

Rather, to my land and to my kindred shall you go and take a wife for my son, for Yitzhak. (24:4)

Harov Yosef Shalom Elyashiv, zl, relates a debate that took place between a modern, progressive thinking Jew and a traditional member of the community. Clearly, a deep contrast existed between the divergent outlooks on Jewish life and living that guided these two men. The forward thinking (as he regarded himself) wondered why, when Eliezer sought a wife for Yitzchak *Avinu*, a woman who would one day be the next Matriarch, he did not look for *yichus*, pedigree, nor was he concerned whether she used electricity on Shabbos, (There is a serious debate among the *poskim* whether one is prohibited from using electricity generated by Jewish workers on *Shabbos*. A number of communities use their own generators). He did not question whether she took *Maaser*, tithed her food. His primary criteria were *middos tovos*, positive character traits. What about the rest of Torah? Does character refinement supplant the 613 *Mitzvos*? Obviously, his concern was that she had a good heart. The remainder of the Torah with all its *halachic* minutiae was insignificant- as long as she had a good Jewish heart. (This has been the position taken by the secular camp. As long as one is a *mentch*, fine human being, the rest of halacha is unimportant.)

The traditional Jew (with his “archaic” beliefs) asked, “Why do you choose to base your position on the insights of Avraham *Avinu*’s servant? Why not take a look at his master’s perspective? Avraham did not instruct Eliezer to seek a girl (who had a refined character) who exemplified acts of loving kindness.” ‘He told him to “go to my land and to my kindred.”’ He apparently had a different outlook on what type of woman would be an appropriate wife for Yitzchak.

Rav Elyashiv explains that, actually Avraham and Eliezer were on the same page. Indeed, each one complemented the other. The two *Luchos*, Ten Commandments, that Hashem gave *bnei Yisrael* on *Har Sinai* (and are the basis of our Torah) were comprised of two sets of *mitzvos*: *bein adam la’Makom*, between man and G-d; and *bein adam la’chaveiro*. One errs if he thinks that he can carry out his responsibilities to Hashem while ignoring his own character traits and relationship with his fellow man. One who focuses on acts of loving kindness, while ignoring the rest of the *Torah*, is living a flawed Jewish life.

The *Rav* told the story of a group of horse thieves who made their home in a small town in Russia. A person must earn a living, so they decided they would earn their livelihood by stealing horses. After a while, they graduated to other items. They stole anything they could move and fence. They were open minded, liberal Jews; thus, they stole from everyone-not just the ultra-Orthodox. They stole from whoever had something worth stealing. Something, however, was unique about their lifestyle and its relationship with Judaism. They established a *shul* which they named Congregation Horse Traders, in which they *davened* every day. Furthermore, every member of the congregation had to attend services on *Shabbos*, followed by *Tehillim* recitation in the afternoon. They were acutely aware that their chosen vocation was accompanied by danger. They hoped that their fervent prayers would circumvent any danger to themselves.

Clearly, anyone who possesses a modicum of intelligence understands the hypocrisy and fallacy of such *frumkeit*, observance. This type of self-serving nature is not even remotely connected with Jewish observance. They thought that as long as they davened and observed one particular area of *bein adam la'Makom*, they could reject *bein adam la'chaveiro*.