

And Avraham said to his servant, the elder of his household who controlled all that was his...that you not take a wife for my son from the daughters of the Canaani. (24:1,3)

The *Torah* places great emphasis upon Eliezer's position in Avraham's household. Certainly it was a high status position, considering Avraham's great wealth. *Horav M.D. Soloveitchik, Shlita*, comments that Avraham *Avinu* placed incredible trust in Eliezer, appointing him to direct and control all of his material assets. When it involved spiritual pursuits, however, he exacted an oath from him. He did not simply rely upon his proven integrity and devotion. He sought a promise that would bind him to his word. Marriage was a spiritual endeavor for Yitzchak. He and the woman he would marry were to become the progenitors of *Klal Yisrael*. Avraham could not afford to chance that Eliezer might not carry out his mission.

Horav Chaim Soloveitchik, zl, related that he once read in a *sefer* a parable that addresses the *Torah's* emphasis on Eliezer's position. A man had entered a city starving, after travelling for a number of days without adequate food. He saw a restaurant that displayed a "Kosher" sign. He immediately entered to order a meal. It goes without saying that an individual who is more scrupulous regarding *kashrus* will not enter an establishment until he knows who the owner is. A greater *yarei Shomayim*, G-d fearing person, will surely investigate the *kashrus* standards of that restaurant thoroughly. There are those who will not be satisfied until they have spoken to the local rabbi and received confirmation that the restaurant is unequivocally *kosher*.

On the other hand, if someone were to come to this community with the intention of making a business deal, the story would be quite different. They would investigate every aspect of the deal, demand guarantees and be completely confident that nothing would go wrong with their money. This is, regrettably, human nature; when it comes to money, people are uncompromising and demanding. When it comes to spiritual matters, they leave *frumkeit* for the next person.

Avraham *Avinu's* standard is the converse. In regard to his material possessions, he was confident that Eliezer would suffice. When it came to selecting a wife for Yitzchak, he recognized that it was a spiritual endeavor. This woman would be responsible for continuing the matriarchal tradition which began with Sarah *Imeinu*. A simple assurance was not sufficient. He exacted an oath, signifying the overwhelming importance of his endeavor.