
פרשת לך לך

פרק יב פסוק א

וַיֹּאמֶר ה' אֶל־אַבְרָם לֵךְ־לְךָ מֵאֶרֶץ־ךָ וּמְוֹלַדְתְּךָ וּמִבֵּית אָבִיךָ אֶל־הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר אֶרְאֶךָ:

מושג

עֲשָׂרָה נְסִיוֹנוֹת נִתְּנָה אֲבִרָהּ אָבִינוּ עָלֵינוּ הַשְּׁלוֹם וְעַמְד בְּכָלֵם:

Translation:

With ten tests was Avrohom Avinu Alav Hashalom tested, and he stood in them all.

Explanation:

Hashem tested Avrohom ten times, beginning with the test to leave his home and ending with the Akeidah¹. The Mishnah in Avos tells us the Avrohom passed all the 10 tests.

The purpose of the tests is to prove to Avrohom how strong his faith in Hashem is and to show the whole world² Avrohom's greatness³.

Looking in the Pasuk:

The Pasuk tells us לך לך מארצך וממולדתך ומבית אביך, *Go from your land and from your birthplace and from your father's home*. Once Avrohom left his land, would he not have already left his birthplace and his father's home?

The Pasuk is teaching us that Avrohom is not being told to simply move to another land, which people do all the time, but, rather he is being tested to leave his past behind. He is being tested to forget his culture and all that he learned in his father's home.

Another test is in the fact that Hashem said: אל הארץ אשר אראך, *To the land which I will show you*. Hashem never told Avrohom where he was going!

While people will be willing to leave one place and move to another, they will not be willing to go unless they know where they are going. The fact that Avrohom was willing to go, proved his complete trust in Hashem.

Musag Learning Outcomes:

Know: Ten tests. Who was tested, how many times and what were the outcomes?

Understand: Purpose of tests. What do tests prove? For whom?

Think: Analyze text of Pasuk א to understand context of test.

1 See note #1

2 See note #2

3 See note #3

NOTES

1. The ten tests begin with לך לך only according to the Rambam. According to Rashi and Rabbeinu Yonah (in their respective commentaries on the Mishnah in Avos) they begin with the test of Nimrod. According to Rabbeinu Yonah we are referring to the test of the כבשן האש. According to Rashi, it refers to the test of having to hide underground from Nimrod for 13 years.

The reason Rashi did not use the test of the כבשן האש is because Rashi understands all the tests to be a question of whether Avrohom would question G-d upon undergoing hardship. Willingness to enter the כבשן האש does not fall in this category.

The Rambam did not begin with Nimrod because it is not mentioned in the Torah.

As for the final test, Rabbeinu Yonah understands it to be the need for Avrohom to buy a burial place for Sarah. (See the attached chart)

2. The word used for a test is נסיון. It is worthwhile to point out that the word for miracle נס shares the same root. The simple connection is the fact that one being tested is asked to go beyond the natural response and to act above the natural. Thus, when passing the test, he or she is in effect creating a miracle, a נס, something above the natural order of things. Also interesting to note is that the word נס also means a banner (נס ושיים אותו על נס), it is something that becomes a sign for others to see. Every supernatural event, whether a change in nature or someone acting beyond the ordinary, captures the attention of all. Thus through Avrohom's trials - נסיונות - he showed the ability to act beyond the natural order - נס=miracle - and inspired the world to act in the same fashion - נס=banner.

3. The question often asked is why did Hashem need to test Avrohom; didn't Hashem know how Avrohom would react? The two answers frequently given are:

The tests are not for Hashem but for the person being tested. They allow the person to openly display the love of Hashem they have in their hearts, thus strengthening that love.

The tests are open displays of Avrohom's dedication to Hashem which are meant to show the world why Hashem chose Avrohom.

The two above answers can be read into the continuation of the Mishnah in Avos which says that the purpose of the tests was להודיע כפיה חבתו של אברהם אבינו. The first answer above would understand להודיע as to make known to Avrohom, while the second would understand להודיע as to make known to the world at large.

4. Question for further thought:

- a. Why did the Mishnah only speak of Avrohom's tests? Weren't the other Avos tested as well?

אברהם אבינו
The ten tests of
according to Rashi, Rambam and Rabbeinu Yonah

רבינו יונה	רמב"ם	רש"י	
נמרוד	לך לך	נמרוד	1
לך לך	ויהי רעב	לך לך	2
ויהי רעב	ותקח האשה בית פרעה	ויהי רעב	3
ותקח האשה בית פרעה	מלחמת המלכים	ותקח האשה בית פרעה	4
מלחמת המלכים	לקח הגר אחר שהתייאש משרה	מלחמת המלכים	5
מילה	מילה	ברית בין הבתרים	6
וישלח אבימלך ויקח את שרה	וישלח אבימלך ויקח את שרה	מילה	7
גרש הגר וישמעאל	גרש הגר	וישלח אבימלך ויקח את שרה	8
עקדה	גרש וישמעאל	גרש הגר וישמעאל	9
קבורת שרה	עקדה	עקדה	0 1