

Genesis 24: 61-67

וַתָּקֶם רִבְקָה וְנַעֲרֹתֶיהָ וַתִּרְכַּבְנָה עַל־הַגְּמֵלִים וַתִּלְכְּנָה אַחֲרַי הָאִישׁ וַיִּקַּח הָעֶבֶד אֶת־רִבְקָה וַיֵּלֶךְ :
סב וַיִּצְחַק בָּא מִבּוֹא בְּאֵר לַחַי רֵאִי וְהוּא יוֹשֵׁב בְּאֶרֶץ הַנֶּגֶב :
סג וַיֵּצֵא יִצְחָק לְשׁוּחַ בְּשָׂדֵה לַפְּנוֹת עָרֵב וַיִּשָּׂא עֵינָיו וַיֵּרָא וְהִנֵּה גְמֵלִים בָּאִים :
סד וַתִּשָּׂא רִבְקָה אֶת־עֵינֶיהָ וַתִּרְאֵ אֶת־יִצְחָק וַתִּפֹּל מֵעַל הַגְּמֵל :
סה וַתֹּאמֶר אֶל־הָעֶבֶד מִי־הָאִישׁ הַלֵּזָה הַהֵלֶךְ בְּשָׂדֵה לְקִרְאֹתֵינוּ וַיֹּאמֶר הָעֶבֶד הוּא אֲדֹנָי וַתִּקַּח הַצְּעִירָה וַתִּתְּכַס :
סו וַיִּסְפֹּר הָעֶבֶד לְיִצְחָק אֶת־כָּל־הַדְּבָרִים אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה :
סז וַיְבַאֲהָ יִצְחָק הָאֵלֶּהָ שָׂרָה אִמּוֹ וַיִּקַּח אֶת־רִבְקָה וַתְּהִי־לּוֹ לְאִשָּׁה וַיִּנָּהֲבָה וַיִּנְתָּם יִצְחָק אַחֲרַי אִמּוֹ : {פ}

Then Rebekah and her maids arose, mounted the camels, and followed the man.

And the servant took Rebekah and went.

Isaac had just come back from the vicinity of Beer-lahai-roi,
and he was settled in the region of the Negeb.

And Isaac went out to stroll [or “to meditate”] in the field toward evening

And he lifted his eyes and he saw, behold, camels approaching.

And Rebecca lifted her eyes, and she saw Isaac, and she fell [or descended] from the camel
and she said to the servant, “Who is that man walking in the field toward us?”

And the servant said, “That is my master.” So she took the veil and covered herself.

The servant told Isaac all the things that he had done.

Isaac then brought her into the tent of his mother Sarah, and he took Rebekah as his wife.

Isaac loved her, and thus found comfort after his mother’s death.

Midrash Breishit Rabbah

וַתִּשָּׂא רִבְקָה אֶת עֵינֶיהָ וַתִּרְאֵ אֶת יִצְחָק (בראשית כד, סד),

אָמַר רַב הוּנָא צִפְתָּ שְׂיָדוֹ שְׁטוּחָה בְּתַפְלָה, אָמְרָה וַדָּא אָדָם גָּדוֹל הוּא, לְכָךְ שְׂאֵלָה עָלָיו. (בראשית כד, סד) :
וַתֹּאמֶר אֶל הָעֶבֶד, רַבִּי הִיא אֲמַר רְאֵתָה אוֹתוֹ הַדּוֹר, וְתוֹקָא מִפְּנֵיו, הִיךְ מַה דְּאֵת אָמַר (בראשית לז, יט) : הִנֵּה
בַּעַל הַחֲלָמוֹת הַלֵּזָה בָּא. רַבְּנָן אָמְרֵי הוּא וּפְלִסוֹנוֹ, הַלֵּזָה, אֵלּוֹן זֶה. (בראשית כד, סה) :

And Rebecca lifted up her eyes and she saw Isaac (Genesis 24:62)

Rav Huna said:

She saw that his hand was stretched out in prayer, and said “surely, this is a great man.”

Therefore she asked about him.

And she said to the servant

“who is this man [ha-ish halazeh] walking in the field toward us?”

Rabbi Chiya said:

She saw him majestic, and was astonished before him.

Behold the same expression is used in

“behold this dreamer [ba’al hachalomot halazeh] comes” (Genesis 37:19).

RaSHI (Rabbi Shlomo Yitzchaki, Troyes France 1040-1105CE)

לְשׁוּחַ. לְשׁוּחַ תַּפְלָה (בראשית רבה), כָּמוֹ יִשְׁפָּךְ שִׁיחוֹ (תהילים ק”ב) :

To stroll [lasuach]. This word means prayer,

as in the verse *and before God he pours out sicho (Psalm 102:1)*

וַתִּרְאֵ אֶת יִצְחָק. רְאֵתָה אוֹתוֹ הַדּוֹר וְתוֹקָא מִפְּנֵיו (בראשית רבה) :

And she saw Isaac. She saw him majestic and was astonished before him.

Haamek Davar (Rabbi Naftali Tzvi Yehuda Berlin, Volozhin Yeshiva, Russia 1816-1893)

ותלכנה אחרי האיש ויקח העבד וגו'. נראה מיותר. אבל הענין דמתחלה כשהיו אנשים ונשים מלוים אותם בושה לשבת עם העבד על הגמל. ע"כ ישבה עם נערותיה על הגמלים. ואח"כ בהיותם אחורי העיר. והמלוים שבו. אז ויקח העבד אותה על הגמל שלו. והנראה כי נערותיה לא לקחה עמה לא"י זולת מינקתה. אך בעיר היו הנערות מסייעות לה לרכוב על הגמל. ובא כ"ז הספור לתכלית שיבואר בסמוך :

And they followed the man...and the servant took, etc.

This appears redundant.

But in fact, at first while men and women were escorting them,

it would have been an embarrassment to sit with the servant on the camel.

Therefore, she sat with her maids on the camels.

But after they left the city, and the escort returned, then the servant took her on his camel.

And apparently she did not take her maids with her to *Eretz Yisrael*, except her nurse.

But while in the city, her maids had helped her to ride on the camel.

And this entire story is told for the sake of what happens next.

ותשא רבקה וגו' ותרא את יצחק. בעודו עומד ומתפלל והי' אז כמלאך אלהים נורא מאד. וכמבואר ברבה שראתה ידיו שטוחות בתפלה ע"כ נבעתה מאד :

And Rebecca lifted up her eyes and she saw Isaac

While he was still standing and praying,

And he was then like an angel of God, very frightening.

As it is made clear in Midrash Rabbah, that she saw his hands outstretched in prayer,

And therefore she was very frightened.

ותפל מעל הגמל. מרוב פחד ואימה. אמנם לא ידעה ממי היא מתפחדת ואלו לא היתה יושבת עם העבד על גמל אחד והיתה יושבת מאחוריו עד שראתה שאח"כ האיש הולך לקראת העבד ועומד ומדבר עמו ככל אדם והי' דעתה מתקרר בתוך כך עד שבהודעה אח"כ מי הוא האיש הי' כבר סר הפחד ממנה. אבל בהיותה יושבת עם העבד. ובתוך הפחד שאלה את העבד מי האיש הלוה. אשר אני מתפעל ומתפחד ממנו. וכמבואר בב"ר בלשון הלזה משמעו אדם מאוים ונורא. ע"כ כששמעה שהוא אישה ותקח הצעיף ותתכס. מרוב פחד ובושה כמו שמבינה שאינה ראויה להיות לו לאשה

She fell from of her camel

Because of her great fear and dread, but she did not know from whom she was being frightened.

If she had not been sitting with the servant upon a single camel,

And sitting behind him until the moment she saw him,

She would have had time to compose herself,

Seeing him come, and speaking with the servant like any other person,

And then when he told her who the man was, her fear would have dissipated.

But as it happened, she was sitting behind the servant,

And in her fear she asked the servant "*who is this man* that is arousing such fear in me?"

And in Midrash Breishit Rabbah the word *halazeh* is understood

as meaning a man who inspires fear and trembling.

Therefore, when she heard that this was her husband to be, *she took a veil and covered herself.*

out of her great fear and embarrassment,

As though she understood that she was not fit to be his wife.

ומאז והלאה נקבע בלבה פחד. ולא היתה עם יצחק כמו שרה עם אברהם. ורחל עם יעקב.
אשר בהיות להם איזה קפידא עליהם לא בושו לדבר רתת לפניהם. משא"כ רבקה.
וכ"ז הקדמה להסיפור שיבוא בפי תולדות שהיו יצחק ורבקה מחולקים בדעות. ומכ"מ לא מצאה רבקה לב
להעמיד את יצחק על דעתה בדברים נכוחים כי היא יודעת האמת כי עשו רק ציד בפיו. וכן בשעת הברכות.
וכ"ז הי' סיבה מהקב"ה שיגיעו הברכות ליעקב דוקא באופן כזה וכאשר יבואר במקומו. ואלו הית' רבקה עם
אישה כמו שרה ורחל עם אנשיהן לא הי' מגיע בזה האופן. והכל בהשגחה פרטית מראש שתגיע רבקה ליצחק
בשעה שתבהל ממנו ויצא אחרית דבר כפי רצונו ית' :

And from that time forward, fear was planted in her heart,
And she was not with Isaac as Sarah had been with Abraham, or Rachel with Jacob,
between whom if there was ever any issue, or change of mind,
they were not embarrassed to speak up against them. But it was not thus with Rebecca,
And all of this is introduction to the story which is told in the next portion, *Toldot*,
in which Isaac and Rebecca had divided opinions,
but Rebecca could not find the heart to bring Isaac to her opinion with effective words.
For she knew the truth, that Esau was merely *tzayid b'fiv*
[literally "a hunter of game," but understood by the sages as "a deceiver."]
And likewise in the moment of the blessings.
And all of this was caused by the Holy One Blessed be He,
that the blessings would come to Jacob specifically in this way,
and if Rebecca has been with her husband as Sarah and Rachel were with their husbands,
the blessing would not have come in this way.
And all of it was through divine providence, from the outset,
That Rebecca would come to Isaac in a way that she would be frightened of him,
And so the matter would eventually end according to God's will.

Aviva Gottlieb Zornberg, *Genesis: The Beginning of Desire* pp 142-143.

What Rebekah sees in Isaac is the vital anguish at the heart of his prayers, a remoteness from the sunlit world of *chesed* that she inhabits. Too abruptly, perhaps, she receives the shock of his world. Nothing mediates, nothing explains him to her. "Who is that man walking in the field toward us?" (verse 66) she asks, fascinated, alienated. What dialogue is possible between two who have met in such a way?

A fatal seepage of doubt and dread affects her, so that she can no longer meet him in the full energy of her difference. She veils herself, obscures her light. He takes her and she irradiates the darkness of his mother's tent. She is, and is not, like his mother; through her, his sense of his mother's existence is healed. But the originating moment of their union is choreographed so that full dialogue will be impossible between them.