

פרשת חיי שרה

ויהי הוא טרם כלה לדבר והנה רבקה יצאת אשר ילדה לבתואל בן מלכה אשת נחור אחי אברהם וכדה על שכמה. (פרק כד' טו)

And it was when (Eliezer) had not yet finished speaking that suddenly Rivkah was coming out-she who had been born to Bethuel, the son of Milcah the wife of Nachor, brother of Avraham-with her jug upon her shoulder.

ויהי הוא טרם כלה לדבר is an awkward sentence structure. As Rabbeinu Bachya asks, "Why not write *ככלותו לדבר*?" Alternatively, asks the Meshech Chochma, "Should not the phrase be *ויהיה טרם כלה לדבר*?"

Rabbeinu Bachya explains that the word הוא can be a reference to HKBH. The superfluous הוא is therefore hinting to the tremendous דשמיא סייעתא that Eliezer received. The מלאך who Avraham prayed for earlier in פסוק ז' when he said to Eliezer, "ה' אלקי השמים...הוא ישלח מלאכו", *Hashem, G-d of heaven,...He will send His angel before you, and you will take a wife from my son there,* facilitated the success of Eliezer's search almost immediately after Eliezer spoke the conditions that the future wife of Yitzchak would have to meet.

The Meshech Chochma also feels that הוא is referring to Hashem and explains as follows: The matchmaking of Yitzchak and Rivkah clearly proceeded via a סיבה and מסובב, "a cause and effect" mechanism. One might think that Eliezer's request to find Yitzchak's חיל אשת resulted in Rivkah coming out with her jug upon her shoulder. In actuality, הוא/Hashem knew that Rivkah was always destined to be Yitzchak's wife. They were "soul mates" waiting to find each other. Her חסד and his עבודה would blend perfectly to continue to help establish what would become the עמ'ה. In order for the whole world to appreciate this, that these two were "made" for each other, Hashem "made" Eliezer ask for the conditions he set forth. So in fact there was a cause and effect process; but it was revealing Rivkah's essence, her מדת חסד, that was the cause which effected Eliezer's request! And that is also why the pasuk uses the clumsy syntax ויהי הוא טרם כלה לדבר, in order to convey that exact message: how did it happen that just as Eliezer uttered his wish, Rivkah appeared? Because הוא/Hashem orchestrated it!

ויוצא העבד כלי כסף וכלי זהב ובגדים ויתן לרבקה, ומגדנות נתן לאחיה ולאמה. ויאכלו וישתו הוא והאנשים אשר עמו... (פרק כד' נג-נד)

(Eliezer) brought out objects of silver and gold, and garments, and gave them to Rivkah, and delicious fruit he gave to her brother and mother. They ate and drank, he and the men who were with him...

Although Rivkah, her brother and mother, may have enjoyed delicious fruit, it appears that they did not participate in the feast that Eliezer and his men ate from. Why not? Rav Meir Simcha utilizes Medrash Rabba (quoted later by Rashi) which informs us that Bethuel wanted to prevent Rivkah from going with Eliezer so an angel came and put him to death. Rivkah, her brother and mother were therefore אבלים in the שבעה for their father/spouse. Rambam tells

us that although it is permissible to undergo אירוסין/engagement during the שבעה, the אבל may not partake in the סעודת אירוסין. This is exactly what our pasuk is telling us. Rivka was allowed to become engaged during the שבעה but she and her family could not join Eliezer and his men in the סעודה. Eliezer did give them מגדנות for dinner but not as part of a lavish feast. Once again, a wonderful example of the Meshech Chochma's penchant for finding Biblical sources for Rabbinically derived laws!

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