

Text Study: Rebecca Busy at the Well

בְּרִשִׁית פָּרַק כֹּד פְּסוּקִים טז-כ
טז וְהִנְעֵרָה טַבַּת מְרִאָהּ מֵאֵד בְּתוֹלָהּ וְאִישׁ לֹא יָדָעָה וַתֵּרֶד הָעֵינָה וַתִּמְלֵא כַּדָּהּ
וַתַּעַל: יז וַיָּרֶץ הָעֶבֶד לְקִרְאָתָהּ וַיֹּאמֶר הַגְּמִיאֵינִי נָא מֵעֵט-מַיִם מִכַּדָּךְ: יח וַתֹּאמֶר
שְׂתָה אֲדֹנָי וַתִּמְהַר וַתֵּרֶד כַּדָּהּ עַל-יָדָהּ וַתִּשְׁקֶהוּ: יט וַתַּכֵּל לְהַשְׁקִתוֹ וַתֹּאמֶר גַּם
לְגַמְלֶיךָ אֲשָׂאב עַד אִם-כָּלּוּ לְשִׁתּוֹתַי: כ וַתִּמְהַר וַתַּעַר כַּדָּהּ אֶל-הַשִּׁקָּת וַתָּרֶץ עוֹד
אֶל-הַבְּאֵר לְשָׂאב וַתִּשָּׂאב לְכָל-גַּמְלָיו:

The maiden was very beautiful, a virgin whom no man had known. She went down to the spring, filled her jar, and came up. The servant ran toward her and said, “Please, let me sip a little water from your jar.” “Drink, my lord,” she said, and she quickly lowered her jar upon her hand and let him drink. When she had let him drink his fill, she said, “I will also draw for your camels, until they finish drinking.” Quickly emptying her jar into the trough, she ran back to the well to draw, and she drew for all his camels.

Genesis 24:16-20

Questions for Discussion

1. What words would you use to describe Rebecca based on this scene? What can we learn from this scene about the woman who will become Isaac’s wife, one of the four matriarchs in Jewish tradition?
2. According to Robert Alter, in this scene Rebecca is presented, “...as a continuous whirl of purposeful activity. In four short verses (Gen. 24:16, 18-20) she is the subject of eleven verbs of action and one of speech, going down to the well, drawing water, filling the pitcher, pouring, giving drink.... In her actions and speech we see her energy, her considerate courtesy, her sense of quiet self-possession”. (*The Art of Biblical Narrative*, pp. 53-54)

What connections do you see between the image of Rebecca presented by Alter and your work as coordinators? How would you characterize the value of your role within The RE-IMAGINE Project?

3. Keeping in mind the image of the well, while you are busy drawing water for the Leadership Team and the Task Force, how can you be sure that you are also able to “drink your fill”?

Background

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