

WHAT IS THE RUSH?

PARSHAS CHAYEI SARA

Avraham sent his servant, Eliezer, to find a wife for Yitzchak. Eliezer traveled to Aram Naharayim and waited by the well. He felt that any girl who would offer water to both him and his camels was a girl who would exemplify the trait of kindness that would make her fitting to join Avraham's family. Eliezer davened to Hashem that such a girl would also be from Avraham's family, proving without a doubt that this was Yitzchak's designated wife (Bereishis 24:10-14, based on **Rashi's** explanation).

Rivkah approached the well and offered water to both Eliezer and his camels. All of Rivkah's actions were done quickly, with alacrity. *"She said, 'Drink, my master', and she quickly lowered her pitcher to her hand, and let him drink. She quickly emptied her pitcher into the trough, and she ran to the well again to draw water. and she drew water for all his camels."* (Bereishis 24:18.20)

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(Bereishis 24:20)*

Why was Rivkah acting in such a quick manner? The pasuk does not indicate that the camels were on the verge of collapse. So why was Rivkah rushing and running even to give water to the camels?

The **Midrash** (Midrash Rabbah Bamidbar 10:7) states, "All of the deeds of the righteous are done quickly." **Rabbi Moshe Chaim Luzatto** zt"l writes (Mesilas Yesharim chapter 6), "The man whose soul yearns to perform the will of his Creator will not be lazy in the performance of His mitzvos. His movements will be as the quick movements of a fire, and he will not rest or be still until the deed has been completed." Doing mitzvos with alacrity shows one's love for Hashem.

Sforno says when you do someone a favor quickly you are showing that he is important to you. Rivkah

expressed this by the speed with which she went about her tasks.

The **Shelah** has an entirely different answer. He says that Rivkah's running was a brilliant plan to save herself from a tricky situation. After Eliezer finished drinking from the jug, there was some water left over. That left

Rivkah with a dilemma. If she would give the remaining water to the camels, that would be disrespectful to Eliezer. It would equate his needs with the needs of the camels. If she would spill out the water, that would also be a slight to Eliezer. It would be as if she was saying that there was something wrong with his leftover water. Rivkah solved the problem in a brilliant manner. She kept "running" back and forth to bring water to the camels. She deliberately "tripped", dropped the jug and let all the water spill out. Since she had been running, it seemed as if the jug fell by accident. In this way, Rivkah avoided offending Eliezer. (Talelei Oros by Rabbi Yissachar Dov Rubin)

According to the **Shelah**, Rivkah showed kindheartedness, wisdom. and sensitivity.

According to the **Beis Halevi**, Eliezer was testing Rivkah when he asked for a drink. He purposely left some water in the jug as an additional test. First,

Eliezer asked to drink directly from Rivkah's jug, as there were no glasses to drink from. Rivkah could have easily refused by saying to herself that Eliezer's saliva may make the water disgusting to drink for the next person who would want to drink. She could have also refused lest Eliezer had an illness. Ignoring those thoughts and offering Eliezer a drink, showed that Rivkah was kindhearted, by giving a drink to a weary traveler. Then, Eliezer purposely left over some water in the jug. He was testing Rivkah to see how she would handle the situation. If she would bring the remaining water to her family, that would show a lack of wisdom. How could she share a stranger's water with her family, not knowing if Eliezer was healthy or sick? If she would spill out the leftover water to get new water for her family, that

would be embarrassing to Eliezer. Rivkah passed all 3 tests. She offered to give water to the camels. That way she did not have to spill out the water. Not only did she offer to give water to the camels, she even offered to give enough water to the camels until their thirst was quenched. She did that as an added sign of respect to Eliezer. In so doing, Eliezer would not think that she had given water to the camels solely to avoid having to bring his leftover water into her house. This way, she wouldn't be embarrassing Eliezer, and she would be able to give her family clean, fresh water. Rivkah showed kindheartedness, wisdom, and sensitivity to the feelings of another person. Eliezer's prayers were also answered in that the girl who passed these tests indeed turned out to be a member of Avraham's family. The total picture proved that Rivkah was the one destined to become Yitzchak's wife.

In the midst of doing an act of kindness for someone we should be careful not to embarrass them or make them feel uncomfortable.

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Rabbi Yaakov Finestone is the director of JEP Queens. For almost 50 years JEP Queens has been in the forefront of kiruv. JEP has changed the lives of thousands of Jewish children enrolled in public schools and kiruv schools. Many are shomrei Torah and mitzvos today because of JEP.

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