

*And he [Abraham's servant] said, "O Lord, God of my master Abraham, grant me good fortune this day, and deal graciously with my master Abraham." --- Gen. 24:12*

Rabbi Haggai observed in the name of Rabbi Yitzchak: All need [God's] kindness. Even Abraham, who prophesied and said, *He will send His angel before you* (Gen. 24:7), was yet in need of kindness, as it says, *and deal graciously with my master Abraham.* --- **Midrash Bereshit Rabbah** 60:2

This midrash teaches us that if a person merits it, and is blessed in everything, in Torah and trade, in wealth and honor and with every good thing in the world, like Abraham in his time, as it says in our parashah, *And the Lord had blessed Abraham in all things* (Gen. 24:1), one should not say, I am lacking nothing and do not need anything from others; they should do me no kindness and I will do nothing for them. No, for a person should always do kind deeds not in order to receive anything in exchange, for a person is obligated to be involved with others in knowledge, lovingkindness, and mercy. For so did the Sages teach: "One who says what is mine is mine and what is yours is yours, this is the trait of Sodom." (**Pirkei Avot** 5:10) Furthermore, there is no one who has not a time when he needs something from his fellow, whether in bodily matters or in financial matters, as people say, "Mountains never meet, but people do." --- **Min ha-Torah**, Rabbi Mordecai HaKohen, 20<sup>th</sup> c. Israel.

Our rabbis taught: In three respects, **gemilut chasadim** (deeds of lovingkindness) are superior to **tzedakah**. **Tzedakah** can be done only with one's money, but **gemilut chasadim** can be done with one's person and one's money. **Tzedakah** can be given only to the poor; **gemilut chasadim**, both to the rich and poor. **Tzedakah** can only be given to the living; **gemilut chasadim** can be done both for the living and the dead (by attending to funeral needs). --- Talmud, Sukkah 49b

*Here I stand by the spring as the daughters of the townsmen come out to draw water; let the maiden to whom I say "Please, lower your jar that I may drink," and who replies, "Drink, and I will also water your camels," let her be the one whom*

*You have decreed for Your servant Isaac. Thereby shall I know that You have dealt graciously with my master. --- Gen. 24:13-14*

Eliezer asked improperly by saying *let the maiden to whom I say*; it could have been a bondmaid! Yet God prepared Rebecca for him and granted his request in a fitting manner. --- **Midrash Bereshit Rabbah** 60:3

Our Sages say that Eliezer's request was improper in that he relied on God to find a wife for Isaac. But as the Midrash suggests, God nevertheless accepted his plea and had Rebecca meet him. Our Sages also say that Eliezer was biased, because he had a daughter whom he would have liked to have Isaac marry. Realizing, however, that he could not be impartial, Eliezer decided not to trust his own judgment, and to trust God to arrange matters. The fact is, however, that whereas in general such a request would not be proper, in these particular circumstances they were proper, and God accordingly answered his prayer. --- Rabbi Yosef Hurwitz (Lithuania, 1847-1919)