

Portion

THE MATCHMAKER

For the second time we are told that Abraham was old and well advanced in years (24:1, 18:11). This time it is in relation to Avraham's instructions to his senior servant, Eliezer, to go and find a wife for his son Yitzchak. He made him swear that he would not take a wife for his son from the women of Canaan among whom he was living, but rather he should travel all the way to Abraham's native land, his birthplace, to find a woman there.

It seems like back then there was the opposite problem as today - for Yitzchak there was a shortage of appropriate marriageable women - nowadays the women complain that there is a shortage of decent marriageable men. Even with such a shortage, when reading these verses I wondered why would Abraham send his servant back to the land that God commanded him to leave? There must have been a reason he was commanded to leave there - why send Eliezer just there? Rav Sorotkin in Oznayim LaTorah asked the same question. He answered that it seems that when Terach did t'shuva his whole family followed his example. Therefore there was a chance that a woman from there would have the same values as Abraham's family. Also Abraham was commanded to leave his hometown in order to

spread the word of God throughout the world and so in the future it would be easier for his children to conquer the land. It was not because the natives of Canaan were any better than those from his home town. Like those of us who make aliya, some of our children may choose to marry true Israelis who don't speak a word of English (I have one of those). Others might marry Americans who chose to live in Israel (I have one of those too) and others might go for what is called American (South African) - Israeli (I have those kinds also).

If Avraham had been younger he would have gone on the important mission to find a wife for his son on his own; that is why the verse tells us he was old - he needed to send Eliezer to do it on his behalf. And why not send Yitzchak himself? Because he was so pure and could not leave Israel.

In our modern era, we may think that there is no longer a need for matchmakers like Eliezer, but rather young people and not so young people can find their soulmates on their own. But this is not the case. Not only in the yeshivish-charedi circles, but in all circles in our society there is a need for this profession, as well as for well meaning neighbors and friends who shouldn't be shy to make suggestions of possible suitors. May they all take their job as seriously as Eliezer who tried to find just the right girl for Yitzchak and prayed to God to help him with his mission. His elaborate test of Rivka with the

camels proved that she was a true baalat chesed. She rushed to help him (VAT'MAHEIR & VATARATZ are repeated twice each in verses 18,20,28) even though it was obvious that he was just the servant and not the master. She gave him to drink and without making a big deal about it she drew water for all the 10 camels. She didn't give up and leave the job in the middle though it was difficult. Besides having the high moral standard of chesed she was also very pretty and also modest (24:16). And besides all that she was from Avraham's own family. Eliezer's prayers were answered. He had accomplished the mission Avraham sent him on. He found the right girl and he was able to convince her family to let her go with him as they exclaimed "It is something of God!" (24:50).

May the prayers of all the parents to find the appropriate match for their children be answered. In this area especially while doing our hishtadlut we must remember that it is God who is the real matchmaker. It is up to us to pray.

AFTER MAKING THE SHIDUCH

Eliezer gives Rivka presents and gives her mother and brother MIGDANOT which Rashi explains as fruit he had brought with him from Israel. So here is a recipe with dates - one of the 7 species of Israel and what most people go on in order to choose their mate.

DATE MUFFINS

1½ cups whole-wheat flour

⅔ cup bran cereal

1 tsp baking soda

½ tsp ground cinnamon

½ tsp salt

½ cup chopped dates

¼ cup chopped walnuts

1 large egg, lightly beaten

1¾ cups unsweetened applesauce

⅓ cup packed dark brown sugar

2 Tbsp canola oil

Mix flour, bran cereal, baking soda, cinnamon and salt in a large bowl. Stir in dates and walnuts. Mix egg, applesauce, brown sugar and oil in another bowl until smooth. Add to dry ingredients; and stir until just combined. Don't over mix. Spoon the batter into muffin pan.

Bake the muffins at 220°C until the tops are golden brown and spring back when touched lightly, 12 to 15 minutes. Enjoy. 🍌