

## "And Lot lifted up his eyes and beheld all of the plain of Jordan." (13:10)

The narrative concerning Lot is puzzling. He accompanied his mentor, Avraham, throughout his exile. His physical resemblance to Avraham reflected the spirit of an individual who maintained a high standard of morality. Suddenly he separated as Lot sought out the fertile lands. In Lot's next appearance he had been transformed into a depraved individual with the result that the *Torah* prohibits his male descendants from being included in *Am Yisrael*. How are we to rationalize this enigma?

*Horav Yisrael Salanter Z"l* tells of a *Yeshiva* student who was diligent in *Torah* study. Upon leaving the sheltered walls of the *Yeshiva*, he was completely transformed into an avaricious businessman. His metamorphosis did not transpire suddenly. This sordid desire for wealth existed even while he was in the confines of the *Yeshiva*. There was no avenue, however, for him to pursue his ambitions. Only when he left the place of his spiritual sustenance did he disclose this evil attribute. Analogously, Lot's negative characteristic lay dormant, waiting for the opportunity to reach fruition. Every individual must examine his own personality in order to develop an acute awareness of his weaknesses. He will then be able to deal responsibly with difficult moral situations when they arise.