



A VORT FROM THE ROSH YESHIVA

פרשת חיי שרה

וַיִּקַּח הָעֶבֶד עֶשְׂרֵה גַמְלִים וְכוּ'. וַיֹּאמֶר ה' וְכוּ', הֲקִרְרָה נָא לִפְנֵי הַיּוֹם וְעָשָׂה חֶסֶד וְכוּ'. הֲנֵה אֲנֹכִי נֹצֵב עַל עֵין הַמַּיִם וְכוּ'. וְהִנֵּה הַנְּעֹרָר אֲשֶׁר אָמַר אֵלַיָּהּ וְכוּ', אַתָּה הַכַּחֲתָ לְעֶבְדְּךָ לְיִצְחָק וְבָה אֲדַע כִּי עָשִׂיתָ חֶסֶד עִם אֲדֹנָי. וַיְהִי הוּא טָרָם כְּלָה לְדַבֵּר וְהִנֵּה רַבְקָה יֹצֵאת וְכוּ'. וְהָאִישׁ מִשְׁתַּאֲהָ לָהּ מִחֲרִישׁ לְדַעַת הַהֲצִלִּים ה' דְּרָכּוֹ אִם לֹא. (בראשית כד, י' - כא')

The servant took ten camels... And he said, "Hashem, may You so arrange it for me this day, and do kindness with my master Avrohom. Behold, I stand here by the spring of water... and let it be that the maiden to whom shall I say... her will You have chosen for Your servant, for Yitzchok; and may I know through her that You have done kindness with my master." And it was when he had not yet finished speaking that suddenly Rivkah was coming out... The man was astonished at her, reflecting silently to know whether Hashem had made his journey successful or not. (Bereishis 24:10-21)

In this *parshah*, we learn about Eliezer's mission to find a fitting wife for Yitzchok Avinu. When he reached the city of Avrohom's relatives, he went to the well of water and petitioned Hashem to show him a sign as to who would be a suitable wife. So swift was the Divine response to his petition that while he was still during his supplication, *hashgachah* had already caused Rivkah to leave her house and go to the well. When Rivkah excelled in the test, Eliezer was amazed at the immediate fulfilment of his prayer, which surpassed all his expectations.

The Rosh Yeshiva *shlita* notes that this experience of *siyata dishmaya* which Eliezer witnessed profoundly changed him. Inspired by how his *tefillah* had been answered so speedily, he was now a different person. Until now the Torah labels him as an *עֶבֶד*, *servant*. However, with this transformation, his identity was adjusted accordingly, with the Torah now defining him as an *אִישׁ*, *a man*, a depiction of greatness, as the *possuk* says *וְהָאִישׁ מִשְׁתַּאֲהָ לָהּ*.

Eliezer's newly reached *madreiga* can also be inferred from how the Torah changed its terminology regarding Eliezer from last week's *parshah*. By *Akeidas Yitzchok* the Torah (22:5) describes Avrohom telling Eliezer and Yishmoel to wait, with the words: *שָׁבוּ לָכֶם פֹּה עִם הַחֲמוֹר*, *Stay here by yourselves with the donkey*. Chazal expound from that which the Torah writes *עִם* and not *אֶת*, that Eliezer and Yishmoel are regarded as an *עִם הַדּוֹמָה לַחֲמוֹר*, a donkey-like people. Yet in our *parshah*, the *possuk* (24:30) writes: *וְהִנֵּה עֹמֵד עַל הַגְּמָלִים*, *and behold, he was standing over the camels*, with the word *עַל* being used and not *עִם*, which indicates that he was no longer categorised as being animal-like.

However, even though Eliezer experienced this metamorphosis, it was not to be long-lasting. The Torah does continue to classify him as *אִישׁ* a few more times throughout the *parshah*; when he saw the Divine assistance that Rivkah was from the family of Avrohom - *וַיִּקַּד הָאִישׁ וַיִּשְׁתַּחֲוֶה לָהּ*; when relating how Lavan came to greet him - *וַיָּבֹא אֶל הָאִישׁ*; and lastly when Eliezer reached the house of Besuel - *וַיָּבֹא הָאִישׁ הַבְּיָתָה*. Nevertheless, only a short time later, after being successful in his mission with Rivkah's family consenting to let her serve as a wife for Yitzchok, the Torah reverts to describing Eliezer as an *עֶבֶד*, as the *possuk* says *עָבַד אַבְרָהָם אֶת דְּבָרֵיהֶם*. His great inspiration had waned and his new spiritual heights were not maintained and therefore faded away.

Eliezer's fall in *madreigah* can further be indicated by the manner of his speech to Besuel. The *posuk* (24:49) says: **וְעַתָּה אִם יִשְׁכֶּם עֲשִׂים הַסֹּד וְאָמַת, אֶת אֲדֹנֵי הַגִּידוּ לִי, וְאִם לֹא הַגִּידוּ לִי, וְאֶפְנֶה עַל יְמִין אוֹ עַל שְׂמֹאל**, *And now, if you intend to do kindness and truth with my master, tell me; and if not, tell me, and I will turn to the right or to the left.* This speech is extremely troubling, how could Eliezer speak this way, as if there was another option as to whom Yitzchok would marry? A man who had witnessed such a clear revelation of Hashem's wondrous ways and having been granted such phenomenal success should have declared to Besuel in all confidence, "Hashem is showing the path here with no room for doubts. Do as His will, give me Rivkah and let me get on my way!" We understand from this dialogue how the heights Eliezer had reached in recognising Hashem's utter and absolute control were very short-lived.

This teaches us an important lesson. Sometimes we can be moved and motivated to new heights of *Avoidas Hashem*, but it's crucial to make a conscious effort to sustain that level of commitment. Eliezer experienced a profound change and transformation, but unfortunately, he quickly reverted back to his original state.

May we be *zoche* to gain inspiration and *chizzuk* from these challenging times, resulting in long-lasting change.

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