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the expression on the faces of the doctors and nurses, I got really scared. In their eyes, I read, 'He's a dead man.' I knew, right then and there, that I needed to take action"

"Action? What kind of action?"

"Well, there was a big, burly nurse shouting questions at me," said the man. "She asked if I was allergic to anything. 'Yes,' I replied. All at once, the doctors and nurses stopped working as they waited for me to tell them what I was allergic to. Amid the sudden silence, I took a deep breath and yelled, 'Bullets!' That broke the tension and they immediately got to work. Over their laughter, I told them, 'I am choosing to live. Operate on me as if I am alive, not dead.'" He lived thanks to his unshaken *Emunah* - belief, the skill of his doctors, and his amazing attitude. Every day we have the choice to live fully.

TORAH GEMS

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From this *posuk*, we learn a profound lesson in spirituality: Some people think that the ability to grow and reach great heights in *Torah* and *Yiddishkeit*, is an achievement that is only possible for a select few, the holy and wise men of *Bnei Yisroel*, but well beyond the reach of the average person. However, the *Torah* tells us that this is not the case. Even the greatest levels of spirituality are well within each and every person's grasp. One needs only to make a sincere decision to pursue this goal and *Hashem* will help him to succeed.

R' Abraham J. Twerski Shlit" a uses a case study of one of his patients as a *moshol* - parable. A man who had a terrible drinking problem would vehemently deny that he had a problem, in spite of overwhelming evidence to the contrary. No matter how much he drank and made a spectacle of himself, he would steadfastly maintain that he was perfectly in control, that he could hold his liquor. Ultimately, he was forced to enter a alcohol treatment program and after a number of months he finally began to show progress on his way to recovery. It was then that he confided, "The real reason why I was so obstinate in refusing to admit that I had a drinking problem was because I was afraid I wouldn't be able to quit." The man knew all along that he had a problem but denied it publicly because he feared he would fail if he tried to quit. He insisted there was no problem and thus continued his self-destructive behavior.

This is what Moshe was telling *Bnei Yisroel*. The *Torah*, with its 613 *mitzvos*, might appear so difficult to fulfill that people will say, "What's the use of trying? I can't possibly comply with all the requirements of the *Torah*." Not only is it possible, it's even simpler than one might think. All one has to do is make the decision, commit himself to it, and the rest will follow quite easily.

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מעשה אבות... סימן לבנים

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There was once a man who owned and operated a flourishing business in the diamond district. He was popular and well-liked and his employees especially admired him for his constantly upbeat attitude about life and business. It happened that he once arrived early one morning to work and was held up at gunpoint by three armed robbers. They wanted everything and while trying to open the safe, his hand, shaking from nervousness, slipped off the combination. The robbers panicked and shot him. Luckily, he was found relatively quickly and rushed to the local traumacenter.

After 18 hours of surgery and weeks of intensive care, the man was released from the hospital with fragments of the bullet still in his body. It took months but eventually the man healed and went back to work. His employees were happy to see him and they asked how he was feeling. He never lost his good cheer and sense of humor. "If I were any better, I'd be twins," he jokingly replied. But then someone asked him what had gone through his mind as the robbery took place.

He thought for a moment. "Well, the first thing that went through my mind was that I should have locked the door," he replied, with a wink. "Then, as I lay on the floor, I remembered that I had two choices: I could choose to live, or I could choose to die. I chose to live."

"But weren't you scared? Did you lose consciousness?" the questions kept coming. He smiled, "The paramedics were great. They kept telling me I was going to be fine. But when they wheeled me into the emergency room and I saw