

THE CHOICE WAY

by Rabbi Label Lam

And HASHEM said, "Shall I hide from Avraham what I do, now that Avraham is surely to become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the world will bless themselves by him?! For I have loved him (Avraham) because he will command his children and his household after him to keep the way of HASHEM to do acts of charity and justice in order that HASHEM might bring upon Avraham that which He had spoken of him. (Breishis 18:18-19)

Avraham is being treated as a partner of The Almighty. A loyal friend would not do something that would upset his comrade's world without first consulting with him. It's wondrous to behold such a level of Divine endearment directed at a single mortal individual. It begs a larger question though.

The Ramchal in Derech Etz Chaim writes the following: This is the most powerful medicine that you can find to cure the negative inclination. It's easy and yet its result is profound, and its fruit is plenty. The person should set aside and fix at least one hour daily a time without any other distractions and consider and focus on only this matter about which I have spoken (to wonder about your purpose in the world) and he should consciously meditate in his heart on the following question: "What did the Patriarchs of the world do that HASHEM desired them so? What did Moshe do? What did David the anointed one do? And all the other great individuals that preceded us, what did they do that they went up into His mind? What would be good for a person to do all the days of his life so that it should also be good for him?

What had Avraham done that distinguished him from all the other people that came before him? What had he done to be chosen? How did he prove himself worthy to G-d?

What might we be able to do that would earn perhaps similar recognition? Could anything be more important in the entire world?

The hint is as subtle as the sun at noon! The verse above identifies two items. Avraham will teach his children to go in the way of HASHEM for all generations! Well, what is the way of HASHEM? How is it such a certainty that Avraham will be able to cast his opinion and his influence across so many future generations?

A woman was buying clothing for her boys for an upcoming holiday when she noticed the rather sad face of a child pressed against the window of the store on the outside. She recognized the boy and remembering that he was an orphan who had recently lost his father. She asked her own children to step aside momentarily while she went outside to speak to the young fellow. Within minutes the

mother had kindly coaxed the youth into the store and was urging him to pick out a jacket, pants, shirts, and a tie just as if he was her own. While she stood on line to pay for these items the boy queried naively, "Are you HASHEM?" The woman chuckled and responded in all modesty, "No! I'm just one of his children!" To which the boy retorted, "I thought you were related!!"

The verse explicitly states that the way of HASHEM is "to do acts of charity and justice". So Avraham is portrayed as living in HASHEM's spotlight, high on the stage of human history at an advanced age, infirmed, deep in prophecy, yet in search of strangers in the heat of the day to wash, feed, and dignify. Styles and tastes come and go. The political landscape changes like the seasons. An act of kindness, though is classic-always in-style, and for all time it's **the choice way**. DvarTorah, Copyright © 2007 by Rabbi Label Lam and Torah.org.