

possess the sharp mind that the first boy had.

Both boys took the test and afterwards the *Hatam Sofer* announced that he would be accepting only one of them - the second boy, the one with the fine reputation - but not the outstanding genius.

Staff members who had observed and overheard the boys being tested were surprised. Both had done well, but the first boy had certainly done better. "Why," they asked the *Hatam Sofer*, "are you taking only the second student?"

The *Hatam Sofer* peered at those who questioned him and answered sternly, "I was sitting by the window and noticed the two boys as they made their way from the street into this building. There was some *schach* on the sidewalk from one of the *succot* that had just been taken down after the holiday. The first boy did not make it a point to avoid the *schach*, but nonchalantly stepped on it as he was walking. The second boy, however, walked around the *schach*.

"I maintain," continued the *Hatam Sofer*, "that a student who can step on *schach* two days after Succot does not have the appropriate sensitivity to the holiness of the *misvot*. Such a student I don't want in my yeshivah. He will find someplace else to learn." (In the Footsteps of the Maggid)

*The Lorraine Gammal A "H Edition*

ט"ה תשע"ח, חג סוכות, חג שמחת תורה

ס"ט

## Congregation Magen Abraham

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SHABBAT LECH-

LECHA ☆ ΩκΘ, X♥↑

Haftarah: Yeshayahu 40:27-41:16

**OCTOBER 27-28, 2017 8 HESHVAN 5777**

Friday Minhah: 5:42 pm

Shaharit: 6:21, 6:40, 8:30, 9:15 am

Candlelighting: 5:42 pm

Morning Shema by: 9:22 am

Evening Shema after: 6:40 pm

Shabbat Classes: 4:20 pm

Shabbat Minhah: 5:20 pm

These times are applicable only for the Deal area. Shabbat Ends: 6:38 pm (R"Y 7:10 pm)

This bulletin is dedicated in memory of Moshe ben Margie  
by Eli & Marjorie Kairey

This bulletin is dedicated in memory of Victor Rishty  
by his wife and children

כ"ה תשע"ח, חג סוכות, חג שמחת תורה

Weather permitting, *Bircat Halebanah* will be recited on Saturday night. If not, it may be said until Friday night, November 3.

### A Message from our Rabbi

”וְאַבְרָהָם מְבָרְכֵךָ וּמְקַלְלֶךָ אָמַר”

“I will bless those who bless you, and the one who curses you I will curse.” (Beresheet 12:3)

Hashem gave Abraham a huge gift. Whoever blesses you will be blessed. Rabbi Avigdor Miller zt”l asks: This is but one of many examples of Hashem’s aid to Abraham. Why is this example chosen? Because one who attempts to contradict the majority of men must expect a torrent of reproach and vilification. Therefore Abraham had been exposed to much animosity, and he was cursed by the rulers and priests and by the multitude of their followers.

This was a prophetic parallel to Abraham's seed that opposed the idolatrous, cruel and immoral nations, and that opposed the false religions and the materialists, and were therefore the target of a torrent of vilification.

For this reason, G-d promised to take action against the defamers of Abraham's seed. The cursers would be many, but in the end Abraham's name remained blessed by all. Thus it would be with his seed.

Shabbat Shalom.

Rabbi Reuven Semah

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## What's the Test?

וְאֶעֱשֶׂךָ לְגוֹי גָדוֹל וְאֶבְרַכְךָ וְאֶגְדָּלְךָ שְׂמֶיךָ וְהָיָה בְרַכָּהּ”

“I will make you into a great nation, and I will bless you, and I will make your name famous, and it will be a blessing.” (*Beresheet* 12:2)

The commentators explain that Hashem's command to Abraham to journey to an unknown destination was the first of ten great trials. And yet, within this command, Hashem promises Abraham that if he leaves his land, he will be given great riches and enormous reward. If so, was it really such a difficult decision to go to a place where amazing fame and fortune await him? This question is made even stronger by *Rashi*, who writes that Hashem also told Abraham that he would not merit having any children unless he would leave that land. That being the case, what was the great test facing Abraham?

The famous *sadik*, Reb Zushia, was once asked if he would want to change places with Abraham. His reply was as follows: “What would Hashem gain – there would still be only one Abraham and one Reb Zushia?” This was Reb Zushia's response in regards to Abraham, whose offspring are as numerous as the stars and in whose merit the Jewish people beseech in their prayers three times a day. Nevertheless, Reb Zushia would give us the opportunity because there would be no gain to Hashem. This exemplifies what the *Ramban* describes as the epitome of *ahavat Hashem*, the trait of loving Hashem – someone who serves Hashem with no thought of personal reward.

This tremendous level of love for Hashem, where personal reward is irrelevant and all that matters is “What will Hashem gain?” and “What can I do for Hashem?” is the great test that Abraham faced in this week's *parashah*.

The struggle of coming face to face with such an enormous reward, yet opting to serve Hashem wholeheartedly without thinking about the reward at all, was Abraham's true test. The test was not whether Abraham would go, his test was “for what reasons would he go” – would his thoughts wander to the great wealth promised to him, or would they remain focused entirely on serving Hashem? (*Short Vort*)

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## Renewed Promises

וְהִקְמַתִּי אֶת־בְּרִיתִי בֵּינִי וּבֵינְךָ וּבֵין זַרְעֶךָ אַחֲרָיִךְ... וְנָתַתִּי לְךָ... אֶת־אֶרֶץ מִצְרָיִם”

“I will sustain My covenant between Me and you, and between your descendants after you throughout their generations, as an eternal covenant...I will give to you...the land of your temporary residence.” (*Beresheet* 17:7,8)

Immediately after Hashem told Abraham that he would be an “*av hamon goyim* – father of a multitude of nations,” Hashem gave him the *misvah* of *berit milah*, which

was meant to set him apart from the rest of mankind. Hashem then gave Abraham an added promise, saying, “I will sustain My covenant between Me and you, and between your descendants after you throughout their generations, as an eternal covenant... The whole land of Canaan shall be your eternal heritage.” Why did Hashem promise *Eress Yisrael* to Abraham at this point? After all, Hashem already had pledged it to him at the *Berit ben Habetarim* – Pact Between the Halves!

The *Netziv* explains that the mission of spreading the belief in one G-d was given not only to Abraham, but also to his descendants. They, too, were charged with disseminating monotheism throughout the world. For this reason, Abraham and his descendants were given the *misvah* of *berit milah*, in order to keep them from thinking that in order to spread the knowledge of Hashem they would have to mingle with the nations and adopt their lifestyle and customs.

The act of *milah*, the physical sign of separation, lifted Abraham to an exalted spiritual plane, setting him apart through his faith and his Torah. This being so, his descendants might fear that they would forever wander to the four corners of the earth, exhorting people to believe in Hashem without a prospect of ever settling down in a land of their own. It was then that Hashem repeated His vow, reassuring Abraham that ultimately his descendants would return to *Eress Yisrael*. (*Torah Tavlin*)

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## Prediction

A friend of mine is great at predicting. He can tell you – three weeks in advance – what the weather will be like at the company picnic. He knows which politician will be elected, and he can inform you which stocks will rise and which will fall. In staff meetings, his opinion is respected because his track record in foretelling the future is so accurate.

When our Sages said: “Who is wise? One who foresees the future” (*Tamid* 32a), they did not have my friend in mind. His luck – or foresight – is not the wisdom of which they spoke. The wise men of the past were giving sound advice to all generations: “Weigh the results of your behavior *before* you act.”

Errors in judgment create excuses. Often one is prompted to deny having participated in an activity that turned out to be the wrong thing to do. One lie leads to another until the truth is revealed and the tower of falsehood crumbles embarrassingly before the perpetrator's red face. A smart person avoids the misdeed and is saved from the pressure of the cover-up.

The Torah says: “Keep a distance from falsehood” (*Shemot* 23:7). That does not only mean “Don't lie”; it means “Don't do things that will bring you to deception.” A good rule to follow is: “If you might have to deny it – don't do it!” A good lie may work for a moment, but it will lead to another false statement and then another until the truth is eventually revealed. Consider the long-term results of your behavior, and you will be spared the shame of getting caught.

Those who foresee the future are truly wise. (*One Minute With Yourself* – Rabbi Raymond Beyda)

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## Watch Your Step

Many years ago, two students came to the *Hatam Sofer* to take a test to determine whether or not they would qualify for admission in his prestigious yeshivah. It was right after Succot, and the students were anxious to become part of the world renowned Torah institution. One of the boys had a reputation of being a genius, whose

understanding and perception of Torah topics was outstanding. The second boy also had the reputation of being an exemplary scholar for his age, but he was not known to