

## Staying Focused

In this week's *parsha*, after *Avraham* completes the ten challenges, he becomes known as *Avraham Avinu*, *Avraham*, our forefather. The climax of the challenges appears to be the *Akeidas Yitzchak* when *Avraham* faces the ultimate test to sacrifice his only son. However, *Rabbeinu Yonah*, one of the early *Rishonim*, disagrees with this thought and states that the tenth test, finding a burial place for Sarah, was the definitive test. Although, *Avraham* was promised the land of Canaan, at the time of his wife's death, he did not have control over it yet. Therefore, he could not find a place to bury Sarah there. In *Rabbeinu Yonah's* opinion, *Avraham's* belief and trust in *Hashem* that he would find the appropriate burial for his wife was the ultimate challenge.

Many commentaries are perplexed by *Rabbeinu Yonah's* outlook. How is it possible that any test would be greater than willing to give up one's only son that *Hashem* promised would be the future of the Jewish people? *Avraham's* mission in life, to spread Judaism to future generations, was about to be lost if he sacrificed *Yitzchak*. Could any test be greater than that?

*Rabbeinu Yonah's* idea teaches us an important lesson for our daily lives. I think all would agree that there is no comparison between the two challenges, *Akeidas Yitzchak* and finding Sarah a burial spot. There are times in our lives that we can muster up the strength to pass a really big test. However, the key to consistency for one that serves *Hashem* is to be able to pass the small test that follows the big one for all of them are important.

This idea is illustrated often in professional sports. Many times there is a mediocre team that rises to the challenge and beats a better team. The very next week that mediocre team loses to a much weaker one. In life, many times people tend to lose focus on the smaller issues. They rise to the occasion for the big challenge but fall short on the smaller one.

*Avraham* was able to become our forefather with his unwavering dedication to *Hashem*. He met each challenge, big or small, with steadfast faith in *Hashem*. Our job is to transmit this message to our children. Value every challenge, big or small, for they are all opportunities to grow in our service of *Hashem*.