

# PARTICIPATING IN G-DS MASTER PLAN

by Rabbi Pinchas Winston

*God said to Avram, "Go from your land, your birthplace, and your father's house, to the land which I will show you." (Bereishis 12:1)*

Like a main star who doesn't enter the play for the first time until a later scene, Avraham takes over the show in the third act. Even though he was already 48 years old at the time of the Tower of Bavel in last week's parshah, we hear nothing about him until the end of the parshah, and then, only in passing.

This is not because Avraham's life was insignificant until this week's parshah. On the contrary, he had already undergone, and passed, two of his destined 10 tests. Rather, it is because history had been insignificant until this time, until, that is, Avraham's 52nd year, when the world turned 2,000 years old.

The Talmud states:

*History is divided into three periods of 2,000 years each: 2,000 years of Tohu, 2,000 years of Torah, and 2,000 years of the Heels of Moshiach. (Sanhedrin 97a)*

Hence, it wasn't until Year 2000 from Creation that history was even ready for an Avraham Avinu. On a personal level, he was becoming who he was becoming anyhow, and influencing who he was able to influence along the way. However, he had also met with tremendous resistance along his spiritual journey, no matter how logical his arguments for a single God had been.

Success as life constantly proves, is a matter of two things, an idea, and the time in which it is launched. And, often what counts the most is the time period itself, because as Hitler, ysv'z, showed history, bad ideas can also take off if the world in which they are launched is ripe to follow them.

This is what the Talmud means when it says:

*Anyone who pushes off the moment will be pushed off by the moment. However, anyone who is pushed off because of the moment, the moment will be pushed off for him. (Brochos 64a)*

This means that even good ideas can fail if they occur at the wrong time. As Shlomo HaMelech wrote:

*Everything has an appointed season, and there is a time for every matter under the heaven. A time to give birth and a time to die; a time to plant and a time to uproot that which is planted. A time to kill and a time to heal; a time to break and a time to build. A time to weep and a time to laugh; a time of wailing*

*and a time of dancing. A time to cast stones and a time to gather stones; a time to embrace and a time to refrain from embracing. A time to seek and a time to lose; a time to keep and a time to cast away. A time to rend and a time to sew; a time to be silent and a time to speak. A time to love and a time to hate; a time for war and a time for peace. What profit has the one who works in that which he toils? (Koheles 3:1-9)*

It's a good question. If coming up with a good idea is not enough to succeed, because God's Master Plan is the overriding factor in such success, then why bother invest the time and energy in any kind of project that requires any kind of personal sacrifice? Even Avraham came close to going down with his spiritual ship:

Rav Shmuel ben Rebi Yitzchak said, "Avraham would not have been saved from the furnace of fire had it not been for the merit of his future grandson, Ya'akov. A parable explains this: once a man was brought before the Sultan to be judged, who subsequently ruled that the man should be burned to death. However, by way of astrology, it was revealed to the Sultan that in the future, the man, should he not be killed, would father a daughter who would one day marry the king. The Sultan said, 'It is worth saving this man's life for the daughter that will one day marry the king!' Thus Avraham was judged to be burned in Ur Kasdim, and when it was revealed before God that in the future, Avraham would have a descendant Ya'akov, God said, 'It is worth saving Avraham in the merit of Ya'akov!' " (Bereishis Rabbah 63:2)

First of all, there are a few important, though succinct, things to recall. The first is:

*This world is like a corridor before the World-to-Come. Rectify yourself in the corridor in order to be able to enter the Banquet Hall. (Pirkei Avos 4:16)*

Let's say Avraham Avinu would have died that day in Ur Kasdim for having stuck with God until the very end, what would the impact have been? For Avraham himself, it would have meant reaching the highest levels of eternal life, as if he had lived a perfect life until the end without actually having lived it. He would have gone to where it only gets better. Those who would have survived him would have fared far worse, being held responsible for the murder of an innocent and righteous person. More importantly, they would have lost a great teacher who would have guided them to higher spiritual plateaus from which it would have been more likely that they pass from this world to the eternal one, as opposed to spiritual oblivion.

From this point of view, leaving early, even through fire, might seem like the better way.

It also says:

*According to the effort is the reward. (Pirkei Avos 5:26)*

Notice how it says nothing about one's level of success in this world. Rather, the mishnah speaks of reward, which, as the Talmud states, is something for the next world, not this one (Avodah Zarah 3a). A person can see little, or even no results, from his effort to spiritually impact the world in a positive

way during his lifetime. Even more difficult is that he may, and often does, watch others come along later and succeed with his ideas in ways that he could not.

Historically, many originators of great ideas have gone to the grave without realizing success, virtual nobodies in the eyes of the people who benefit from their accomplishments after they are long gone. However, from Heaven's point of view, every time someone accomplishes anything through history based upon the original person's efforts, good or bad, he is accredited for the good or bad that results, and famous for either one where it counts the most.

And finally for now, there is the following principle as well:

*Rebi Shimon of Shikmona says: Moshe Rabbeinu knew that the daughters of Tzelofchad were to inherit, but he did not know whether or not they were to take the portion of the first born son. It was fitting that the section of the laws of inheritance should have been written through Moshe, but the daughters of Tzelofchad merited it, and it was written through them. Moshe furthermore, knew that the man who gathered sticks was to be put to death, as it says, "Anyone who profanes it shall surely be put to death" (Shemos 31:14), but he did not know by which death. It was fitting that the section of the man who gathered sticks should have been written through Moshe, but the gatherer had brought guilt upon himself and it was written through him. This teaches you that merit is brought about by means of the meritorious and punishment for guilt by means of the guilty. (Bava Basra 119b)*

History is also a function of match-making. Though a person may often not get a chance to succeed in the eyes of others with his successful idea, sometimes the time is right, and he succeeds beyond his wildest dreams. The starting point, however, is being available for that right time, a moment in time that we can't necessarily predict.

The best we can do is continue to develop ourselves as people worthy of merit, so that when God's Master Plan requires such a person, our resume will be on top of the stack.

Text

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