

R' Ben Tzion Shafier

## ► ELIEZER WAS GIVEN A MISSION

Eliezer, the loyal servant of Avrohom, was charged with the mission of finding a wife for Yitzchak. Before sending him out, Avrohom Avinu cautioned him, "Only take a girl from my family and my father's house." Eliezer then asked HASHEM for a sign: "The girl who, when I ask her for water, responds, 'Not only will I give you to drink, but your camels as well,' is to be the girl that You have chosen for my master." (Bereishis 24:14) Her response was to be the indication. If it happened exactly as he outlined, then it would mean that this was the woman intended for Yitzchak.

No sooner did Eliezer finish this request than Rivka appeared at the well. Eliezer said the words, "Please give me to drink," and Rivka answered, "I will give your camels as well." She then moved with such alacrity and enthusiasm that Eliezer was astounded. He was so certain that she was the right one that he immediately gave her the golden bracelets, formally engaging her to Yitzchak. Only later did he ask her name to find out that she was, in fact, from Avrohom's family.

## ► WHEN TELLING LAVAN, ELIEZER CHANGES THE ORDER

When Eliezer met Lavan and Besuel, he told over the events exactly as they transpired, but with one change. He said, "**First**, I asked her name **and then** I gave her the bracelets."

**Rashi**, in explaining why Eliezer changed the order, explains that Eliezer was afraid that Lavan would never believe him if he said that he first gave the bracelets and then asked her name. He would assume Eliezer was lying. Therefore, Eliezer reversed the order, "First, I asked her name and then I gave her the bracelets."

## ► ELIEZER WASN'T AFRAID TO SAY A MIRACLE HAPPENED TO HIM

This becomes difficult to understand when we recall that just a few moments before this, Eliezer told Lavan of a striking miracle that had occurred to him. When he began telling over the events, he started with the expression, "Today I left, and today I arrived," recounting a startling phenomenon.

Avrohom lived many days' journey from Charan. Eliezer had said that he set out from Avrohom's house that very morning and arrived the same day. It was physically impossible for

## Everyone Views Things Just as I Do...

*"And I asked her and said:  
"Who is your father?" and she said,  
"I am the daughter of Bisuel..."  
and I placed the bracelet  
on her hands."*

— Bereishis 24:47 —

Eliezer, who was traveling with ten camels laden with goods, to have covered that distance in such a short time. Chazal explain that he had a *Kifitzas Ha'Derech*. The land literally folded under him like an accordion so that his few steps took him over vast distances, something so supernatural that it is hard to imagine.

Apparently, he wasn't afraid to tell this to Lavan. He didn't assume that Lavan would call him a liar. Yet he was afraid to mention that he trusted that HASHEM had brought him to the right woman for Yitzchak. The question is — why? If Eliezer felt that Lavan could believe that HASHEM did miracles for him, why couldn't Lavan believe that Eliezer trusted HASHEM?

## ► SEEING THE WHOLE WORLD THROUGH MY EYES ONLY

It would seem the answer is that Lavan lived by the golden rule: **Do onto others before they do you in**. Lavan was devious, deceitful, and lived a ruthless existence. Because he was untrustworthy, he didn't trust anyone else, either.

Lavan assumed that since he was too smart to trust anyone, then anyone who "had brains in his head" would never be so foolish as to trust. He saw the whole world through his eyes. The idea that someone could trust HASHEM was something he couldn't accept. Miracles, as unlikely as they may be, he knew could happen. But for someone intelligent to actually trust — that couldn't be.

Lavan was engaging in what is known as **projection**: projecting his worldview onto others, assuming that the way he was, the way that he approached life, is the same way that all others do. He could never accept that someone would let his guard down and actually trust. Therefore, Eliezer was afraid to mention that he acted with complete trust in HASHEM. He knew Lavan wouldn't believe him and would assume he was lying.

## THE WAY WE SEE THE WORLD

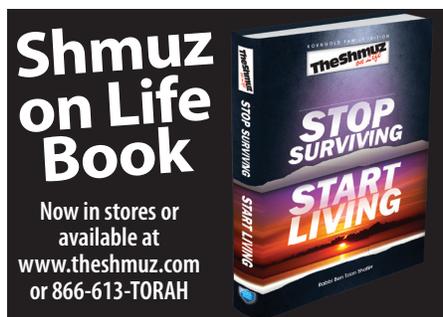
This concept has great relevance to both the way that we relate to others as well as the way we relate to HASHEM.

If a person is a giving and caring individual, it is easy for him to see the good in man. If I am a giver, then intuitively I see that in others. I assume their motivating force is generosity. However, if I am self-centered, then I tend to see that as the driving force in others, and the nature of man appears to me to be dark.

This concept applies to our relationship with HASHEM as well. Often times we find it difficult to discern the kindness of HASHEM. Where is the *chesed*? Where is the loving generosity that HASHEM is reported to exhibit throughout Creation?

The more that I practice doing for others without expecting anything in return, the more I can see that quality in the way that HASHEM created and runs this world. The more that I train myself to be a giver, the more accurately I learn to see giving in HASHEM.

Quite simply, my character traits and personal bias shape not only the way that I act towards others, but the very way that I view the world. My view of people, my view of those close to me, and ultimately my view of my Creator are based on my perception. My perception is based on me — who I am, how I act, and how I think. The more that I adopt the nature of a giver, the better a person I will become, and additionally, the more easily I will identify that same trait in others and in HASHEM. The whole world takes on a different view.



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