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Close Reading: Analysis of The Story of Abraham (Genesis chapters 15-22)

“ Fear not, Abram: I am a shield to thee, thy reward very much.” (Genesis15: 1).

The above verse sums up the entire paragraph where God seems to use vision as the platform to convey his message to Abraham. In his dream, Abraham had God telling him that he would never go back on his promise to reward or save those who believed in him. While Abraham was protecting his kingdom with all his heart and soul, he knew he was doing a service to God. He was so much involved in the protection of his subjects, that he hardly had the time to spend with Sarah. Despite his heroics to stand for his people and vanquish the aggressors, he couldn't keep Sarah happy because they had no children. It was during one of those nights when he was thinking about God that he was not able to keep his wife happy even after so many years, did he see the vision of God speak to him. The divine promise “ I am a shield thee,” signifies the theory that those who believe in God will forever be protected by him. It may not appear to happen before one's eyes, but God has his way of doing his bit to his beloved. In coming to him through his dream, it illustrates that God reminded Abraham that he didn't feel depressed as he hasn't forgotten his promise to him, and would keep it.

While promising to protect his wife in posterity in Egypt, and defeating his foes in the East, he had promised his people that he would deliver to them the Promised Land, but that had no materialized. Fearing that he couldn't keep his promises, Abraham had become anxious and looked defeated. With the fear that their future looked bleak despite his efforts, he was crestfallen,

God appeared in his dream and said, “ Fear not, I am thy shield.” This statement, ““ Fear notI am a shield to thee, thy reward very much” has a lot of meaning. First of all, it acts as a catalyst to motivate Abraham from his depressed state. It is very easy for a depressed person to shun responsibilities and admit defeat. This is something Abraham could least afford to do, given that any laxity from him could mean the end of his reign and the big dreams he has for his people and wife. Therefore, Gods words come at the right time. When Abraham had completed most of his mission and reminiscence his past, it suddenly struck him that while he was honouring most of his promises, he has discarded his wife’s. This had made him sad. Had Abraham not had that vision in his dream then, he would have broken down and lost faith in the Lord. The words of God were also a reconfirmation of his promise to Abraham that he wouldn’t dishonour his promise to him.

In the context of its relationship with other parts of the play, the part 15: 1 of the Genesis magnifies the entire content of the Genesis in a single sentence. The Genesis speaks of God creating the world, and then the first man and woman. The man he made was ordained to be his regent; his obedient follower and messiah, but by betraying his faith, and disobeying God’s wishes, the world was destroyed through flood. However, God does allow Noah to build a boat to carry the innocent animals in it till the fury subsides. When God set out to build the world again, the world has by then become a corrupt land. But this time, instead of destroying it, God commands Abraham to be the seed for its salvation. At God’s behest, Abraham descends to Earth to fulfil his desires, when God promises them a future of posterity and

greatness.

On the question of symbolism, it can be said that the words of wisdom are spoken in the true spirit of its meaning. For Abraham, the vision of God speaking those words meant a new lease of life. He was on the verge of submitting himself in defeat, but the vision rekindles the fire in him, and he sets out to do what he was commanded to do. This passage has a number of important messages to modern man. Today, the world competes with each other from supremacy on the economic front. The world of business is run on the pretext that the management of an organization will keep its promise of rewarding those who remain faithful and focused in their work. Assume that despite their sincere and hard work that propels their organization's growth, the management forgets to reward the performers with their promise of rewards. The effect of this can have serious repercussions.

Employees work to meet their needs. These needs include food, shelter, and clothing; not necessarily in that order. Once they have met one of their basic needs, they train their focus to attain their next one. This cycle of prioritizing needs change from time-to-time, and the only way they can achieve their needs is by working. Organizations throw challenges and influence performance by offering employees with incentives and rewards. The challenge is met with renewed valor, as employees target the incentives and rewards to achieve their goal. Their effort improves productivity, which in turn enhances profit and growth. The management is happy and they renew their promise by rewarding the star performers, and offering incentives to all those who worked to achieve success. However, what would happen if the management didn't keep its promise to reward the performers for their hard

work and personal sacrifices? The employees will feel cheated and show their displeasure by slowing down work; absenting themselves from work often; or going on strike. This can be least afforded by organizations.

Therefore, like how God came to Abraham in his vision and promised him that he will keep his promise and shield him from danger, the management must also encourage their employees from time-to-time and honor their promise.

This theory of encouragement and promise has driven me to be what I am today. My dad always presented me with a challenge that if I performed well in my studies, he would buy me something or the other, and I would work hard to achieve it. Even when I failed in my attempt to achieve the set goal, dad still gave me a present; even though it wasn't what he promised, to keep me from falling crestfallen. Therefore, dad, by being by my side at all times, kept me motivated, and I'm happy to say that I am a better person today because of him.