

# Pardes Yehuda

← Weekly Torah Journal By Yehuda Z. Klitnick →

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פרשת חיי שרה תשפ"ה

## *The sincerity of Eliezer's actions were precious to Hashem*

וַיֹּאמֶר אַבְרָהָם אֶל עַבְדּוֹ זָקֵן בֵּיתוֹ הַמִּשְׁשֵׁל בְּכָל אֲשֶׁר לוֹ שֵׁים נָא יְרֵךְ תַּחַת יְרֵכֵי וַיֹּאמֶר אַבְרָהָם אֶל עַבְדּוֹ זָקֵן בֵּיתוֹ הַמִּשְׁשֵׁל בְּכָל אֲשֶׁר לוֹ שֵׁים נָא יְרֵךְ תַּחַת יְרֵכֵי *And Avraham said to his servant, the elder of his house, who ruled over all that was his, described as "the elder of his home, who ruled over all that was his,"* Eliezer is primarily recognized as the unnamed servant, as described in this Pasuk. He was sent by Avraham to seek a wife for his son. When Eliezer presented himself to Lavan and Besuel, he introduced himself by saying: עַבְדְּ אַבְרָהָם אֲנִי *"I am a servant of Avraham"* (24:34). The only time the Torah refers to him as Eliezer, is in the Posuk: וְזָקֵן מִשְׁשֵׁק *"the steward of my household is Eliezer of Damascus"* (15:2).

Chapter 24 is the longest chapter in Bereishis, containing 67 verses. It describes Eliezer's contemplation, his strategy for the test at the well, and how he carried it out extensively. Avraham's name appears 37 times; Yitzchak's, 13; Rivka's, 12; Sarah's, 9; Efron's, 9; Besuel's, 4; Lavan's, 3; however, Eliezer's name appears not once. Eliezer was tasked by Avraham to journey to the city of Nachor, where Avraham's relatives lived, in order to find a spouse for Yitzchak. He sought a sign to identify the right woman, and Rivka appeared immediately. To comprehend why Eliezer is not named in this Parsha, despite being the key figure in Yitzchak's matchmaking, we need to reflect on the text.

Upon reaching Charan, Eliezer stated: וַיָּבֵא הַיּוֹם אֶל הַעַיִן: *"I came today to the well"* (42), and Rashi explains it indicates he had set out on his journey that very day. Eliezer miraculously traveled from Be'er Sheva to Haran—a considerable distance—in less than a day. This extraordinary occurrence known as kefitzat haderekh, or "jumping the path,"

The absence of Eliezer's name illustrates that the focus was not on him personally but rather on the mission itself. His unwavering dedication to Avraham meant that his own interests never interfered with carrying out this task. He was simply a servant and an extension of Avraham.

The Midrash Rabbah (Bereishis 60:8) conveys: יָפָה שִׁיתָן שֶׁל עַבְדֵי בְּתֵי אֲבוֹת מִתּוֹרְתָן שֶׁל בְּנֵים *"The discussions of the servants of the patriarchs carry more weight than the laws guiding their descendants,"* highlighting the significant length of Eliezer's narrative, which spans two or three columns as it elaborates and reiterates. Thus, the everyday conversations of the servants of our faith's founders are deemed more relevant to us than the formal laws.

Eliezer set aside all his personal interests to serve his master, Avraham. He accompanied Avraham as an extra

assistant and was part of him. As a result, he was privileged to experience kefitzas Haderech. At the well, Eliezer prayed to Hashem, understanding that a good spouse is a divine blessing dependent on one's actions. When he reached the well and asked Rivka to fetch water for him, he understood that she might hesitate and question why a grown man couldn't draw water for himself and his camels! Nevertheless, she displayed good manners and agreed to assist him. A miracle took place, and the water rose to her, as Rashi explains. The test was meant to assess Rivka's thoughtfulness and willingness to exert herself. Still, the Torah indicates that he remained uncertain if this girl was genuinely righteous. The Torah mentions in 24:21, וַיִּרְבּוּ אָם לֹא יָדָעוּת הַהַצְלִיחַ ה' *"And the man was astonished at her, standing silent, waiting to know whether the Lord had caused his way to prosper or not."* Why was he not sure? He thought she might ask for something in return after exerting herself to help him. Yet, Rivka requested nothing in exchange. Thus, the next verse states: *"Now it came about, when the camels had finished drinking, that the man took a golden nose ring, weighing half a shekel, and two bracelets for her hands, weighing ten gold shekels."* The commentaries question why he presented her with the jewelry before inquiring about her identity. Only after adorning her with the jewelry does the verse say, "And he said, 'Whose daughter are you? Please tell me. Is there a place for us to lodge in your father's house?'" Eliezer had complete confidence that, in Avraham's merit, everything was aligned for the right outcome. That is why he stated, "And food was set before him to eat, but he said, 'I will not eat until I have spoken my words.'" And he was told, "Speak." Eliezer responded, "I am Avraham's servant." He remained guided by Avraham's merit and refused to eat until he secured the match. This is why he identifies himself as the servant of Avraham and his hand. The Torah does not mention his name in this portion because, in this narrative, he embodied Avraham's essence. Lavan and Besuel recognized Eliezer's determination and replied, *"The matter has emanated from the Lord. We cannot speak to you either bad or good. Behold, Rivka is before you, take her and go, and let her be a wife for your master's son, as the Lord has spoken."* This teaches that since every Jew is a servant of Hashem, he must be committed to Him and adhere to His commandments.

(Yehuda Z. Klitnick)

The Rebbe Reb Moshe Yehuda Leib Erblich of Sassov - רבי משה ליב מסאסוב זצוק"ל - was born in 5505 to his holy father Hagaon Reb Yaakov Rav in Brodi and his mother Rifka. He studied for 13 years at the Yeshiva of Reb Shmelka of Nikulshberg, brother of The Gaon Reb Pinchus of Frankfurt, the Panim Yafos on Torah, and Hafloah, and later by Rebbe Elimelech of Lizhensk. His Ahavas Yisrael and love for all creatures was second to none. Reb Moshe Leib worked diligently to free people from prison known as פדיון שבויים. He was also a great giant in Torah too. He authored the following seforim: תורת הרמ"ל, ליקוטי הרמ"ל, חידושי הרמ"ל. He was the Rebbe of Reb Tzvi Hersh of Ziditchov, Reb Menachem Mendel of Kosov, The Yehudi Hakadosh, and The Butchache Rav. His Yahrtzeit is ד' שבט תקס"ז.

When Reb Moshe Leib of Sassov was to begin his journey back to his home town, he took leave of his Rebbe, Rabbi Shmelke of Nikolsburg. His Rebbe gave him three gifts: a loaf of bread, a coin, and his own white silk robe. "You will understand soon enough what to do with them," his Rebbe said, as he saw Reb Moshe Leib off with his blessing.

On the road, Reb Moshe Leib passed the large estate of a wealthy gentile landowner, or poritz. From a pit that had been hollowed out near the entrance, he heard bitter wailing. Reb Moshe Leib peered inside and found a Jew from the village there, a tenant who leased the inn owned by the Poritz. The Jew was crying with hunger: He had neither eaten nor drunk for three days. Unable to pay his debts to the landowner, the man had been hurled into the pit by the furious poritz, with the warning that if he did not pay what he owed, he would be left there to die of starvation and cold.

Reb Moshe Leib's heart nearly burst with pity. He threw in the loaf of bread for the man to eat. Then he approached the entrance to the mansion and asked the guards standing there for permission to speak with their master. The guards described Reb Moshe Leib to the poritz as a man of tall stature with a handsome face that radiated light and goodwill. Curious as to what business such a man might have with him, the poritz granted him an audience.

Reb Moshe Leib came to the point at once, asking that the

poor Jew be released. The poritz raised his voice in wrath: "And do you really think I will overlook what is owed me?"

With no other option, Reb Moshe Leib offered the single coin he possessed, his Rebbe's gift. The poritz grew even more furious, and hit Reb Moshe Leib with his stick. This was a signal to the poritz's servants to seize Reb Moshe Leib and throw him out. To add insult to injury, they set their masters dogs on him. They were large ferocious dogs that patrolled the courtyard and attacked unwanted visitors.

To the servants' wonder, the dogs circled Reb Moshe Leib but did not touch him. They ran to tell their master, and the poritz came out to see for himself. Still, he remained unmoved. "It is obvious that this is no ordinary Jew. Let's give him one more test. If he passes it, I will set him free, and also the Jew in the pit whose liberty he requested."

The wolves backed away from him and drew back in the rear of the cage. The poritz ordered his servants to throw Reb Moshe Leib into a cage containing a pack of snarling, meat-eating wolves. Reb Moshe Leib saw that the danger was very great; the wolves would tear apart and devour anything that came near them. Suddenly, he remembered something his Rebbe had told him. Reb Shmelke had once explained that all wild creatures fear and dread a Jew who had not damaged his Tzelem Elokim, his G-dly image. Even ferocious wolves will not harm such a man.

Calmly, Reb Moshe Leib put on the white silk robe that his Rebbe had given him before they parted. The wolves backed away from him and cringed at the back of the cage. And there they stayed.

When the poritz's servants saw this, they were truly shocked and amazed. They ran to fetch their master, so that he might witness this miracle with his own eyes. Seeing Reb Moshe Leib and the wolves in the cage, the poritz immediately issued an order that he be freed. He bowed deeply to the tzadik, saying, "Now I know that you are truly a man of G-d. I will fulfill your every wish."

The Jewish tenant was helped out of the pit where he had languished for three days. Moreover, at Reb Moshe Leib's request the poritz vowed never to punish any Jewish tenant again in this cruel manner. זייע א"ן

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