

RAISE THE BAR

by Rabbi Chaim Flom

"Someone once saw Napoleon crying and asked him why he was crying. Napoleon said, 'I looked up to Alexander the Great as a role model. Now people will look up to me as a role model. Since I'm not as good as Alexander the Great, there will be a lowering of standards of what a ruler can accomplish.'" (Rabbi Simcha Zissel Brodie zt"l, as heard from my good friend, Barnea Selavan)

When G-d commanded Abraham to sacrifice Yitzchok, G-d said "please" (Biraishis 22:1-19). The Gemara in Sanhedrin says that G-d was telling Abraham to make sure he "passes this test" and obeys His commandment, because otherwise Abraham will negate his earlier successes. (Our Rabbis tell us that G-d gave Abraham ten tests, which he passed.) Why does one failure invalidate other successes? When a person does an action, it reflects on his entire being!! Since Abraham passed all of the tests until now, people felt that his essence was one of total devotion to G-d. If he would fail one, that would reflect a lesser dedication to G-d. This in turn would affect to what extent other people would put into their service of G-d.

As parents, educators, and friends, we don't always realize it, but people DO look at us as guideposts in life. Don't lower the bar of standards of what can be accomplished in life!!

Have a great Shabbos !!

Rabbi Chaim Flom
