

# Sight Unseen

*Excerpted and adapted from a shiur by Dayan Yosef Greenwald*

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[https://baishavaad.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/BER81\\_005\\_Chayei\\_Sarah\\_Blind\\_Marriage\\_Seeing\\_the\\_Kallah\\_Before\\_the\\_Wedding.mp3](https://baishavaad.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/BER81_005_Chayei_Sarah_Blind_Marriage_Seeing_the_Kallah_Before_the_Wedding.mp3)

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*And Avraham said to his servant . . . but you shall go to my land and to my birthplace, and you shall take a wife for my son, for Yitzchak.*

Bereishis 24:2,4

The *Acharonim* question how Yitzchak was permitted to have Eliezer serve as a *shaliach* (proxy) to marry Rivkah on his behalf. After all, the Gemara (Kiddushin 41a) states that it is forbidden to marry a woman without seeing her first to ensure that he is happy with her, and it is generally accepted that the *Avos* kept the Torah (see, e.g., Mishnah, Kidushin 72b).

The Sefer Chasidim answers that since Yitzchak was not allowed to leave Eretz Yisrael, he couldn't marry Rivkah himself, so he had to send a proxy. The Moshav Zekeinim answers that Eliezer did not actually marry Rivkah on behalf of Yitzchak; he simply brought her back to Yitzchak so they could marry in person.

The Tzeidah Laderech answers that the prohibition applies only if no one sees the girl on behalf of the groom. However, if the groom appoints someone to see her for him, that is sufficient.

R' Asher Weiss answers, based on the Noda Bihuda, that if the groom accepts upon himself that he wishes to marry the girl regardless of how she looks, that would be acceptable.

There were many communities in Europe where couples married without the groom seeing the bride beforehand. Although this seems to violate the Gemara, many *poskim* defended the practice for various reasons, including some of the reasons we have cited.