

The Torah Any Times

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Rabbi Shlomo Farhi

Camels of Character

The Torah shares a fascinating insight in the story of Eliezer and his mission to find a wife for Yitzchak. Eliezer, tasked with finding a match for Yitzchak, embarks on his journey with ten camels. The Torah specifically notes that these camels were from "the camels of Avraham." This description seems superfluous—after all, whose camels would Eliezer take if not Avraham's? Yet, Rashi points out that the camels were unique; they were muzzled to ensure they wouldn't graze in fields that didn't belong to Avraham.

This detail highlights Avraham's meticulous care for honesty and integrity. Even his animals were an extension of his values. This stands in contrast to the incident between Avraham's and Lot's shepherds, where Lot's shepherds allowed their animals to graze freely, arguing the land would eventually belong to Lot. Avraham rejected this logic, emphasizing that something promised for the future doesn't justify its misuse in the present.

Eliezer's decision to take Avraham's camels on this journey was deliberate. By presenting these distinctive camels, Eliezer broadcasted Avraham's values of honesty and accountability to the family he was visiting. It sent a clear message: this is the kind of household Yitzchak comes from, and this is the type of bride they seek—someone who values integrity and kindness.

This offers a profound lesson in how we represent ourselves and our values. Whether in dating, business, or relationships, we communicate our standards by how we present ourselves and what we tolerate. If we delay expressing our principles, we risk wasting time or aligning with people whose values don't match our own. Just as Eliezer made honesty central to his mission, we too must be clear about who we are from the outset.

Avraham's camels teach that integrity isn't limited to personal actions; it extends to everything under our influence—our family, employees, and even our possessions. If someone working for us or a family member under our roof engages in dishonest behavior, we bear a degree of responsibility. If we tolerate dishonesty within our sphere of influence, we become complicit. We must uphold the highest standards of integrity, not only for ourselves but for all we represent.

Ultimately, Eliezer's journey wasn't just about finding a wife for Yitzchak. It was about ensuring that the values Avraham built his life around—honesty, humility, and kindness—would carry forward into the next generation. This lesson endures: our legacy is defined not by wealth or status, but by the principles we live by and instill in those around us.

When you hear someone excuse questionable behavior with, "It wasn't me," you realize the disconnect. Avraham didn't excuse himself when his camels were muzzled. He didn't say,

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"I'm not the one eating the grass." He ensured that even his animals—beings incapable of understanding moral accountability—would not trespass on another's property. Why? Because Avraham understood that integrity begins with us and flows outward.

Consider this in a modern context: A business owner may hire a lawyer to "play dirty" in a negotiation or a deal. The owner thinks they've maintained their integrity because they didn't personally draft the underhanded contract. But can they truly claim moral innocence? The Torah teaches us otherwise. When Avraham ensured his camels were muzzled, it was because he knew that his standards of honesty are non-negotiable, even for his animals.

Imagine a parent who hears their child has been dishonest in a school project or in a minor business venture. Does the parent brush it off with, "Well, they're their own person"? Or do they take responsibility for guiding their child, ensuring they understand the values of hon-

esty and accountability? Avraham teaches that we are answerable for the conduct of those within our domain, especially when it reflects on the values we've instilled.

How does this apply to us today? Many people are hesitant to openly share their values or take pride in who they are. They worry about scaring people away or being perceived as too rigid or too extreme. But in this Parsha, the Torah reminds us that this hesitation is misplaced. By leading with honesty and integrity, we naturally attract those who align with our values and deter those who don't.

Imagine someone in the dating world hesitant to reveal they're Shomer Shabbat or strictly Kosher. They think, "I'll wait a few months before bringing it up; I don't want to scare them off." But if those values are non-negotiable, isn't it better to be upfront? Isn't it better to scare away someone incompatible early, rather than invest months only to face disappointment? Similarly, in business, if we tolerate unethical behavior, we attract like-minded people who

think cutting corners is acceptable. Conversely, if we advertise integrity from the start, we foster relationships based on trust and mutual respect.

Avraham Avinu's legacy is a call to elevate ourselves and those around us. By doing so, we build a reputation, a Shem Tov (good name), that lasts far beyond material wealth. As the Torah emphasizes, all of Avraham's goodness was in Eliezer's hands—not just his possessions, but his character, his reputation, and his values.

Let us embrace this lesson in our daily lives, ensuring that our actions, choices, and relationships reflect the honesty and integrity we hold dear. Like Avraham, let us make our values clear so that those who encounter us know exactly who we are.

Rabbi Avrohom M. Mendelson

You, Me, We

In the first paragraph of Krias Shema, we find the words, "U'kshartem le'os al yadecha ve'hayu le'totafos bein einecha—And you shall bind as a sign on your arm and they shall be for you as tefillin between your eyes," a reference to the mitzvah of tefillin. This mitzvah is not only a physical act, but also a gesture that binds us to our emunah in Hashem and the Torah. The Tefillin contain specific passages, known as Parshiyos, which convey essential themes about our belief in Hashem.

What is the central theme of these Parshiyos in our tefillin? The

praises of Hashem, specifically encapsulated in the declaration, "Shema Yisrael Hashem Elokeinu Hashem Echad." Here, we acknowledge and declare the greatness of Hashem, extolling His exalted attributes and recognizing His role in our lives and the world around us.

Interestingly, the Gemara (Berachos 6a) reveals that Hashem also has Tefillin. What is written in Hashem's Tefillin? "Mi ke'amcha Yisrael goy echad ba'aretz—Who is like Your people, Israel, one nation on the earth?" In Hashem's Tefillin, Hashem praises us, just as we praise Him in our Tefillin.

It's a striking dynamic. In our Te-

fillin, our focus is on Hashem, and in Hashem's Tefillin, His focus is on us. But herein lies the secret of a true relationship: it is where both parties express admiration and appreciation for the other.

Rav Levi Yitzchak of Berditchev notes that we find this nuance in the way we describe the Yom Tov of Pesach. The Torah—as representing the word and expression of Hashem—refers to it as "Chag HaMatzos—The holiday of Matzos," which signifies the haste with which we left Mitzrayim, before our dough could rise. On the other hand, we refer to the Yom Tov as "Pesach," emphasizing how Hashem passed over the homes of Bnei Yisrael during the plague of the firstborn in Mitzrayim, sparing our

lives. In this vein, we are reminded of Hashem's mercy and care for us, His people. Why the difference in names?

The act of "Pesach," or passing over, symbolizes the profound love Hashem has for us. In our name of the Yom Tov, we therefore focus on what Hashem did for us and express our appreciation toward Hashem. At the same time, Hashem calls the Yom Tov "Chag Ha'Matzos" because He wishes to spotlight what we did for Him and show His love for us. This duality showcases our symbiotic relationship with Hashem; we express our gratitude to Hashem and He praises us for our unique status as His chosen people.

In this mutual exchange, we create a tapestry of respect and admiration, which is the essence of any meaningful relationship. When one spouse continually looks to praise and uplift the other, it cultivates an environment filled with peace and harmony, creating a serene atmosphere of shalom bayis.

What does this look like in real life? Consider the ways our Gedolim captured the essence of mutual respect and admiration in their own personal relationships.

Years ago, a doctor from Los Angeles had children who were of age for shidduchim. On one occasion, he decided to invite them to a conven-

tion in New York, where he would be attending breakfast with Rav Pam and Rebbetzin Pam zt"l. He flew his children in specifically for this occasion to experience this unique opportunity. As they gathered for breakfast, the following unfolded. "Would the Rosh Yeshiva like an egg?" asked Rebbetzin Pam to Rav Pam with a smile. "Yes, please!" he replied. "Can I get the Rebbetzin some milk?" "Sure," she said. The back-and-forth continued: "Would the Rosh Yeshiva like coffee?" "Please!" Their banter continued to ensue, as the children watched in awe, absorbing the mutual respect and care displayed in their interactions. This heartfelt exchange epitomizes the heart of a relationship—complimenting, looking for the best in one another, and helping each other.

Another couple, Rav and Rebbetzin Scheinberg zt"l, were in their nineties after being married for seventy long years. One day, as they moved through their kitchen, Rav Scheinberg gently bumped into the Rebbetzin and asked, "How do you feel today?" "Weak," she replied softly. "I feel weak too," Rav Scheinberg said, "but when I see you, it gives me strength." "I was just going to say the same thing!" she beamed back.

A third couple were Rav and Rebbetzin Leibowitz zt"l. I had the privilege of visiting their home several

times, and during one visit, I learned a valuable lesson. As a young kollel fellow, I found myself grappling with a common question that many young newlywed husbands ponder: "What about the dishes? Should I help or not?" One morning, I decided to ask Rebbetzin Leibowitz directly. "Did the Rosh Yeshiva ever do the dishes?"

She smiled knowingly. "Once, when my wrist was particularly bad, I couldn't wash the dishes for a couple of days. They piled up in the sink, and I knew that if I stepped out for shopping, the Rosh Yeshiva would surely do them, and I didn't want that to happen. So I decided to write a sign. I took a pen and paper and wrote: 'Do not use the sink'—as if to say it was broken. I placed the sign right next to the kitchen sink and went out shopping. When I returned about forty-five minutes later, I rushed into the kitchen and, lo and behold, the dishes were gone!"

"Then I heard water running from the bathroom around the corner. Curious, I hurried to see the Rosh Yeshiva washing the dishes in the bathroom sink!" She turned to me, a twinkle in her eye, "Does that answer your question?"

This is the essence of shalom bayis—a foundation built on love, respect, and the continual appreciation of one another.

with tefillah. Every step of the way, Eliezer turned to Hashem in prayer, recognizing that success in such a mission is entirely b'yad Hashem—in the hands of Heaven.

Yitzchak, at the time, was 40 years old. Eliezer set out into the wilderness, likely wondering, "Where do

Rabbi Yisroel Majeski

The Measure of Kindness

When Avraham sent Eliezer to find a shidduch (marriage partner) for his son Yitzchak, the first

thing Eliezer did was daven. From this episode in the Torah, we learn that the foundation of any effort, particularly in shidduchim, begins

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I even begin? The answer was tefillah—again and again, tefillah. This is because everything we do relies on siyata d’shmaya (Heavenly assistance).

What was Eliezer seeking? He prayed to find someone who could join the house of Avraham Avinu, someone whose character would be fitting for Yitzchak. Rashi (Bereishis 24:14), explains that Eliezer sought a woman who was a gomeles chas-sadim—a person devoted to acts of kindness. To build a family in the legacy of Avraham, chesed was the non-negotiable foundation.

But what kind of kindness was Eliezer looking for? It wasn’t just about being polite or doing the bare minimum, like holding a door open. Eliezer devised a test: he would ask for water, and the right person would not only offer him a drink but would also water his camels—an act of going above and beyond.

The Sforno elaborates: when someone asks for a favor, they often minimize their request, asking for less than they truly need so as

not to impose. But a giver, a true ba’al chesed, doesn’t stop at the request. They consider what the other person really needs and provide even more. For instance, if someone asks for a ride to the airport, a ba’al chesed might not only give the ride, but also stop to buy them a drink along the way. It’s about anticipating and addressing needs without waiting to be asked.

Eliezer’s test revealed this quality in Rivka, who despite being a young girl, didn’t hesitate to step up and assist. She could have questioned why it was her responsibility to help a group of grown men and their camels. But Rivka didn’t ask, “Why me?” Instead, she embraced the opportunity to give.

This principle of chesed extends beyond Rivka’s actions. Sometimes, when someone asks us for help, we rationalize why they should turn to someone else. For example, if a person with wealthy relatives asks for financial assistance, one might think, “Why don’t they ask their family?” A true ba’al chesed doesn’t think this way. One notable ba’al chesed offered this perspective: Imagine someone ap-

proached you with a lucrative real estate deal, saying you could earn a million dollars. Would you turn them away, saying, “Why don’t you offer this to your brother instead?” Of course not. If we’re eager to seize opportunities for gain, we should be just as eager to embrace opportunities for giving.

Later in the story, when Eliezer arrives at Rivka’s family home, he is offered food. Yet, he refuses to eat until he shares the purpose of his mission. This reflects another key lesson: when the opportunity arises, don’t delay. Hesitation can result in missed chances to do good.

Ultimately, true giving isn’t about checking off a box or fulfilling a request. It’s about understanding and addressing the deeper needs of others. By embodying this mindset, we not only become givers, but also elevate ourselves as vessels of chesed, following the legacy of Avraham Avinu.

Rabbi Avi Wiesenfeld

Eternal Priorities

Sim Na Yadcha Tachat Yerei-chi—Place your hand underneath my thigh.” With these words, Avraham Avinu charged his trusted servant Eliezer with a mission of monumental significance: to find a suitable wife for Yitzchak. This wasn’t just about marriage; it was about shaping the future of Klal Yisrael. The woman chosen would become the next matriarch, carrying forward the legacy of Sarah Imeinu and ensuring the continuity of Avraham’s vision for generations to come.

The Torah describes Eliezer as hamoshel b’chol asher lo—the over-

seer of all that Avraham owned. He was, in modern terms, the CEO of Avraham’s household, entrusted with access to financial accounts, property, and even personal security measures. If Avraham trusted Eliezer so implicitly with all his material wealth, why, then, was he so cautious when it came to this mission? Why demand a solemn shvua before sending him to find Yitzchak’s wife?

The Be’er Mayim Chaim provides a profound insight: while Avraham had absolute confidence in Eliezer’s management of material matters, spiritual matters were

in a different category entirely. When it came to ensuring the future of Klal Yisrael, Avraham could not rely solely on trust. The stakes were simply too high. This wasn’t just about loyalty or competence; it was about ensuring that the task was executed with the utmost seriousness and fidelity to Avraham’s values.

As we go about our daily lives, this lesson calls us to recalibrate our priorities. Material possessions and comforts are fleeting, but our spiritual actions—our mitzvos, values, and legacy—are eternal.

Bring Them Home!

Names of Hostages in Gaza and Partial List of Injured Soldiers

(Updated: 22 Cheshvan)

שמות חיילים פצועים לרפואה שלמה

אביתר מנחם חיים בן זהבה
אברהם מרדכי בן יעל
אהרן בן שרה הנדל
אופק בו אלינור
אורי אברהם בן הדסה
אייל אליעזר בן חנה
אלון בן מרים
אלחנן יאיר בן דבורה
אליה בן רות
אלישע יהודה בן רות
אלעד בן שרית
אמיר בן אלה
בנימין בן ריינה
בנימין יצחק בן שרה
בר בן נורית
גלעד איתי בן אפרת
דוד בן זיוה
הראל בן חנה
חיים מרדכי בן שרה איטה
טל גרשון בן שרה
יאיר יונה בן דרורה צפורה מלכה
יהודה אהרון בן מרים אסתר
יהונתן יאשיהו בן כרמית
יהונתן יוסף בן שירה
יואל בן אילה
יוחאי יהודה בן סיגל חוה
יונה בצלאל בן חווה שושנה
ירין אליהו בן סיגל
כפיר חיים בן מירה מרים
מיכאל בן פריידל
מישל בת אנג'ליקה
מנחם דוד חי בן מרים
משה אהרן בן לאה בילא
משה צבי בן עירית
מתן בן דבורה
ניר בן אורנה
עדי מנחם בן מורן מירה
עודד אפרים בן ויויאן
עוז חי בן סמדר
עידן בן טובה
עמיחי בן סיגלית רחל
עמית יהונתן בן מאיה
רואי בן עופרה
רון בן אבישג
רון בן שרון
רועי חיים בן מירב
תום שאול בן דניאל
תומר בן צפורה

אבינתן בן דיצה תרצה (אור)
אביתר בן גליה (דוד)
אגם בת מירב (ברגר)
אוהד בן אסתר (בן עמי)
אוהד בן קרן (יהלומי)
אור בן גאולה (לוי)
איתן בן רות אדית (הורן)
איתן אברהם בן אפרת (מור)
אלון בן עידית (אהל)
אליה בן סיגלית (כהן)
אליהו בן חנה (שרעבי)
אלכסנדר סשה בן ילנה לאה (טרופנוב)
אלקנה בן רוחמה (בוחבוט)
אמילי תהילה בת אמנדה פרנסיס (דמארי)
ארבל בת יעל (יהוד)
אריאל בן סילביה מוניקה (קוניו)
אריאל בן שירי (ביבס)
בר אברהם בן גיוליה (קופרשטיין)
גד משה בן שרה (מוזס)
גיא בן מירב (גלבע דלאל)
גלי בן טליה (ברמן)
דוד בן סילביה מוניקה (קוניו)
דורון בת סימונה שרה (שטיינברכר)
דניאלה בת אורלי (גלבע)
זיו בן טליה (ברמן)
טל בן ניצה (שוהם קורנגולד)
יאיר בן רות אידית (הורן)
יוסף חיים בן מרים (אוחנה)
יצחק בן אנטה חנה (אלגרט)
יצחק בן דבורה (עידן)
ירדן בן פנינה (ביבס)
כפיר בן שירי (ביבס)
לירי בת שירה (אלבג)
מקסים בן טלה (הרקין)
מתן בן ענת (אנגרסט)
מתן בן ירדנה עינב (צנגאוקר)
נמרוד בן ויקי (כהן)
נעמה בת איילת (לוי)
עודד בן בלהה (ליפשיץ)
עומר בן ניבה (ונקרט)
עומר בן שלי (שם טוב)
עומר מקסים בן אורנה אסתר (נאוטרה)
עופר בן כוכבה (קלדרון)
עידן בן יעל (אלכסנדר)
עמרי בן אסתר ורוניקה (מירן)
קית' שמואל בן גלדיס חוה (סיגל)
קרינה בת אירנה (ארייב)
רום בן תמר נועה (ברסלבסקי)
רומי בת מירב (גונן)
שגב בן גלית (כלפון)
שגיא בן נעמית (חן דקל)
שירי בת מרגיט (ביבס)
שלמה בן מרסל (מנצור)
תמיר בן חירות (נמרודי)

Bring Them Home!

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(Updated: 22 Cheshvan)

INJURED SOLDIERS

Evyatar Menachem Chaim ben Zehava
Avraham Mordechai ben Yael
Aharon ben Sarah Hendel
Ofek ben Elinor
Ori Avraham ben Hadassah
Eyal Eliezer ben Chana
Alon ben Miriam
Elchanan Yair ben Devorah
Eliya ben Ravit
Elisha Yehudah ben Rut
Elad ben Sarit
Amir ben Ella
Binyamin ben Reina
Binyamin Yitzchak ben Sarah
Bar ben Nurit
Gilad Itai ben Efrat
David ben Ziva
Harel ben Chana
Chaim Mordechai ben Sarah Itta
Tal Gershon ben Sarah
Yair Yonah ben Drora Tzipporah Malka
Yehuda Aharon ben Miriam Esther
Yehonatan Yoshiyahu ben Carmit
Yehonatan Yosef ben Shira
Yoel ben Ayala
Yochai Yehudah ben Sigal Chava
Yonah Betzalel ben Chava Shoshana
Yarin Eliyahu ben Sigal
Kfir Chaim ben Mira Miriam
Michael ben Freidel
Michelle bat Angelika
Menachem David Chai ben Miriam
Moshe Aharon ben Leah Beila
Moshe Tzi ben Irit
Matan ben Devorah
Nir ben Orna
Adi Menachem ben Moran Mira
Oded Efraim ben Vivian
Oz Chai ben Smadar
Idan ben Tova
Amichai ben Sigalit Rachel
Amit Yehonatan ben Maya
Roi ben Ofra
Ron ben Avishag
Ron ben Sharon
Roi Chaim ben Meirav
Tom Shaul ben Danielle
Tomer ben Tzipporah

Avinatan ben Ditzza Tirtza (Ohr)
Evyatar ben Galya (David)
Agam bat Meirav (Berger)
Ohad ben Esther (Ben-Ami)
Ohad ben Keren (Yahalomi)
Ohr ben Geula (Levi)
Eitan ben Ruth Idit (Horen)
Eitan Avraham ben Efrat (Mor)
Alon ben Idit (Ohel)
Eliya ben Sigalit (Cohen)
Eliyahu ben Chana (Sharabi)
Alexander Sasha ben Yelena Leah
(Tropanov)
Elkana ben Ruchama (Buchbut)
Emily Tehilla bat Amanda Francis
(Damari)
Arbel bat Yael (Yehud)
Ariel ben Sylvia Monika (Konyo)
Ariel ben Shiri (Bibas)
Bar Avraham ben Julia (Cooperstein)
Gad Moshe ben Sarah (Mozes)
Guy ben Meirav (Gilboa Dalal)
Gali ben Talya (Berman)
David ben Sylvia Monika (Konyo)
Doron bat Simona Sarah (Steinbrecher)
Daniella bat Orli (Gilboa)
Ziv ben Talya (Berman)
Tal ben Nitza (Shoham-Corngold)
Yair ben Ruth Idit (Horen)
Yosef Chaim ben Miriam (Ochana)
Yitzchak ben Aneta Chana (Elgarat)
Yarden ben Penina (Bibas)
Kfir ben Shiri (Bibas)
Liri bat Shira (Elbag)
Maxim ben Talleh (Herkin)
Matan ben Anat (Angrest)
Matan ben Yardena Einav (Tzangauker)
Nimrod ben Viki (Cohen)
Naama bat Ayelet (Levi)
Oded ben Bilhah (Lifschitz)
Omer ben Niva (Venkrat)
Omer ben Shelly (Shemtov)
Omer Maxim ben Orna Esther (Neutra)
Ofer ben Cochava (Kalderon)
Idan ben Yael (Alexander)
Omri ben Esther Veronica (Miran)
Yitzchak ben Devorah (Idan)
Kieth Shmuel ben Gladis Chava (Segal)
Karina bat Irena (Ariav)
Rom ben Tamar Noa (Brasalevsky)
Romi bat Meirav (Gonen)
Segev ben Galit (Chalfon)
Sagi ben Naamit (Chen-Dekel)
Shiri bat Margit (Bibas)
Shlomo ben Marcelle (Mansour)
Tamir ben Cheirut (Nimrodi)