

RCA Chomer Lidrush Lech Lecha 5787

For Shabbat Aliyah

Nisyonos (R. Yerachmiel Roness, *Aloh Na'aleh: Aliyah and Eretz Yisrael in the Weekly Parshah*, pp. 20–22)

Hashem already knows everything, so a *nisayon* isn't meant to inform Him. Its purpose is to show Avraham, and through him all of mankind, what he is capable of. [According to R. Roness](#), the Rambam notes that the first and last tests both contain the words *lech lecha* (12:1 and 22:2), and both send Avraham off without a clear destination: “the land I will show you” and “one of the mountains which I will tell you.” The Midrash asks which of the two tests was more beloved to Hashem, which suggests they share a theme. Nechama Leibowitz explains that the first test required Avraham to close the door on his past, and the *Akeidah* required him to be willing to give up his future.

R. Roness adapts the Midrash's question: which of these is harder for the *oleh*? *Aliyah* weakens ties to birthplace, community and family, and many also fear it will cost them their future, such as their careers. His answer is that *aliyah* transforms a person. Veteran *olim* admit they are not the same person who got off the plane. He used to reassure prospective *olim* that, unlike Avraham, who went blindly, they could be sure they were giving their children a brighter Jewish future at the Torah center of the world. He admits this isn't always true. “Just this past week,” he writes, young people who came to the land were killed in battle and in terror attacks.

To deal with that honestly, he brings Rav Pinchas Horowitz of Frankfurt. Rashi reads *lech lecha* as “for your benefit,” but if Avraham was told the move was good for him, where is the test? The answer is that Avraham's *nisayon* was to ignore the promise and go only because Hashem commanded it, as 12:4 says, “Avram went, as Hashem had told him.” R. Roness concludes that we hope coming to Israel brings *bracha* and *hatzlacha*, but our move should be driven only by the command of *lech lecha*, and that is our *nisayon*.