

DAF TSAFON

16 October 2021
10 Cheshvan 5782

Parasha Lech Lecha
ArtScroll 54 Hertz 45



This week's parasha introduces us to the seminal character of the Bible, Abraham. Abraham is the father of monotheism, the father of the Jewish People. As we read through the story we ask the question, why is Avraham so special? The Torah does not grant him the complimentary adjectives that it lavished upon Noach at the beginning of last week's parasha. We read in the midrash of his willingness to die on behalf of his belief in one God at the test of the furnace of Ur Casdim, but this story is not even mentioned in the Torah text. It was only inferred by the rabbis.

So why is Abraham revered as the father of many nations and generations, the spiritual ancestor and guide to so many millions in the world, 3500 years after his death? The rabbis of Mishna Avot have long ago provided the answer to these questions. They stated that our father, Abraham, was sorely tested by life and the Creator ten times and he rose greater each time from the experience.

Rabbi Berel Wein, of Jerusalem commented that the most remarkable quality of the Jewish people is not necessarily or even mainly its scholarship and its contributions to the betterment of humanity, as much as it is its resilience. This resilience is personified in the life and vicissitudes of Avraham. To a great extent we all pray that we not be tested too often or too severely in our lives. Yet simply being a Jew and not deserting the cause of the Jewish people at the time of its need is a significant test.

Many are the critics and enemies of Avraham. Yet, he never loses his faith. His hopes for humanity and his loyalty to the values that have guided his way in life survive all of his experiences in life. That is the Jewish definition of the quality of resilience that has become the hallmark of Jewish life throughout the ages.

Avraham is tested many times, be it through members of his immediate family, war, famine and personal crises. The Torah chooses not to highlight his self-sacrifice to God in Ur. However, it does tell us, in painful detail, of the betrayal of Avraham and his values and life style by his ungrateful nephew, Lot. How does one deal with such a disappointment? Yet Avraham goes to war to save Lot and his wealth and it is because of Avraham alone that Lot apparently undeservedly survives the destruction of Sdom.

Avraham's son, Yishmael, behaves like a wild beast in human guise. Parents may be helpless and even blameless regarding the behaviour of their adult children, but the hurt that those adult children can inflict upon their parents with wrongful behaviour is immeasurable. Yet Avraham does not waiver, and at the end of his life, he lived to see that Yishmael repented and returned.

It is the unwavering courage and tenacity of Avraham, in the face of all defeats, hurts, hostile enemies and false friends, that most impresses us about our father. This strength of constantly renewing resilience is the legacy that he has bestowed upon us, his generations and descendants.

Shabbat Shalom

Haftarah

ArtScroll 1133 Hertz 60

ISRAEL'S FEARS ALLAYED

Isaiah XL, 27-XLI, 16

The exiles, says the prophet, need not fear that God has forgotten them, for those who trust in Him will renew their strength. Other nations rely on idols to deliver them from attack, but God Himself will lead Israel, the seed of Abraham who loved Me, to victory.

מזל טוב
Wedding anniversary

Michael and Stevie Levenston

מזל טוב
Bar and Bat Mitzvah anniversaries

Peter Forrester
Basil Harris
Leslie Schrieber
Alan Simon
Alexander Traurig

Kayla Brandon

Our congregation acknowledges the following
yahrzeit anniversaries and wishes long life to those
who are commemorating a yahrzeit
during the coming week.

חיים ארוכים

Robert Beecher	father of Judy Misrachi
Lionel Israel	grandfather of Susan Marjoram
Susan Kelvin	grandmother of Alexander Zak
Herman Myers	father of Mark Myers
Jack Rapken	grandfather of Sarah Zukerman
Nona Elaine Rosenbaum	mother of Geoffrey Rosenbaum, grandmother of Michael Rosenbaum
Bob Shteinman	husband of Diane Shteinman AM, father of Ruth Shteinman
Michael Winch	grandfather of Adele Bernard and Ian Bernard
Henry Zukerman	father of Harley Zukerman, grandfather of Zara Zukerman, Leah Kirsner and Lana Oxnam