

## TORAH THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK

### PARSHAS LECH LECHA

(Genesis 12-17)

Copied from AISH HATORAH

#### “Leaving the Garbage Behind”

“And God said to Avram, go for yourself from your land, from your relatives, and from your father's house to the land that I will show you”. (Gen. 12:1)

The Torah portion begins with Avraham's first trial: to give up his entire past and follow God's lead to a new land: God said to Avram, "Go for yourself from your land, from your relatives, and from your father's house to the land that I will show you." When a person leaves his hometown, he first leaves his father's house, then his neighborhood (his relatives), and then his country. Why does the verse list these in the opposite order?

When a person makes a physical departure, he first leaves his father's house, then his relatives, and then his country. However, the verse is alluding to Avraham's departure in a spiritual sense. "Leaving your hometown" means changing your old ways and leaving behind your bad habits. Therefore, the order in the verse is reversed, starting with the easier things. The culture of a person's country is not so deeply ingrained, and so it can be uprooted relatively easily. More difficult is to get rid of bad habits a person acquired amongst his social circle and friends. Finally, to shake off bad traits acquired at home is very challenging.(1)

The Sfas Emes quotes the Zohar, which states that God called out "Go for yourself," in every generation, but Avraham was the only one to respond to God's call. God still calls out "go for yourself" today, and we need to respond. We must distance ourselves from bad habits and serve God even though it may require inconvenience or hardship.

#### NOTES

1. Lev Shalom (R' Shalom Shwadron)