

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

The *Bais HaLevi* submits that Eliezer tested Rivkah in two areas. First, he sought to ascertain if she was a *gomeles chesed*, one who performs kindness, by giving drink to someone whom she did not know. Of special interest to Eliezer was the fact that she did not have a cup for him. He would have to drink directly from the pitcher. She did not know if he had germs that would contaminate her pitcher. Would she still offer him to drink, or not?

Second, and of extreme significance, is what she would do after Eliezer drank from the pitcher. What would she do with her left-over water? Would she spill it out, thereby embarrassing the man to whom she had given water; or would she take the pitcher home and share the water with her family, who might become ill as a result of drinking “contaminated” water?

The optimum for which he could hope was what ultimately occurred. She demonstrated her kindness by extending the pitcher to Eliezer. She also showed common sense when she took the left-over water and poured it for the camels.

The *Bais HaLevi* alludes to a very important principle, one that we often seem to ignore. *Middos tovot*, good character traits, such as pursuing *chesed*, going out of one’s way to help another, are all wonderful and essential for one’s spiritual development, but they should go hand in hand with *seichel*, common sense. One who has no *seichel* will accomplish very little with his *chesed*. Sooner or later, he will do something foolish or hurt the feelings of the person he is trying to help. He means well, he wants to help, but he regrettably does not know how. Common sense is a prerequisite for success. *Seichel* is more than a good idea; without it, one is lost!