

He will send His angel before you, and you will take a wife for my son from there. (24:7)

Avraham *Avinu* was a *nasi*, Prince, in the land; therefore, he was highly respected. The most distinguished persons of that era were guests at his home. His wealth was unparalleled. He had one son (with his wife Sarah) who was his sole heir, both materially and spiritually. He could have had any young woman as a wife for Yitzchak. Nonetheless, he made every arrangement, by sending his trusted servant to seek out the right woman. Avraham prayed incessantly that Yitzchak would find the right wife. Why? The *shadchan* must have been standing by his door with a list of names that would be the envy of everyone. The **Chasam Sofer** derives from here that: “The primary *avodas Hashem* (the best way to be assured of one’s proper ability to serve Hashem) and the greatest source of increased success in *Olam Haze*h (matters pertaining to this world, i.e. material) are dependent on one’s wife; something of which anyone with a modicum of common sense and intelligence is aware (author’s translation).” Indeed, we see that even after the *shidduch* between Yitzchak and Rivkah was made, Lavan and his mother did everything to prevent its realization. This is why Eliezer sought to culminate the match and leave post-haste.

Shlomo *Hamelech* says (*Koheles* 7:28), “One man in a thousand I have found, but one woman among them I have not found.” The *Midrash* comments: It is a natural occurrence to see a thousand students begin their educational journey with *mikrah*, *Chumash*. One hundred of those budding scholars continue on to the next level – *Mishnah*. Of those, ten go on to studying *Talmud*, with only one succeeding as a *moreh horaah*, *Halachic* adjudicator. This is what the *pasuk* is teaching: One (so to speak) “makes it” of the original thousand students; one goes all the way to become an accomplished Torah scholar.

The **Ksav Sofer** (in the preface to his novellae) asks: What is the relationship between the beginning of the *pasuk* (the one in a thousand who succeeds in Torah scholarship) and its end? (“A woman among them I have not found.”) He explains that the Torah is giving a reason that, among one thousand who enter *mikrah*, only one succeeds in becoming successfully erudite: It is because one *ishah k’sheirah*, righteous woman – who is willing to support her husband, allowing him to learn Torah diligently, without the mundane responsibilities that detract from his studies – is not found. A woman whose willingness to settle for less (materially), so that her husband could spend more time learning, is uncommon. It is the wife, the *eishas chayil*, that must often determine the success of her husband – and the future direction of her family.