

FOUND GREATNESS

by Rabbi Label Lam

And he said, "HASHEM, G-d of my master Avraham, may You so arrange it for me this day that You do kindness with my master Avraham. See, I stand here by the spring of water and the daughters of the townsmen come out to draw. Let it be that the maiden to whom I shall say, 'Please tip over your jug so I may drink' and who replies, 'Drink and I will even water your camels,' her will You have designated for Your servant, for Yitzchok; and may I know through her that You have done kindness with my master." (Breishis 24:12-14)

...the world is built on kindness... (Tehillim 89-3)

Eliezer, the servant of Avraham, had very specific criteria in mind when selecting a wife for Yitzchok. His profile seems to be centered on the trait of kindness. Maybe it's obvious already, but still the question must be asked. Why does he focus his entire test on that single indicator?

Midrash Rabba tells us about the world conqueror Alexander of Macedonia and his travels beyond the mountains of Mountains of Darkness. There he befriended the King of Cassia who offered to show him their system of justice. Two men came before the court. One man had bought a vacant lot from his neighbor and then found treasure buried in it. He claimed that he intended to buy land and not treasure, and therefore he insisted that the treasure belonged to the original owner. The other man argued that he sold the land and all that it contained and the treasure should go to the buyer. The King of Cassia addressed the two litigants and asked them if they had sons or daughters. It happened to be that one had a daughter and the other a son of marriageable age. The King's decided that the children should marry so that the treasure remains in the family. When he saw Alexander's surprise reaction to the case and its verdict the King said to him, "Have I not judged well?!" How would you have decided such a case in your country?" Alexander replied, "We would have put both parties to death and confiscated the property."

The King of Cassia asked, "Does the sun shine in your country?" "Yes" answered Alexander. "Do you have animals?" enquired the King. "Yes!" replied Alexander. "Now I understand," said the King of Cassia, "If you have rain and sunshine it is not in your merit; it is in the merit of the animals; as it says, 'Save O' G-d, man and beast' (Tehillim 36:7) Man is saved in the merit of the beast!"

Rabbi Eliahahu Eliezer Dessler ztl. comments; "When the two givers brought their case before the King of the Givers, neither wanting to take from his neighbor, more than he had given, the decision was, "Unite!" This is the characteristic of "givers"... The King of the Takers held very different views. He

would have condemned to death the virtuous givers as destroyers of the established order of society. Even their property would not go to their children; it would be confiscated by the government.

Why all the grandiose talk of political philosophy? Are we not dealing here with something as simple as a mate for the man, Yitzchok? What's the big deal? The girl should be nice enough in order to promote an atmosphere of congeniality at home. OK, but Eliezer was not just shopping for Yitzchok. He was like a contractor sent by the architect to find the strongest building materials for the tallest of edifices. From long ago it was made clear that the "selfish gene" does not survive" while the selfless ones persist from generation to generation. Eliezer was sent to find and to **found greatness**. DvarTorah, Copyright © 2007 by Rabbi Label Lam and [Torah.org](https://torah.org).