

And it was, when the camels finished drinking, that the man took a nose ring whose weight was a beka, and two bracelets for her hands, whose weight was ten measures. (24:22)

The Torah goes to great lengths in describing Eliezer's journey to Aram Naharayim in search of a suitable wife for Yitzchak *Avinu*. When Eliezer saw the outstanding display of *chesed*, loving kindness, manifested by *Rivkah* Imeinu, he realized that she had the refined character traits that were necessary for the next Matriarch of the Jewish Nation. Eliezer gave her gifts, a nose ring and two bracelets. The Torah underscores the weight of these pieces of jewelry, due to their allusion to the half-*shekel* collected from the people for the building of the *Mishkan*, and the ten measures, which allude to the Ten Commandments that were engraved on the two *Luchos*, Tablets.

The **Shem MiShmuel** explains the significance of these gifts. He cites the *Talmud Yerushalmi Sanhedrin* 6:7 which states that Hashem gave three gifts of *middos tovos* to *Yisrael*; they are: *baishanim*, bashful; *rachamanim*, merciful; *gomlei chassadim*, performers of acts of loving kindness. These three qualities are of special importance, because of their corresponding to the three basic aspects of our existence. A human being is comprised of three primary components: the *guf*, the physical body; *nefesh*, emotional ingredient; *seichel*, intellect. It can be posited that all human experience, in one way or another, can be characterized by one or more of those categories. This means that everything in life is either an intellectual, emotional or physical experience. In some experiences, more than one of these categories may come into play.

The three above-mentioned gifts of bashfulness, compassion and performance of acts of kindness correspond directly to the three components of human endeavor. The ability to be bashful is a function of the *seichel*, intellect. One who lacks intellect, such as a baby, has no *bushah*, is not ashamed. A baby will walk around without a diaper, without shame. The child has no concept of shame, because it lacks intelligence. This same idea applies to adults whose level of shame and embarrassment coincides with their level of intellect. A person who loses his ability to intellectually cogitate, such as through illness or narcotics, will, likewise, lower his standard of embarrassment. In the spiritual dimension, the more we sense G-d's Presence, the greater will be our sense of modesty and constraint. The feeling of mercy is the consequence of emotion, which corresponds with the *nefesh*. Last is *gomel chesed*, carrying out acts of kindness, which clearly is a product of our *guf*, physical being.

In this light, the *Shem MiShmuel* establishes a connection between Eliezer's gifts to Rivkah and the gifts with which the Jewish People are endowed. Apparently, Eliezer saw in Rivkah a unique personality, a tremendous power, a latent potential that defined her as the perfect mate for Yitzchak *Avinu*, and, hence, the ideal Matriarch of the Jewish People. He alluded to this covert message by means of the gifts that he gave her.

The nose ring is a piece of jewelry that is attached to the head, the repository of the *seichel*, the

intellect. As the head is sort of detached from the rest of the body, indicating a separation between the intellect and the emotional and physical aspects of a person – so, too, the nose ring was separate from the other two gifts.

The set of two bracelets corresponds to the other two human components which work together – the *nefesh* and the *guf*. The bracelets were identical, symbolizing a very close relationship between the emotion of mercy and the act of carrying out one's feeling of compassion with acts of kindness. The emotion behind the mercy and the performance of the act are closely linked to one another.

Perhaps we may add that the intellect must also play a role in the emotion/mercy – physical/carrying out act of kindness experience. One must apply his intellect to draw boundaries on his emotion. Otherwise, the mercy will run wild, with a person acting with unreserved compassion to anyone in need – regardless of the circumstances or nature of the individual. To take pity on a cruel person is wrong. Indeed one who misplaces his mercy can similarly misplace his sense of cruelty. One who is good to bad people can end up being bad to good people. Compassion must be tempered with circumspection and limited to situations that warrant such positive emotion.

The *Shem MiShmuel* takes the gift of the two bracelets to the next level. When one observes another person in trouble, his natural emotion of mercy is aroused and a feeling of pity fills his heart. This is considered a received feeling derived externally, stimulated by an outside experience. The next stage is acting upon the internal feeling of mercy that strives to alleviate the other person's predicament. This may be referred to as a giving encounter, since it begins within the person and flows from his internal mercy to another person. These two closely related experiences are natural outgrowths of the two hands. The right hand is symbolically viewed as the stronger hand, the hand that motivates and compels mercy for another person. The left hand carries out the act of mercy, actualizing the emotion of mercy flowing to "it" from the right hand.

Eliezer observed Rivkah's behavior in giving him water, then watering the camels. She indicated by her actions that she embodied the fine character traits which exemplify the Jewish People. Who could be more suitable to become the next Matriarch than a young woman who personified the finest qualities of Judaism? The trusted servant indicated his intentions by presenting Rivkah with gifts that underscored her manifestation of the Abrahamic ideals, thus indicating her suitability to become Avraham's daughter-in-law.