

Parashat Chayyei Sarah

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<https://www.sefaria.org/Genesis.23.1-16?lang=bi>

Summary

This week's *Torah* portion is *Parashat Chayyei Sarah*. I will be reading Genesis Chapter 23 Verses 1-3.

When *Sarah* dies at the age of 127, *Avraham* returns to *Hevron* to purchase a burial place for her. He buys the Cave of *מְכַפְּלָה* and the surrounding fields for full price, even though the owner tries to sell them to him for a discount. This is the first piece of land purchased by a Hebrew in what will one day be the land of Israel. *Avraham* buries *Sarah* there and mourns for her.

Avraham later sends his servant back to his family to find a wife for his son, *Yitzhak*, instructing him not to take a Canaanite woman. *Avraham* also tells his servant that if the woman he finds does not want to go back to the land of Canaan with him, he absolutely must not take *Yitzchak* back to meet her.

The servant prays for guidance and decides to choose a woman who demonstrates great *hesed*, loving-kindness. He comes to a well, and there he meets *Rivka*. She offers him water and then she also offers water to his camels. She then proceeds to haul water for his ten camels until they can drink no more. *Rivka* agrees to marry *Yitzhak* and travel to *Canaan*. When she sees *Yitzhak*, she falls off of her camel. The two marry. *Avraham* dies at the age of 175, and *Yishma'el* and *Yitzhak* come together to bury him next to Sarah in the Cave of *מְכַפְּלָה*.

Questions

1) Have you ever refused a gift? This week we read of Sarah's death. When Avraham speaks with Efron the Hittite about purchasing a cave in which to bury Sarah, Efron offers to give Avraham the cave and the field surrounding the cave, but Avraham will not accept it as a gift. He insists on paying the full price for the land. Why do you think Avraham would not accept the land as a gift and insisted on paying a fair price for it?

<<Pick 3>>

Avraham wants to pay the full price because it shows honor for Sarah. By paying for the cave and field with money that he worked hard to earn, he shows how important Sarah was to him. He wanted to show that her life was valuable to him. Another reason why Avraham insisted on paying a fair price for the land was so that Efron & the Hittites don't feel badly later about the sale and ask for more money or ask for the land back.

2) When Avraham tells his servant to go get a wife for Yitzchak, the servant asks Avraham what he should do if the woman he chooses will not come back to Canaan with him. The servant asks Avraham if he should just take Yitzchak to go live with the woman in the place where Avraham was born. Avraham says, "Absolutely not!" Why do you think Avraham responded like this?

<<Pick 3>>

I think that Avraham was afraid to send Yitzchak back to *Ur kasdeem* where Avraham was born because he was afraid that Yitzchak might pray to idols and forget about his relationship with God.

3) In the verse after Avraham tells his servant that Yitzchak is not, under any condition, to return to Avraham's homeland, Avraham repeats some of the same language that God used at the beginning of *Parashat Lech L'cha*. Avraham reminds the servant that God took him out from his father's house and from the land where he was born. Why do you think Avraham uses this language? <<Pick 3>>

Maybe Avraham says it to remind his servant or even himself of his own life story--what is important to him, why he is in the land of Canaan, and who he's serving.