

Quit? No! He picks himself up, dusts himself off, and runs to get back into the game. The next moment he is standing confidently, ready to fight for victory.

It is the same in life. In *Michah* (7:8) it is written: "My enemies do not rejoice. If I fall, I stand up; if I am in the dark, Hashem provides me with light."

It is inevitable that you will sometimes fail to accomplish what you set out to do. Don't let it get you down. Don't focus on the temporary failure – focus on your ultimate goal. Look ahead for a window of opportunity rather than back at a door that slammed shut in your face. Such a change in direction will get you to the goal line of victory in the game of life. (One Minute With Yourself – Rabbi Raymond Beyda)

### The Attitude of Gratitude

"We have to thank our parents; we have to thank our teachers; we even have to thank the policeman on the street. We must thank Hashem because He is the one who caused all the others to be good to us. When parents feed their children and bestow many benefits on them, it is actually the kindness of Hashem."

A person who performs kindness to you, is an agent of Hashem demonstrating kindness. Possessing an Attitude of Gratitude towards others, creates humility and strength of character. (Norman D. Levy, based on Rabbi Miller's teachings with permission from Simchas Hachaim Gedola Bais Yisrael)

### Covenants

During the early 1900's Rabbi Yosef Chaim Sonnenfeld (1848-1932) served as Chief Rabbi of Jerusalem. He lived in the Old City but would travel anywhere to perform a *berit milah*. One day, Reb Yosef Chaim was asked to perform a *berit milah* on an infant whose parents lived in one of the poverty-stricken areas of the city. On the designated day, he made his way to the neighborhood of the young couple. He knew there would be very few people at the *milah*, for the family had no money to tender a festive meal afterwards.

As Reb Yosef Chaim entered the courtyard of the apartment complex, he heard a baby cry. The sound was coming from the building where the *milah* was to be. He followed the voice and knocked on the door.

A young woman answered the door. "*Mazal tov*," said Reb Yosef Chaim. "I am here to do the *berit milah* for your son."

"Oy, Rebbi," sighed the woman. "I only wish you were in the right house!"

Seeing the great Rabbi unexpectedly, the woman started crying. "Rebbi, I have been married so many years and my husband and I have no children. Please bless me." Then she added, "The child is next door; it's my neighbor who had the baby."

She turned away, wiping her tears in embarrassment for her brazenness in asking the great *sadik* for a *berachah*. She was ashamed that she had broken down and revealed her plight.

Reb Yosef Chaim felt terrible that he had been the cause of the woman's anguish. By walking into the wrong apartment he had inadvertently brought forth her sad situation.

Reb Yosef Chaim said softly and compassionately, "I give you a *berachah* that I should come back to your home next year and it won't be a mistake. It will be for a *simchah*."

A year later the woman had a little boy, and Reb Yosef Chaim was called to perform the *berit milah*. It was the only child the woman ever had. (Reflections of the Maggid)

The Lorraine Gammal A"K Edition

לְעִילּוֹי נְשִׁמַת לְאָה בֵּת בְּהִיָּה

בס"ד

## Congregation Magen Abraham

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SHABBAT VAYERA ✪ שַׁבַּת וַיֵּרָא

Haftarah: Melachim II 4:1-23

**NOVEMBER 6-7, 2020 20 HESHVAN 5781**

Friday Minhah: 4:28 pm

Shaharit: 5:34, 6:40, 8:15, 9:00 am

Candlelighting: 4:28 pm

Morning Shema by: 8:30 am

Evening Shema after: 5:26 pm

Shabbat Minhah: 4:05 pm

These times are applicable only for the Deal area.

Shabbat Ends: 5:25 pm (R"Y 5:57 pm)

Sunday Minhah: 4:25 pm

This bulletin is dedicated in memory of Abe Shalom by the Kassin family

לְעִילּוֹי נְשִׁמַת אַבְרָהָם בֶּן מִזֵּל

### A Message from our Rabbi

”וְהוּא יָשָׁב פְּתַח הָאֹהֶל בְּחֶם הַיּוֹם”

“He was sitting at the entrance of the tent in the heat of the day” (*Beresheet* 18:1)

Abraham *Abinu* did not simply perform many acts of *hesed* (kindness). He was *oheb hesed* (lover of *hesed*) who looked for any and every opportunity to do *hesed*, even at great effort, expense and risk to his health. This is clearly evident by how far he went to tend to the needs of the three wayfarers on a brutally hot day, despite the fact that it was the third day after his *brit milah* and he was in great pain.

Rav Avraham Pam zt"l explains that an *oheb hesed* must have patience to deal with the various types of people and needs that come his way. Among them may be nudnicks, complainers, obnoxious and ungrateful people, even crooks, who make take advantage of an *oheb hesed*'s goodness and generosity.

A rebetzin once complained to the *Hafetz Hayim* that her husband, a warm-hearted Rav, whose generosity knew no limits, was sometimes taken advantage of by some unscrupulous people. This greatly upset him and embittered his wife. The *Hafetz Hayim* replied, "A good person must sometimes tolerate difficult people. A bad person makes other people suffer from him. It is better that in the World to Come your husband will be considered from the first type rather than from the second..."

Shabbat Shalom

Rabbi Reuven Semah

## They Went Together

What thoughts passed through Abraham's mind as he walked towards the mountaintop with his son Yitzhak? Childless until the age of one hundred, and now Hashem had commanded Abraham to bind his beloved son on the altar and sacrifice him. In this, the supreme test of his loyalty and devotion, Abraham did not hesitate for a moment, and we his descendants still reap the benefits to this very day.

But let us consider for a moment Abraham's state of mind on that fateful day. Did he cringe at the thought of touching the sharp blade to the tender skin of his son's throat? Not at all. As Abraham and Yitzhak set out for the mountain, the Torah tells us, "*The two of them went together.*" What does this mean? Our Sages see this as a metaphor for the feelings in their hearts, which beat together as one. Abraham fully shared the joyous anticipation experienced by Yitzhak, who was as yet oblivious to the true purpose of the journey. The enormity of what he was about to do did not becloud Abraham's mind and heart. On the contrary, it exhilarated him.

Abraham had attained the highest levels of faith. He had so completely subordinated his own desires to the Divine will that nothing existed for him but Hashem's command. Therefore, in his understanding, how could an action that fulfilled the will of Hashem inspire anything but perfect joy?

And how about Yitzhak? What was the level of his faith? We need look just a little further in the *perashah* to find the answer. As they travel towards the mountaintop, Yitzhak questions his father about the whereabouts of the sacrificial lamb. From Abraham's response, it becomes apparent that Yitzhak himself is to fill that role. And again the Torah tells us, "*The two of them went together.*" Their hearts still beat together as one. Yitzhak not only accepts his divinely ordained fate, he faces it with joy equal to that of his father.

But perhaps the most startling insight into the character of the Patriarchs comes at the very end of this astonishing episode. The angel has stopped Abraham's hand even as it already held the slaughtering knife. Hashem has acknowledged Abraham's supreme faith and showered eternal blessings upon him and his offspring. We can well imagine the transcendent ecstasy that gripped Abraham and Yitzhak in the aftermath of this incredible spiritual experience. And yet, when they return to the young attendants waiting with the donkeys in the distance, the Torah again tells us, "*They went together.*" Abraham and Yitzhak did not feel themselves suddenly vastly superior because of the miracles they had witnessed and the promises they received. They took no personal credit for their stellar achievements and considered themselves no more precious than any of Hashem's other creatures.

The outstanding spiritual achievements of the Patriarchs and their extreme humility present no paradox. Quite the contrary. As they became more aware of the awesome and infinite Presence of the Almighty, their sense of self diminished proportionately, and consequently, their humility was a direct result of their spiritual growth.

In our own lives, we can use our own humility as a measure of our spiritual growth. As long as we feel smug and self-satisfied by the good deeds we accumulate and the advances in our level of learning, we can be sure that our growth is essentially superficial. But when we begin to feel dazzled and dwarfed by the spiritual vistas that open before us, when our new understanding and experiences make us shrink inside with a sudden sense of inadequacy, then and only then do we know that we are on the path of true spiritual growth. (Rabbi Label Lam)

## Grand Finale

The *perashah* of the *Akedah* is well known. Abraham is told "Please take your son, your only son, whom you love — Yitzhak. The *Gemara* [*Sanhedin* 89b] comments on the expression "*nah*" [please]: This is comparable to a king who had to fight many wars to protect his kingdom. He had a mighty warrior in charge of his battles who was always successful in his military efforts. Then another war loomed on the horizon. The king went back to his trusted warrior and asked, "Please do me a personal favor, come fight one more war for me, so people will not say 'the first battles mean nothing'. If you cannot win this last war for me, my whole reputation will be destroyed."

So too, G-d comes to Abraham and tells him "I have tested you with many tests and you have withstood all of them. But I need you to undergo just one more test so that it not be said that the first tests were insignificant." How could anyone say after the nine tests that Abraham already underwent that "the first tests were insignificant?"

Rav Yosef Grossman quotes Rav Schwab: People would say "Abraham, no matter how great you are and no matter how much you achieved in your lifetime, if you are not successful in passing the tradition over to your children then what came before is insignificant." Now G-d was giving a test to Abraham that would be a test not only of his own dedication, but also of the dedication of his 37-year-old son, Yitzhak. If Yitzhak would tell his father "Dad, I am not buying into this; this is not for me; this is your religion, not mine," then in effect, Abraham's valiant success in passing all his other spiritual tests would have been insignificant.

Abraham *Abinu* is not only about personal perfection. Abraham *Abinu* is about creating a legacy that he passes on to his children and his children's children. Had he been unsuccessful in this last test, the value of his success in passing all of the previous tests could indeed be questioned.

*Rashi* in *Lech Lecha* cites the idea that each letter in Yitzhak's name was symbolic. The *Sadee* alludes to the fact that his mother was 90 years old when she bore him. The *Het* refers to the fact that he was circumcised on the eighth day of his life. The *Kuf* symbolizes the fact that his father was 100 years old when he was born. Finally, the *Yud* symbolizes the fact that his father Abraham withstood ten tests.

Rav Yosef Grossman asks how the *Yud* referring to the ten tests of Abraham relates to Yitzhak. It seems to relate to Abraham, rather than to Yitzhak. The answer is that Yitzhak validated all ten tests. If not for Yitzhak cooperating willingly at the *Akedah*, others could rightfully consider the first nine tests insignificant. Therefore, the *Yud* is an appropriate part of Yitzhak's name. He had a crucial role in confirming the validity of all the previous tests that his father withstood. (Rabbi Yissocher Frand)

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## Setbacks

"How are you?" asked the caring neighbor.

"I had a bad day," replied the distraught businessman.

It happens to everyone. Sometimes you just have a day when everything seems to be working against your success. Your reaction to such a day is crucial to your overall performance.

Did you ever watch athletes? The best of them are a rare breed. In the heat of the game they remain focused on their goal. It may be called the goal line, home plate, or the net – but no matter what it is called, they know where they are aiming. Next time you watch a sporting event, focus on a player who has just suffered a setback. Maybe he was tackled; maybe he struck out; maybe he was tripped. What does he do? Cry?