

10And the servant took ten camels of his master's camels, and he went, and all the best of his master was in his hand; and he arose, and he went to Aram naharaim, to the city of Nahor.

יִצְחָק הָעֶבֶד עָשָׂה גִמְלִים מִגְמְלֵי אֲדֹנָיו וַיֵּלֶךְ
וְכָל-טוֹב אֲדֹנָיו בְּיָדוֹ וַיָּקָם וַיֵּלֶךְ אֶל-אֲרָם נַחְרָיִם
אֶל-עִיר נַחוֹר:

11And he made the camels kneel outside the city beside the well of water, at eventide, at the time the maidens go out to draw water.

יֹאבִיבְרָךְ הַגִּמְלִים מִחוּץ לָעִיר אֶל-בְּאֵר הַמַּיִם
לָעֵת עֶרֶב לָעֵת צֹאת הַשְּׂאֲבֹת:

12And he said, "O Lord, the God of my master Abraham, please cause to happen to me today, and perform loving kindness with my master, Abraham.

יְבוֹיֵאמֶר | יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי אֲדֹנִי אֲבְרָהָם הַקָּדוֹה-גָּא
לִפְנֵי הַיּוֹם וַעֲשֵׂה-חֶסֶד עִם אֲדֹנִי אֲבְרָהָם:

13Behold, I am standing by the water fountain, and the daughters of the people of the city are coming out to draw water.

יִגְהַנֶּה אֲנֹכִי נָצַב עַל-עֵין הַמַּיִם וּבָנוֹת אֲנָשִׁי
הָעִיר יֵצְאוּ לְשָׂאֵב מַיִם:

14And it will be, [that] the maiden to whom I will say, 'Lower your pitcher and I will drink,' and she will say, 'Drink, and I will also water your camels,' her have You designated for Your servant, for Isaac, and through her may I know that You have performed loving kindness with my master."

יִדְוֶהֶּיָהּ הַנְּעֹרָה (כְּתִיב הַנֶּעַר) אֲשֶׁר אָמַר אֵלֶיהָ
הַטִּי-גָא כַדָּךְ וְאֶשְׁתֶּה וְאָמְרָה שְׂתֶה וְגַם-גִּמְלֶיךָ
אֶשְׁקֶה אֶתְּהָ הַלְחָתִי לְעַבְדְּךָ לְיִצְחָק וְכֵן אֵדַע
כִּי-עָשִׂיתָ חֶסֶד עִם-אֲדֹנִי:

15Now he had not yet finished speaking, and behold, Rebecca came out, who had been born to Bethuel the son of Milcah, the wife of Nahor, Abraham's brother, and her pitcher was on her shoulder.

טוֹיִי-הִיא הוּא טָרָם כָּלָה לְדַבֵּר וְהִנֵּה רֵבֶקָה יֵצְאת
אֲשֶׁר יָלְדה לְבֶתוּאֵל בֶּן-מִלְכָּה אִשְׁתִּי נַחוֹר אָחִי
אֲבְרָהָם וְכַדָּה עַל-שִׁכְמָהּ:

16Now the maiden was of very comely appearance, a virgin, and no man had been intimate with her, and she went down to the fountain, and she filled her pitcher and went up.

טוֹיִי-הַנְּעֹרָה (כְּתִיב וְהַנֶּעַר) טַבַּת מִרְאֶה מְאֹד
בְּתוּלָה וְאִישׁ לֹא יָדָעָה וְתָרַד הָעֵינָה וְתִמְלֵא
כַדָּה וְתַעַל:

17And the servant ran toward her, and he said, "Please let me sip a little water from your pitcher."

יִזְרָחַרְץ הָעֶבֶד לְקִרְאָתָהּ וַיֹּאמֶר הִגְמִי־אֵינִי גֹאֲ
מַעַט־מַיִם מִכִּדְרִי:

18And she said, "Drink, my lord." And she hastened and lowered her pitcher to her hand, and she gave him to drink.

יַחְוָתָאמֶר שְׁתֵּה אֲדֹנָי וַתְּמַהֵר וַתִּרְדּוּ כִדְהָ עַל־
יָדָהּ וַתִּשְׁקֶהוּ:

19And she finished giving him to drink, and she said, "I will also draw for your camels, until they will have finished drinking."

יִטְוֹתְכֹל לְהַשְׁקִיתוֹ וַתֹּאמֶר גַּם לְגַמְלֶיךָ אֲשָׁאֵב עַד
אִם־כָּלוּ לִשְׁתֵּת:

20And she hastened, and she emptied her pitcher into the trough, and she ran again to the well to draw water, and she drew for all his camels.

כֹּוַתְּמַהֵר וַתַּעַר כִּדְהָ אֶל־הַשִּׁקָּת וַתִּרְחַץ עוֹד אֶל־
הַבְּאֵר לְשָׂאֵב וַתִּשְׁאֵב לְכָל־גַּמְלֵיוֹ:



62Now Isaac was on his way, coming from Be'er Lachai Ro'i, and he dwelt in the land of the south.

סִבּוֹ וַיֵּצֵאֵלָהּ בָּא מִבּוֹא בְּאֵר לַחַי רֹא'י וְהוּא יוֹשֵׁב
בְּאֶרֶץ הַנֶּגֶב:

63And Isaac went forth to pray in the field towards evening, and he lifted his eyes and saw, and behold, camels were approaching.

סָגוּ וַיֵּצֵא יִצְחָק לִשְׁוֹם בַּשָּׂדֶה לְפָנוֹת עָרֶב וַיִּשָּׂא
עֵינָיו וַיֵּרָא וְהִנֵּה גַמְלִים בָּאִים:

64And Rebecca lifted her eyes, and saw Isaac, and she let herself down from the camel.

סִדּוּ וַתִּשָּׂא רֵבֶקָה אֶת־עֵינֶיהָ וַתִּרְאֵהוּ וַתִּרְאֵהוּ וַתִּצְחָק
וַתִּפֹּל מֵעַל הַגַּמֶּל:

65And she said to the servant, "Who is that man walking in the field towards us?" And the servant said, "He is my master." And she took the veil and covered herself.

סִהוּ וַתֹּאמֶר אֶל־הָעֶבֶד מִי־הָאִישׁ הַלֹּזֵה הַהֶלֶךְ
בַּשָּׂדֶה לְקִרְאָתֵנוּ וַיֹּאמֶר הָעֶבֶד הוּא אֲדֹנָי וַתִּקַּח
הַצִּעִיף וַתִּתְקַס:

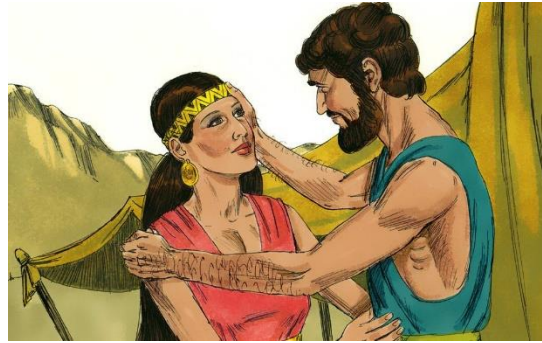
...

סִוּוּ וַתִּסְפֹּר הָעֶבֶד לִיִּצְחָק אֶת כָּל־הַדְּבָרִים אֲשֶׁר
עָשָׂה:

67And Isaac brought her to the tent of Sarah his mother, and he took Rebecca, and she became his wife, and he loved her. And Isaac was comforted for [the loss of] his mother.

סִזְוּ וַיְבִאָהּ יִצְחָק הָאֵלֶּה לִּשְׁרָה אִמּוֹ וַיִּקַּח אֶת־
רֵבֶקָה וַתְּהִי־לוֹ לְאִשָּׁה וַיֵּאֱהָבֶהּ וַיִּנָּחֶם יִצְחָק
אֶחָרֶי אִמּוֹ:

A.



and saw Isaac: She saw his majestic appearance, and she was astounded by him (Gen. Rabbah 60:14).

ותרא את יצחק: ראתה אותו הדור ותוהא מפניו:

67. נִאֲהָבָה

These biblical ancestors are drawn with the character trait of *anavah*, humility, and the result is *ahavah*, love. Their marriage will take painful and soul-rending twists, as all do, but for now, as Sarah and Abraham pass from the world, a heartwarming tale of affection and tenderness is ours to savor for a few precious moments.

- Rabbi Shana Chandler Leon is rabbi of Congregation Ner Tamid in the Sunset District of San Francisco

B.



64. וְתָפַל

The Netziv, Rabbi Naftali Tzvi Berlin, in his commentary Ha'Emek Davar, explains that Rebecca fell because she had never before seen a religious personality, a spiritual persona who communed with nature and actually spoke before God. So awesome was the sight of Isaac transformed by prayer that she was literally knocked off her feet. Compared to the lying and cheating world of her father, Betuel, and her brother, Laban, Isaac projected a purity with which Rebecca had no previous experience. When Eliezer revealed the man's identity, she took the veil and covered herself, not only as a sign of modesty, but as an expression of her unworthiness.

From that moment on, the veil between them was never removed. She felt she could never speak to her husband as an equal. She never felt that she had the right to offer a dissenting opinion.

But why was Isaac unable to bridge the gap? The harrowing experience of the Akedah left Isaac in a permanent state of shock. In fact, a part of him always remained behind on Mount Moriah, as hinted at in the final verse of the Akedah: "Abraham returned ..." [Gen. 22:19], but where is Isaac? Why is he not mentioned? The verse alludes to the fact that only Abraham came down from the mountain while Isaac, or something about Isaac, remained behind. After the Akedah the traumatized Isaac became silent, non-communicative, leading Elie Wiesel to call Isaac the first survivor.

If neither Isaac nor Rebecca could speak openly with each other, there could be no real communication between them.

Rabbi Shlomo Riskin, JTA 2017

<https://www.jta.org/2017/11/07/ny/the-relationship-of-isaac-and-rebecca>



Parashat Chayei Sarah (literally, "the life of Sarah") actually begins with Sarah's death. The commentator Rashi tells us that, juxtaposed as this is with the sacrifice of Isaac in the previous Torah portion, Sarah's death is a direct result of hearing of her beloved son's near-death at the hands of his father (and her husband) Abraham. The rest of this portion, and indeed the remainder of the Book of Genesis, reflect the reverberations of this event.

After Sarah's death, Abraham tells his servant to go find a wife for Isaac... **What transformation moved her from a place of kindness and transparency to one of deception?**...Isaac was deeply traumatized after suffering violence at the hand of the person ostensibly most entrusted with caring for him. And though he comes through it alive, the integrity of his existence has been broken and a part of him has indeed been sacrificed. His brokenness touches all those around him, as trauma tends to do.

Avivah Gottlieb Zornberg notes in "The Beginning of Desire: Reflections on Genesis" that when Rebecca first sees Isaac, she sees in him "the vital anguish at the heart of his prayers, a remoteness from the sunlit world of hesed [kindness] that she inhabits." Isaac's enduring pain is palpable even from afar, and

its impact on Rebecca — and on their future relationship — is immediate and deep. The biblical text tells us that Rebecca responds to the sight of Isaac by veiling herself.

Revealingly, Rashi notes that the verb “to veil” is conjugated in the passive construction, suggesting that someone or something else veiled her. One might then read this passage to suggest that it was Rebecca’s inner light that was enveiled by Isaac’s anguish, separating them from each other and Rebecca from part of herself. Rashi’s comparison of this verb to other biblical passive constructions is further illuminating: “she was buried” Genesis 35:8 and “she was broken.” I Samuel 4:18 Rebecca’s essential self is veiled, broken, buried.

Rather than replace the nurturing care of Sarah as was intended, Rebecca shuts down a vital part of herself, further deepening, one would imagine, Isaac’s despair and the couple’s ability to communicate.

-Elizabeth Mandel, jGirls Magazine

<https://www.myjewishlearning.com/article/chayei-sarah-the-reverberations-of-familial-violence/>

62.

coming from Be'er Lachai Ro'i: where he had gone to bring Hagar to Abraham his father, that he should marry her (Gen. Rabbah 60:14).

מבוא באר לחי ראי: שהלך להביא הגר לאברהם אביו שישאנה:

65.

and covered herself: ותתקס is in the reflexive form, as in (below 35:8) ותקבר (and she was buried); (I Sam. 4:18) ותשבר (and it was broken).

ותתכס: לשון ותתפעל, כמו ותקבר, ותשבר:

67.

to the tent of Sarah his mother: He brought her to the tent, and behold, she was Sarah his mother; i.e., she became the likeness of Sarah his mother, for as long as Sarah was alive, a candle burned from one Sabbath eve to the next, a blessing was found in the dough, and a cloud was attached to the tent. When she died, these things ceased, and when Rebecca arrived, they resumed (Gen. Rabbah 60:16).

האהלה שרה אמו: ויביאה האהלה והרי היא שרה אמו, כלומר, ונעשית דוגמת שרה אמו, שכל זמן ששרה קיימת היה נר דלוק מערב שבת לערב שבת, וברכה מצויה בעיסה, וענן קשור על האהל, ומשמחה פסקו, וכשבאת רבקה חזרו:

We choose our partners for two basic reasons: 1. They have both the positive and the negative qualities of the people who raised us. 2. They compensate for positive parts of our being that were cut off in childhood.

We enter the relationship with the unconscious assumption that our partner will become a surrogate parent and make up for all the deprivation of our childhood. All we have to do to be healed is to form a close, lasting relationship.

After a time we realize that our strategy is not working. We are “in love,” but not whole. We decide that the reason our plan is not working is that our partners are deliberately ignoring our needs. They know exactly what we want, and when and how we want it, but for some reason they are deliberately withholding it from us. This makes us angry, and for the first time we begin to see our partners’ negative traits. We then compound the problem by projecting our own denied negative traits onto them. As conditions deteriorate, we decide that the best way to force our partners to satisfy our needs is to be unpleasant and irritable, just as we were in the cradle. If we yell loud enough and long enough, we believe, our partners will come to our rescue...

What may not be immediately apparent in this brief summary is this: there is really very little difference between romantic love and the power struggle. On the surface, these first two stages of the love relationship appear to be worlds apart. A couple’s delight in each other has turned to hatred, and their goodwill has degenerated into a battle of wills. But what’s important to note is that the underlying themes remain the same. Both individuals are still searching for a way to regain their original wholeness, and they are still holding on to the belief that their partners have the power to make them healthy and whole. The main difference is that now the partner is perceived as withholding love. This requires a switch in tactics, and husbands and wives begin to hurt each other, or deny each other pleasure and intimacy, in hopes of having their partners respond with warmth and love.”

— Harville Hendrix, *Getting the Love You Want : A Guide for Couples*

C.



5And the servant said to him, "Perhaps the woman will not wish to go after me to this land. Shall I return your son to the land from which you came?"

וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלָיו הַעֲבֹד אוֹלִי לֹא-תֵאבְּהָ הָאִשָּׁה
לָלֶכֶת אַחֲרַי אֶל-הָאָרֶץ הַזֹּאת הַהֹשֵׁב אֲשִׁיב
אֶת-בְּנִי אֶל-הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר-יֵצֵאת מִשָּׁם:

6And Abraham said to him, "Beware, lest you return my son back there.

וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלָיו אֲבֹרָהֶם הַשָּׁמַר לְךָ פֶּן-תָּשִׁיב אֶת-
בְּנִי שָׁמָּה:

Rebekah's character is also often maligned because she is the one who initiates the deception of Isaac and because she favors Jacob over Esau. No amount of spiritual insight in perceiving Jacob to be the more appropriate recipient of the blessing is enough to salvage her character for a lot of commentators. Nothing can excuse her deception. I, however, believe that seeing Isaac on the autistic spectrum can help us see both of these two characters in a more balanced way.

...but if this needs an explanation we might seek it in Isaac's sometimes awkward commitment to doing things the way he believes that they should be done. This also goes for his determination to bless Esau even though Esau has already proven to be an unworthy successor through his marriage to a Hittite woman and through despising his birthright... For some reason, Isaac cannot bring himself to see Esau's poor character and foolishness, and that reason could have to do with a commitment to patterns and systems, to doing things the way he thinks things are supposed to be done, including blessing Esau as his firstborn.

...It perhaps goes without saying that the spouses of adults on the autistic spectrum have their own unique challenges as they not only accommodate their autistic spouses' quirks but also actively try to facilitate their success and integration into society. I personally know of a man who, though not diagnosed on the spectrum, exhibits a lot of the typical characteristics... He is a highly successful professional with a family. His wife learned over time different strategies to work around his autism, at times to ignore it, and at other times to find subtle ways to prod him in the direction that she perceived would be best for him. For example, whenever he might find himself getting overwhelmed in a social situation, she would perceive this and create some errand for him to run to give him an excuse to escape. Needless to say, a successful spouse of an adult on the autistic spectrum must be an intelligent, resourceful, proactive, and deeply caring individual. There are profound blessings to the individual who loves someone on the spectrum, and every successful relationship requires adaptation, but when you love someone on the spectrum, sometimes that adaptation has to be a little more pronounced and intentional.

I argue that Isaac's wife Rebekah exhibits the characteristics of a successful spouse of someone on the spectrum. From the moment we meet her in chapter 24, we see her to be a strong, proactive, kind, decisive, and courageous woman. Those features are only reinforced in chapter 25, in the story of the birth of Esau and Jacob... I am also not convinced that her favoritism for Jacob is intended to be read as some fatal flaw in her character. Rather, we can read it in ways that are positive towards her: as spiritual perception, as faith in the oracle of [God], as tenderness towards the unfavored son of the other parent...

If we read Isaac as a man on the autistic spectrum, Rebekah's actions look less selfish and deceitful and more caring and pragmatic: she is trying to help Isaac do the right thing (and I think the narrative leaves us in no doubt that blessing Jacob rather than Esau is the right thing) using the avenues that are available to her as a woman and as the spouse of someone who could perhaps be intractable in his commitment to doing things a particular way.

<https://bitesizedexegesis.com/2018/03/19/may-your-children-be-like-isaac-reading-isaac-on-the-autistic-spectrum/>