Jewish Tribune – Lech Lecho

**Ticket to Olam Habo**

The command of Lech Lecho, to leave his birthplace and homeland is one of the ten tests of Avrohom Ovinu.

HKBH promises Avrohom and Soro wonderful things. Here in Chutz L’Aretz, they will not merit to have children. If they go to Eretz Yisroel, they will be blessed with numerous progeny. Not only that, they will be blessed with wealth and fulfilment of their mission in life. HKBH promises Avrohom fame, family and fortune.

The difficulty of course is, given the above, what exactly is the test? If HKBH speaks to you and promises you these things, wouldn’t you go?!

Let’s consider this more. The suffering of not having children is painful in the extreme. Childless couples will do anything and everything to be blessed with children. If HKBH Himself assures Avrohom and Soro that they will have a family, who wouldn’t go?

The pain and suffering of not making ends meet, of constant financial pressure, is something that many are challenged with. Again, if HKBH Himself offers great wealth, anyone would jump at the chance.

And fulfilling one’s destiny in life, our neshomos crave this. To leave a noble and lasting legacy based on the fulfilment of one’s destiny in life is something we all aspire to.

So when HKBH promises fame, family and fortune, what is the question? Avrohom should jump! Why is this even considered a test?

The answer often quoted (and I saw in the sefer Shir Ma’on of Rav Shimon Sofer ztl) is this.

The test for Avrohom was to leave his birthplace and homeland, not because of the fame, family and fortune promised, but because HKBH told him to go. To do the rotzon Hashem for no ulterior reason other than it is the rotzon Hashem.

Professor Yeshaya Leibowitz was once in hospital and a well-intended yeshiva bochur was going around the ward offering patients to put tefillin on them. “The mitzva of tefillin is a segula for a refua shleima” announced the young man loudly, trying to persuade patients in the ward to perform this mitzva.

Professor Leibowitz rebuked the young man: “Do you think I put on tefillin because if is a segula for good health!? I put on tefillin because HKBH instructed me to do so!”

In a famous statement at the end of Maseches Makkos (23b), R’ Chananya ben Akashya says:

רצה הקב"ה לזכות את ישראל לפיכך הרבה להם תורה ומצות

Hashem wanted to create merits for the Jewish people

so he gave them much Torah (to learn) and many mitzvos (to perform)

One might actually think the opposite. If Hashem wanted to help the Klal Yisrael, He should have given us just a small Torah to master and a few mitzvos upon which we could focus our efforts. Instead, we are tasked with knowing a mammoth Torah and performing a large number of mitzvos, making our job much more difficult.

The Rambam explains that a person’s ticket to Olam Habo is through the performance of one mitzva performed perfectly – totally lishmoh, totally altruistically. For someone to earn a true portion in Olam Habo, he has to do a mitzvah with his whole heart, with pure kavonah, absent of any ulterior motives other than for the sake of love of Hashem. Therefore, R’ Chananya states that Hashem gave many mitzvos so that everyone can find at least one mitzvah to which he can connect and perform wholeheartedly.

This was the test of Avrohom Ovinu. Yes, there was the lure of fame, family and fortune. But the test was to go because HKBH told him to go and not for any other reason.

This is clearly a very difficult test. But we can at least aspire to it. Performing some mitzvos and good deeds in private, away from the public eye, often enhances the purity of our motives and could well be our ticket to Olam Habo.

**Rabbi Golker is the** **Menahel of Hasmonean Boys School and Hasmonean Girls School. To listen to his shiurim, go to TorahAnytime.com or JewishPodcasts.Org**