

Let it be that the maiden to whom I shall say, “Please tip over your jug so I may drink,” and who replies, “Drink, and I will water your camels,” her will You have designated for Your servant. (24:14)

Osah hochachta, “He will You have designated”: She is fitting for Yitzchak *Avinu* due to her performance of acts of lovingkindness. Such a girl is worthy of entering the home of Avraham *Avinu*, the Patriarch who personified *gemillas chesed*, acts of lovingkindness. While offering to give water also for the camels was certainly an act of thoughtfulness and *chesed*, was that all it was? *Horav Sholom Schwadron, zl*, observes that there was another factor— something about the manner in which she carried out her act of kindness. The Torah states, *Vatomar sh’sei adoni va’timaher va’torad kadah*; “And she said, ‘Drink, my master’ and she quickly lowered her jug” (ibid 24:18). *Rav Sholom* asks: What is the difference between lowering the pail in the natural manner and lowering it quickly? Obviously, if the Torah chose to immortalize the word, *Va’timaher*, “And she quickly” (lowered the pail), it indicates that the alacrity with which Rivkah (*Imeinu*) carried out her kindness was noteworthy and made all of the difference in the world. Her promptness elevated an act of kindness to such a sphere of sanctity that it was forever perpetuated in the Torah.

Rav Sholom goes so far as to assert that the barometer for determining whether an act of *chesed* is motivated by one’s good heart is alacrity. When one cares, he acts quickly. It is not the act that shows, but the attitude that accompanies it which demonstrates one’s purity of heart. The time differential between lowering the pail quickly versus normally is probably a second or two – but those two seconds demonstrate that the act of *chesed* is heartfelt!

We perform favors for people. We perform acts of *chesed*. Some of us go to great lengths to help others – to lend money, spend time, give advice, be there in a time of need – whether real or imagined – but, how are these wonderful acts executed? Are they performed begrudgingly, because we must, or because we want to? That is a question which is answered in the manner in which we carry out our kindness.

A *ben Torah* was having difficulty in finding his mate due to a not-so-simple demand that was non-negotiable. He had an elderly mother to whom he was extremely attached. He attended to her many needs and was always present to see to it that her twilight years were not spent in solitude. Any girl whom he would marry would have to move in to his mother’s apartment with him. Understandably, it would take a special young woman to accept such a lifestyle from the onset of her marriage.

Concerned relatives of this *bachur*, young man, approached *Horav Shlomo Zalmen Auerbach, zl*, for advice. Perhaps he could speak to the *bachur* and explain to him that no girl in her right mind would initially enter into matrimony under such trying conditions. To expect so much from a young

woman was unrealistic.

Imagine their surprise when *Rav Shlomo Zalmen* agreed with the *bachur*! The primary criterion for a girl to qualify as a spouse with whom to share a Torah life and build a Torah home is *gemillas chesed*. A spouse who lacks the sensitivity for her husband's aged mother is deficient in her *middah*, attribute, of *chesed*. The *gadol hador* had spoken. He left no room for discussion.

A few months passed, and the *bachur* met his *bashert*. He became engaged to a special young woman who was willing to move in with his mother and assist in her care. Upon hearing the wonderful news, *Rav Shlomo Zalmen* sent for the *chosson*. *Rav Shlomo Zalmen* wished him all the best, then said, "When you were looking for a spouse and the question was for what qualities in a girl should one seek, I said that priority number one was *gemillas chesed*. Now that you have found a special *kallah*, it is my wish to inform you that it is incumbent upon you to move your mother into a senior citizens home that will provide for her needs on a constant basis. Your new *kallah* should not be relegated to carry such a load. While she has demonstrated her attribute of *chesed* by her willingness to accept upon herself to share with you in assisting your mother, it is nonetheless your primary responsibility – not that of your wife.