

**THE MEETING AT THE WELL**

שלשה נדווגו להם זווגיהם מן הבאר, יצחק יעקב ומשה,

*Three met their partners at the well, Yitzchak, Yaakov and Mosheh (Shemot Rabba 1)*

The classic Biblical type-scene; meeting the girl at the well

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| 1. A man leaves his home,                    | 5. At a well                                     |
| 2. Arrives in a foreign land                 | 6. She runs home to tell of his arrival          |
| 3. Meets a girl (normally described as נערה) | 7. He's invited to a meal and they are betrothed |
| 4. From his family                           |  |

Character	Differences	Long-term symbolism	Other notes
<b>Yitzchak (Bereishit 24:10-61)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Not Yitzchak himself</li> <li>- Rivka pours herself – only time in Tanach that the woman does it</li> <li>- Slow and stately</li> <li>- told in the third person</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Displays Yitzchak's passivity, most of the avoth; see ch.26, a continuation of Avraham</li> <li>- Slow due to ceremony nature</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rivka as the most active of the imahot (16-20), foreshadowing her determination to get Yaakov the bechor</li> </ul>
<b>Yaakov (Bereishit 29:1-20)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Yaakov is fleeing, 'a refugee from his brother's wrath'</li> <li>- The well is blocked up</li> <li>- Told through Yaakov's p.o.v., his personal story</li> <li>- Not close to the city but in the field where all of his story will unfold</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Yaakov as a constant struggler, his name at birth, grabbing at his brother's heel, now he must push over the stone.</li> <li>-If the well is a symbol of fertility, then how fitting that it is blocked up</li> <li>-Stones in Yaakov's life – sleeping at Bet El, the marker there, the peace treaty with לבן – struggling with stones, the hard unyielding nature of things – כי שרית עם אלוקים</li> </ul>	
<b>Moshe (Shemot 15-21)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- So short; but six verses</li> <li>- M has to chase off a band of marauders</li> <li>- No specific girl but all seven of Re'uel's daughters</li> <li>- NOT HIS FAMILY!</li> <li>- Description of M as אִישׁ מִצְרַיִם</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Characteristic of how little M's private life features compared to other avot, 'excluded from the domestic intimacy we have w avoth or David'</li> <li>- M continually fighting injustice in his life, Described by the girls as הישיע, and soon to be liberator of his people</li> <li>- Yitro as more important than Tzipora for continuation, M looking for a father in law over a wife</li> <li>- M's search for identity, always being an outsider</li> <li>- Described as וְגַם דָּלָה דָּלָה – drawing water for them. Water motif for M; as an infant saved from the water, whose name means drawn from the water, who will lead his people through an expanse of water, will eventually bring forth water from</li> </ul>	
<b>Rut (2:5-14)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Story of water 'needlessly' inserted.</li> <li>- Gender and geography rotated 180 degrees. Not a hero but a heroine, Yehuda is the foreign land</li> <li>- Of the same family through Nomi, but her kindness, loyalty and courage, stand in place of her genealogy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A sort of matriarch by adoption;</li> <li>Strong parallel to Avraham, in Boaz's words וַתַּעֲזֹב אֲבִיהָ וְאִמָּהָ וְאֶרֶץ מוֹלְדוֹתָהּ וַתֵּלֶכְי אֶל עַם אֲשֶׁר לֹא יָדַעְתָּ תְּמוּל שְׁלִשׁוֹם לָהּ לֶךָ מִמְּוֹלְדוֹתָהּ וּמִבֵּית אֲבִיהָ אֶל הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר אֲרָאָה</li> <li>A similar move from east to west</li> </ul>	

### Devarim Rabba 2:8 – A Question of Mosheh's Identity

Said Rabbi Levi: When Mosheh Rabbeinu was refused entry into the Land of Israel he complained to God: "Master of the Universe, the bones of Yoseph shall enter the land and I shall not enter?" God replied: "He who proudly admitted that this was his land shall be buried in it, but he who did not admit that this was his land shall not be buried in it". Yoseph did not deny his Hebrew origin when Potifar's wife derided him as a "Hebrew brought here to make fun of us". He even went further in describing himself to the chief butler as "one who had been stolen from the land of the Hebrews". As a result he was buried in the land... You (Mosheh) who did not acknowledge your land cannot be buried there. Where is this found? The daughters of Yitro told their father that "an Egyptian man rescued us from the shepherds", yet Mosheh heard and was silent, therefore he was not buried in his land.

### RUT AND AVRAHAM

#### Hashem to Avraham (Bereishit 12:1)

לך לך מארצך וממולדתך ומבית אביך אל הארץ אשר אראך

*Go for yourself from your country, from your birthplace, and from the house of your father to the land which I will show you.*

#### Boaz to Rut (Rut 2:11)

ותעזבי אביך ואמך וארץ מולדתך ותלכי אל עם אשר לא ידעת תמול שלשום

*I have been told of all that you did for your mother-in-law after the death of your husband – how you left your father and your mother and the land of your birth, and went to a people you had not known before*

#### Nomi upon hearing that Rut has met Boaz (2:20):

ותאמר נעמי לכלתה ברוך הוא ליקנוק אשר לא עזב חסדו את החיים ואת המתים

*And Nomi said to her daughter in law: Blessed is the Lord who did not forsake his kindness with the living and the dead*

#### Eliezer meeting Rivka (Bereishit 24:27):

ויאמר ברוך יקנוק אלהי אדני אברהם אשר לא עזב חסדו ואמתו מעם אדני

*He said, "Blessed is the Lord, the God of my master Avraham, who did not forsake his kindness and his truth from my master"*

### רמב"ם הלכות מתנות עניים יא - Rambam, Laws of Gifts To The Poor, 10:1

חייבין אנו להזהר במצות צדקה יותר מכל מצות עשה, שהצדקה סימן לצדיק זרע אברהם אבינו שנאמר כי ידעתיו למען אשר יצוה את בניו לעשות צדקה, ואין כסא ישראל מתכונן ודת האמת עומדת אלא בצדקה שנאמר בצדקה תכונני, ואין ישראל נגאלין אלא בצדקה שנאמר ציון במשפט תפדה ושביה בצדקה.

*We are obligated to recall the commandment of tzedaka (charity/ righteousness) above every other mitzvah, for tzedaka is the sign of the seed of Avraham Avinu, as is said, 'for I know that he will command his children to act with righteousness', (Bereishit 18:19) and the throne of Israel is not whole, nor does true religion stand except through tzedaka, as is said 'with righteousness you shall be established' (Yeshayahu 54:14), nor are Israel ever to be redeemed except through tzedaka, as is written, 'Zion will be redeemed through justice and those who return to her through charity' (Yeshayahu 1:27).*