

## CHAYEI SARAH (*life of Sarah*)



Sarah dies in Hebron

**Genesis 23:1** And Sarah was 127 years old: *these are the years of the life of Sarah.*  
C-MATS

**Question:** Sarah was the great mother of the entire Israelite people. By learning to appreciate her, we can learn to appreciate the great things about our own mothers too. How can we let our mom know we appreciate her? It's easy to take our mother for granted, but there is no one who does more - or cares more - for us than she does. Of course we can *tell* her - that's music to a mother's ears. But more than that we can make an effort to speak pleasantly and respectfully to her and do what we can to help out.

**Question:** A mother's desire to feed her children is even greater than the children's desire to be fed. How do you understand this? יהיה put in a mother a special, deep and unceasing love for her children, to the point that she derives more pleasure from their happiness and success than even they do. Whether or not they are always able to show it, we should know that our mother loves us, in a certain sense, even more than we love ourselves.

**2 Sarah died in Kirjath-arba (*city of four giants*); also known as Hebron in the land of Canaan: and Abraham came to mourn for Sarah and to weep for her. C-MATS**

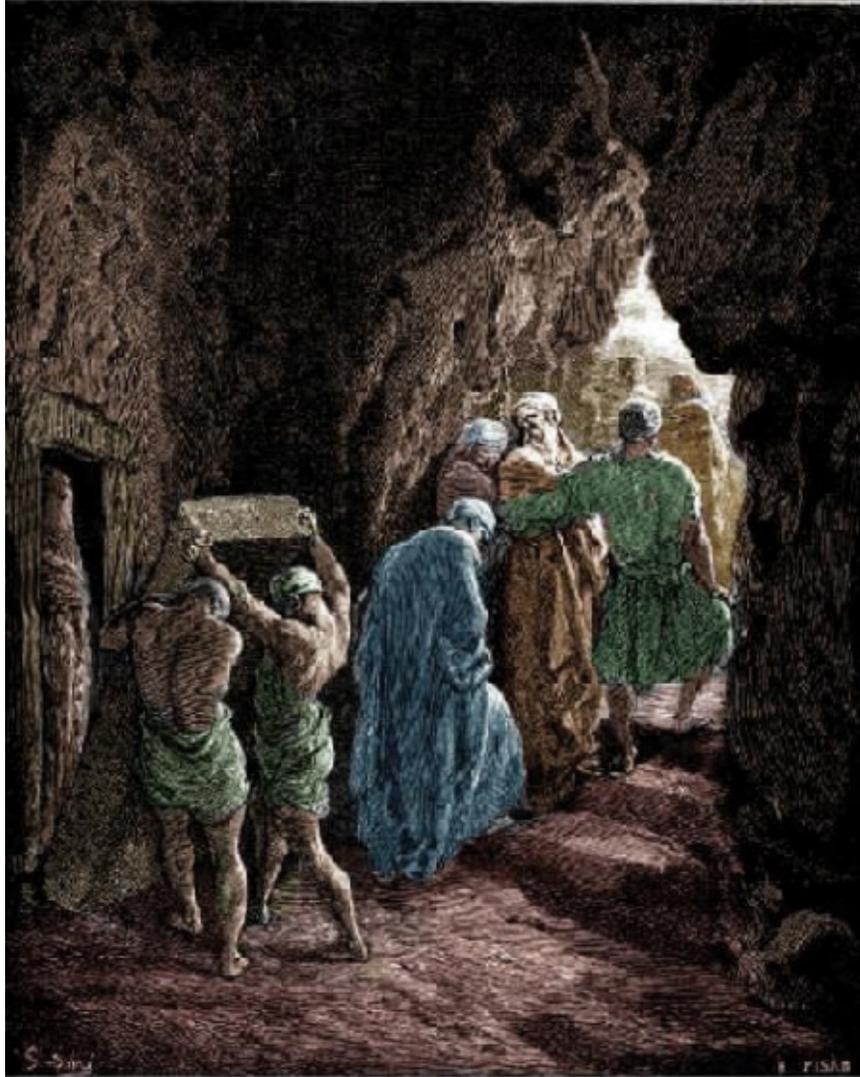
**Question:** Why do the scriptures concerning the sacrifice of Isaac and the death of Sarah follow one another? The narratives of Sarah's death and the sacrifice of Isaac follow one another to indicate that she died as a result of that event.

**Question:** Why does the Torah record the birth of Rebekah before the death of Sarah? The Torah records the birth of Rebekah before the death of Sarah in line with the tradition that a righteous person is not taken from the world until his or her successor has been born, as implied by the verse (Ecclesiastes 1:5) **The sun rises and the sun sets.** (Sforno, Baal HaTurim).

**Question:** Where did Abraham come from? He came from Mount Moriah with Isaac. This explains why Abraham and Isaac were not there at Sarah's death.

**Question:** How did Satan deceive Sarah? Satan went to Sarah, and he appeared to her in the figure of an old man very humble and meek and he said unto her, "Abraham took Isaac and built an altar, and killed him, and brought him up as a sacrifice upon the altar, and Isaac cried and wept before his father, but he would not have compassion over him." Sarah lifted up her voice and wept and cried out bitterly on account of her son; and she threw herself upon the ground and she cast dust upon her head, and she said, "O my son, Isaac my son, O that I had this day died instead of you." She rose up and went about making inquiries till she came to Hebron, and she inquired of all those whom she met walking in the road, and no one could tell her what had happened to her son. They went to seek him in the house of Shem and Eber, and they could not find him, and they sought throughout the land and he was not there. Satan came to Sarah in the shape of an old man, and said unto her, "I spoke falsely to you, Abraham did not kill his son and he is not dead"; and when she heard the word her joy was so exceedingly violent on account of her son, that her soul went out through joy; she died and was gathered to her people. Abraham and Isaac went to her to Hebron, and when they found that Sarah was dead they lifted up their voices and wept bitterly over her; and Isaac fell upon his mother's face and wept over her, and he said, "O my mother, my mother, how hast thou left me, and where hast thou gone? O how could you leave me?" Abraham and Isaac wept greatly and all their servants wept with them on account of Sarah, and they mourned over her a great and heavy mourning. Jasher 22

**Question:** What does Kiriath-arba mean? The city was so named because four giants lived there (see Numbers 13:22); or the name was given prophetically because four well-known couples would be buried there: Adam and Eve, Abraham and Sarah, Isaac and Rebekah, and Jacob and Leah (Rashi).



Burial of Sarah  
(engraving by Gustave Doré from the 1865 *La Sainte Bible*)

**3** Abraham got up from his dead *wife* and spoke to the sons of Heth saying, **4** *I am a stranger and a sojourner (stranger) with you: give me a תַּבִּיטָא holding of as a burying place, that I may bury my dead wife.* C-MATS

**Question:** What was the purpose of Abraham? His intense desire was to give Sarah a proper burial in a place worthy of her greatness-in the Promised Land.

**Question:** What are essential concepts concerning death? We should have respect for the dead and concern for the future. We neither reject what has gone before nor neglect what lies ahead. To acquire the fitting burial plot, Abraham was forced to negotiate with the transparently greedy Ephron and gladly paid an exorbitant price. That accomplished, Abraham looked ahead and turned to the responsibility of finding the proper wife for Isaac.

**Question:** How was Abraham expressing the dual role that every believer must play? On the one hand, he is a resident of his country, and as such he must work and pray for its welfare, as Jeremiah urged his people on the threshold of exile (Jeremiah 29:7). But on the other hand, he in this world is always an alien, for his allegiance is to יהוה and his goals are set forth by the Torah. A believer must always be ready to be a lonely alien, resisting the culture that surrounds him and maintaining his unique responsibility (R' Yosef Dov Soloveitchik).



Sarah's Cave

5 And answered the children of Heth **את־** Abraham saying to him, 6 Hear us, my master: **אתה** you are a mighty prince among us: choose any of our tombs to bury **את־** your dead; none of us will withhold from you **את־** his tomb, but *that* you may bury your dead. C-MATS

**Question:** What is the difference between how Abraham described himself and how the Hittites described him? Abraham said that he was an alien and resident and they addressed him as a mighty prince. Abraham was modest and humble with all men.

7 Abraham stood up and bowed himself to the people of the land, the children of Heth. 8 And Abraham spoke with them saying, If it be **את־** your wish that I should bury **את־** my dead wife; then hear me and ask Ephron, the son of Zohar, 9 If he would give me **את־** the cave of Machpelah, which he owns, which *is* at the end of his field; he will sell it to me for as much money as it *is* worth as a burying place in your presence. C-MATS

**Question:** What does the word Machpeilah mean? The word means double, which could refer to an upper and lower chamber, or on account of the couples who would be buried there (Abraham and Sarah, Isaac and Rebekah)

**10 Ephron lived among the children of Heth: and answered Ephron, the Hittite, אֶת־ Abraham in the presence of the children of Heth, who belonged to the ruling council of his city saying, C-MATS**

**Question:** Why were all the men at the city gate? They all left their work and came to pay their respects to Sarah

**11 No, my master, hear me: I will give you the field and the cave that *is* there. I will give it to you in the presence of the sons of my people. I will give it to you to bury your dead. 12 Abraham bowed down himself before the people of the land. 13 And Abraham spoke to Ephron in the presence of the people of the land saying, If you hear me: I will give אֶתְּךָ you money for the field; take it from me and I will bury אֶת־ my dead there. 14 And answered Ephron אֶת־ Abraham saying to him, 15 My master, listen to me: the land *is worth* 400 shekels of silver; but what *is* that between me and you? אֶתְּךָ and therefore, your dead, go bury. C-MATS**

**Question:** What is that "between me and you"? Ephron said to Abraham, "Between two friends such as we are, of what importance is it? None! Rather leave the sale and bury your dead."

**16 Abraham understood what Ephron was saying; and Abraham weighed to Ephron אֶת־ the silver, which he had named in the presence of the sons of Heth, 400 shekels of silver according to the weight accepted by the merchants. C-MATS**

**Question:** Did Ephron really intend to give Abraham the cave? Ephron promised the cave as a gift to Abraham, but he took a great deal of money for the cave instead. He revealed himself to be a greedy man who extorted more than the property was worth. The righteous promise little and perform much--Abraham promised his guests "a morsel of bread" (Genesis 18:5) and then "ran to the herd and fetched a calf tender and good, and he hurried to prepare it." On the other hand, the wicked promise much and do not perform even a little. Initially Ephron proclaimed, "the land *is worth* 400 shekels of silver; but what *is* that between me and you?" But in the end, "Abraham weighed to Ephron אֶת־ the silver, which he had named in the presence of the sons of Heth, 400 shekels of silver according to the weight accepted by the merchants." Each shekel that Abraham used to pay for the plot was worth 2,500 ordinary shekels (Rashi). Thus Abraham paid a total of one million ordinary shekels for the cave. This illustrates Abraham's love for Sarah. He chose the finest burial site for her and did not haggle over the price.

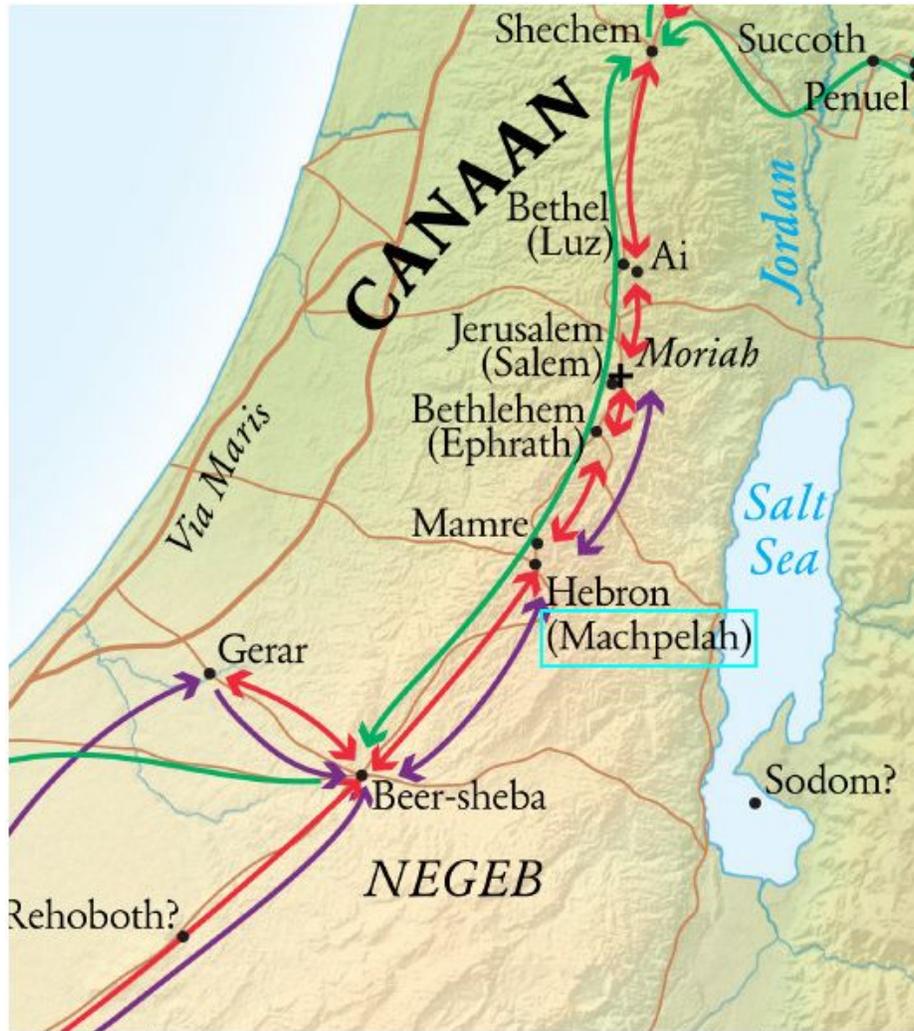


**Question:** Why was this purchase recorded in scripture? This is one of the three places regarding which the nations of the world cannot accuse Israel and say, "You have stolen them." The three places are: the Cave of Machpelah, the site of the Holy Temple, and the tomb of Joseph at Shechem.

**17** And the field of Ephron in Machpelah, which *is* by Mamre, the field, the cave and all the trees that *were* in the field and around it were dedeed. **18** To Abraham as his possession in the presence of the children of Heth, who belonged to the ruling council of his city. **19** And after this, buried Abraham אֵת Sarah אִשְׁתּוֹ *his wife* in the cave of the field of Machpelah before Mamre: known as Hebron in the land of Canaan. **20** And the field and the cave that *is* there were dedeed to Abraham as his possession as a burying place אֵת from the sons of Heth. C-MATS

**Question:** How did Abraham mourn for Sarah? Abraham buried Sarah with pomp as observed at the interment of kings, and she was buried in very fine and beautiful garments. At her casket was Shem, his sons Eber and Abimelech, together with Anar, Ashcol and Mamre, and all the grandees of the land followed her casket. Sarah was one hundred and twenty-seven years old and she died, and Abraham made a great and heavy mourning, and he performed the rites of mourning for seven days. All the inhabitants of the land comforted Abraham and Isaac his son on account of Sarah. Jashar

**Question:** Where did Isaac go after his mother died? When the days of their mourning passed by, Abraham sent away his son Isaac, and he went to the house of Shem and Eber, to learn the ways of יְהוָה and his instructions, and Isaac remained there three years. Jashar



Genesis 24:1 And Abraham *was old and advanced in age*: and יהוה had blessed את־ Abraham in all things. C-MATS

**Question:** What does the verse mean, “Abraham *was old and advanced in age*”? When Abraham aged, he did not merely pass through the days of his life: he *accumulated* them. Each day was fully utilized, so that they were fully possessed by him.

**Spiritual Exercise:** Do you fully use your days or do you waste your time and not fulfill your purpose everyday? Think of a way you can not waste your time and do it this week.

2 Abraham said to his eldest servant of his house, that ruled over all that he had, Please put your hand under my thigh. C-MATS

**Question:** Why did Abraham choose Eliezer for such an important mission? Even sixty years before, Eliezer had been Abraham's most trusted servant (see 15:2); now he is not only the senior servant, but the elder of his household (R' Hoffmann). Eliezer was much more than a trusted servant, but he taught the disciples that converted to יהוה and he was an example of Abraham's way of life. Only such a person had the stature and understanding to be worthy of such a heavenly mission.

**Question:** What does “put your hand under my thigh” mean? Thigh is a euphemism for the male organ; literally coming out of the [father's] thigh (46:26; Exodus 1:5). When one who swears an oath, he must take in his hand some sacred object such as a Torah scroll. Since circumcision was the first commandment given Abraham and he had fulfilled it with much pain, it was particularly precious to him, so Abraham asked Eliezer to take his oath upon it.



Eliezer swears to Abraham

**3** And I will make you swear in ביהוה, the Elohim of heavens and the Elohim of the earth, that you will not take a wife for my son from the daughters of the Canaanites, among whom I live: **4** But you will go to my country and to my kinsmen and take a wife for my son Isaac there. C-MATS

**Question:** What kind of wife did Abraham want to give Isaac? Isaac's mate had to be a worthy successor to his mother; she had to be the next Sarah of the Israelite people, a woman who would be not only a wife and mother, but a Matriarch.

**5** And the servant said to him, Suppose the woman will not be willing to follow me to **הָאָרֶץ** *this* land: must I bring again **אֶתְּךָ** your son to the land from which **אָצְרָתְךָ** *you came forth* from? **6** And Abraham said to him, Do not bring **אֶתְּךָ** my son there again. C-MATS

**Question:** Why did Abraham ask Eliezer not to take Isaac to the woman's land? Abraham wanted Isaac to live in the promised land of Canaan all his days and he did.

7 יהוה *the Elohim of heaven*, which took me from my father's house and from the land of my kinsmen and which spoke to me and that swore to me saying, To your seed אתן *I will give* הוצאת *this* את- *land*; Elohim will send his angel before you and you will take a wife for my son from there. 8 And if the woman is not willing to follow you, then you will be free from הוצאת *this* oath: only את- *my son* do not bring there again. 9 And put the servant את- *his hand* under the thigh of Abraham his *master* and swore to him concerning that matter. 10 And the servant took ten of his *master's* camels and departed with all kinds of gifts from his *master*: and he rose and went to Mesopotamia to the city of Nahor. C-MATS

**Question:** Abraham asked his reliable servant, Eliezer, to help him find a wife for his son. We can learn from Eliezer the trait of being reliable when we're asked or volunteer to help. Why is it a positive spiritual value to be reliable? Being reliable means we take our word and ourselves seriously, which is a cornerstone of a spiritual and fulfilling life. The spiritual essence of a person is his or her character.

**Question:** Is there ever a value that overrides reliability? While being reliable - following through to what we've committed to - is a virtue, it must exist in context. That is, if we've committed to do something that we come to realize is negative and harmful to ourselves or others, it is certainly the ethical choice to back out.

**Question:** How were Abraham's camels different from others' camels? They were distinguishable from other camels by the fact that they would go out muzzled to prevent robbery-that they should not graze in strangers' fields.

11 And towards evening he made his camels kneel down outside the city by a well of water, at the time of evening הוצאת *go forth* that women to draw water. 12 And he said, יהוה *the Elohim*, of my master Abraham, please let me succeed this day and show kindness to my master, Abraham. 13 As I stand *here* by the well of water; and as the daughters of the men of the city הוצאת *they came out* to draw water: 14 Let the young woman to whom I will say, please lower your pitcher that I may drink; and she will say, drink and I will give your camels drink also: *let the same be* אתה *she* you have appointed for your servant Isaac; and then I will know that you have shown kindness to my master. C-MATS



Rebekah and Eliezer by Alexandre Cabanel 1883

**Question:** How did Eliezer know which woman to choose for Isaac? Eliezer prayed and asked יהוה to give him a sign showing him the woman יהוה had chosen for Isaac.

**Question:** Should one look for omens? Ordinarily it is forbidden to base one's actions on omens, such as Eliezer's request that a girl's behavior would be a sign for him. This applies only to omens that are unrelated to the choice being made, such as saying that if the sun shines tomorrow it is a sign that I should marry this woman. In Eliezer's case, his omen was appropriate to his mission: Since the Matriarch of Israel had to be a woman of kindness and sensitivity, Eliezer was looking not for omens but for proof of the girl's qualifications (Ran, Chullin 95b).

**Question:** What kind of woman was Eliezer looking for? Eliezer was not interested in the wealth of the woman, but he preferred someone of modest means, the kind who would go to draw water herself and not make the servants do it for her. Eliezer was more concerned about the character of the woman. She must be worthy of Isaac and perform acts of kindness, and she must be fit to enter the house of Abraham and be from Abraham's family.

**Question:** What should you look for in a wife? Humble (not proud or haughty), modest (covers herself), works hard, wants to help others, kind to others, believes in *יהוה*, does not desire the things of the world (money, fame, power)

**Question:** Who do you think is usually happier -- somebody who likes to take, or somebody who likes to give? Somebody who is able to find the joy in giving will always be happy. Just about whatever situation he finds himself in, he'll be able to do what he enjoys: giving. Many people will like him and be glad to see him. Someone who likes taking depends on finding others who want to give. When things don't work out just the way he wants, he's likely to feel low.

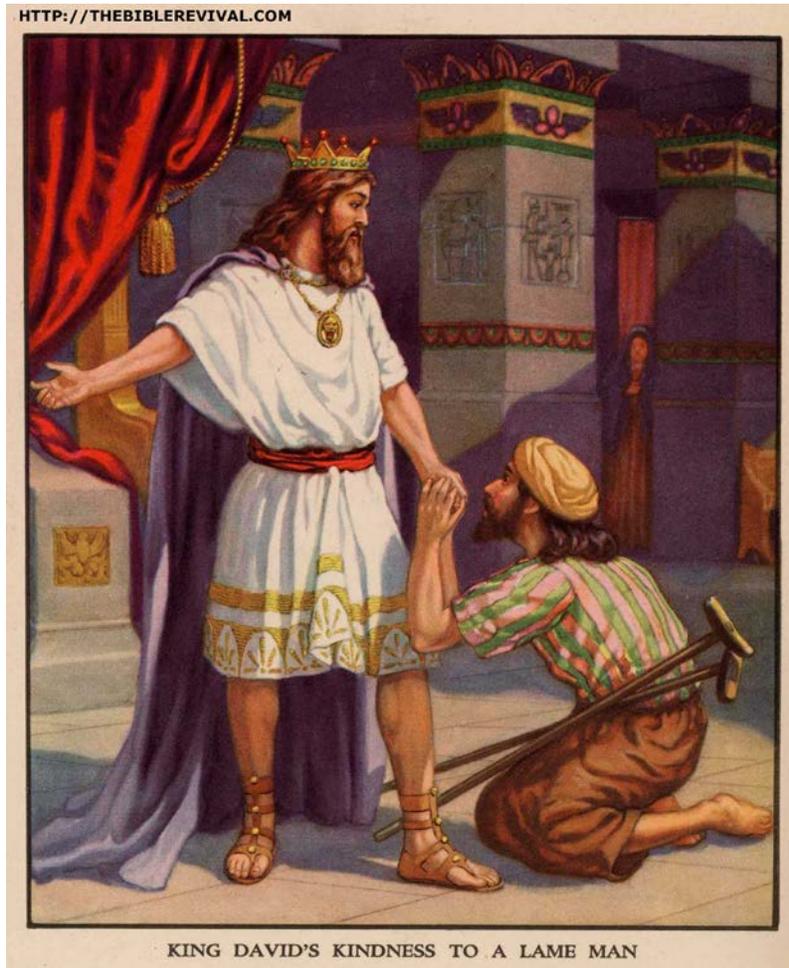
**Question:** Imagine a situation where a teenage girl is hoping to go out with friends in the afternoon but her mom asks her to baby-sit. If she is a "giver," how will she react? What if she is a "taker"? If she is a "giver" she will say: "Great! Now I get a chance not only to help my mom so she can go out, I can also help my little brother and sister with the things they need." If she is a "taker" she will say: "Oh no! My day is ruined. Instead of getting to play I'm going to be stuck in the house all afternoon."

**Question:** If a person has 100 dollars he will want 200, if he gets 200 he will want 400. How do you understand this statement, and what insight does it reveal about the nature of "taking?" If a person focuses on taking, he may convince himself that if he only could get what he desires, he'll be happy and content. But in reality it is the desire to have more that is actually motivating him. So it creates a never-ending cycle of not feeling content until he gets the "one more thing." A wise person realizes this sooner rather than later, and begins to re-focus himself on giving rather than getting.

**Question:** Do you think a person who is willing to help is likely to be taken advantage of by others? It may seem that way since there always seems to be somebody who needs something. But a person who becomes aware that helping others is one of the greatest pleasures will not be concerned about this, any more than she would "mind" having precious jewels constantly offered her. And if she feels she is being taken advantage of, she can always say no.

**Question:** There are two ways to give of ourselves. One way is to "give like a servant." The other way is to "give like a son." What do you think might be the difference between the two? A servant is in the business of giving to his employer. He's giving because he *has* to - he wants to keep his job - not because he *wants* to. Generally his attitude is to give enough to keep his boss satisfied, and no more. A child loves his parents and basically wants to give them pleasure. His giving will be much deeper since it's from the heart. His motivation isn't to simply fulfill an obligation, like a servant, but to genuinely do his utmost to make his parents happy. The Torah says we should strive to relate to everyone on this higher level of "giving from the heart."

**Question:** How can we apply this idea to our relationship with יהוה? It's a matter of attitude. יהוה has given us many commandments to fulfill. Are we doing them because we feel we have to, and if יהוה somehow weren't looking we would act differently? Or are we doing it on even a higher level, because we love יהוה and want to please Him with all our heart?



**15** And it came to pass, before he had finished speaking that Rebekah, daughter of Bethuel, son of Milcah, the **אִשְׁתּוֹ** wife of Nahor, Abraham's brother, **וַיָּצֵאתָ** she came out with her pitcher upon her shoulder. C-MATS

**Question:** When did יהוה answer Eliezer's prayer? Three people were answered by יהוה as their words left their mouths: Eliezer, Moses, and Solomon. Eliezer, as it is written, "Before he finished speaking, Rebekah came out." Moses, as it is written, "As he concluded saying all these things, the ground split open." Solomon, as it is written, "As Solomon concluded praying, the fire descended from the heavens."

**16 The young woman *was* very beautiful, a virgin, never having sexual relations with any man: and she went down to the well and filled her pitcher and came up. C-MATS**

**Question:** How did Eliezer know which maiden to choose? When Eliezer went to the well, and desired the maidens to give him some water to drink: but while the others refused, on pretense that they wanted it all at home, and could spare none for him, one only of the company of maidens offered Eliezer water in an obliging manner and also gave water to his camels.

**Question:** Why does the verse say, “a virgin, never having sexual relations with any man”? Since the daughters of the gentiles would preserve their virginity but were promiscuous in unnatural ways, Scripture attests that Rebekah was completely innocent.



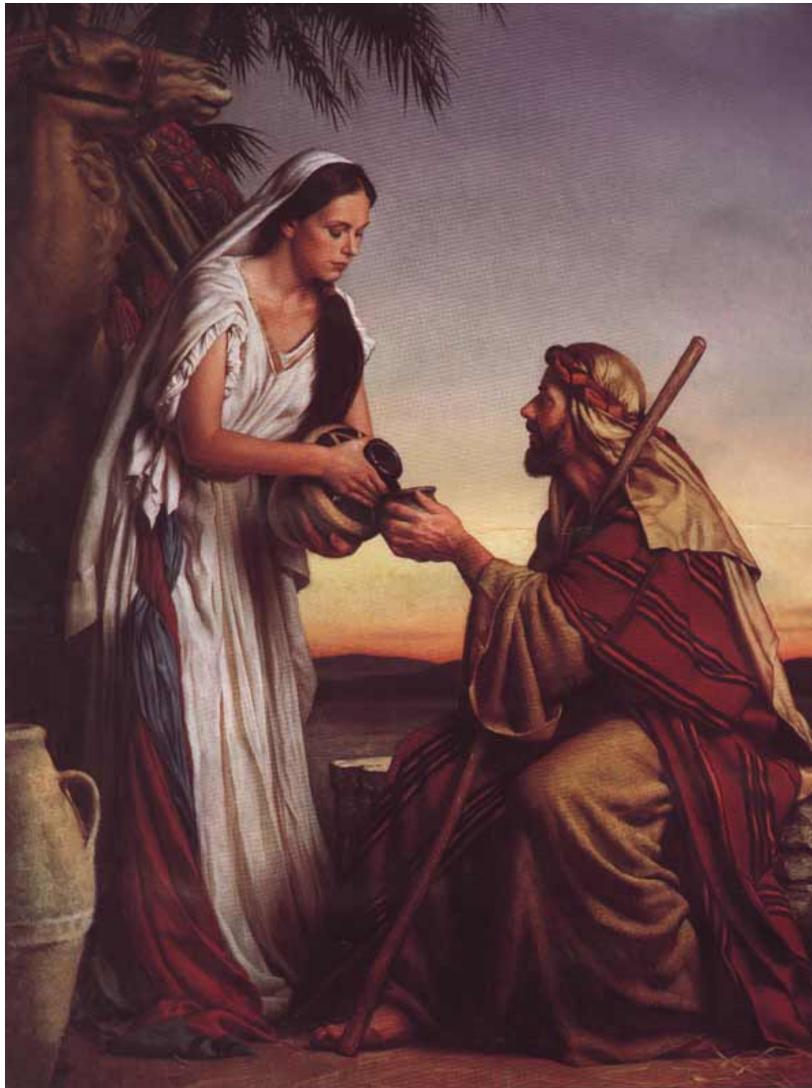
Rebekah and Eliezer (painting circa 1652 by Bartolomé Esteban Murillo)

**17 The servant ran to meet her and said, Please give me a drink of water from your pitcher. C-MATS**

**Question:** What does this act show us about Rebekah? It was apparent that this was second nature for Rebekah to want to meet the needs of others and also their animals.

**18 And she said, Drink, my master and she hurried and lowered her pitcher and gave him drink. C-MATS**

**Question:** Giving to others is one of the strongest ways to become close to יהוה. Why do you think that's so? Coming close to יהוה doesn't mean being closer physically. After all, יהוה is everywhere. It means bonding to Him by acting more and more as He does. Since יהוה is always giving and helping His creations (including us), when we help others we act as He does and thus bring ourselves closer to Him.



Rebekah and Eliezer

**Question:** If someone asks of us a favor and we don't feel like doing it - is it hypocritical to do it anyway? Many times we feel inner resistance to doing things we know are right. This is natural and we gain tremendously when we can overcome this resistance and 'do it anyway.' As long as the favor is reasonable and not asking us to go against our values, we should do it whether we feel like it or not.

**Spiritual Exercise:** Do someone a favor today



Rebekah waters the Camels

**19 And when she had finished giving him a drink she said, I will draw *water* for your camels also until they have finished drinking. C-MATS**

**Question:** How difficult was the task of watering the camels? Rebekah had to draw all the water for the camels through sheer physical exertion, and this was the great proof of her kindness (Ramban). After camels have gone without water for a few days, they require 140 gallons of water. That Rebekah would undertake such a strenuous task so eagerly for a total stranger is a supreme indication of her sterling character.



“Camels at a Watering Trough” 1857 Jean Leon Gerome

**20** And she hurried and emptied her pitcher into the trough and ran again to the well to draw *water* and drew water for all his camels. C-MATS

**Question:** What is a trough? It is a hollow stone from which the camels drink.

**21** And the man gazed at her silently waiting to know *whether* יהוה had made his journey successful or not. **22** When the camels had finished drinking, the man gave her a golden earring of half a *shekel* weight and two gold bracelets for her hands of ten shekels weight; **23** And he said to her, Whose daughter *are* את (you?)\* You tell me, please, *is* there room *in* your father’s house for us to lodge? C-MATS

**Question:** Why did Eliezer give Rebekah gifts first and ask to lodge in her house before he asked her about her family? Eliezer was amazed at how fast his prayer had been answered, and he was confident that in the merit of Abraham, יהוה had caused his way to prosper. Eliezer gave Rebekah bracelets, and some other ornaments which it was esteemed decent for virgins to wear, he gave them to her, by way of acknowledgment, and as a reward for her kindness in giving him water to drink; saying, it was but just that she should have them, because she was so much more obliging than any of the rest.



Eliezer gives Rebekah gifts

**24** And she said to him, *I am* the daughter of Bethuel, the son of Milcah, which she bore to Nahor. **25** She said also to him, we *have* enough straw and feed and a room for you to lodge in. C-MATS

**Question:** What other act of kindness did Rebekah show Eliezer? In keeping with her previous display of giving more than Eliezer asked of her, she responded to his request for personal lodging by saying that she would provide for his camels, as well.

**26** And the man bowed down his head and worshipped to ליהוה. **27** And he said, Blessed *be* יהוה *the* Elohim of my master Abraham, who has not abandoned his mercy and his truth to my master: because יהוה has led me to the house of my master's brother. C-MATS

**Question:** Why does Eliezer speak of both mercy and truth? Mercy alone can be harmful, because it can cause someone to give in to the wishes of the one he loves, even in cases where it is wrong. Therefore, truth must regulate mercy.

**28 And the young woman ran and told *those in her mother's house* these things. 29 Rebekah had a brother and his name *was* Laban: and Laban ran out to the man at the well. C-MATS**

**Question:** Who was Laban? The Torah introduces us to Rebekah's family, where it seems that her father played little role, and her brother, Laban, was dominant. In those days, the women had separate houses where they did their work, and since a daughter naturally confides only in her mother, Rebekah ran and told her mother about her encounter at the well. Once the family heard the news, Laban took charge. From the profound influence he exercised in the household it would appear that he was either the only son or the oldest (R' Hoffmann).

**Question:** What motivated Laban? Laban's character, as it reveals itself later in his relations with Jacob, was motivated by greed. Wicked people should be assumed to act wickedly, even when their actions seem on the surface to be virtuous. Conversely, people who are known to be righteous should always be given the benefit of the doubt, even when they seem to be acting improperly. Thus, upon hearing that the stranger was the servant of Abraham and that he was dispensing such lavish gifts, Laban assumed that he surely had gifts for the rest of the family -- and if Eliezer had given Rebekah, a mere child, such extravagant gifts, just imagine what lay in store for Laban! Therefore, without showing his father the least courtesy, Laban dashed to the waiting servant and piously tried to secure favor for himself with the wealthy and generous Eliezer.

**30 When Laban saw *את* the earring *אֶת* and bracelets upon his sisters hands and when he heard *את* the words of Rebekah his sister saying what the man spoke to her; then he came to the man who stood by the camels at the well. 31 And Laban said, Come in you blessed of ייִהוּה; why do you stand outside? I have prepared the house and room for the camels. 32 And the man came into the house: and he unloaded his camels and gave straw and feed to the camels and washed his feet and the men's feet that *were אתו* with him. 33 And they set *meat* before him to eat: but he said I will not eat until I have told you what I have to say. And Laban said, Go ahead and speak. 34 And he said I *am* Abraham's servant. 35 And ויִבְרַךְ has blessed *את* my master greatly; and he *has* become great: and Elohim has given him flocks and herds and silver and gold and menservants and female servants and camels and donkeys. 36 And Sarah, my master's *אִשָּׁת* wife, gave birth to a son to my master when she was old: and my master has given to him *את* all that he *has*. C-MATS**

**Question:** What does it mean “my master has given to him *את* all that he *has*”? Eliezer showed them a deed of bequest in which Abraham had given Isaac all his possessions, so that his relatives should hurry to send their daughter to Isaac.

37 And my master made me swear saying, You will not take a wife for my son from the daughters of the Canaanites in whose land I live: 38 But you will go to my father's house and to my kinsmen and take a wife for my son. 39 And I said to my master, suppose the woman will not follow me. 40 And he said to me, יהוה in whose presence I walk will send His angel אִתְּךָ *with you* and prosper your way; and you will take a wife for my son from my kinsmen and my father's house: 41 But you will be free מֵאֲלֵתִי *from my oath*, if you come to my kinsmen and if they will not give you the woman, then you will be clear מֵאֲלֵתִי *from my oath*. 42 I came this day to the well and said, O יהוה the Elohim of my master Abraham, if you will give me success; 43 When I stand by the well of water when the virgin comes out to draw water and I say to her, please give me a little water from your pitcher to drink; 44 And she said to me, Both of אֲתָּה you drink and I will also draw water for your camels. *Let this woman be the same one who יהוה has appointed for my master's son.* 45 And before I had finished speaking in my heart, Rebekah בְּרַעְיָה she came out with her pitcher on her shoulder; and she went down to the well and drew water: and I said to her, Let me drink, please. 46 And she hurried and lowered her pitcher from her shoulder and said, Drink and I will give your camels water also so I drank and she made the camels drink also. 47 And I asked אֲתָּה her, whose daughter אַתְּ (you?)\* And she said, The daughter of Bethuel, Nahor's son, whom Milcah gave birth to him: and I put the earring on her nose and the bracelets on her wrists. 48 And I bowed down my head and worshipped לַיהוָה and blessed אֱלֹהֵי יהוה the Elohim of my master, Abraham, who has led me in the אֱמֶת right (truth) way to bring אֶתְּ (grand) daughter of my master's brother to his son Isaac. 49 And now tell me if you are going to deal kindly וְאִמָּתִי and truly אֲתָּה with my master: and if not, tell me that I may look elsewhere. 50 Then Laban and Bethuel answered and said, This thing comes from מִיְהוָה: we cannot say anything to you bad or good. C-MATS

**Question:** Why did Laban speak ahead of his father? This showed Laban's lack of respect for his father.

**Question:** A parent is more than just another person and should be treated with special respect. The disrespectful way Laban treats his father reveals his poor character. We can show our good character by speaking to and treating our parents respectfully. Why should we act respectfully toward a parent?

- We owe our parents a tremendous debt of gratitude for giving us our lives and every bit of effort they put in to raise us since we were a baby.
- יהוה tells us to honor our parents so we can have a long and happy life.
- How we respect our parents defines our character.

We can train ourselves to act respectfully and we'll eventually discover that the more we treat others (especially our parents) with respect, the more we will come to respect ourselves.

**Question:** How are some ways to demonstrate that respect? When our parents ask us to do something, we should do it without complaining or arguing. We should listen to the advice of our parents knowing that יהוה has given them wisdom to instruct you (if they are walking in the ways of Torah). We should go out of our way to try to help them and do things we know will make them pleased. יהוה judges us by how we treat our parents.

**Question:** What was another sign that Eliezer had been successful? The family recognized that this thing was from יהוה. This is proof that יהוה does choose a mate for every man.

**51 Rebekah is here, take her and go and let her be your master's son's wife as יהוה has spoken. C-MATS**

**Question:** Was Rebekah in covenant with Yahshua? The very first time Rebekah's name is mentioned in the Torah in Gen 22:23 there is a את in front of her name. In Gen 24:23 by virtue of where the את is placed in this scripture it would appear that when Abraham's servant, Eliezer sees Rebekah for the first time he asks her whom she has descended from to make sure she is not a Canaanite, so that he will fulfill his master's wish to see promptly if she is a worthy candidate for Isaac. This verse is repeated in verse Gen 24:47 as Eliezer recounts to Laban his meeting with Rebekah for the first time that day and Eliezer knows immediately she could be the one for Isaac and gives thanks to יהוה the Elohim who has led Eliezer in the right way to bring a את daughter of my master's brother to his son. In Gen 24:35 Eliezer tells Rebekah's brother, Laban that יהוה has blessed את his master greatly. Eliezer also shares with Laban in Gen 24:36 that his master (*Abraham*) has given to Isaac everything את has given to his master. C-MATS

**Question:** Did יהוה speak to Rebekah's family? Nowhere in the chapter did יהוה speak explicitly. However, יהוה "speaks" through His control of events, and the entire sequence of the narrative shows that He wanted Rebekah to become Isaac's wife (Ramban).

**Question:** How does יהוה talk to us today?

- His Spirit
- His Torah
- Prayer
- Signs
- Events
- People
- Nature
- History
- Dreams
- Visions
- Prophets

**52** And when heard servant Abraham את־ their words, he worshipped to ליהוה, *bowing himself* to the earth. **53** The servant brought out jewels of silver and gold and garments and gave *them* to Rebekah: he also gave to her brother and to her mother valuable gifts. C-MATS

**Question:** What was the purpose of the gifts given to Rebekah's family? The gifts served the function of the ring customarily used nowadays. She had now been promised for marriage.

There are two types of gifts mentioned in this story, both related to marriage customs of the time:

- the bride price, given by the family of the groom to the bride's family; in Rebecca's case, it is gold and silver jewelry and clothing, with additional gifts for members of her family
- the dowry, which was money, servants/slaves and gifts taken with the bride to her new home; Rebecca took her nurse and maids with her as part of her dowry.



Gold earrings from Mycenae, made at about the time that Rebecca lived



A pair of ancient Persian gold bracelets, similar to the ones Rebecca received

The description of Rebecca's betrothal and marriage gives a fair picture of marriage practices among the early Hebrew people:

- The marriage was arranged between families rather than between the individuals themselves
- There were definite legal procedures to be followed: in Mesopotamia, a marriage arranged by a brother was only valid if the woman gave her full consent. This is why the biblical text mentions consultation with Rebecca.

**54 And he and the men that *were* with him ate and drank and stayed all night; and they rose up in the morning and he said, Send me away to my master. 55 And her brother and her mother said; Let the young woman stay אֶתְנוּ *with us* at least ten days, after *that* she will go. C-MATS**

**Question:** Why did Laban and Rebekah's mother ask for a few more days? It was customary to feast 10 days during the wedding feasts.

**56 And the servant said to them, Do not keep אֶתִּי *me*, and יְהוָה has prospered my way; send me away that I may go to my master. 57 And they said, We will call the young woman and inquire from אֶת־ her mouth (*see what she says*). 58 And they called Rebecca and said to her, Will you go with this man? And she said I will go. 59 And they sent away אֶת־ Rebekah their sister אֶת־ and her nurse אֶת־ and servant, Abrahams אֶת־ and his men. C-MATS**

**Question:** Why did Rebekah's nurse come with her? It was customary for the nurse of a girl to remain with her as her servant throughout her life. The nurse and her maid servants were also part of her dowery.

**60 And they blessed אֶת־ Rebekah and said to her, You *are* our sister, may אַתְּ (*you?*)\* become *the mother* of thousands of millions and let possess your descendants אַתְּ *the gate* of those which hate them. 61 Rebekah and her young women rose and they rode upon the camels and followed the man: and took the servant אֶת־ Rebecca and went his way. 62 Isaac came along the way of the well from Beer-Lahai-roi (*well of a living one, seeing me*), because he lived in the south country. C-MATS**

**Question:** Why was Isaac at Beer-Lahai-roi? Isaac had gone to the site where Hagar's prayers had once been answered, and it was there that Isaac had gone to pray. Even before he prayed, his needs were answered, and his bride was already approaching Haran as led by יְהוָה.

**63 Isaac went out to meditate in the field in the evening: and he lifted up his eyes and saw the camels coming. C-MATS**

**Question:** What tradition did Isaac start? Isaac instituted the afternoon prayer. Abraham instituted the Morning Prayer as derived from Genesis 19:27; and Jacob instituted the evening prayer as derived from Genesis 28:11.



Isaac saw the camels coming

64 And lifted up Rebekah אֶת her eyes and when she saw אֶת Isaac she got down from the camel. 65 Because she had said to the servant, Who is this man who comes to meet us? And the servant *had* said, It is my master therefore, she took a veil and covered herself. 66 The servant told Isaac אֶת all the things that had happened. C-MATS

**Question:** How did Rebekah prepare to meet Isaac? She quickly descended from her camel and stood modestly. Upon hearing that he was Isaac, she veiled herself.



Rebekah covers herself



Rebekah meets Isaac

**67 Isaac brought Rebekah into his mother Sarah's tent and took את־הָרֵבֶקָה Rebekah and she became his wife; and he loved her: and Isaac was comforted after his mother's death. C-MATS**

**Question:** How old was Isaac when he married Rebekah? 40

**Question:** What does it mean, “Isaac brought Rebekah into his mother Sarah's tent”? This verse can also be punctuated “And Isaac brought her into the tent--his mother Sarah" implying that when she came into the tent she became, in effect, his mother Sarah. As long as Sarah lived, her doors were wide open; at her death that openhandedness ceased; but when Rebekah came, it returned. As long as Sarah lived, there was a blessing on her dough, and the lamp used to burn from the evening of the Sabbath until the evening of the following Sabbath; when she died, these ceased; but when Rebekah came, they returned. When Isaac observed that the actions were like those of Sarah, he married her.

**Question:** What does it mean, “and Isaac was comforted after his mother's death”? It is the way of the world that, as long as a person's mother is alive, he is attached to her, but as soon as she dies, he finds comfort in his wife. Isaac found consolation only through his love for his wife. This love was inspired by her righteousness and the aptness of deeds, the only criteria upon which the Torah bases the love between husband and wife (Ramban).

**Question:** What type of man was Isaac? Isaac's most outstanding character trait was '*gevura*' - self-control and inner strength to do what's right even when it's hard. We have all inherited this trait from him and by tapping into it can become strong where it really counts.

**Prov 25:28** Like a city whose walls are broken down is a man who lacks self-control.

**Gal 5:22** But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law. 24 Those who belong to Yahusha have crucified the sinful nature with its passions and desires. 25 Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit. 26 Let us not become conceited, provoking, and envying each other.

**2 Peter 1:5** For this very reason, make every effort to add to your faith goodness; and to goodness, knowledge; 6 and to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, perseverance; and to perseverance, godliness; 7 and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, love. 8 For if you possess these qualities in increasing measure, they will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive in your knowledge of our Master Yahusha. 9 But if anyone does not have them, he is nearsighted and blind, and has forgotten that he has been cleansed from his past sins. 10 Therefore, my brothers, be all the more eager to make your calling and election sure. For if you do these things, you will never fall, 11 and you will receive a rich welcome into the eternal kingdom of our Master and Savior Yahusha.

**Question:** Wise men teach that it is harder for a person to conquer their inner negative inclinations than to conquer a fortified city. How do you understand this? Each of us lives in two worlds. Our 'outer' world in which we struggle to get and hold onto the things we want and need (metaphorically 'conquering cities'), and our 'inner' world in which we struggle with whether we choose to focus on positive or negative thoughts, feelings and values. Although it might not be so apparent, it is how well we succeed in the struggles of our inner world which will determine whether we live a happy and successful life. Because these struggles are more hidden yet more important, they often present an even greater challenge than the outer struggles of life.

**Question:** What can a person do to develop his inner strength? Like any other type of strength we want to build, we must exercise. Each time we choose to stand up for our inner values despite temptations not to, we get stronger. Also, the stronger we connect ourselves to יהוה and feel Him more in our lives the easier it will be to tap into our inner strength to live our lives the way we feel He wants us to.

**Spiritual exercise:** Do one thing that is ethically right even though it's hard today.

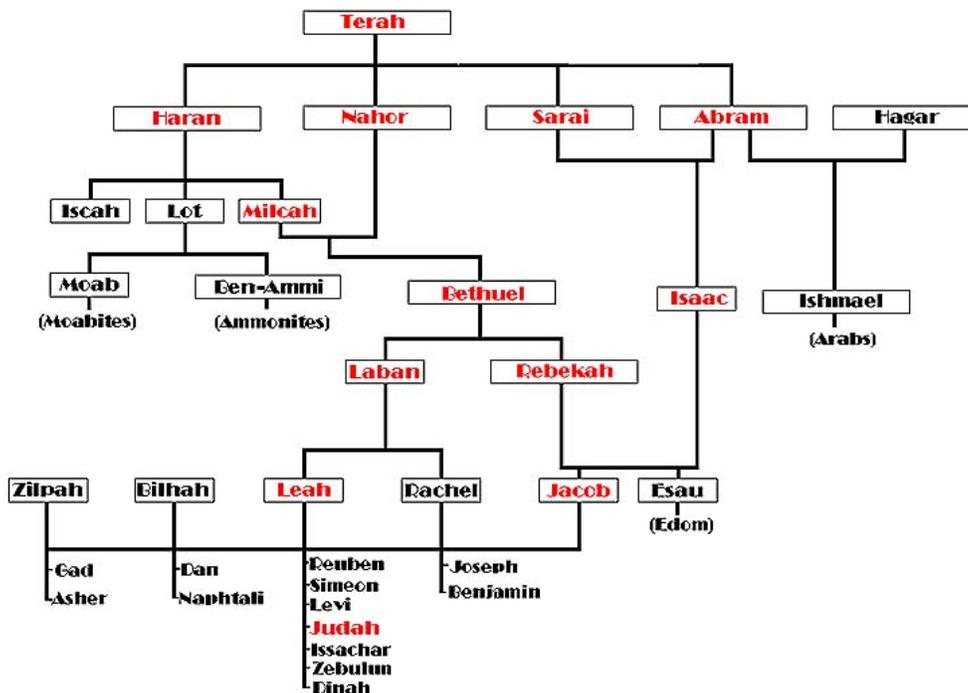
Genesis 25:1 Then again Abraham took a wife and her name *was* Keturah. 2 And she gave birth *for* him זִמְרָן *and* זְיֹאֵל *and* יֹכְשָׁן *and* מֵדָן *and* מִדְיָן *and* יִשְׁבָּק *and* שׁוּאֵל. 3 Jokshan became the father of שֵׁבָא *and* דֵּדָן. The sons of Dedan were Asshurim and Letushim and Leummim. 4 The sons of Midian were Ephah and Epher and Hanoch and Abida and Eldaah. All these *were* the children of Keturah. 5 And gave Abraham אֵת all that he had to Isaac. C-MATS

**Question:** What did Abraham give to Isaac? Abraham gave him a permanent blessing because יהוה had said to Abraham, “and you shall be a blessing,” the blessings are delivered into your hand to bless whomever you wish. And Abraham gave them over to Isaac.

**6** But to the sons of the concubines, whom Abraham *had*, Abraham gave gifts and sent them off to the east away from Isaac, his son, while he was still alive. C-MATS

**Question:** Why is a person’s life summed up before he dies? In Torah when a person’s role in the development of יהוה’s Chosen People is complete, his life is summed up even though he may have lived for many more years. Once Abraham at the age of 140 had arranged for the marriage of Isaac, the destiny of the Hebrew people moved on to the next generation, even though Abraham lived to the age of 175. Since Ishmael has no part in the ongoing story of Israel, the Torah merely lists Ishmael’s offspring and goes on to the story of Isaac.

**7** Now this is how long Abraham lived: 175 years. C-MATS



8 Then Abraham breathed his last and died at a ripe old age, an old man full of years; and he was gathered to his people. 9 His sons Isaac and Ishmael buried **אתו** *him* in the cave of Machpelah (*portion*), in the field of Ephron, the son of Zohar, the Hittite, by Mamre. C-MATS

**Question:** What can we conclude from this verse, “His sons Isaac and Ishmael buried **אתו** *him*”? We may conclude that Ishmael repented and placed Isaac before him, unlike Esau, who forced himself ahead of Jacob at the burial of Isaac. Because of Ishmael’s repentance Abraham was happy and had “a good old age.” There was no more conflict between Isaac and Ishmael.

**Question:** Why didn’t the rest of Abraham’s sons bury him? Abraham sent them away with gifts while he was still alive, so that they would not contest Isaac’s position as his only true heir. Ishmael’s status, however seems to have been different from the other children, because he was not sent away permanently.

**Question:** Where did Abraham send his sons birthed by Keturah? Abraham decided to settle his sons in colonies. They made war against Libya, and took it. They dominated the land of Assyria and the country of Africa. (Jashar)

10 The field which purchased Abraham **באת** *from the* sons of Heth: Abraham was buried there with Sarah **אשתו** *his wife*. C-MATS



Isaac and Ishmael bury Abraham



**Question:** Where was Abraham buried? Hebron, where Abraham purchased the cave of Machpelah for Sarah's burial, and where the matriarchs and patriarchs were all buried in time, except Rachel.



Cave of Machpelah, Hebron -- burial place of Patriarchs and Matriarchs



Burial site of Abraham

**Question:** Are the Jewish people allowed to visit the burial site of the Patriarchs? The **Cave of Machpelah** is the world's most ancient Jewish site and the second holiest place for the Jewish people, after Temple Mount in Jerusalem. The cave and the adjoining field were purchased—at full market price—by Abraham some 3700 years ago. Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Sarah, Rebecca, and Leah are all later buried in the same Cave of Machpelah. These are considered the patriarchs and matriarchs of the Jewish people. The only one who is missing is Rachel, who was buried near Bethlehem where she died in childbirth.

The double cave, a mystery of thousands of years, was uncovered several years ago beneath the massive building, revealing artifacts from the Early Israelite Period (some 30 centuries ago). The structure was built during the Second Temple Period (about two thousand years ago) by Herod, King of Judea, providing a place for gatherings and Jewish prayers at the graves of the Patriarchs.

This uniquely impressive building is the only one that stands intact and still fulfills its original function after thousands of years. Foreign conquerors and invaders used the site for their own purposes, depending on their religious orientation: the Byzantines and Crusaders transformed it into a church and the Muslims rendered it a mosque. About 700 years ago, the Muslim Mamelukes conquered Hebron, declared the structure a mosque and forbade entry to Jews, who were not allowed past the seventh step on a staircase outside the building.

Upon the liberation of Hebron in 1967, the Chief Rabbi of the Israel Defense Forces, the late Major-General Rabbi Shlomo Goren, was the first Jew to enter the Cave of Machpelah. Since then, Jews have been struggling to regain their prayer rights at the site, still run by the Muslim Waqf (Religious Trust) that took control during the Arab conquest. Many restrictions are imposed on Jewish prayers and customs at the Tomb of the Patriarchs despite the site's significance, primacy and sanctity in Jewish heritage and history.

Over 300,000 people visit Ma'arat HaMachpelah annually. The structure is divided into three rooms: Ohel Avraham, Ohel Yitzhak, and Ohel Ya'akov. Presently Jews have no access to Ohel Yitzhak, the largest room, with the exception of 10 days a year. (Jewish Virtual Library)

**11** It came to pass after the death of Abraham that blessed Elohim אֱלֹהִים Isaac, his son and Isaac lived by the well Lahai-roi. **12** Now these *are* the generations of Ishmael, Abraham's son, whom Hagar the Egyptian, Sarah's maidservant, gave birth to Abraham: **13** And these *are* the names of the sons of Ishmael according to their generations: the firstborn of Ishmael, Nebajoth; and Kedar and Adbeel and Mibsam, **14** And Mishma, Dumah and Massa, **15** Hadar and Tema, Jetur, Naphish and Kedemah: **16** These *are* the sons of Ishmael and their names, according to their towns and their castles, twelve tribal princes. **17** Ishmael lived 137 years and he breathed his last and died; and was gathered to his people. C-MATS

**Question:** Why were Ishmael's years counted? This was added in order to trace the years of Jacob. From the years of Ishmael we learn that Jacob studied in the academy of Eber for fourteen years after he left his father before arriving to Laban, for when Jacob left his father, Ishmael died.

**18 Ishmael's sons lived between Havilah and Shur near Egypt, as you go toward Assyria: and Ishmael died in the presence of all his brethren. C-MATS**

**Question:** How are Abraham and Isaac different? In contrast to Abraham whose primary characteristic was kindness, Isaac's was strength (self-control). Kindness and strength must go together; either one without the other can be dangerous. Kindness not tempered by strength can lead to self-indulgence and pleasure-seeking; strength without kindness can lead to selfishness and cruelty. One requires strength to differentiate between good and evil -- and then to purge the bad and nurture the good. Isaac and Rebekah produced two sons; one became the personification of righteousness and the other the personification of wickedness, and it was the mission of the parents to make the distinction so that the nation of Israel would be pure.

**Question:** Do you think everyone has the potential to be great? True greatness can be defined as fully applying one's unique talents and personality to a worthwhile cause. This is something we can each reach in our own way.

**Question:** Does "being oneself" mean never conforming to what others are doing? For a community or society to function in a healthy way there has to be a certain degree of conformity and cooperation. However, even then one should seek a way to do whatever he is doing in a way that best reflects and expresses who he is inside.

### Do You Know????

1. The first matriarch of Israel
2. The cave Abraham bought for Sarah's burial
3. Abraham bought the burial cave for \_\_\_\_ shekels of silver.
4. Abraham sent \_\_\_\_ to look for a wife for Isaac.
5. Eliezer swore on Abraham's \_\_\_\_.
6. Eliezer's sign from יהוה was for Rebekah to water his \_\_\_\_ also.
7. What trait did Eliezer look for in a wife?
8. Isaac's new wife
9. Isaac got married at the age of \_\_\_\_
10. Rebekah's brother
11. Abraham's new wife
12. Abraham was \_\_\_\_ years old when he died
13. Abraham's burial city
14. \_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_ buried Abraham.
15. Rebekah brought her \_\_\_\_ with her when she left her home.

**Answers:**

1. Sarah
2. Machpelah
3. 400
4. Eliezer
5. "thigh"
6. camels
7. kindness
8. Rebekah
9. 40
10. Laban
11. Keturah
12. 175
13. Hebron
14. Isaac and Ishmael
15. Nurse



Abishag at the bed of David, with Bathsheba, Solomon, and Nathan from a bible historiale (The Hague, MMW, 10 A 19, fol. 33r), c. 1435

## Haftorah

This week's *Haftorah* describes an aging King David, echoing this week's Torah reading, which mentions that "Abraham was old, advanced in days."

**1 Kings 1:1** Now King David *was* old *and* stricken in years; and they covered him with clothes, but he got no warmth. **2** Why his servants said to him, let there be sought for my master the king a young virgin: and let her stand before the king and let her cherish him and let her lie in your bosom, that my master the king may get heat. **3** So they sought for a fair young woman throughout all the coasts of Israel and found אֶת־ Abishag a Shunammite and brought her to the king. **4** And the young woman *was* very fair and cherished the king and ministered to him: but the king knew her not. **5** Then Adonijah the son of Haggith exalted himself, saying I will be king: and he prepared him chariots and horsemen and fifty men to run before him. **6** And his father had not discouraged him at any time in saying why have you finished so? And he also *was* a very goodly *man*; and *his mother* had given birth to him after Absalom. **7** And he conferred with Joab the son of Zeruah and with Abiathar the priest: and following Adonijah they helped *him*. **8** But Zadok the priest and Benaiah the son of Jehoiada and Nathan the prophet and Shimei and Rei and the mighty men which *belonged* to David were not with Adonijah. **9** And Adonijah killed sheep and oxen and fat cattle by the stone of Zoheleth, which *is* by En-rogel and called אֶת־ all his brothers the king's sons and all the men of Judah the king's servants: **10** But Nathan the prophet and Benaiah and the mighty men and Solomon his brother, he called not. **11** Why Nathan spoke to Bath-sheba the mother of Solomon, saying have you not heard that Adonijah the son of Haggith does reign and David our master knows it not? **12** Now therefore come, let me, Please, give you counsel, that you may save אֶת־ your own life and the life of your son Solomon. **13** Go and get you in to King David and say to him, did not you, my master, O king, swear to your maidservant, saying assuredly Solomon your son will reign after me and he will sit upon my throne? Why then does Adonijah reign? **14** See, while you still talk there with the king, I also will come in after you and confirm אֶת־ your words. **15** And Bath-sheba went in to the king into the chamber: and the king was very old; and Abishag the Shunammite ministered to the king. **16** And Bath-sheba bowed and did obeisance to the king. And the king said what *would* you? **17** And she said to him, my master, you swore by יהוה your Elohim to your maidservant, *saying* assuredly Solomon your son will reign after me and he will sit upon my throne. **18** And now, see, Adonijah reigns; and now, my master the king, you do not know *it*: **19** And he has slain oxen and fat cattle and sheep in abundance and has called all the sons of the king and Abiathar the priest and Joab the captain of the host: but Solomon your servant has he not called. **20** And you, my master, O king, the eyes of all Israel *are* upon you, that you should tell them who will sit on the throne of my master the king after him. **21** Otherwise it will come to pass, when my master the king will sleep with his fathers, that I and my son Solomon will be counted offenders. **22** And, lo, while she still talked with the king, Nathan the prophet also came in.

23 And they told the king saying, see Nathan the prophet. And when he was come in before the king, he bowed himself before the king with his face to the ground. 24 And Nathan said my master, O king, have you said Adonijah will reign after me and he will sit upon my throne? 25 For he is gone down this day and has slain oxen and fat cattle and sheep in abundance and has called all the king's sons and the captains of the host and Abiathar the priest; and, see, they eat and drink before him and say, Elohim save king Adonijah. 26 But me, *even* me your servant and Zadok the priest and Benaiah the son of Jehoiada and your servant Solomon, has he not called? 27 Is this thing finished by my master the king and you have not showed it to אה your servant, who should sit on the throne of my master the king after him? 28 Then King David answered and said call *to* me Bath-sheba. And she came in to the king's presence and stood before the king. 29 And the king swore and said *as* יהוה lives, that has redeemed אה my soul out of all distress, 30 Even as I swore to you by יהוה Elohim of Israel, saying assuredly Solomon your son will reign after me and he will sit upon my throne in my stead; even so will I certainly do this day. 31 Then Bath-sheba bowed *with her* face to the earth and did reverence to the king and said let my master king David live for ever. C-MATS

## Brit Chadasha

1 Corinthians 15:50 What I mean, brothers, is that what is made of flesh and blood cannot share in יהוה's Kingdom, and what is mortal cannot possess immortality. 51 Listen to this secret truth: we shall not all die, but when the last trumpet sounds, we shall all be changed in an instant, as quickly as the blinking of an eye. For when the trumpet sounds, the dead will be raised, never to die again, and we shall all be changed. 53 For what is mortal must be changed into what is immortal; what will die must be changed into what cannot die. 54 So when this takes place, and the mortal has been changed into the immortal, then the scripture will come true: "Death is destroyed; victory is complete!" 55 "Where, Death, is your victory? Where Death is your power to hurt?" 56 Death gets its power to hurt from sin, and sin gets its power from the Law. 57 But thanks be to יהוה who gives us the victory through Yahshua!

Philippians 2: 5 The attitude you should have is the one that Yahshua had: 6 He always had the nature of יהוה, but he did not think that by force he should try to become equal with יהוה. 7 Instead of this, of his own free will he gave up all he had, and took the nature of a servant. He became like man and appeared in human likeness. 8 He was humble and walked the path of obedience all the way to death-- his death on the cross. 9 For this reason יהוה raised him to the highest place above and gave him the name that is greater than any other name. 10 And so, in honor of the name of Yahshua all beings in heaven, on earth, and in the world below will fall on their knees, 11 and all will openly proclaim that Yahshua is King, to the glory of יהוה the Father.

**Question:** What is stealing? When we hear the word "stealing" we usually think of robbers with masks and guns or a thief sneaking around in the night. However there are many more subtle forms of stealing that we may not have considered. For instance in this week's Torah portion we learn about the very special camels of our forefather, Abraham. While most camels would nibble on people's fields and plants, as they would pass through a town, Abraham was careful to keep his camels muzzled up so they wouldn't take a single bite of food that didn't belong to him. Abraham recognized that even this little taking, which everyone did, was actually stealing. We too can learn from this to keep our distance from anything the least bit dishonest.

### "POCKET MONEY"

Jonathan Coleman walked out of the Ace Hardware store in a rush. His dad had asked him to pick up a few things for him on the way home from school, and now he was hurrying to get to soccer practice on time. After soccer practice, as he was changing out of his uniform, Jonathan noticed that the pocket of his pants seemed awfully full. He reached in and pulled out his receipt from the hardware store together with a wad of big bills. His friend Hal from the next locker had been watching the whole thing. "Hey Jon, when did you get so rich all of the sudden?" Jonathan didn't answer. He was too busy studying his receipt.

He realized that the clerk at the hardware store had made a mistake and had given him change for \$100 instead of the \$10 dollar bill he had actually given. In his rush to get to practice, the boy had just stuffed the money into his pocket without thinking twice. When he told Hal what had happened, his friend's eyes grew wide. "Wow, you are lucky!" he exclaimed. "What are you going to buy with it?" Jonathan looked up at his friend and said, "I'm not going to buy anything with this money. I'm going right back to the store to return it." Hal dropped the soccer ball he had been holding onto the floor. "But why?!" he asked. "You didn't take the money. They gave it to you. And they'll never find out! Hundreds of people must shop there every day. Besides, I'm sure you need the money a lot more than the store does." Jonathan thought about what Hal said. He did have a point. It sure would be nice to have all that money... But then he shook his head. "It doesn't matter," he said firmly. "If I keep this money, it's stealing. It doesn't belong to me." With that Jonathan turned on his heels and started walking to the store. He found the same clerk working there as before. Jonathan showed him the sales slip and handed him back the wad of bills. The clerk's face broke into a smile of amazement and admiration, and he called over his father, the store's owner. Pointing to Jonathan he said, "Meet this honest young man, a real hero!" Jonathan went home that day with less money in his pocket, but feeling like a million bucks.

**Question:** How did Jonathan feel when his friend tried to convince him to keep the money? He felt tempted to listen to him and keep the money.

**Question:** Why didn't Jonathan keep the money? He felt like it would be stealing.

**Question:** How did he feel after he returned the money to the store? He felt like he had done the right thing, and that felt great.

**Question:** Do you think Jonathan would have been happy had he listened to Hal and kept the money? Even if he had enjoyed having the extra money at first, eventually he would have regretted his decision and felt bad about taking something that wasn't his. People deep down want to be honest and feel great pleasure and contentment when they are. In the long run dishonesty never makes a person really happy.

**Question:** Why do you think that generally honest people sometimes make excuses to justify taking things that aren't theirs? Even people with good values can find themselves at times being tempted by things that they want. Sometimes they start to think of ways to make it somehow okay to take them. Rationalizing like this is natural. The important thing is to recognize that our mind is trying to play tricks on us, and to stick to our values and remain honest. We'll be glad we did.

**Question:** Would you say that it would be justifiable for someone to take something that wasn't his if: A) He knew he would never get found out? B) He was only taking something very small from someone very rich and would never miss it? C) He wasn't taking it from an individual but rather from the government or big corporation?

It may be easy to rationalize these cases, but it's still stealing. Honesty and refraining from theft is a value independent of whether one gets caught or does significant harm. יהוה wants us to be honest people, period. Our spiritual character, which is our most important possession, is greatly affected by how well we succeed in this area.

**Question:** Do you think there is any relationship between a person's level of honesty and his level of belief in יהוה? A big part of one's relationship with יהוה is knowing that יהוה is aware of our actions. Even if no one will see what we do and we will never get caught, יהוה sees everything. יהוה also provides for all of our needs. He assures us that anything we truly need will come to us by means of our honest efforts. By stealing, a person is in effect demonstrating that he doesn't believe that יהוה can give him what he needs and is therefore antithetical to faith.

**Question:** Can you think of a time when you tried to rationalize to do something you knew to be wrong? What did you do?

**Resources:** “Weekly Torah Portion” from [www.aish.com](http://www.aish.com)

*The Stone Edition of The Chumash*

*The Complete Messianic Aleph Tav Scriptures* **C-MATS**  
[www.AlephTavScriptures.com](http://www.AlephTavScriptures.com)

*The Book of Jashar. Joshua 10:13 And the Sun stood still and the Moon stayed, until the nation had avenged themselves of their enemies. Is not this written in the book of Jashar? C-MATS*