IN HONOR OF
Daniel Shlomo שיחי' Hirman
On the occasion of his Bar Mitzvah, 13 Cheshvan, 5775
AND IN HONOR OF HIS BROTHER AND SISTERS שיחיו
AND IN HONOR OF THEIR PARENTS
Mr. & Mrs. **Aryeh Leib (Alex)** and **Ela Eidel (Elina)** שיחיו **Hirman**
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LIKKUTEI SICHOS

AN ANTHOLOGY OF TALKS

by the
Lubavitcher Rebbe
Rabbi Menachem M. Schneerson

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generation, all matters of Divine service have already been concluded and completed, and we stand ready to greet our righteous Moshiach. We are therefore at a time when all obstacles and hindrances have been nullified. Since this is so, there is now not just **the existence** of Moshiach, but also **the revelation** of Moshiach. Now we need only **greet** our righteous Moshiach in actual reality!

…With this in mind, every activity must be penetrated with the subject of Moshiach and Redemption, including one's eating and drinking. For the longing for the meal of Livyason, Shor HaBor and Yayin Meshumar[16] is so great that even **after** the meal one remains hungry for it. Consequently, he will complain to G-d that he cannot fulfill the commandment of "And you shall eat **and you shall be satisfied** and you shall bless"[17] **in earnest** until G-d seats us at His table for the feast of the world to come.

(From the discourse of Shabbos Parshas Vayeira, 18 MarChesvhan 5752)

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of the Jewish people in that generation (See the discourse title "Padeh V'Shalom" in Shaarei Teshuva of the Mitteler Rebbe, chapter 12).

16. *[Levyaton is the great fish, Shor HaBor the great ox and Yayin Meshumar the aged wine that will feed the righteous in the era of Moshiach. Translator's note.]*

17. *Eikev* 8:10.

In loving memory of
Horav **Schneur Zalman Halevi** ע״ה
ben Horav **Yitzchok Elchonon Halevi** הי״ד
Shagalov
Passed away on 21 Tamuz, 5766

Reb **Dovid Asniel** ben Reb **Eliyahu** ע״ה
Ekman
Passed away on 5 Sivan - Erev Shavuot, 5765

Mrs. **Devora Rivka** bas Reb **Yosef Eliezer** ע״ה
Marenburg
Passed away on the second day
of Rosh Chodesh Adar, 5766

Reb **Yitzchok Moshe** (Ian)
ben Reb **Dovid Asniel** ע״ה
Ekman (Santiago, Chile)
Passed away on the 24th day of Shevat, 5769
ת. נ. צ. ב. ה.

And in honor of
Mrs. **Esther Shaindel** bas **Fraidel Chedva** שתחי׳
Shagalov

Dedicated by
Rabbi & Mrs. **Yosef Y.** and **Gittel Rochel** שיחיו
Shagalov

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Rabbi Yosef Y. Shagalov,
Executive Director

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HaMikdash[10] , "The sanctuary, O L-rd, which Your hands have established."[11]

* * *

Furthermore, and this is the main point:

It was explained above, that Moshiach exists in the spark of Moshiach (the aspect of Yechida[12]) within each and every Jew. In addition Moshiach also exists in the literal sense (the general Yechida). For it is known that "in every generation an individual from the descendants of Yehudah is born who is qualified to be the Moshiach for Israel,"[13] and that "one who is worthy because of his righteousness to be the Redeemer, and when the time arrives, G-d will reveal it to him and will send him, etc."[14] And if it were not for the undesirable things that got mixed in, which delayed and obstructed, he would have been revealed and come in actual reality.

And according to the pronouncement of my sainted father-in-law , the leader of our generation, the Moshiach[15] of our

10. *Midrash Tehillim* on the verse.

11. *Beshallach* 15:17.

12. *[Yechida literally means singular or singularity. It is the part of the soul that is directly connected with and thus an actual part of G-d above. Translator's note.]*

13. The commentary of the Bartenura on Megillas Rus.

14. See *Sha'alos v'Teshuvos Chasam Sofer Choshen Mishpat* (vol. 6) at the end (section 98). And see *S'dei Chemed*, Peas HaSadeh, entry Aleph, klal 70. And in other places.

15. The general Yechida, which shines through and is revealed in the soul of the leader of the generation and therefore includes all the souls

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Volume VI: *Bereishis*

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In English rendition
by
Rabbi Eliyahu Touger

VAYEIRA

AVRAHAM'S HERITAGE OF KINDNESS

Our Sages[1] interpret the word "L-rd" in the verse,[2] "My L-rd, do not pass from Your servant" as referring to G-d, i.e., Avraham was asking G-d to wait while he cared for the wayfarers he had spotted. And thus they conclude: "Affording hospitality to guests comes before receiving G-d's Presence."

This principle is echoed in the *Mishneh Torah,* the *Rambam*'s Code of Law:[3]

> This is the statute which Avraham instituted and the path of kindness which he practiced: to give food and drink to wayfarers and to accompany them. [Indeed,] affording hospitality to guests surpasses receiving G-d's Presence, [as reflected in the verse:[4] "And he saw three men...]."

The wording chosen by the *Rambam* raises two questions:

a) In the *Mishneh Torah,* the *Rambam* generally states laws without citing their source. An exception is made, however, when such citation clarifies the law in question. In the instance at hand, the principle "Affording hospitality to guests surpasses receiving G-d's Presence" does not appear to be clarified by the verse which the *Rambam* cites. What is his purpose in bringing this quote?

1. *Shabbos* 127a.
2. *Bereishis* 18:3.
3. *Mishneh Torah, Hilchos Eivel* 14:2.
4. *Bereishis* 18:2.

Dovid, Melech HaMoshiach will be accomplished in actual reality.

Our generation, the third generation from the Rebbe Rashab and his students, the soldiers of the House of David, will be witnesses to the **conclusion and completion** of their Divine service to bring the Redemption in actual reality through Dovid, Melech HaMoshiach. In the words of my sainted father-in-law, the leader of our generation, while he was alive in this world, all the Divine service **has already been concluded and completed**, and we stand prepared to greet Dovid, Melech HaMoshiach. This is all the more so the case, since the Divine service has continued in a manner of "the L-rd has give you a heart to understand and eyes to see and ears to hear."[8]

We now find ourselves in the 90th year[9] - which follows the conclusion of the 89th year, which is connected with the 89th Psalm that concludes "who revile the footsteps of your anointed" and "Blessed is the L-rd forever amen and amen." This refers to a complete victory in the wars of the House of Dovid. [This puts us] at the beginning of the period connected with the 90th Psalm, which concludes and ends with "May the pleasantness of the L-rd our G-d be upon us... and the work of our hands **establish it**." This refers to the future Beis

8. Tavo 29:3.
9. *[The letter equivalent for the number 90 is "Tzadik." The word "Tzadik" has two meanings: the name of a letter and a righteous person. This discourse was delivered in the Rebbe's 90th year. Translator's note.]*

BESURAS HAGEULO
The Announcement Of The Redemption

47

The accomplishment of the Rebbe Rashab[1] in founding the Yeshiva Tomchei Temimim is explained in the well-known discourse[2] "All Who Go Out to the Wars of House of David." The students of the Yeshiva Tomchei Temimim are the "soldiers of the House of David" who fight the wars of the House of David against those "who revile the footsteps of your anointed."[3] In the words of the Rambam in his *Laws of Kings and their Wars and the King Moshiach*:[4] "He [Moshiach] will fight the wars of G-d" until he is "victorious."[5] [That Moshiach will be victorious] is also indicated by what follows after "who revile the footsteps of your anointed," in the words "Blessed is the L-rd forever **Amen and Amen**."[6] For "Amen" (and all the more so when Amen is repeated) testifies to victory in war,[7] through which the coming and revelation of

1. *[The founder of the Yeshiva Tomchei Temimim was the Rebbe Rashab, father of the Previous Rebbe and the fifth Lubavitcher Rebbe. Translator's note.]*
2. The discourse of Simchas Torah 5661 - *Likkutei Dibburim* vol. 4, 787b and following. *Sefer HaSichos* 5702 end of p. 141 and following.
3. *Tehillim* 89:52. *[The word for "anointed" in Hebrew is "Moshiach." Thus this verse is seen as a reference to the king Moshiach, descendent of King David, who will bring Redemption. Translator's note.]*
4. End of chapter 11.
5. *[Clearly Moshiach will not fight the wars all by himself. Rather, as the king, he will direct his soldiers, the students of the Yeshiva Tomchei Temimim, in battle. This is the connection between the passage from the Rambam and the directive given at the founding of the yeshiva. Translator's note.]*
6. Ibid, 53.
7. See *Nazir* at the end. See there for cross references.

b) In his *Commentary to the Mishnah*,[5] the *Rambam* states that our observance of the *mitzvos* stems, not from their observance by the Patriarchs, but rather from G-d's command to Moshe on Mount Sinai. For example, our observance of the *mitzvah* of circumcision has its source, not in Avraham's circumcision of himself and his household, but rather in G-d's command to Moshe[6] that we should circumcise ourselves as Avraham did.

The same applies with regard to all the *mitzvos* commanded before the giving of the Torah. The *Rambam's* reference to "the statute which Avraham instituted and the path of kindness which he practiced" is thus problematic. We observe these *mitzvos,* not because they are part of Avraham's spiritual heritage, but because G-d commanded them to us on Mount Sinai. As the *Rambam* himself writes,[7] the *mitzvah* of affording hospitality is an extension of the *mitzvah* of "Love your neighbor as yourself."[8] What then does the reference to Avraham's conduct teach us?

DISCOVERING SOURCES OF LAW WITH MYSTIC TEXTS

These questions can be resolved by referring to a similar passage in the *Tikkunei Zohar*[9] which states: "A person who receives guests with a full heart is considered as if he receives the Divine Presence." This quote appears to contradict the quote from the *Talmud* cited previously, which states that receiving guests *surpasses* receiving the Divine Presence. Differences of opinion among our Sages is not an unusual matter. We find such dissimilarities within the *Talmud* itself, and between the *Talmud* and the *Zohar*. In this instance, however, it is difficult to say that the *Tikkunei Zohar* differs with the *Talmud,* because the *Talmud's* statements are based on an

5. *Chulin* 7:6.
6. *Vayikra* 12:3.
7. *Mishneh Torah, loc. cit.*:1.
8. *Vayikra* 19:18.
9. *Tikkun* 6.

explicit verse from the Torah which describes Avraham's conduct. Statements in the *Tikkunei Zohar* cannot contradict a law which the *Talmud* derives from such a source.

OBSERVING *MITZVOS* ON THE SPIRITUAL PLANE

The meaning of the statement in the *Tikkunei Zohar* can be clarified by understanding the spiritual level attained by Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai, author of that statement. With regard to Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai, it is stated:[10] "His Torah was his occupation," and he is described[11] as one of "the men of a higher plane." Even the revealed dimensions of Torah law clarify the greatness implied by these two descriptions. And in the texts of *Pnimiyus HaTorah* and *Chassidus,*[12] their uniqueness is even more strongly highlighted.

In view of Rabbi Shimon's spiritual level, one can understand his appreciation of what it means to "receive the Divine Presence." Indeed, the *Zohar* identifies Rabbi Shimon with the Divine Presence itself, stating: "What is meant by 'the face of the L-rd G-d'? This is Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai."[13]

So we can appreciate that what "receiving G-d's Presence" means to us — receiving an awareness of the inner dimensions of G-dliness — was for Rabbi Shimon a continuous experience. The inner dimension of G-d's Presence always shined forth for him. So when *he* speaks of "receiving G-d's Presence," we must understand that he is speaking of a higher level.

Rabbi Shimon was thus saying that showing hospitality to guests is equivalent *to his own higher level* of "receiving G-d's

10. *Shabbos* 11a.
11. *Sukkah* 45b.
12. See *Tanya,* the conclusion of ch. 10, *Emek HaMelech,* the conclusion of sec. 1.
13. We find a similar concept in texts of Torah law. The *Jerusalem Talmud* (*Bikkurim* 3:3) comments on the verse (*Chabbakuk* 2:20): "G-d is in His holy Sanctuary," "This refers to Rabbi Yitzchak b'Rabbi Lazar in the study hall of Ceasaria." See also the commentary of Rabbeinu Bachaye (*Shmos* 33:7).

dishkeit. Although they live in a free land, they will be ready to give of themselves — offering their possessions and if necessary their lives — for their faith in the Torah and its *mitzvos,* and for everything which is connected to their Jewish heritage.

G-D'S BLESSING

G-d responds with generous blessings for the support given to *yeshivos* and Torah schools. He does not give merely "a dollar for a dollar," but rather multiplies our gifts several fold. And this applies not only in the financial sphere — that is self-evident — but with regard to all matters: health, long life, and satisfaction from children. (This is also reflected with regard to Avraham: Although he began with only one son, he was granted the promise:[35] "I will greatly increase your descendants, [multiplying them] as the stars of the heavens, and the sand on the seashore.")

"Do not feel bad about giving."[36] On the contrary, may G-d enable us to emulate the example set by Avraham and Yitzchak, and give with happiness. G-d will repay this generosity several fold, not only in the financial sphere, but in all aspects of life.[37]

(Adapted from the *sichah* delivered to supporters of the Lubavitcher *Yeshivah, Tomchei Temimim,* Cheshvan 17, 5719)

35. *Bereishis* 22:17.
36. Cf. *Devarim* 15:10.
37. See the beginning of *Torah Or* which states that through charity, one's mind and one's heart are refined one thousand-fold. See the explanation in *Likkutei Torah LeGimmel Parshiyos*.

selves is the establishment of *yeshivos* and Torah schools.[33] And the approach is always not merely to give the students the minimum, but to develop them to their fullest potential, "to make the Torah great and glorious."[34]

THE SOURCE OF SELF-SACRIFICE

On this basis, we can appreciate the connection between Avraham's planting of a tamarisk tree (and all the broader implications of the word *eshel*) and the binding of Yitzchak. The power of *mesirus nefesh* which motivated Avraham and Yitzchak to carry out the *akeidah* came from the tamarisk tree which Avraham had planted, i.e., from his willingness to do good and spread kindness in a manner which transcends reason. Although Avraham and Yitzchak had lived freely in the land of the Philistines for many years and did not suffer oppression, their unbounded kindness enabled them to summon up the self-sacrifice necessary for the *akeidah* with joy.

WHAT IS NECESSARY TODAY

This serves as a lesson for subsequent generations. Today, what is demanded of the Jewish people is *mesirus nefesh,* self-sacrifice, and this is particularly true with regard to *chinuch,* education. The resources for which we have labored must be dedicated to the education of children — our own, and the children of others.

Moreover, the intent must be to give them not only the bare necessities, but to advance their education to the most complete degree, giving them everything possible in the realms of *Yiddishkeit,* Torah, and *mitzvos.*

In this manner, we will raise a generation of *mesirus nefesh Yidden,* Jews prepared to sacrifice themselves for *Yid-*

33. See *Yoma* 28b.
34. *Yeshayahu* 42:21.

Presence." But while Rabbi Shimon considered his own level to be the standard for the world at large,[14] others who have not reached his exalted plane regard the showing of hospitality as surpassing the reception of the Divine Presence.

Another point: In *Likkutei Torah,*[15] it is explained that Rabbi Shimon's soul was on such a high level that his spiritual service alone could draw down the influence which others draw down through the observance of *mitzvos* on the physical plane.

This concept is reflected in the fact that during the 13 years which Rabbi Shimon hid from the Romans in the cave, he surely did not have the opportunity to fulfill the *mitzvos* of eating *matzah,* making *Kiddush* with wine, taking a *lulav* and *esrog,* dwelling in a *sukkah,* and the like. It is true that while hiding he was *anus,* prevented from observing these *mitzvos* by forces beyond his control. Nevertheless, although "the Torah does not hold an *anus* liable [for punishment]," it is difficult to say that Divine Providence would have allowed Rabbi Shimon to be without the Divine influence drawn down by these *mitzvos.* This leads to the conclusion that through his spiritual service alone, Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai was able to achieve what others are able to do only through the actual observance of *mitzvos.*

Unquestionably, the actual observance of *mitzvos* was also relevant to Rabbi Shimon. Thus the *Jerusalem Talmud*[16] asks rhetorically: "And does Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai not agree that [Torah study] should be interrupted in order to build a *sukkah,* or to prepare a *lulav*?" Nevertheless, as reflected by Rabbi Shimon's experience in the cave, the actual performance of *mitzvos* — including the *mitzvah* of receiving guests — was much more important to others than it was to him.

14. See *Berachos* 35b.
15. *Parshas Shemini,* the *maamar* entitled *Leviathan.*
16. *Shabbos* 1:2.

[To cite a parallel concept: Although the violation of a negative commandment is generally punishable by lashes, this punishment is not given if the violation does not itself involve a deed.[17] We find several *halachic* authorities[18] who maintain that whenever a negative commandment generally does not involve a deed, one is not punished by lashes even in a particular instance when the violation *did* involve a deed. Since the violation of that prohibition *generally* does not involve a deed, the performance of a deed is not deemed significant. Similarly, since Rabbi Shimon's spiritual service could take the place of the actual observance of *mitzvos,* even when he actually observed a *mitzvah,* that observance was not as significant for him.]

Similarly with regard to showing hospitality to guests, Rabbi Shimon observed this *mitzvah* on such a high spiritual level that its physical trappings were not as significant. Therefore the spiritual dimensions of the *mitzvah* of showing hospitality to guests did not (for him) surpass the reception of the Divine Presence.

Accordingly, Rabbi Shimon maintained that showing hospitality is merely equivalent to receiving the Divine Presence. But the *halachah,* which "follows the majority" who cannot aspire to Rabbi Shimon's level (indeed, "men of a higher plane" like Rabbi Shimon are few),[10] rules that showing hospitality surpasses receiving the Divine Presence.

17. *Shavuos* 3b.
18. See the gloss of the *Mishneh LeMelech* to the *Mishneh Torah, Hilchos Malveh* 4:6, and *S'dei Chemed, Ma'areches Lamed,* secs. 12 and 14. [The *Mishneh LeMelech* cites the *Sefer HaChinuch* (*mitzvos* 345-346), which explains that a person is never punished by lashes for transgressing the prohibitions against selling a Hebrew servant publicly, or making a Hebrew servant perform rigorous labor. Since it is possible to transgress these prohibitions without performing a deed, even when one does perform a deed, one does not incur liability for punishment.]

— material pleasure, and the personal satisfaction that comes from the resolution of one's problems.

The above approach to charity is particularly relevant to parents in their relationship with their children. Parents have an inherent desire to give their children everything they need (without questioning whether the children will ever repay them). And they will give them more than their needs. For example, in the sphere of education, parents endeavor to give their children everything they need so that they will develop and grow to the full extent of their potential in both material and spiritual affairs.

For Jews, this approach is not confined to one's own children; it is extended to others as well. In every Jewish heart, there is an inherent tendency to share even what one has earned through hard work and much effort with utter strangers. And this involves not only providing for material needs, but also addressing personal problems.

This approach transcends the bounds of reason. Our minds understand that we should give another person what he is lacking; it's a pity that a person should suffer. But the willingness to give a person something he *doesn't* need, something intended to give him pleasure, stems from a type of generosity which surpasses the intellectual imperative. A person's attribute of kindness is what motivates him to seek out the other person's ultimate welfare.

If these concepts apply with regard to material things, surely they are relevant with regard to the spiritual. For a spiritual deficiency — a lack felt by the soul — causes much more pain, and is much more difficult to correct, than a material deficiency.

Therefore, whenever Jews reach a new place — regardless of whether it is a free country or a country which oppresses them — the very first matter to which they address them-

Torah described the greatness of Avraham, relating how although he was the one and only Jew, and that he spread faith in the one G-d. After such heights of devotion, what is added by the fact that he planted a tamarisk tree? And how does planting a tamarisk tree relate to the narrative of the binding of Yitzchak?

The tamarisk is a large tree with broad branches. Since Avraham was living in a desert, he planted such a tree to provide wayfarers with protection from the scorching sun. The *Talmud*[29] extends the interpretation of the Hebrew word *eshel*, explaining that it refers not to only one tree, but to an orchard. Avraham planted an orchard so that passersby could refresh themselves with the fruit.

The *Talmud* also offers a second interpretation, stating that *eshel* refers to an inn. Besides fruit, Avraham gave wayfarers bread and meat, drink and lodging.[30] Indeed, the *Midrash*[31] states that he even provided his guests with a court of law in which they could settle any dispute that might arise among them.

Avraham did not content himself with providing bread, salt and water, so that his guests' basic needs would be met. He did not provide only the bare minimum; he gave his guests items which brought them pleasure: fruit, wine, delicacies and lodging; and gave them also a court to resolve their difficulties.

And for whom did he do this? For absolute strangers.

This teaches a lesson. Within the heart of every Jew has been implanted the attribute of charity and the desire to perform deeds of kindness. This is our heritage from Avraham our Patriarch[32] — not merely to provide other people with the bare necessities, but rather to enable them to derive pleasure

29. *Sotah, loc. cit.;* see *Rashi*'s gloss.
30. *Midrash,* as quoted in Rabbeinu Bachaye in his gloss to *Bereishis* 21:33.
31. *Bereishis Rabbah* 54:6.
32. *Yevamos* 79a.

RESOLVING THE RAMBAM'S STATEMENTS BASED ON KABBALAH

On this basis, we can understand the *Rambam's* intent in citing the source for the concept of affording hospitality to guests. Citing the source in the narrative from the Torah indicates that Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai in the *Tikkunei Zohar* does not differ from this *halachah.* (When there is a difference of opinion between the *Talmud* and the *Zohar,* the *halachah* follows the *Talmud.* Nevertheless, in such a situation, the minority view retains a measure of importance, and remains relevant to the Divine service of every Jew, as implied by the statement:[19] "These and these are the words of the living G-d.")

By bringing the source for this *halachah* from an explicit verse, the *Rambam* indicates that, appearances notwithstanding, there is no difference of opinion regarding this matter. In the *Tikkunei Zohar,* Rabbi Shimon is speaking about his own personal level. Thus his statement does not contradict that of the *Talmud*, which is applicable to people at large.

It is not surprising that the *Rambam* seeks to clarify an issue whose source is in the *Zohar,* for the *Rambam* was a Kabbalist,[20] and many of the concepts stated in his works have their source in the *Zohar* or other Kabbalistic texts.[21]

19. *Eruvin* 13b.
20. See *Sefer HaSichos Kayitz 5700,* p. 41, note 27*.
21. See the notes of the *Tzemach Tzedek* to *Moreh Nevuchim* (at the conclusion of *Sefer HaChakirah*); the gloss of the *Kessef Mishneh* to *Hilchos Mezuzah* 5:4; the gloss of the *Migdal Oz* to *Hilchos Teshuvah* 5:5; *Sefer Bar Yochai,* sec. 6, excerpt 130; *HaRambam VehaZohar* by Rav Margolies. See also the gloss of the *Tzafnas Paneach* to *Hilchos Avodas Kochavim* 12:6, which explains that at least four [the standard texts of the *Mishneh Torah* state 40] hairs must remain at each corner of the head, because "it is explained in Kabalistic texts that there are four hairs at the corners [of the spiritual realm] of *Adam Kadmon.*" See the text *Mafteach HaOlamos.*

FOLLOWING AVRAHAM'S "PATH OF KINDNESS"

This also enables us to understand the wording chosen by the *Rambam:* "This is the statute which Avraham instituted and the path of kindness which he practiced...." This also explains why the statements of Rabbi Shimon in the *Tikkunei Zohar* do not contradict the *halachah* as stated by the *Talmud.* The influence we are granted to perform the *mitzvos* as commanded to us on Mount Sinai is because "the deeds of the Patriarchs are a sign to their descendants."[22] The fact that for the Jewish people as a whole offering hospitality to guests surpasses receiving the Divine Presence is a result of the influence of Avraham our Patriarch. "The statute which Avraham instituted" has become part of the spiritual heritage of every Jew.

This is also implied by the phrase "the path of kindness which he practiced." Since Avraham's Divine service followed the vector of *Chesed* (kindness) — as reflected by the fact that he even sought the benefit of Yishmael, as it is written:[23] "Would it be that Yishmael live before You" — he blazed a path of caring for guests that would enable every one of his descendants, even those on a low level, to follow in his footsteps. He empowered every one of us to show hospitality in a manner which surpasses receiving the Divine Presence.

This is the intent of the phrase "the statute which Avraham instituted and the path of kindness which he practiced." Were it not for the Divine service of Avraham our Patriarch, we would not have the potential to fulfill the *mitzvah* of offering hospitality on the material plane. Avraham's Divine service endowed every one of his descendants with his quality of kindness, engraving it on our hearts. And this kindness

22. *Or HaTorah, Parshas Lech Lecha.* See also the *Ramban*'s Commentary to *Bereishis* 12:6 which states: "Everything which occurred to the Patriarchs is a sign to their descendants." See also the *Ramban*'s commentary to *Bereishis* 12:10.
23. *Bereishis* 17:18.

will be expressed in our conduct. This is "the entire purpose of man."[24]

(Adapted from *Sichos Erev Rosh HaShanah,* 5723)

AN INHERENT DESIRE TO HELP

My revered father-in-law, the Rebbe, once said[25] that we must learn a directive for our conduct from the weekly Torah reading. This concept can be readily understood. Since G-d is eternally alive, and He has given us a Torah which is a source of eternal life, by continually studying it we can derive lessons that apply to our daily lives. This in turn endows us with eternal vitality, enabling us to overcome any and all difficulties.

This week's Torah reading describes Avraham, the first Jew. He was one man, alone, and the entire world opposed him[26] until it became obvious that G-d supported him in everything he did. At that point, the king of the Philistines asked to establish a covenant with him, which enabled him to live securely in their land.

With regard to the time during which Avraham lived in the land of the Philistines, this week's Torah portion tells us:[27] "And Avraham planted an *eshel,* a tamarisk tree... and there he called in the name of G-d, L-rd of the world" — i.e., he publicized G-d's presence[28] — "And Avraham lived in the land of the Philistines for an extended period." It is after these verses that the Torah tells us about the binding of Yitzchak.

The question arises: What lesson can we learn from the fact that Avraham planted a tamarisk tree? Previously, the

24. *Koheles* 12:13.
25. See *Kuntres Bikkur Chicago,* p. 7. See also the sources mentioned in the *sichah* for *Parshas Noach* in this series, note 3.
26. *Bereishis Rabbah* 42:8. See *Rambam, Mishneh Torah, Hilchos Avodah Zarah,* ch. 1.
27. *Bereishis* 21:33-34.
28. *Sotah* 10a.