

“AND NOW, IF YOU SHOW KINDNESS AND TRUTH TO MY MASTER...”  
(BEREISHIS 24:49)

**He appealed to B’suel to allow Rivka to return with him to marry Yitzchak**

ELIEZER, AVRAHAM’S SERVANT, in his search for a bride for Yitzchak, was Divinely guided to the home of B’suel, Rivka’s father. There, he appealed to B’suel to allow Rivka to return with him to marry Yitzchak. The S’forno (ibid.) explains that Eliezer asked B’suel to show “*chesed* and *emes*”: *chesed* – kindness – to Avraham by allowing Rivka to undertake this long journey to a distant land, and by giving up the benefits of having Rivka marry into a family from their own locale; *emes* – truth – to do what is best for Rivka, i.e. allow her to enter the household of Avraham and become one of the matriarchs of the Jewish nation.

**How could this refusal be labeled untruthful?**

“Kindness” would be an appropriate description of B’suel’s decision to allow the marriage, but “truth”? How would it be *emes* to let Rivka marry Yitzchak? If B’suel would not allow her to go, he could justifiably be described as selfish or uncaring in denying Rivka this unparalleled opportunity for greatness that she so richly deserved. But how could this refusal be labeled untruthful or false?

If someone is entrusted to our care, protection or guidance, we are considered to have made an implicit commitment that we will carry out our obligations to the fullest. Any failing in these obligations is not merely laziness or selfishness – it is a basic lack of *emes* in honoring a commitment.

When a husband and wife bring a child into this world, they are entering into an unspoken agreement with Hashem that they will care for the baby to the best of their abilities. They take upon themselves the responsibility of raising their child to follow the path of Torah and to subjugate their needs and desires to the best interests of their baby. Negligence in upholding this agreement, by putting our interests first, is therefore an act of dishonesty. If B’suel had not allowed Rivka to fulfill her destiny as a matriarch of the chosen people, he would have been breaking his trust with Hashem – a violation of *emes*.

As parents, teachers or people in positions of responsibility, we will inevitably face challenges when our own interests conflict with the needs of our charges. How many *shiduchim*, or even marriages, have been destroyed by parents who viewed their child’s mate or in-laws as an affront to their honor or social standing? How often was a child unable to develop to his full potential because parents were afraid they would be stigmatized if they sent their child to a school, or even just a different class, which was more suitable for the child’s needs? And how many children are denied a better education or spiritual environment because of their parents’ desire to have their offspring close to home, or even worse, because of a fear that a higher standard of observance would make the parents uncomfortable in their established lifestyle?

**The attribute of honesty will help them determine the proper balance**

Of course, sincere and devoted parents must be aware of their own needs, to safeguard their physical and mental health, in order to ultimately be more fit to care for their children. The attribute of honesty will help them determine the proper balance of their vital needs versus their children’s requirements. There is no greater satisfaction than the knowledge that we have kept our commitment to properly care for Hashem’s precious children – the sacred task and privilege with which we have been entrusted – exhibiting not only consummate *chesed*, but also essential *emes*.