

"And Hashem appeared to him and he sat in the doorway of the tent." (18:1)

Rashi explains that in order to spare Avraham the burden of guests during his recovery from the *bris milah*, Hashem removed the sun from its "container." Upon seeing him grieve because of a lack of visitors, however, He brought the angels to Avraham in human form. It seems puzzling that Hashem would send angels instead of humans. Would it not have been more appropriate to send poor people rather than angels, thereby allowing Avraham to perform the actual *mitzvah* of *tzedakah* (charity) and *hachnasas orchim* (hospitality for wayfarers)? We may derive an important lesson from the meaning of these very noble *mitzvos*. One should not think that it is his act of charity which enables the poor individual to survive. Hashem has many agents and vehicles for taking care of His children, and these individuals would ultimately find another means of support. The purpose of the *mitzvah* of charity or any form of kindness to others is to benefit the giver, not the recipient. Just as Avraham was transformed into the beneficiary, since the "poor people" were actually angels, so too, we must realize that it is the giver who is the one who is indebted to the receiver.