

A LITTLE WATER*

וַיָּרֵץ הָעֶבֶד לִקְרֹאתָהּ וַיֹּאמֶר
הַגְּמִיאֵינִי נָא מֵעֵטְמִים מִבְּדֶה.
וַתֹּאמֶר שְׂתֵה אֲדֹנָי וַתִּמְהַר
וַתִּרְד כְּדֵה עַל־יָדָהּ וַתִּשְׁקֶהוּ:
וַתִּכַּל לְהִשְׁקֹתוֹ וַתֹּאמֶר
גַּם לְגַמְלֵיךָ אֶשְׂאֵב עַד אִם־כָּלוּ לִשְׂתֹת:

And the servant ran to meet her, and said:
Please give me a drink, a little water from your pitcher.
And she said, drink my lord; and she hurried
and she let down her pitcher on her hand, and she gave him to drink.
And done giving him drink she said:
Also for your camels I will draw until they they finish drinking.

And the servant ran to meet her—The servant of God hurried to find the young woman to whom his faith had guided him. *And said: Please give me a drink, a little water from your pitcher*—He tested her character, her compassion for suffering. *And she said, drink my lord; and she hurried*—She responded without thinking, as if to share with a stranger in need was the most natural of acts, hurrying to be of assistance. *And she let down her pitcher on her hand, and she gave him to drink*—Recognizing the immediacy of his need, she did not delay him with conversation or questions. *And done giving him drink she said: Also for your camels I will draw*—She waited until he finished to avoid the choking that sometimes occurs when “the windpipe acts before the gullet (Taanit 5b)” (Sforno). And she had compassion for the animals as well. *Until they finish drinking*—She had “full knowledge of the great labor involved” in watering the ten camels (N. Sarna), which required many trips to the well and back to the watering trough. But she recognized that their thirst was as great a trial to them as her own was to her.

* Genesis 24:17-19 (in Chayai Sarah)