

CHESED: THE ESSENCE OF JUDAISM

Background

Avraham Avinu sent his trustworthy servant, Eliezer, to find a wife for Yitzchak. Eliezer was given the directive to find the right girl, one from Avraham's family. Eliezer davened and set out certain signs to determine if the woman he would meet would be the right one for Yitzchak. Amazingly, all of the signs that he asked for were met. He was so assured that this was a divine directive showing him that she was the right one that he immediately gave Rivka the bracelets. Only afterward did he ask her, "Who is your father?" Yet when he told over the events to Rivka's father, Lavan, Eliezer changed the order, saying, "I asked her whose daughter she was, and then I gave her the bracelets."

Questions

Eliezer wasn't afraid to tell Lavan that great miracles happened to him. He said, "I left today and arrived today," meaning, "I walked an extremely long distance in a miraculous manner. The land literally folded under my feet." Eliezer assumed that Lavan would believe that statement, as fantastic as it was. Why, then, does he assume that Lavan couldn't believe that he would have the faith to give the girl the bracelets without asking her what family she came from?

ספר בראשית פרק כד

מב) וְאָבָא הַיּוֹם אֶל הָעֵין וְאָמַר יִדְוֹד אֱלֹהֵי אֲדֹנָי אַבְרָהָם אִם יִשְׁפָּךְ נָא מִצְלִיחַ דְרַבִּי אֲשֶׁר אֲנֹכִי הֵלֵךְ עֲלֶיהָ

And today I came to the well, and I said, "HASHEM, the G-d of my master Avraham, please allow me succeed in the mission that I am pursuing."

רש"י על בראשית פרק כד פסוק מב

מב) **ואבא היום** - היום יצאתי והיום באתי מכאן שקפצה לו הארץ

Today I left, and today I came – From here we learn that the land folded up under him.

ספר בראשית פרק כד

מז) וְאֶשְׂאֵל אֶתְּהָ וְאָמַר בֵּת מִי אַתְּ וְתֹאמְרֵי בֵּת בְּתוּגָאֵל בֶּן נַחוּר אֲשֶׁר יָלְדָהּ לוֹ מִלְכָּה וְאֶשְׂמֵם הַנָּזָם עַל אַפָּהּ וְהִצַּמְדִּים עַל יָדֶיהָ

And I asked her, "Whose daughter are you?" And she said to me, "I am the daughter of Besuel, the son of Nachur that was born to Milkah." And I placed the ring on her nose and the bracelet on her hands.

רש"י על בראשית פרק כד פסוק מז

מז) **ואשאל ואשים** - שנה הסדר שהרי הוא תחלה נתן ואח"כ שאל אלא שלא יתפשוהו בדבריו ויאמרו היאך נתת לה ועדיין אינך יודע מי היא

And I asked and I placed – Eliezer changed the order because first he gave her the presents and then he asked whose daughter she was, but he was afraid of being caught in his words (lying). He thought Lavan would say, "How did you give gifts when you didn't yet know who she was?"