

"And Lot journeyed from the east." (13:11)

Rashi interprets Lot's journey from the east as creating more than a geographical distance. Lot "removed himself from okug ka ubunse, the Originator of the world". This separation was a critical choice on Lot's part. He was leaving the presence of the pious, saintly Avraham to dwell among the wicked, sinful nation of Sodom. Lot travelled away from Hashem. He withdrew his faith in the Almighty. This decision was the forerunner of Lot's spiritual descent. Indeed, what seemed to be a simple choice then turned out to be the determining factor in his descendants' "spiritual" decadence.

We seldom realize the long-term effects our decisions have on our children's future. As *Horav Moshe Swift z.l.*, notes, history is more than a mere record of events. It is the slow unveiling of a Divine scheme. Every action, every decision we undertake has ramifications for tomorrow. *Horav Swift* cites the *Ramban* who observes in his critical comment concerning Avraham's behavior with Pharaoh, "In the place where justice is to be exacted is where evil and sin was perpetrated." Where injustice has been committed, justice must be done. Pharaoh showed mercy towards Avraham, sending him off with a royal escort despite Avraham's "seeming" misrepresentation of the truth. Avraham's insincerity was counteracted by Pharaoh's beneficence and was requited when Avraham's descendants returned generations later to become Pharaoh's slaves. No act is unrequited!

This is probably the greatest lesson of history applying to the individual, as well as the community. No evil goes unnoticed, no good deed goes unrewarded. We may inately think we have fooled or hurt someone or "gotten away" with a caper. This belief is a travesty of the facts. Avraham's single act of duplicity, albeit justified, brought his children back to Egypt. Pharaoh's single act of generosity, regardless of its insincerity, was repaid by Avraham's descendants.

Justice will prevail, if not now, then tomorrow. Parents who think they can raise their children in any manner they choose have only to wait and see the "fruits" of their decisions. Lot's act did not affect only himself. His decision shaped the destiny of his descendants. We do not know how or when we are to be punished or rewarded. We must be unequivocally aware, however, that requital and compensation are realities which will reflect our every action.