

## LOOK DEEP INTO YOUR HEART!

### PARSHAS CHAYEI SARAH

*For many years, twice a year a merchant sent an agent to the big fair. At the 1st fair of each year, he would buy a large quantity of merchandise from a particular wholesaler. He bought it on credit and repaid it when he returned for the 2<sup>nd</sup> fair. One day, the merchant told the agent that he wanted to buy an exceptionally large amount of goods without ever paying for it. The agent did not want to be dishonest, but he also did not want to anger his employer. When he arrived at the fair he went to the wholesaler and said, "My master has asked me to buy the largest possible quantity of goods I could get from you on credit. I pointed out that I doubted that you would let us do that. I am not even sure that our firm is in the financial position to engage in such a transaction. My employer became quite angry at me when I told that to him." After hearing this, the wholesaler refused to sell him any merchandise at all. (The Maqqid of Dubna & his Parables by Benno Heinemann)*

Our forefather Avraham felt that it was time to find a suitable wife for his son, Yitzchak. The woman had to be very special, as she would be the next link in the chain of the Patriarchs and Matriarchs. Avraham sent his trusted servant, Eliezer, to Avraham's homeland, to find such a woman. Avraham made it clear that he did not want Yitzchak to marry a Canaanite woman. Avraham asked Eliezer to swear that he would fulfill his mission faithfully. The **Torah** (Bereishis 24:5) relates Eliezer's followup question to Avraham. He wanted to know what to do if, "Perhaps the woman shall not wish to follow me to this land." The Hebrew word for "perhaps" was written as "אולי". Eliezer left for his mission, traveling to Aram Naharaim. Hashem performed many miracles to help Eliezer succeed in his task: Eliezer's travel was unusually quick, and he reached his destination on the same day that he started on his journey (**Rashi** 24:42). Eliezer had asked Hashem to show him certain signs indicating the right wife for Yitzchak. All those signs happened. When Rivka drew water from the well, it miraculously rose-up to "greet" her (**Rabbeinu Bachya** 24:16). When Rivka told Eliezer that she was from Avraham's family, Eliezer knew with certainty that

*"I said to my master,  
Perhaps the woman will  
not come back with  
me?" (Bereishis 24:39)*

Hashem had led him to Yitzchak's future wife (Although Eliezer knew that with certainty, even before Rivka confirmed that fact). Eliezer followed Rivka to her house and told her father, Besuel, and her brother, Lavan, the purpose of his mission. He praised Avraham and

Yitzchak. Eliezer then added some words that seemed to be unnecessary. He repeated the question that he had asked Avraham about what he should do if, "Perhaps the woman will not follow me." This time, the Torah spells the Hebrew word as, "אלי", without the letter vav. **Rashi** (24:39) says that the word as it is written,

"אלי", means "to me". Eliezer also had a daughter of marriageable age. The Torah tells us what Eliezer had hinted to Avraham when he was first sent on his mission. If the woman wouldn't follow Eliezer, then Avraham should turn "to me" to take my daughter as a wife for Yitzchak.

Many of the commentators question why Eliezer chose to repeat his question to Besuel & Lavan. It was proper to ask Avraham what he should do if, "Perhaps the woman will not follow me". But what was the point in saying it to Besuel and Lavan?

**Rav Ovadia from Bartanura** explains that Eliezer said it to help convince Besuel and Lavan to permit Rivka to marry Yitzchak. Eliezer wanted to infer that Yitzchak was so special that Eliezer, himself, wanted Yitzchak as a son-in-law.

The **Dubno Maggid**, and **Rabbi Chaim Soloveitchik zt"l** explain that Eliezer wanted his mission to fail! He wanted Besuel and Lavan to refuse to send Rivka, thus opening the way for Eliezer's own daughter to marry Yitzchak.

**Rabbi Chaim Soloveitchik zt"l** (quoted in sefer Ituri Torah by Rabbi Aharon Yaakov Greenberg) says that Eliezer's comment could have caused Besuel and Lavan to wonder why the potential wife would not come. Was it because there was something wrong with Yitzchak? That concern could have caused them to refuse to send Rivka, thus opening the possibility of Eliezer's daughter marrying Yitzchak.

The **Dubno Maggid** (The Maggid of Dubna & his Parables by Benno Heinemann) also asks why Eliezer repeated the comment to Besuel & Lavan. He asks an additional question of why Rashi comments on the second time that Eliezer said it and not when he initially said it to Avraham. The **Dubno Maggid** concludes that Eliezer did not want his mission to succeed. By saying this comment, he hoped to influence Rivka's family to refuse to allow her to marry Yitzchak. Thus, he implied "אָלֵי", that Avraham would have to turn to Eliezer to ask him to allow his own

daughter to marry Yitzchak. The **Dubno Maggid** illustrated this with the parable that was written in the beginning of the dvar Torah.

I find it hard to believe that Eliezer would want his mission to fail. He was Avraham's trustworthy servant for many years. Avraham even trusted Eliezer to manage all his wealth. **Rav Eliyahu Lopian zt"l** (Lev Eliyahu on the Torah) says that Eliezer had control of his evil inclination just as Avraham had. He also taught Avraham's Torah to others. Furthermore, he also swore to Avraham that he would be dedicated to his mission. When Eliezer saw all the miracles that occurred, it should have been obvious that Rivka was the bride that Hashem had chosen. How could such a great person try to sabotage the success of his mission?

Perhaps we can understand the explanation of **Rabbi Chaim Soloveitchik zt"l** and the **Dubno Maggid** as **Rabbi Menachem Mendel** from **Kotz** understands it. The **Kotzker Rav zt"l** (quoted in Ituri Torah) says that Eliezer was sincere and definitely wanted his mission to succeed. However, subconsciously, he wanted it to fail. Once he saw Rivka and all the miracles that Hashem had performed, Eliezer knew that Hashem had chosen Rivka to be the bride for Yitzchak. That caused Eliezer to think back to his initial conversation with Avraham. It was only now that he recognized what his original subconscious motives were. **Rashi** says that is why the Torah changed the spelling from "אֹלֵי" to "אָלֵי" now, because it was only now that Eliezer realized this.

**When we do an action, we have so many thoughts swirling in our minds and in our subconscious. Are our actions totally pure or do we have other motivations in our subconscious that we don't even realize? We must analyze our thoughts very carefully so that we serve Hashem properly.**

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