

And I said to my master, perhaps the woman will not follow me. (24:39)

Upon meeting with Rivkah's family, Eliezer recounted his entire discussion with Avraham. Included in the conversation, Eliezer related his anxiety that the prospective bride might refuse his offer. *Rashi* cites the reason behind this fear. Eliezer, himself, had a daughter for whom he sought Yitzchak as a husband. Upon approaching Avraham with the idea of this match, he encountered a negative response.

Avraham's rejection was based upon the fact that Eliezer, as a descendant of Canaan, was considered cursed, while Yitzchak was blessed. A union between one who is blessed and one who is cursed cannot endure. The spelling of the word *hikut* which means "perhaps," alludes to the overture by Eliezer regarding his daughter. It is written without a "vov," thereby causing it to be read as *hikt*, "to me." This construct intimates that Avraham should approach Eliezer in order to request his daughter for Yitzchak.

Why does *Rashi* not make his comment earlier in (in *pasuk* 5), when Eliezer questions Avraham upon receiving the details of his mission? Indeed, in Eliezer's original statement the word "perhaps" is written within the conventional spelling of *hikut*. If Eliezer was alluding to something, why doesn't the *Torah* indicate this at the time he actually said it? Why does the *Torah* wait until the retelling of the conversation to make this point?

The Kotzker Rebbe z.t.l. replied with an insightful statement. Frequently, one will not admit to himself his own personal ulterior motives. While one is immersed in a predicament which touches upon areas of vested interest, it is very difficult to notice how much one's subjectivity controls his actions and responses. Only after some time has elapsed can one be truly critical of his own motivations. In recounting the whole episode of his mission, Eliezer was struck with the realization that, indeed, his personal interest has clouded his subjectivity. His profound sense of disappointment in not managing to arrange for Yitzchak to be his son-in-law indicated this to him. Only after this realization became apparent to Eliezer does the *Torah* reveal this allusion.

This is true in other areas. Often one will perceive himself as acting solely *l'shem shomayim*, for the sake of heaven. The litmus test of one's true motivations is his reaction during a moment of crisis or disappointment. If one's initial response, is dignified and respectable, then one's motivations for the sake of heaven are clear. Conversely, if one reacts negatively, with a vengeance and animosity unbecoming a *ben Torah*, his true ulterior motives are readily apparent. Prior to undertaking any activity or mission, be it personal or communal, one should go through some form of introspection in order to clarify his actual motivations.