

Abraham successfully passed all the tests. Still, while he did demonstrate his intense loyalty and devotion to G-d, how did it prove his love for G-d?

G-d does not challenge people beyond their capacities. It follows, then, that as they advance in spiritual growth and strength, they actually render themselves vulnerable to trials of greater intensity. In the course of his many trials, Abraham detected the pattern. He could have logically decided to avoid any further spiritual progression, because it might subject him to even greater ordeals than those he had already sustained.

Abraham decided otherwise. He desired so much to come closer to G-d that he was willing to pay any price. Thus, when he was put to the ultimate task - to sacrifice Yitzhak - Abraham was not taken aback. He had fully anticipated such an eventuality.

We are not of the character of Abraham, and we pray every day, "Do not put us to test." While we indeed wish to advance spiritually, we ask to be spared the distress of trial. Yet, should we experience adversity in life, we would do well to realize that this may be a testimony to our spiritual strength. (Growing Each Day)

### The Best Prescription

"The same mouth that serves as an instrument of speech, is also a laboratory and factory for the processing of food. After being processed by our bodies, the food that comes into our mouths ultimately becomes the hair on our head, the skin, muscle, bone and nerves. Every part of our body is replenished by the food.

Our physical health continues to grow if we feed it with the right prescription of a Kosher and healthy diet. On a spiritual basis, the Torah is The Best Prescription to form a bond between us and Hashem. The concept of expressing gratitude and love to Him for our health, will result in stronger spiritual health. (Norman D. Levy, Based on Rabbi Miller's teachings with permission from Simchas Hachaim Yeshiva Gedola Bais Israel.)

### All or None

On a fundraising mission in America for Yeshivas Chochmei Lublin, Rabbi Meir Shapiro stayed in a hotel, where the proprietor, hearing of his phenomenal genius, approached him with a problem.

A few days before, three businessmen had checked into his inn, and had left a valise filled with money with him for safekeeping. As a security measure, they instructed him only to return the suitcase in the presence of all three, so that no single member of the trio would be able to abscond with their profits.

As it turned out, the innkeeper was out for a short while when one of the men knocked on the office door and asked for the valise. Unaware of the safety provision, his wife gave it to him, and he escaped. Now the other two were demanding restitution. The innkeeper told Rabbi Meir that he suspected that the three had waited for him to leave the premises in order to trap him into repaying them.

"The solution is really quite simple," Rabbi Meir advised. "Tell them that according to the provision agreed upon at the onset of their stay, you can only return the valise in the presence of all three men..." (Brilliant Gems)

The Lorraine Gammal A "H Edition

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## Congregation Magen Abraham

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### SHABBAT

BEHUKOTAI ☆ η♥,↔E♠φ□X, □X♥↑

Haftarah: Yirmiyahu 16:19-17:14

**MAY 31-JUNE 1, 2019 27 IYAR 5779**

Friday Shir Hashirim/Minhah: **6:48 & 7:30 pm** Shahrarit: **4:30, 6:40, 8:10, 9:15 am**

Candlelighting: **8:01 pm**

Morning Shema by: **8:15 am**

Evening Shema & Omer after: **8:59 pm**

Shabbat Classes: **6:40 pm**

**Day 42 of the Omer**

Shabbat Minhah: **7:40 pm**

Shabbat Ends: **8:59 pm (R" T 9:31 pm)**

These times are applicable only for the Deal area.

Sunday Minhah: **7:00 pm**

**Rosh Hodesh Sivan will be celebrated on Tuesday, June 4.**

**Rabbi Dabbah will be giving a ladies' class every Shabbat one hour before Minhah in memory of Naomi bat Zakia.**

**Mabrook to Isaac & Elana Abadi on the marriage of their son, Shlomo, to Shoshana Cohen. Mabrook to the grandparents, Meir & Barbara Abadi.**

**Mabrook to Rabbi Leon & Rose Hazan on the engagement of their daughter, Sharon, to David Mochon. Mabrook to the grandparents, Ralph & Sharon Hazan.**

### A Message from our Rabbi

"וְיִנְסְתֶם וְאִי־רִדְךָ אֶתְכֶם"

"You will flee but there will be no one pursuing you." (Vayikra 26:17)

Our *parashah* contains the *tochachah*, the admonition which Hashem warns will be the lot of the Jewish people if they fail to keep the *misvot* of the Torah.

The *pasuk* says that the Jewish people will flee. *Rashi* says they will flee as a result of terror. The *Vilna Gaon* asks, why does the Torah say that they will flee without a pursuer? Isn't it better not to have a pursuer than to have a pursuer? On the simple level the answer is that if someone is chasing someone else and he flees from his pursuer, he is a normal person. But, if someone runs away from an imagined pursuer, it is worse because he is no longer a normal person. The curse would not be the pursuit, but the curse is on the pursued.

The Vilna *Gaon* zt”l has his own answer. He says it is worse to be pursued without a pursuer, because Hashem always favors the pursued or the underdog, but this is only when there is a pursuer. If there is no pursuer, the victim doesn't benefit the usual benefit of being pursued.

Today, thank Hashem, we have plenty of real pursuers. The terrorists, Iran, Neo-Nazis, anti-Semites, to name a few. So we have Hashem on our side.

Furthermore, the truth is that even when we are pursued we have nothing to fear, as it says, “When you go to war do not fear them.” The Torah forbids us to fear our enemies. Hashem can and will take care of our enemies always, Amen.

Shabbat Shalom.

Rabbi Reuven Semah

### Read the Instructions

”אִם-בְּחֻקֵי תֵלְכוּ וְאֶת-מִצְוֹתַי תִּשְׁמְרוּ... וְנָתַתִּי גֶשְׁמֵיכֶם בְּעֵתָם”

"If you will walk according to My laws and keep My commandments and do them, then I will give you rains in their season." (*Vayikra* 26:3-4)

The verses that follow cite the abundant material blessings that will accrue from the observance of Torah. This is then followed by a stern warning regarding the harsh consequences that will result if Israel abandons the Torah.

Many of the Torah commentaries ask why the Torah does not mention the spiritual rewards in the eternal world, since these are the true rewards for the *misvot*, rather than the temporal goods of our earthly existence.

In *Pirkei Abot* we are instructed to observe the Torah "not as servants who serve their master for reward, but as servants who serve their master without any anticipation of reward" (1:3). Motivation by reward and punishment is a juvenile concept, necessary only when one is unable to grasp that the good that is inherent in doing a good act and in avoiding doing evil is the desired motivation. Mature thinking people do good for the sake of doing good, and avoid evil because it is evil. Although belief in reward and punishment is a principle of faith, the Torah generally does not elaborate on these in order that they not become the motivation for fulfilling the will of G-d.

How then are we to understand this portion of the Torah, which describes in detail blessings that will accrue from observance of the *misvot* and the harsh consequences that will result from violation of the Torah? Are these not rewards and punishments?

Not necessarily. Think of the user's manual that accompanies a new automobile or any complex piece of machinery. Instructions are given for the proper care and maintenance of the apparatus, and implicit in these is that if one will follow them the apparatus will perform well, but that if the instructions are disregarded, trouble will eventually result. If you fail to change the oil in your car regularly it is quite likely that the engine will malfunction and eventually fail. This is not a punishment for failing to follow the instructions, but is the consequence of failing to provide proper care.

The Midrash states that G-d designed the world according to the principles of the Torah. The *misvot* of the Torah are the instructions, the "user's manual" for the world. Abiding by the guidelines will result in the proper function of the world which will then deliver its fruits. Neglecting the guidelines will result in the malfunction of the world with various unpleasant consequences. The earthly goods and evils that are described in Torah are simply the results of heeding or neglecting the manufacturer's instructions.

If we carry the analogy of the user's manual a bit further, we can also understand the concept of *arebut* (mutual responsibility). Why may one person suffer the consequences of another person's transgression? For the same reason another person's reckless driving may inflict damage upon your car.

Analogies do not have to be precise and we can probably find many dissimilarities in this comparison. Nevertheless, the concept of Torah being the guideline for proper function of the world is valid. Divine reward and punishment for observance or lack of observance of Torah is a subject totally apart from the promises and warnings described in this portion of the Torah. (*Living Each Week*)

### The Sacred Shekel

”וְכָל-עֵרְכָךְ יִהְיֶה בְשֶׁקֶל הַקֹּדֶשׁ”

“Every valuation shall be in the sacred *shekel*.” (*Vayikra* 27:25)

Voluntary contributions to the Sanctuary were a significant source of funding for the maintenance of the Temple. One would think that the laws concerning such valuations would be placed earlier in *Sefer Vayikra*, which deals with the Temple offerings. Rav S.R. Hirsch z”l explains that these gifts were excluded by design, lest one think that his contributions replaced *misvah* performance. Voluntary contributions do not atone for laxity in *misvah* observance.

The above *pasuk* teaches us that every evaluation is to be measured in *Shekel Hakodesh*, sacred *shekel*, the *shekel* of the Sanctuary. Rav Moshe Shternbuch, Shlita renders this *pasuk* homiletically to teach a valuable lesson concerning how we are to give *sedakah*, charity. Even the most philanthropic Jew must be acutely aware that charity must be given on a scale commensurate with the degree that one spends on himself. In other words, the percentage which he feels he is capable of doling out for his personal needs and pleasures should be balanced by a similar percentage for *sedakah*. Likewise, in the same manner that he expects for himself, he should do for others. This does not mean that he must purchase an Armani suit for the indigent and those in need, but there is a vast difference between polyester and Armani. We must factor in the emotional needs of those we help, as well as their financial requirements.

When we contribute to organizations, shuls, yeshivahs, etc., we often become incredibly creative with a litany of excuses that would rival some of the most prolific authors of fiction. “My money is tied up,” “I am just not that liquid right now,” “I just took a big hit in my investment portfolio,” etc. While these excuses might even be partially true, we would expect this person to exhibit some restraint in his personal spending, as well. Of course, this is not the case. When someone's financial portfolio suffers a loss, the first ones to feel the pinch will be those who are beneficiaries of his charitable contributions.

Thus, the Torah teaches us “every valuation” – every penny that you spend on “*erkecha* – your personal needs” – shall be determined with the same measuring stick that you apply to the “sacred *shekel*.” When you feel “tight” concerning *sedakah*, you should likewise feel the pinch regarding your own needs. If you do not have for one – then you do not have for the other. Interestingly, when people apply this measuring device, they suddenly discover money which they “thought” they didn't have. By all means, take that trip; purchase that suit; make that lavish celebration, but please remember those in need. They would also like to celebrate. (*Peninim on the Torah*)

### Ethics of the Fathers

”עֲשָׂרָה נִסְיוֹנוֹת נִתְּנָה אֲבָרָהּ אֲבִינוּ עָלָיו הַשָּׁלוֹם וְעַמְד בְּכֶלֶם, לְהוֹדִיעַ כְּמָה חֲבָתוֹ שֶׁל אֲבָרָהּ אֲבִינוּ”

"The Patriarch Abraham was tested (by G-d) ten times and withstood them all. This proves Abraham's great love for G-d." (*Pirkei Abot* 5:3)

Abraham was tested with ten trials of progressively increasing severity, ultimately culminating in the test of sacrificing his beloved son, Yitzhak, if G-d so willed.