

מי-מעין לאנשים, ומי-באר לגמלים

אבנר רמו



Rebekah by Abel Pann ((1883–1963)

We read in the Book of Genesis about Rebekah, the daughter of Bethuel the son of Milcah:
ותרד העינה, ותמלא כדה ותעל - “**And she went down to the spring, and filled her pitcher, and came up**” (Gen 24:16).

We should notice, that we are told here that Rebekah filled her pitcher with the spring’s water. As spring water “spring up” spontaneously from the ground, there is no need to “draw” them up.

We read that after Rebekah came up from the spring with the water in her pitcher, Abraham’s eldest slave ran toward her and said:

**הגמיאיני נא מעט-מים מכדך.
ותאמר שמה אדני; ותמהר ותרד כדה על-ידה-ותשקהו.
ותכל להשקותו; ותאמר, גם לגמליך אשאב,**

**“Please give me to drink a little water from your pitcher.
And she said: Drink, my lord; and she hastened, and let down her pitcher upon her hand, and gave him to drink.
And when she finished giving him to drink, she said: I will also draw (water) for your camels”** (Gen 24:17-18).

The fact that Rebekah said that she will draw water for the camels, indicates that she did not intend to use the spring’s water for the camels, but rather use another source of water.

Now we hear about Rebekah:

ותער כדה אל-השקת, ותרץ עוד אל-הבאר לשאב; ותשאב לכל-גמליו.
“and she emptied her pitcher into the trough, and ran more to the well to draw (water), and she drew (water) for all his camels” (Gen 24:20; see also: 1 Ch 11:18).

We were told earlier that Abraham’s elder slave:

וילך אל-ארם נהרים-אל-עיר נחור.
ויברך הגמלים מחוץ לעיר, אל-באר המים לעת ערב, לעת צאת השאבת.
“and he went to Aram-naharaim, to the city of Nahor.
And he made the camels to kneel down outside the city by the well of water at the time of evening, the time that women go out to draw water” (Gen 24:10-11).

Yet he himself stood על-עין המים - “by the spring of water” (Gen 24:13; see also: Gen 24:42, 43). It seems that Abraham’s eldest slave knew that while the camels were supposed to drink Well’s water, men drank there only spring’s water.

In the Book of Isaiah we read: ושאבתם-מים בששון ממעיני הישועה - “And with joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation” (Is 12:3).

It seems that here the English (but not the Greek) translator, who apparently knew that unlike wells, water do not need to be drawn from springs, felt it necessary to replace מעיני - “springs of” with “wells of.” Yet the understanding of the Greek translator of:

מחטב עציך, עד שאב מימך - “from your woodcutter to the drawer of your water” (Deu 29:10), as “to your bearer of water” suggests that he believed that here שאב is a letter-substitution and order-type error of נשא - “bearer”, suggest the possibility that in verse Is 12:3 the word ושאבתם is also a letter-substitution and order-type error of ונשאתם - “and you shall bear (water).”