



# REBBETZIN SHIRA SMILES

FACULTY, OU ISRAEL CENTER

## Zeroing in on *Zerizut*

In our *parashah* this week, as Eliezer sets out on his mission to find a wife for his master's son, we are introduced to Rivka Imeinu. The Torah describes how Rivka responds to Eliezer's request for water with alacrity, "**vatemaher vetored kadah**—and she **quickly** lowered her jug." (*Bereisheet 25:18*) As no word in Torah is superfluous, we can understand that *zerizut*—acting quickly and promptly, was a trait at which Rivka excelled. How can we emulate Rivka Imeinu and improve this middah in our everyday interactions?

Rav Shalom Hakohen Schwadron *zt"l* comments that the difference between lowering a jug and lowering it with speed is a mere few seconds. Yet, lest we think a few seconds are insignificant, that very act, done *l'sheim shamayim*, is recorded in the Torah for eternity. Every deed, no matter how grand or slight,

is aptly noted Above.

The Brisker Rav offers an astute insight here. Eliezer arrived at the well towards evening, when the women went out to draw water. He then prays, "*Hashem...hakreh na lifanai hayom...*" (*Bereisheet 24:12*), asking Hashem to show him a sign to identify the girl for Yitzchak, **hayom, today!** It was therefore an imperative for the details to unfold with speed in order for Eliezer's tefillah to be fulfilled! The word "*vatemaher*," reflects the precision with which Hashem orchestrates every event in this world.

There are two components in the act of *zerizut*, notes Rav Yitzchak Isaac Sher *zt"l*. One aspect focuses on the ability to immediately grab an opportunity to do a mitzvah. The second aspect accentuates how the mitzvah is executed, i.e. in the fastest way possible. The mashgiach of Yeshivat Mir, Rav Yerucham Levovitz *zt"l* explains that one who acts without delay to seize an opportunity to do a mitzvah is one who will merit a special Divine energy as he does the mitzvah. One who tarries, although he eventually does the mitzvah, loses this special component. Rav Levovitz describes the middah of *zerizut* as having the Divine Presence rest upon a person as he does an act with swiftness and zeal.

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In his seminal work, *Alei Shur*, Rav Shlomo Wolbe *zt"l* offers a recommendation how one can develop and refine this middah. Our sages teach, *"hevei... kal kanesher... la'asot retzon avicha shebashamayim* —be...light as an eagle... to do the will of of your Father in Heaven." (*Avot 5:20*) We know however, that the eagle is not a "light" bird at all, it is quite formidable, even heavy. What is the Mishnah conveying here? Although the eagle may be a large bird, it possesses strong wings that allow it to lift off quickly and soar higher than other feathered creatures. Humans too, are "heavy;" we originate from the ground and tend to be lazy and sluggish. We also need "wings" that will allow us to act with *zerizut* and seize opportunities to rise above the mundane. The middah of *simchah*, teaches Rav Wolbe, acts as our "wings." Moreover, Rav Chaim Vital *zt"l* teaches that being happy and satisfied with what we have is what counteracts our "earthiness," and allows us to rejoice in the opportunities to do mitzvot.

When we can perceive everything in our lives as being perfectly crafted to our needs and recognize that each situation is specifically suited to our growth, we will be able to embrace each mitzvah with joy and alacrity. ■

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