

## Go out of your land and from your birth place and from your father's home. (12:1)

In *Pirkei Avos*, *Chazal* enumerate the ten *nisyonos*, trials, to which Avraham was subjected. Some commentators count Avraham's ordeal in which he was thrown into Nimrod's fiery furnace as the first test. This is followed by Hashem's command to leave his birthplace and the ensuing abduction of Sarah. This order seems enigmatic. One would think that the logical sequence of trials should be from the easy to the difficult to discern Avraham's progressive degree in faith. It seems clear that if one were to withstand a difficult challenge to his faith by walking into a fiery furnace, the subsequent trial of leaving home would pale by contrast.

*Rabbi Ch. Sheinberg, Shlita* responds to this question in the following manner. He cites the *Drashos Ha'Ran*, who explains the reason that Avraham sent Eliezer away to seek a wife for Yitzchak. Avraham could have performed the same test which Eliezer had staged in Canaan in order to probe Rivkah's moral character. Why was

Avraham so adamant in his demand that Eliezer not take a Canaanite girl for Yitzchak? Is the daughter of Besuel, the heretic, better than a Canaanite girl of equal character? The *Ran* explains that the Canaanites possessed negative character traits as a part of their integral hereditary makeup. The evil which flowed through their genes was unlike the atheistic and idolatrous tendencies exhibited by Besuel and his ilk. Philosophic misconception and ideological inaccuracies are not transmitted to children. It is clearly conceivable to take Besuel's daughter, a child of unquestionable moral character, out of his house and develop her positive characteristics. Canaanite girls, although they may currently exhibit good traits, are natural heirs to a virulent strain of immoral tendencies. They or their descendants could easily revert to the evil traits of their ancestors.

One's inner drives, both subconscious and conscious, are the prevalent factors in character development. With this idea in mind, *Rabbi Sheinberg* explains why, indeed, a challenge to Avraham's emotional belief was a greater indication of his resolute faith than a test of his intellectual sophistication. There are moments in one's life when his emotions must overcome obstacles which demonstrates his true constitution. These tests cause us to grow far more than the intellectual exercises which we rationally work out in our minds.

In entering the fire of *Uhr Casdim*, Avraham showed his philosophic acumen. He publicly indicated his cogent belief in the Almighty. By asking him to leave his birthplace and family, Hashem challenged Avraham's subconscious resources, which are not privy to the strictures of human logic. This test was a purely emotional one. Rarely does one fall prey to heresy because of intellectual disbelief. Personal problems and sufferings destroy one's stamina. Emotions affect us much more than logic. The pain and sorrow which accompany personal difficulties wear down one's belief. Our response to the piercing questions of "Why am I suffering?" and "Where is the

merciful G-d?" indicates our genuine faith. Avraham Avinu was able to demonstrate that his belief extended beyond the cerebral to the emotional and subconscious levels.