**Life is a Test**

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**#1**

**Pirkei Avos 5:4**

*Our forefather Avraham was tested with ten trials and he withstood them all - to show the degree of our forefather Avraham’s love for G-d.*

**Rabbi Chaim Volozhiner, Ruach Chaim (commentary on Pirkei Avos)**

Over the centuries, there have been many causes for which Jews have become martyrs - giving up their lives in order to sanctify the name of G-d. Many of the extraordinary character traits that Jews have exhibited are actually legacies that we inherited from our Patriarchs. Throughout the centuries, Jews have had the strength to go to their deaths sanctifying G-d’s Name because our father Avraham did so first.

**#2**

**Question: Life is a constant series of trials and tests.**

**How do you define a “trial” or a “test”? What is their purpose?**

**#3**

The word for trial or test in Hebrew is *Nisayon*, root of the word is *Nes* -

**(1) Rambam**

Same root *Nes*, as in “banner”;

**(2) Rabbi S. R. Hirsch**

*Nasa* (similar sounding word) - to lift, elevate;

**(3) Sfas Emes**

*Nes* - same root as in “miracle”.

**Question: What do we learn from these explanations about the nature of tests?**

**#4**

**Question: According to our tradition, G-d knows everything.**

**Why would He then give a test if He knows the outcome?**

**#5**

**Question: Would you consider some of these examples as tests?**

**If yes, which ones?**

1. A traffic jam
2. an unexpected (and unwanted) guest
3. a computer malfunction
4. winning $25,000 in lottery
5. a telephone call just as you're falling asleep
6. a financial loss
7. a job promotion
8. moving to another city

**#6**

**Mesillas Yesharim (Path of the Just), chap. 1**
*All the affairs of the world, whether for the good or for the bad, are trials for a person. Poverty on the one hand and wealth on the other.*

**Question: What is your opinion about this statement?**

**#7**

**From the Morning Prayers**

*Do not bring us into the power of error, nor into the power of transgression and sin, not into the power of challenge…*

**Question: If tests are so important for our growth, why then are we asking G-d not to give us any challenges?**

**#8**

**Question: Would it be a good idea to test your employee, friend, significant other? If yes, how?**

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**#9**

You see an old man dropping a few one-hundred-dollar bills on the street. You quickly pick it up and run after the man to return his money.

Two men come out of hiding, holding a camera pointing at you, congratulating you and telling you that you are part of the classic lost money experiment which will be broadcasted throughout North America.

**Questions:**

**(a) How would you feel about it?**

**(b) Would such an experience help you to go through life's tests?**

**(c) What would be some good advice you could give your friend who is in the middle of a life test?**

**#10**

**Question: What is your takeaway from today's discussion?**