דרכים בפרשה

חיי שרה

R' Mordechai Appel, is an alumnus of the Telzer Yeshiva and the author of Derachim Beparsha.



ותכל להשקותו ותאמר גם לגמליך אשאב עד אם כלו לשתות

Eliezer had a difficult job. Avraham had sent him to find a wife for Yitzchak, and he knew that this was no ordinary shidduch. He wasn't simply looking for a nice girl from a good family. He was looking for the future mother of Klal Yisrael.

So he decided that he would test the girl in a very specific way. He would ask her for a little water, and see whether she would offer to water his camels as well.

When Rivkah appeared, everything happened exactly as Eliezer had hoped. He asked for a drink, and she immediately gave him water. Then, without being asked, she offered to draw water for his camels as well. The Torah tells us that she hurried back and forth to the well until all ten camels had finished drinking.

It is difficult to appreciate just how much work this involved. A thirsty camel can drink as much as 200 litres of water in just three minutes! Rivkah wasn't filling a few cups. She was drawing water for ten very thirsty camels, and she did it all without being asked. *Mamish* a full-time occupation!

Eliezer had found what he was looking for. But what was it about this particular quality that made Rivkah the right wife for Yitzchak?

The Sfas Emes (Chayei Sarah, תרל"ז, מאמר ד׳) explains that Yitzchak represented מידת הדין, while Rivkah represented מידת החסד. Yitzchak's avodah was rooted in gevurah, and Eliezer understood that he needed a wife whose exceptional chesed would sweeten those gevuros. As the Sfas Emes writes, לכן סיבב השי"ת להיות לו רבקה לאשה שהיתה בעלת חסד ביותר ובזה נמתק קצת הגבורות של יצחק. *Hashem arranged for Rivkah, who possessed an extraordinary quality of chesed, to become his wife, and through this, the gevurah of Yitzchak was somewhat sweetened.*

There is something very interesting about this. Yitzchak was not lacking in greatness. His middah of gevurah was itself a tremendous quality. But Hashem knew that for Yitzchak to build Klal Yisrael, he needed someone with a very different strength. He didn't need another Yitzchak. He needed Rivkah.

We sometimes have a hard time appreciating qualities in other people that are different from our own. We have our way of doing things, our way of thinking, and our way of approaching situations. When someone operates differently, we can easily become frustrated. We see what they lack, rather than what they have.

A person who is very organized may find it difficult to deal with someone who is more spontaneous. Someone who is naturally careful may be frustrated by a person who is more relaxed. And the person who is always relaxed may wonder why the other one makes such a big deal out of everything!

But in shiduchim, it is much more than "opposites attract". Perhaps each one needs something from the other. The very quality that one person finds frustrating may be the quality that brings something important into the relationship. This is true in marriage, in parenting, in friendships, and in just about every area of life. We are not all meant to have the same strengths. Hashem gives different people different middos, different abilities, and different ways of looking at the world. The challenge is to recognize that what we don't naturally possess may be exactly what someone else brings.

But there is another detail in the story worth noticing. Eliezer could have looked for a girl who was simply kind to people. Instead, he looked for someone who noticed a need that hadn't even been expressed. He asked for water for himself, but Rivkah thought about the camels. She didn't wait for someone to explain what needed to be done. She saw it herself.

Seeing the good in another person means recognizing that there may be qualities we don't possess, but that we desperately need. Instead of focusing on what someone does differently, we try to understand what that person brings that we might otherwise be missing.

And this applies to ourselves as well. Sometimes we spend so much time wishing we had someone else's talents that we fail to appreciate the ones Hashem gave us. We look at another person's strengths and wonder why we weren't given the same abilities. We can become so busy looking at what we don't have that we overlook what we do have.

Rivkah was not chosen because she was like Yitzchak. She was chosen because she brought something to the table that Yitzchak did not. Together, their different middos would form the foundation of Klal Yisrael.

This is something we should remember the next time we find ourselves frustrated with someone else's way of doing things. Before deciding what is wrong with them, we might ask ourselves what they bring that we don't.

We spend a great deal of time trying to see the good in people. Sometimes that means looking a little harder at the qualities we were never looking for in the first place. **Good Shabbos, מרדכי ע. אפפעל**