

Shall I conceal from Avraham what I do? (18:17) - For I have loved him, because he commands his children and his household after him that they keep the way of Hashem. (18:19)

The Torah relates that Hashem sent angels to Avraham *Avinu* to inform him of the Almighty's plan to destroy Sodom. Why were they sent to tell Avraham about the impending destruction? The Torah explains, *Ki yedativ*, "Because I have loved him," means because he [Avraham] teaches his offspring about Hashem, thereby encouraging them to observe His *mitzvos*. The reasoning begs elucidation. What relationship exists between the fact that he has dedicated his life to educating his children and the fact that Angels were sent to inform him of the impending destruction of Sodom?

The sons of the **Chasam Sofer, zl**, quote their father, who says that herein lies a significant principle concerning how a person should act in life. From the very beginning of Creation until Avraham *Avinu*, there were men who were G-d-fearing and clung to Hashem. There was someone as saintly as Chanoch, who ascended to Heaven alive, because he had reached such a pinnacle of sanctity that he could no longer remain in this world of physicality. Yet, we find that Avraham, father of our nation, did not achieve this apex of spirituality. This was, however, not due to any failing in his *avodas Hashem*, service to the Almighty. Indeed, had Avraham secluded himself as Chanoch did, he surely would have achieved angel-status.

Avraham realized that sealing himself in a room, secluded from the rest of humanity, would defeat his purpose in life: to reach out to the world and teach them about Hashem. He felt that he must somewhat diminish his personal service to Hashem, so that he could thereby magnify Hashem's Glory in the world. It was a major spiritual sacrifice on his part, but he was sacrificing for the sake of Hashem!

The Almighty responded favorably to this display of spiritual selflessness. He said, "Avraham did not of his own accord reach the level of prophecy by which he would be suitably fit for Me to reveal to him what I am about to do to Sodom, because he devoted his spiritual ascendancy instead to educating the world about Me. It is not right that he should lose out on prophecy as a result of his extreme devotion to Me." This is why Hashem informed Avraham about Sodom. The *Chasam Sofer* derives from here that Hashem will reimburse the individual who devotes himself to educating and reaching out to people for anything that he might have lost as a result of this "sacrifice."

The **Chida** writes in his *Devash Lefi*: "Heaven acts with a person commensurate with the way he acts with his family and his household."