In this week's Parsha, Vayera, we read about the *Akedat Yitzchak*- the Binding of Isaac. As I read through this portion I was transported to Rosh Hashanah, a seemingly far eight weeks ago. A time when we stood together as a community to read this story and grappled with its meaning. The High Holidays feel far away from me, almost as if they’re a blur. Weeks have passed since we gathered in prayer to read this story, thinking about the ways in which we have been tested throughout the year. On Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur we made promises and envisioned a different version of ourselves. I emerged from that holy time with a renewed sense of hope and purpose for the year ahead. Eight weeks have passed, and this feeling of renewal has manifested into something else; grief. I am sitting in heartbreak over the events that have transpired since October 7th. I find myself wondering how to show up to friends, family, and community. I wish for the strength I envisioned during those High Holiday services.

In this parsha we are offered this line from [Genesis 22:1](https://www.sefaria.org/Genesis.22.1?lang=bi&lookup=%D7%95%D6%B7%D7%99%D6%B0%D7%94%D6%B4%D6%97%D7%99%20%D7%90%D6%B7%D7%97%D6%B7%D7%A8%D6%99%20%D7%94%D6%B7%D7%93%D6%BC%D6%B0%D7%91%D6%B8%D7%A8%D6%B4%D6%A3%D7%99%D7%9D%20%D7%94%D6%B8%D7%90%D6%B5%D6%94%D7%9C%D6%BC%D6%B6%D7%94%20%D7%95%D6%B0%D7%94%D6%B8%D6%A3%D7%90%D6%B1%D7%9C%D6%B9%D7%94%D6%B4%D6%94%D7%99%D7%9D%20%D7%A0%D6%B4%D7%A1%D6%BC%D6%B8%D6%96%D7%94%20%D7%90%D6%B6%D7%AA%D6%BE%D7%90%D6%B7%D7%91%D6%B0%D7%A8%D6%B8%D7%94%D6%B8%D6%91%D7%9D%20%D7%95%D6%B7%D7%99%D6%BC%D6%B9%D6%A3%D7%90%D7%9E%D6%B6%D7%A8%20%D7%90%D6%B5%D7%9C%D6%B8%D6%94%D7%99%D7%95%20%D7%90%D6%B7%D7%91%D6%B0%D7%A8%D6%B8%D7%94%D6%B8%D6%96%D7%9D%20%D7%95%D6%B7%D7%99%D6%BC%D6%B9%D6%A5%D7%90%D7%9E%D6%B6%D7%A8%20%D7%94%D6%B4%D7%A0%D6%BC%D6%B5%D6%BD%D7%A0%D6%B4%D7%99%D7%83%20Some%20time%20afterward%2C%20God%20put%20Abraham%20to%20the%20test%2C%20saying%20to%20him%2C%20%E2%80%9CAbraham.%E2%80%9D%20He%20answered%2C%20%E2%80%9CHere%20I%20am.%E2%80%9D&with=Lexicon&lang2=en):

וַיְהִ֗י אַחַר֙ הַדְּבָרִ֣ים הָאֵ֔לֶּה וְהָ֣אֱלֹהִ֔ים נִסָּ֖ה אֶת־אַבְרָהָ֑ם וַיֹּ֣אמֶר אֵלָ֔יו אַבְרָהָ֖ם וַיֹּ֥אמֶר הִנֵּֽנִי׃

Some time afterward, God put Abraham to the test, saying to him, “Abraham.” Abraham answered, “Here I am.”

A famous response from Abraham- Here I am- *hineni.* As I read the word *hineni* I was flooded with questions. What can these words mean for us in this moment? What can it mean for us to stand before each other and say- *hineni*- here I am. How are we showing up to ourselves in this time of unprecedented despair and fear? Perhaps this means you woke up today and made the bed- *hineni*. Maybe this means you felt overwhelmed by the grocery store, and yet you went anyway- *hineni.* And what if this means that you showed up to difficult conversations, ones you knew would hurt, but you did it anyway- *hineni*. Our emotional capacity is in a state of ultimate elasticity, being stretched farther than some of us know how to handle. What if we reached back in time to those High Holidays, where we showed up to ourselves with compassion and love. Where we created containers of safety and holding. Perhaps all we have in this moment is the ability to show up, be present, try to ground ourselves, and proclaim- *hineni*- Here I am.