

## “I came today to the spring.” (24:42)

*Rashi* comments, “Today I embarked, and today I arrived.” This teaches us that, “*kaftzah lo ha’aretz*, the earth contracted for him, allowing for his journey to be miraculously shortened.” Apparently, it was critical to seal the match that day since Hashem had caused a miracle to occur in order to bring both sides together in the most expeditious manner. *Horav Shlomo Levenstein, zl*, offers a practical reason for Eliezer’s hastened arrival: A *shidduch* was presented to the distinguished *rav* of a community regarding his son: the daughter of a wealthy businessman who lived in a different city. The prospective father-in-law had promised to support the young couple for as long as necessary, thus ensuring that the young man would be able to fully devote himself to Torah study without material concerns. The *rav* agreed in principle to the match. He and his son left the very next day to meet the potential bride and speak to her parents.

That night they stopped at an inn not far from their destination. The *rav* started a conversation with the innkeeper, wondering if he knew, or had business dealings with the wealthy man whose daughter was proposed to his son. “Yes, I know him. I will say one thing; when I shake hands with him, afterward I count my fingers. He is slippery and conniving; he cannot be trusted. He does not know the meaning of giving one’s word. He swindles and cheats at will. I would stay away from him at all costs.” Clearly, when the father and son heard this, they made an about-face for home. This *shidduch* was not going to occur.

During their return trip home, the *rav* said to his son, “I now understand why it was critical that Eliezer and Yitzchak *Avinu* experience *kefitzas ha’derech*. Otherwise, Yitzchak would never have married Rivkah *Imeinu!* Imagine, they would stop at an inn for the night, and strike up a conversation with whomever they would meet. The conversation would immediately proceed to Lavan and Besuel, whom they were about to meet. We know what they would say, “Lavan? He is a scoundrel of the lowest order. Lavan means white. The only thing ‘white’ about him is his name. A swindler and a thief who is no better than Besuel, the father who raised him.” When Eliezer and Yitzchak would hear such terrible information concerning the would-be-*mechutanim*, the *shidduch* would be off! Hashem had to contract the land so that they would arrive quickly and not meet anyone along the way.

*Horav Yosef Sholom Elyashiv, zl*, spent some time in Netanya recuperating in a hotel. His idea of therapy was to spend the day learning and maintaining his usual early morning (2:30 a.m.) *sedarim* that continued all day. He learned incessantly with his usual passion, accompanied by his signature soft melody. This was how he lived. Torah was his life. It was his “song of life.” The fact that it commenced at 2:30 A.M. seemed to bother one of the other guests at the hotel. The *rebbeztin* of a distinguished *Rosh Yeshivah* maintained a low tolerance level for any singing in the middle of the night – even if the tune accompanied Torah study. *Rav Elyashiv* understood. This was a place in which to recuperate. He was depriving her of sleep. The *Rav* no longer sang during the night for the rest of his stay.

Many years later, one of *Rav Elyashiv's* grandsons sought his advice concerning a *shidduch* for his daughter. Interestingly, the prospective match was the grandson of that *rebbetzin* who complained about his early morning singing. *Rav Elyashiv* said, "No, we cannot be *mechutanim*, in laws, with them." This was a reaction that his grandson did not expect. "Why?" he asked. *Rav Elyashiv* explained that the grandmother asked him not to sing when he was learning because it compromised her ability to sleep restfully. This attitude he felt represented a deficiency in her love of Torah. The boy in question grew up in a home in which the love of Torah was not at a premium. "Such *mechutanim* are not for us."

The home in which one is raised has a compelling, almost unalterable effect on one's perspective on life. Indeed, one can hail from a sorely deficient background, but if he/she is raised and nurtured in a home in which character refinement is emphasized, the individual will become a refined person. Eliezer, servant of Avraham, was a descendant of Canaan. As such, his psyche was rooted in moral profligacy and idol worship. He grew up, however, in Avraham *Avinu's* home, where he was in constant contact with the Patriarch and Sarah *Imeinu*. Therefore, he rose from the lowly status of Canaanite slave to become Avraham's *talmid muvhak*, primary student (other than Yitzchak *Avinu*). Eliezer was also involved in the Patriarch's outreach endeavors. Everything that he knew was derived from his *Rebbe* and master, Avraham. He had a daughter who must have been a special young woman, because Eliezer hoped that Yitzchak would marry her. Avraham was brutally honest with Eliezer and told him in no uncertain terms that it would never happen. Eliezer was of Canaanite origin. Yitzchak was an *Ivri*, and therefore blessed by Hashem. One who is blessed cannot unite with one who is cursed. (Canaan had been cursed by Noach.) End of story.

*Horav Aizik Scher, zl*, underscores the fortitude exhibited by Eliezer. Even after being told that he was of accursed origins, and that his daughter could not be accepted in the *Abrahamitic* family, he still served his *Rebbe* faithfully, judicially carrying out his mission to seek the perfect wife for Yitzchak. He not only executed his mission to the very best of his ability, he prayed to Hashem for success. He experienced and manifested pure joy with the successful fulfillment of his pledge. How was he able to overcome the pain/hurt that he must have had after being rejected by Avraham? He was raised and taught in Avraham's home. When one receives a refined education, it shows. What he learned in Avraham's and Sarah's home changed his character. He was able to accept and cope with the rejection, because he understood that at the end of the day he was a Canaanite who is unable to unite with a *Yisrael*.