעו ברחמים תזכור

Tefillat Musaf, Rosh Hashanah
May the Akeidah be visible to you, how Avraham our father bound his son Yitzhak on the altar and controlled his mercy in order to do your will with a full heart. So too may your mercy control your anger with us… In mercy, keep in mind the binding of Isaac when thinking of his descendants today.

סליחות, אִם אָפֵס רֹבַע הַקֵּן, ר' אפרים בר יצחק מרגנסבורג, אשכנז, המאה הי"ב
…בְּמִצְוֹתֶיךָ שְׁנֵיהֶם נִזְהָרִים. וְאַחֲרֶיךָ לֹא מְהַרְהֲרִים. חָשׁוּ מְאֹד נִמְהָרִים. עַל אַחַד הֵהָרִים:
רָאוּ אֵשׁ תְּלוּלָה. מִהֲרוּ עֲצֵי עוֹלָה. יַחַד בְּאַהֲבָה כְלוּלָה. יִשְׁרוּ בָּעֲרָבָה מְסִלָּה:
רָאָה יָחִיד כִּי הוּא הַשֶּׂה. נָאַם לְהוֹרוֹ הַמְנֻסֶּה. אֹתִי כְּכֶבֶשׂ תַּעֲשֶׂה. לֹא־תַחְמֹל וְלֹא־תְכַסֶּה:
בִּי חָפֵץ וְנִכְסֹף. לְבָבִי־לוֹ אֶחְשֹׂף. הַאִם תִּמְנָעֵנִי סוֹף. רוּחִי וְנִשְׁמָתִי אֵלָיו יֶאֱסֹף:
יָדָיו וְרַגְלָיו עָקַד. וְחַרְבּוֹ עָלָיו פָּקַד. לְשׁוֹמוֹ עַל־עֵצִים שָׁקַד. וְהָאֵשׁ עַל־הַמִּזְבֵּחַ תּוּקַד:
צַוָּאר פָּשַׁט מֵאֵלָיו. וְאָבִיו נִגַּשׁ אֵלָיו. לְשָׁחֲטוֹ לְשֵׁם בְּעָלָיו. וְהִנֵּה יְהוָה נִצָּב עָלָיו:
חָקַר אֶת־אֲשֶׁר נַעֲשָׂה. הָאָב עַל־בְּנוֹ לֹא חָסָה. לִבּוֹ אֶל־כַּפָּיו נָשָׂא. וַיַּרְא אֵ-לֹהִים אֶת כָּל־אֲשֶׁר־עָשָׂה:
…**זְכָרוֹן לְפָנֶיךָ בַּשַּׂחַק. לָעַד בְּסֵפֶר יוּחַק. בְּרִית־עוֹלָם לֹא־נִמְחַק. אֶת־אַבְרָהָם וְאֶת יִצְחָק:**
קוֹרְאֶיךָ בָּאִים לִקּוֹד. בְּצָדָק עֲקֵדָה תִּשְׁקֹד. צֹאנְךָ בְּרַחֲמִים תִּפְקֹד. פְּנֵי הַצֹּאן אֶל־עָקֹד:

Selihot, Im Afeis Rova Hakein, R. Efraim of Regensburg, Germany, 12th c.
…In Your commandments both of them were careful, and after You they did not waver. They hastened with great urgency to one of the mountains.
They saw a tall, blazing fire. They hurried the wood of the burnt offering. Together in love complete, they made a path straight in the plain.
The only-child saw that he was the sheep. He said to his tested father: "Make me as a lamb — do not spare, do not cover.
In this I desire and yearn. My heart I will lay bare to Him. Will You withhold me from the end? My spirit and my soul He will gather to Himself."
His hands and feet he bound. His sword He appointed over him. He hastened to place him on the wood, and the fire was kindled upon the altar.
His neck he stretched out on his own, and his father drew near to him to slaughter him in the name of his Master — and behold, the Lord stood over him.

He examined what was being done. The father spared not his son. His heart he lifted to his palms, and God saw all that he had done…
A remembrance before You in the heavens, inscribed forever in the book. An eternal covenant not erased — of Abraham and of Isaac.
Those who call upon You come to bow. In the merit of the Binding attend to them in righteousness. Visit Your flock with mercy. The face of the flock toward the bound one.

Exhibit E—The Message of the Akeidah: Never Again

משנה תענית ב:ד
על הראשונה הוא אומר מי שענה את אברהם בהר המוריה הוא יענה אתכם וישמע בקול צעקתכם היום הזה ברוך אתה ה' גואל ישראל

Mishnah Taanit 2:4
For the first [blessing] he says: He who answered Abraham on Mount Moriah — He shall answer you and hear the voice of your cry on this day. Blessed are You, Lord, redeemer of Israel.

תלמוד ירושלמי מסכת תענית פרק ב הלכה ד
רבי ביבי אבא בשם ר' יוחנן אמר אברהם לפני הקדוש ברוך הוא:
רבון העולמים גלוי וידוע לפניך שבשעה שאמרת לי להעלות את יצחק בני היה לי מה להשיב ולומר לפניך אתמול אמרת לי [בראשית כא יב] כי ביצחק יקרא לך זרע ועכשיו את אומר [שם כב ב] והעלהו שם לעולה. ח"ו לא עשיתי כן אלא כבשתי את יצרי ועשיתי רצונך
כן יהי רצון מלפניך ה' אלהי שבשעה שיהיו בניו של יצחק בני נכנסים לידי צרה ואין להם מי ילמד עליהם סניגוריא אתה תהא מלמד עליהם סניגוריא.
"ה' יראה" - את נזכר להם עקידתו של יצחק אביהם ומתמלא עליהם רחמים.
מה כתיב בתריה [שם יג] וישא אברהם את עיניו וירא והנה איל אחר וגו'...

Yerushalmi Taanit 2:4
R. Beivai Abba in the name of R. Yohanan said: Abraham said before the Holy and Blessed One: Master of the Universe, it is revealed and known before You that when You told me to offer up my son Isaac, I had something to answer and say before You: Yesterday You said to me (Genesis 21:12) "for through Isaac shall your seed be called," and now You say (ibid. 22:2) "and offer him there as a burnt offering." God forbid that I did not do so — rather, I suppressed my inclination and did Your will.
So may it be Your will, O Lord my God, that when the children of Isaac my son enter into distress and there is no one to speak in their defense, You will speak in their defense.

"The Lord will see" — You remember for them the Binding of Isaac their ancestor, and You are filled with compassion for them.
What is written after it? (ibid. 22:13) And Abraham lifted his eyes and saw, and behold a ram after…

"*Tkhine* of the Three Gates" by Sarah bas Tovim (mid-18th C.)
(Translation from *The Merit of Our Mothers* by Tracy Guren Klirs)
And as I prepare the third thread of the wicks for *Avrom ovinu* whom You rescued from the furnace, so may You purify our sins and misdeeds so that our souls may be pure when they come into the next world…
And through the merit which I gain by preparing the wick for the sake of our mother Sore, may Hashem Yisborekh —praised by He—remember us for the merit of her pain when her beloved son Yitskhok was led to the binding. May she defend us before God—praised be He—that we should not — khas vesholem —be left widows this year, and that our children should not— khas vesholem —be taken away from this world in our lifetime.

Exhibit F—The Akeidah Continues, Part 1

איכה רבה (וילנא) פרשה א סימן נ
בני לך אצל אברהם אביכם ואמור לו כך אמרה אמי אל תזוח דעתך עליך ותאמר בניתי מזבח והעליתי את יצחק בני, הרי אמנו בנתה שבעה מזבחות והעלתה שבעה בנים ביום אחד, אתה נסיון ואני מעשה, עד שהיתה מנשקתו ומחבקתו, גזר עליו והרגוהו עליה

Lamentations Rabbah (Vilna) Parasha 1, Section 50
Go to Abraham your ancestor and say to him: Thus has your mother said — do not let your heart be haughty and say "I built an altar and offered up my son Isaac." Behold, your mother built seven altars and offered up seven sons in a single day. Yours was a test, and mine was an act. Even as she was kissing and embracing him, the decree was issued and they killed him over her.

Exhibit G—The Akeidah Continues, Part 2

שלמה בן שמעון, גזירות שנת ד'תתנ"ו

ובני ציון היקרים בני מעגנצא נתנסו בנסיונות עשר כאברהם אבינו וכחנניה מישאל ועזריה ואחרי כן עקדו בניהם כאשר עקד אברהם ליצחק בנו וקיבלו עליהם עול מורא שמים מלך מלכי המלכים ה'ק'ב'ה' בנפש חפיצה…והנשים צדקניות החסידות אשה אל אחותה פשטה צוארה לעקוד על יחוד השם ואיש בבנו ובאחיו ואח באחותו ואשה בבנה ובבתה ושכן בשכינו וריעו וחתן בכלתו וארוס בארוסתו זה עוקד ונעקד וזה עוקד ונעקד

Solomon bar Shimon, The Decrees of 4856 (1096)

And the precious children of Zion, the children of Mainz, were tested with ten trials as our father Abraham and as Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah — and thereafter they bound their children as Abraham bound his son Isaac, and they accepted upon themselves the yoke of the fear of Heaven, the King of kings of kings, the Holy One Blessed Be He, with willing soul…
And the righteous and pious women, each to her sister, stretched out their necks to be bound for the unity of the Name — a man for his son and for his brother, a brother for his sister, a woman for her son and for her daughter, a neighbor for his neighbor, a companion for his companion, a bridegroom for his bride, a betrothed for his betrothed — this one binding and being bound, and this one binding and being bound.

Esty Shushan **Lament for Re'im**	**קִינַת רֵעִים** ***אֶסְתִּי שׁוּשָׁן***
As the rays of the sun begin to rise, Had I refused to open my eyes, How have friends fallen in their hour of joy, The binder, the bound, and the altar. ///	עֵת קָרְנֵי חַמָּה לִזְרֹחַ לוּ מֵאַנְתִּי אָז עֵינַי לִפְקֹחַ אֵיךְ נָפְלוּ רֵעִים בְּבוֹאָם לִשְׂמֹחַ עוֹקֵד וְהַנָּעֳקָד וְהַמִּזְבֵּחַ ///
They journeyed and encamped that morning, On the seventh day of October, Evil men broke through, advancing forward, A heavenly voice cries out, "Seek shelter now," My masters, the time for prayer has come, The binder, the bound, and the altar. ///	וַיִּסְעוּ וַיַּחֲנוּ בְּאוֹתוֹ הַבֹּקֶר בַּיּוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי לְחֹדֶשׁ אוֹקְטוֹבֶר בְּנֵי עַוְלָה פָּרְצוּ לְעֵבֶר בַּת קוֹל זוֹעֶקֶת פְּנוּ לִמְקוֹם סֵתֶר רַבּוֹתַי הִגִּיעַ זְמַן תְּפִלָּה לִשְׁטֹחַ עוֹקֵד וְהַנָּעֳקָד וְהַמִּזְבֵּחַ ///
My masters, the time for prayer has come, Behold the altar, a scattered platform and wood, And the knife in the hands of murderous villains, From Nova, they fled to fields and shrubs,	הִנֵּה הַמִּזְבֵּחַ בָּמָה סְתוּרָה וְעֵצִים וְהַמַּאֲכֶלֶת בִּידֵי בְּנֵי עַוְלָה מְרַצְּחִים מֵהַנּוֹבָה נָפוֹצוּ לְעֵבֶר שָׂדוֹת וְשִׂיחִים הֵיכָן הַשָּׂה לָעוֹלָה יִשְׂאֲלוּ בְּלֹא כּוֹחַ עוֹקֵד וְהַנָּעֳקָד וְהַמִּזְבֵּחַ

"Where is the lamb for the offering?" they ask, strength drained, The binder, the bound, and the altar.	

Exhibit H—The Akeidah and Integrating Realities of Pain

Chana Thompson, "Imagining Sarah", **Kerem no. 2, Winter 1994**

...So Sarah goes to the place where Abraham stood when God spoke to him in the night. And she asks a question that Abraham did not. "Why?" she asks into the dark. …

"Sarah, I have told Abraham what must be. Know for sure that your children will be different from other nations. Know that they will survive as a nation in exile…even should your nation grow up in great danger…They may be hated and falsely accused of horrible crimes. They may be chased from country to country or forced to convert, or massacred. Indeed, a time may come when a ruler arises in a great land of their exile, and attempts to destroy them all. If you knew, Sarah, that such a ruler might send six million of your people, men, women and children, to horrible deaths of starvation and torture and violence, and pile their bodies in the open, and then burn them into smoke and ash, would you want your promise then?"

"Is this what will be? What promise is this? Why must I hear this?"

"None of this should come to be. I have sent Abraham to Moriah, to sacrifice his son, to burn the body of your son into smoke and ash, and so prevent such future suffering."

Suddenly, Sarah realizes: God is offering her a retroactive miscarriage. Perhaps her descendants are a doomed people… Or perhaps God is testing her…as God is testing Abraham. All she need do is utter a word, and Abraham will not lay a hand on his heir. But if she does so, and her son lives, she may give life also to an unspeakable horror. Before her she sees thousands of innocents, starved and murdered, their bodies lying in the open, each emaciated face the face of Isaac, the sky half dark.

"But if that should happen, what is the blessing? You promised us a blessing! ..."

"No, Sarah. Every good thing I have said is true, and more. If Isaac lives, his descendants – your descendants – will flourish in many things, in many ages. They will love me and I will love them…."

"And I must decide."

"Yes, mother of a nation, you must decide, you alone." …

Before her eyes is the sight of a starless sky, and Isaac bloodied. She cries: "Stop!"

And now, suppose that, at that moment, Abraham was standing poised, the consuming knife raised. And at that very moment, God's messenger cried: "Abraham, Abraham!"

And if it happened that way, God might have said to Sarah as to Abraham,

"Indeed, because you have done this thing, **because you have not withheld your son, your only-one, from the world, Sarah**, Indeed, I will bless you… Because you heard my voice, and decided well."

2.245

4.248