

And I will bless you and make your name great and you will be a blessing. (12:2)

Rashi cites the *Midrash* which explains that "And you will be a blessing" refers to the *Shemone Esrai* blessing which is concluded with Avraham's name, *Magen Avraham*, as opposed to Yitzchak and Yaakov. Prior to World War II, *Rabbi S. Shkop z.t.l.* rendered a homiletic exposition of this *pasuk* in relationship to contemporary world events. Eastern European Jewry was greatly affected by the turbulent times. Jewish youth especially were becoming alienated from *Torah*. *Yeshiva* enrollment in most areas was rapidly diminishing. It had reached the point that there was fear that the wh

The *Midrash* responds to this suggestion in the negative. In the end, the alienated Jew will return as a result of Avraham *Avinu*. His search for meaning in life will conclude with *Torah* study and *mitzvah* observance. *Rabbi Shkop* continued, "True, we see many Jews turning away and leaving the ranks of the observant. It even seems that *Yidishkeit* is suffering irretrievable losses. The next generation, however, the children and grandchildren of those who are presently abandoning *Torah* and *mitzvos*, will return. They will adopt Avraham's orientation. They will return to the fold through searching, introspection and inquiry". Indeed, the remarkable growth of the *baal teshuvah* movement, reaching out to thousands of our Jewish brethren, attests to the great *gaon's* words. The system of *Yeshivos* would falter due to a lack of student body.

Rabbi Shkop allayed people's fears with this *Midrash*. One would think that the *bracha* should be concluded with Yaakov's name. Indeed, Avraham's belief in Hashem originated with his own personal search. His indomitable faith in the Almighty was rooted in thoughtful, philosophic dialection. His son, Yitzchak, had the distinct advantage of being raised and educated in an observant home, suffused with *Torah* and *mitzvos*. Yaakov, the grandson, was the third generation in the *mesorah*, tradition, who was availed the opportunity to study *Torah* mandate in the manner of the two previous generations. Consequently, it would seem natural for the conclusion of the *bracha* to include all the patriarchs in unison. Ultimately, the future of *Klal Yisrael* was to be built upon their tripartite foundation.