

“While he was sitting at the entrance of the tent.” (18:1)

Rashi states that Avraham Avinu sat at the entrance of the tent in order to see an “*oveir v’shav*” – passersby, who might be going “back and forth.” Interestingly, *Rashi* bases his exegesis on the *Midrash* which uses the word, “*orchim*,” guests, in contrast to the phrase which *Rashi* selects, “*oveir v’shav*.” Does *Rashi* suggest a specific reason for deviating from the *Midrashic* text? *Horav Mordechai HaKohen, z.l.*, renders his words homiletically. “*Oveir*” is the root of “*aveirah*,” sin, and “*shav*” is the root of “*teshuvah*,” repentance. Inclusive in the *mitzvah* of *hachnasas orchim*, hospitality to wayfarers, which addresses their physical needs, Avraham also cared for the guests’ spiritual deficiencies. He reached out to all people, seeking to infuse them with belief in the Almighty.

Avraham sat at the “*pesach ha’ohel*,” entrance/opening of the tent. He attempted to find an opening, a reason to inspire the traveler’s regret, an opening to catalyze his path to repentance. He sought to bring the “*oveir*,” sinner, to the level of “*v’shav*,” *teshuvah*, repentance. He performed a “full service” *hachnosas orchim* by ministering to the spiritual, as well as physical, needs of the passerby.