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Hayrei Sarah

י"ח - כ"ד מרחשון תשפ"ו November 9 - 15, 2025

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## קַה בַּפָּרָשָׁה • In This Week's Parashah

- ◆ Sarah is 127 years old when she dies. Avraham cries for her and buys מְעָרַת הַמַּכְפֶּלֶה (Me'arat Ha-Makhpelah, the Cave of Makhpelah) as a burial place for her in Hebron. He buys it from Efron for 400 shekels of silver.
- ◆ Avraham sends his servant on a mission to find a wife for Yitzhak from Avraham's birthplace.
- ◆ Avraham's servant asks God for a sign that he is choosing the right wife for Yitzhak. He says that if a woman offers to give water to him and his camels, then he will know that she is the one.
- ◆ Rivkah arrives at the well. She quickly brings water to the servant and to his camels.
- ◆ Rivkah invites Avraham's servant to her home. He meets her father, Betuel, and her brother, Lavan.
- ◆ Avraham's servant tells his whole story to Rivkah's family.
- ◆ Everyone asks Rivkah if she wants to go and marry Yitzhak, and she says yes!
- ◆ Rivkah's family gives her a blessing, she returns home with Avraham's servant, and she marries Yitzhak.
- ◆ Avraham is 175 years old when he dies.
- ◆ Together, Yitzhak and Yishmael bury Avraham next to Sarah in Me'arat Ha-Makhpelah.
- ◆ Yishmael is 137 years old when he dies.





## פִּנְסֵט הַפְּסוּקִים • Understanding the Verses

Avraham's servant is trying to find a wife for Yitzhak. He waits by a well, and Rivkah arrives.

"May I please have a little water?" he asks.

Before or after Shabbat, scan to listen to a discussion of these pesukim on the Harvei Sarah episode of Torah Time!



### Bereishit 24:18-20

She said, "drink, sir."

She hurried and lowered her jar into her hand and let him drink.

When she had let him drink his fill, she said, "I will also draw for your camels, until they finish drinking."

She hurried and emptied her jar into the trough, she ran again to the well to draw water, and she got water for all his camels.

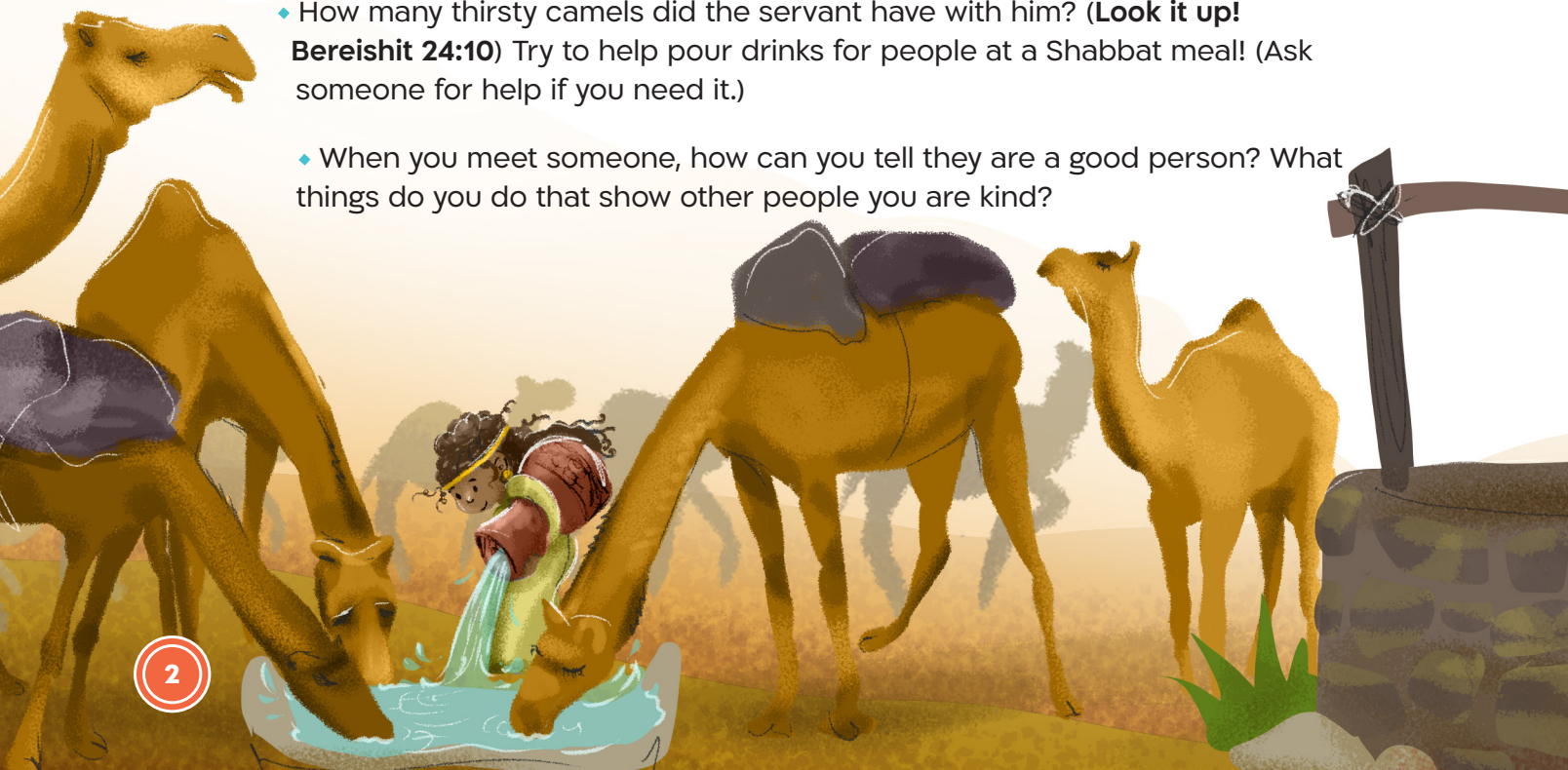
### בראשית כד:יח-כ

וַתֹּאמֶר שְׂתֵה אֲדֹנָי  
וַתַּמְהֵר וַתִּרְדֹּד כֶּדֶה עַל יָדָהּ  
וַתִּשְׁקֶהוּ:

וַתַּכֵּל לְהִשְׁקֹתוֹ  
וַתֹּאמֶר גַּם לְגַמְלֶיךָ אֶשְׂאֵב עַד אִם כָּלֹו  
לְשִׁתָּת:

וַתַּמְהֵר וַתַּעַר כֶּדֶה אֶל הַשֶּׁקֶת  
וַתָּרֶץ עוֹד אֶל הַבְּאֵר לְשֹׂאֵב  
וַתִּשְׂאֵב לְכָל גַּמְלֵיו:

- ◆ How many times are we told that Rivkah is working quickly? What could this show about her attitude? What can we learn from this about how we do kind things?
- ◆ Who came up with the idea to give water to the camels? If Avraham's servant only asked for water for himself, why do you think it was a good idea to give to the camels also?
- ◆ How many thirsty camels did the servant have with him? (**Look it up! Bereishit 24:10**) Try to help pour drinks for people at a Shabbat meal! (Ask someone for help if you need it.)
- ◆ When you meet someone, how can you tell they are a good person? What things do you do that show other people you are kind?







## מִדְרָשׁ • Midrash

Just before Yitzhak meets his bride-to-be, Rivkah, we hear about his precise location:

### Bereishit 24:62

Yitzhak was coming back from going to Be'er Lahai Ro'i...

### בראשית כד:סב

וַיֵּצֵא חֶק בָּא מִבּוֹא בְּאֵר לְחַי רֹאִי...

Why does the Torah mention that Yitzhak was in Be'er Lahai Ro'i? What was he doing there?



Bzzzz  
A lot of midrashim are bugged by something unusual in the Torah text

### Midrash Rabbah

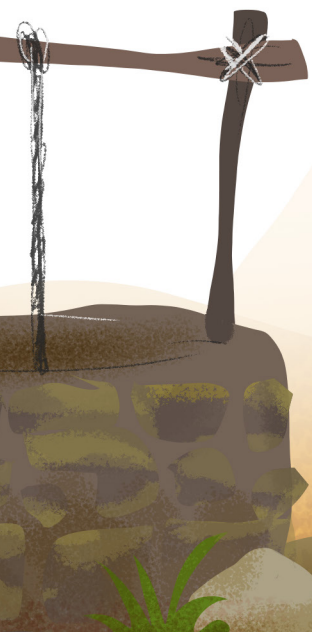
He had gone to bring Hagar home. She was the one who sat by the well and said to the Life of the World: 'See (re'eh) my humiliation.'

### מדרש רבה ס:יד

הָלַךְ לְהַבְיָא אֶת הָגָר, אוֹתָהּ שֵׁשְׁבָה עַל הַבְּאֵר וְאָמְרָה לְחַי הַעוֹלָמִים רֵאָה בְּעֵלְבוֹנִי.

Remember Be'er Lahai Ro'i from Parashat Lekh Lekha? Two weeks ago, we read about Hagar running to the desert to escape from Sarah. An angel comforted Hagar and she called the place where this all happened Be'er Lahai Ro'i (Bereishit 16:14).

**Why would Yitzhak have been going to get Hagar from Be'er Lahai Ro'i?** Rashi (based on this midrash) says he was bringing Hagar home to Avraham, so that the two of them could continue sharing a life together. Sarah had died, Avraham was now alone, and Yitzhak wanted to help his father.





Most of the parashah seems to be about Avraham helping Yitzhak find a companion in life. The midrash flips this, and shows Yitzhak doing the same for his father!

- ♦ What might have made Yitzhak want to care for his father, Avraham?
- ♦ What events in Yitzhak's life might have made him think about Hagar, and want to help her?
- ♦ What are the ways that your parents care for you, and how do you also care for them?



## פְּרָשְׁנוֹת • Commentary

Standing by the well, Avraham's servant asks God for a sign that he is choosing the right wife for Yitzhak. He says that if a woman offers to give water to him and his camels, then he will know that she is the one.

**What can we learn from the way that Avraham's servant chose Rivkah?**

### Rashi (France, 1,000 years ago)

**This is the one you have proven** – She is a good match for Yitzhak, because she does acts of hesed (kindness), and this shows she is worthy to be part of Avraham's family.

רש"י

אַתָּה הִכַּחַת – רְאוּיָה הָיְתָה לוֹ,  
שֶׁתָּהָא גּוֹמְלַת חֲסָדִים, וְכִדְי  
לְכַנֵּס בְּבֵיתוֹ שֶׁל אַבְרָהָם.

Rashi says the servant saw that Rivkah was kind, generous, friendly, and helpful. She passed the test! The servant was looking for a person with these traits because that's who would fit into Avraham's family.

- ♦ What do you look for in a friend?
- ♦ Do people around you share Rivkah's qualities? Are people around you appreciated for the right reasons?





But when Rambam describes the halakhot about not looking for mysterious signs to help you know what to do in life, his example is Avraham's servant!

### Rambam (Spain and Egypt, 850 years ago)

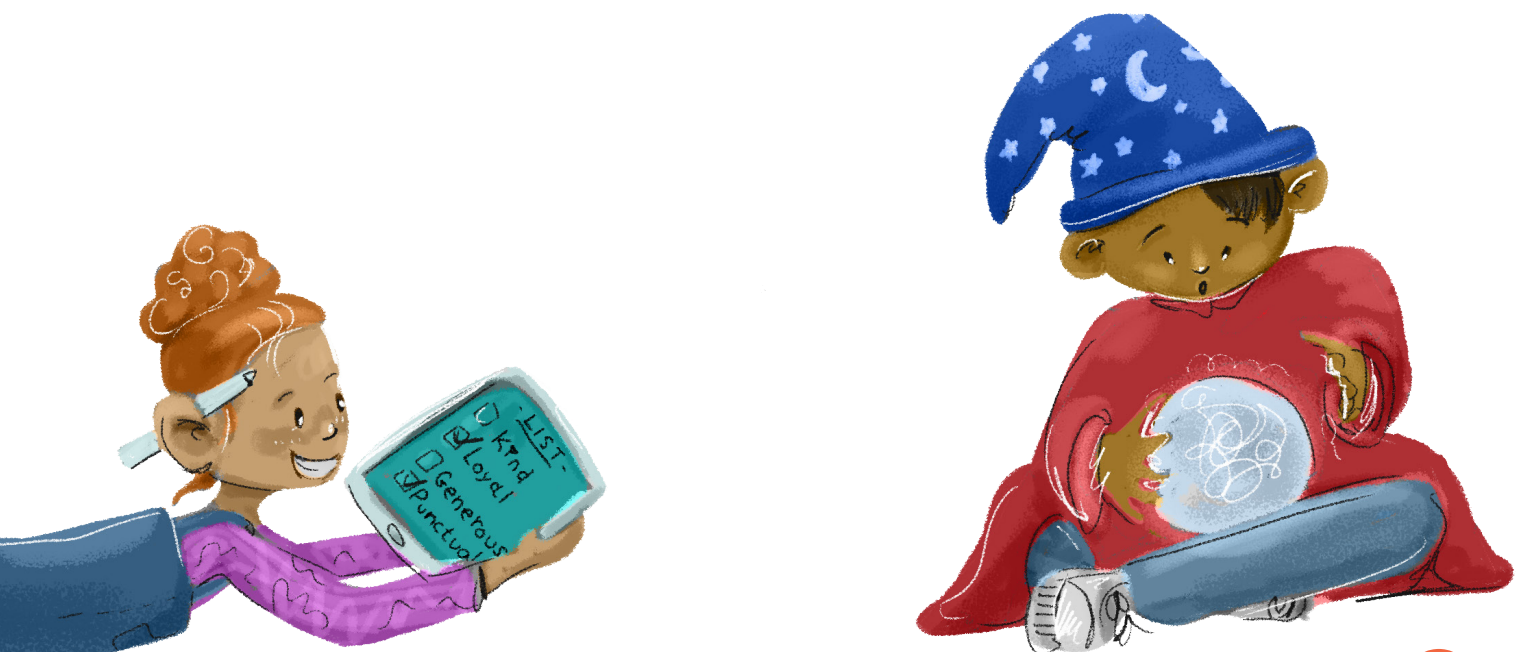
It's totally forbidden to create signs for yourself, by saying "if x or y happens, then I will do a certain thing, but if it doesn't happen then I won't" — like what Eliezer the servant of Avraham did.

### משנה תורה לרמב"ם הלכות עבודה זרה יא:ד

וְכֵן הַמְּשִׁים סִמְנִים לְעַצְמוֹ אִם יֵאָרֵעַ לִי כָּךְ וְכָךְ אֶעֱשֶׂה דְּבָר פְּלוּנִי וְאִם לֹא יֵאָרֵעַ לִי לֹא אֶעֱשֶׂה, כְּאֵלֶּיזֶר עֶבֶד אַבְרָהָם. וְכֵן כָּל כְּיוֹצֵא בְּדְבָרִים הָאֵלֹו הַכֹּל אָסוּר.

Rambam doesn't think too highly of the servant's strategy.

- ♦ Is setting up tests of people, or tests of God, a good model for decision-making? How do you make big decisions in your life?
- ♦ If you were Avraham's servant, would you have made a test for Rivkah, or made God give you a sign? Or would there be another way to figure out if Rivkah will marry Yitzhak?
- ♦ What would have happened if, on the day the servant showed up, Rivkah had sprained her ankle, or was just not feeling up to carrying so much water? Would Avraham's servant not have chosen her?
- ♦ Could both Rashi and Rambam be saying something that is true?





## רָגַע נֶשֶׁל עִבְרִית • A Moment of Hebrew

### Bereishit 24:11

He made the camels kneel down outside the city by the water well, at evening time, the time when women come out to draw water.

עֶרֶב (שְׁרֵשׁ ע.ר.ב.)  
Evening (erev)

### Find the Word!

What comes first in the story of the world's creation: עֶרֶב (erev, evening) or בֹּקֶר (boker, morning)? (Hint: Look it up in the first chapter of the Torah!)

Our Rabbis point to the order of erev and boker in Bereishit as proof that the Jewish day always begins at night—like how Shabbat starts on Friday night! (See Mishnah Hullin 5:5 and Talmud Bavli Berakhot 2a.)

### בראשית כד:יא

וַיִּבְרָךְ הַגְּמָלִים מִחוּץ לְעִיר  
אֶל בְּאֵר הַמַּיִם לְעֵת עֶרֶב  
לְעֵת צֵאת הַשְּׂאֵבֹת:

בֵּין הָעֶרְבִים =  
Around dusk or sunset. In halakhah, this is the time between sundown and when stars are visible. (bein ha-arbayim)



עוֹרֵב =  
Raven (dark bird) (oreiv)

מַעְרִיב / עֶרְבִית =  
The night prayer service (Ma'ariv/Arvit)

מִסְמֵר הָעֶרֶב =  
The center of attention, the life of the party (masmer ha-erev)

מַעְרָב =  
West (ma'arav)



אֲרוּחַת עֶרֶב =  
Evening meal, aka dinner (aruhat erev)

תַּעְרוּבָת =  
Mixture (ta'arovet)







## שאלות השבוע • Parashah Scavenger Hunt

The answers to the first seven questions can be found in the matching numbered aliyah in the Torah reading. **The answers to questions 8 and 9 are harder and can come from anywhere in the parashah.** **The answer to question 10 is in this week's Haftarah.**

### aliyot:

- 1) Bereishit 23:1 to 23:16
- 2) 23:17 to 24:9
- 3) 24:10 to 24:25
- 4) 24:26 to 24:52
- 5) 24:53 to 24:67
- 6) 25:1 to 25:11
- 7) 25:12 to 25:18

**Haftarah:** Melakhim Alef 1:1 to 1:31

Good luck!



1 How does Avraham refer to himself, when speaking with Efron?

2 What is the name of Avraham's servant whom he sends to find a wife for Yitzhak?

3 Who is Rivkah's father?

4 According to Betuel, who must have arranged this match?



5 Whose tent does Yitzhak bring Rivkah to?

6 Who buries Avraham?



7 How many sons did Yishmael have?

9 When Avraham's servant describes who he's looking for at the well, he uses one Hebrew word for "young woman." Then, when he retells the story to Rivkah's family, he uses a different Hebrew word for this. What are the two words?

8 A small detail suggests that Lavan was not respectful to his father, Betuel. What is it?

10 **From the Haftarah:**  
Who does Evyatar think should be the next king after David?

\*  
Look for  
the answers  
on page 11!



## הַפְּטָרָה • Haftarah

In our haftarah, we hear that King David has become old and weak. Then his son Adoniyah tries to take over. He announces: "I'll be king!"

Adoniyah gets a chariot, and invites his followers to a splashy event. David doesn't even know this is happening.

The prophet Natan, one of David's main advisors, is not pleased. Natan knows that David is still king, and that after he dies his son Shlomo is supposed to take over. Batsheva, Shlomo's mother, also knows this. Together, Batsheva and Natan make a plan.

Batsheva goes to King David, updates him on Adoniyah's rebellion, and tries to get him to remember his promise about Shlomo being the next king. Then Natan happens to "show up," and lends his support to Batsheva's arguments.

It works, and King David swears that Shlomo will be the next king. Let there be no doubt!

### How is this story connected to Hayyei Sarah?

The same exact three words are used to describe King David in the haftarah (Melakhim Alef 1:1) and Avraham in the parashah (Bereishit 24:1):

זָקֵן בָּא בַּיָּמִים

Old, advanced in years

Our parashah and haftarah are both about preparing for the future of a family line. Avraham wants Yitzhak to carry on his traditions, and that's why Avraham is so concerned about who Yitzhak marries. Natan and Batsheva also want to make sure that the right person (Shlomo) carries on for King David after he dies.

- ♦ How do we carry on the traditions of our parents and ancestors who came before us? How do we want our traditions and families to carry on after us?







## דְּקָה שֶׁל דִּיּוּן • One-Minute Debate

Avraham's servant met Rivkah at the well, and right away he was super impressed with her (Bereishit 24:15-22).

**Debate: First impressions are most important.**

### How to play:

- ◆ Here are some arguments to get you started, but try to come up with your own. Then debate someone!
- ◆ For a true one-minute debate, give each side 30 seconds to make its best case.



### Agree!

- ◆ We all form opinions right away when we meet people, based on how they look and act. That's human nature.
- ◆ Avraham's servant was able to understand Rivkah's character immediately. She made a really strong first impression.
- ◆ Sometimes, what you see is what you get.



### Disagree!

- ◆ It's possible to be totally wrong with a first impression! When you meet someone new, you should always try to give them time to express who they really are before you decide what you think of them.
- ◆ It doesn't feel good to be judged too quickly (or at all). People should be accepted and understood on their own terms.
- ◆ Never judge a book by its cover.



## בואו נדבר על זה • Tell Me More About This!

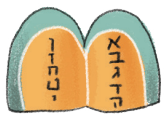
What was the name of עֶבֶד אַבְרָהָם (eved Avraham, Avraham's servant)? Our parashah never tells us. But, two weeks ago in Lekh Lekha, we read about Avram (he wasn't called Avraham yet!) talking about someone called דָּמֶשֶׁק אֱלִיעֶזֶר (Damesek Eliezer, perhaps: Eliezer from Damascus) (Bereishit 15:2).

Back there, Avram calls Damesek Eliezer בֶּן מֶשֶׁק בֵּיתִי (ben meshek beiti), which is very hard to translate. One possibility is that meshek means "possession," and Avram was saying that, after he dies (since he had no children at this point in his story), Damesek Eliezer might "take possession" of Avram's house. In that case, ben meshek means "heir."

A בֶּן בַּיִת (ben bayit), however, is a well-known phrase that meant "household servant or slave." It's possible that Avram really meant to say that Damesek Eliezer was his servant. Either way, the use of the strange word "meshek" might be because it sounds similar to "Damesek."

Perhaps because this pasuk about Damesek Eliezer is so strange, and because the nameless servant is part of such a long and important story in our parashah, tradition ended up combining the two characters into one. Eved Avraham, therefore, is almost always called Eliezer. You can see that Rambam calls him Eliezer, in the text that appears in our פְּרָשְׁנוֹת / Commentary column (p. 4)!

- ◆ Does Rambam's comment back in the פְּרָשְׁנוֹת / Commentary section help you understand why this servant might not have been the right person to be Avraham's heir?



## הלכה • Halakhah

### What's a hesped?

When Sarah dies at the beginning of this week's parashah, the Torah tells us how Avraham responds:



Learn one way  
the parashah  
practically impacts  
our lives

### Bereishit 23:2

...Avraham proceeded to **mourn** for Sarah and **cry** for her.

### בראשית כג:ב

וַיָּבֵא אַבְרָהָם לְסִפּוֹד לְשָׂרָה  
וּלְבִכּוֹתָהּ:

Two verbs (action words) describe what Avraham did: לְסִפּוֹד (lispod, to mourn) and לְבִכּוֹת (livkot, to cry).

The first verb here refers to giving a הֶסְפֵּד (hesped, eulogy). A hesped is a kind of speech where you say things about who a person was in life, the good qualities they had, and what was important to them. Sarah's hesped is the first record of such a speech that we have in the Torah. It shows how much Avraham cared for her and how special she was.





Avraham's behavior teaches us that whenever someone dies, one of the things we should do is to offer a hesped.

But the second verb shows that Avraham also cried, and this teaches us something about the nature of a hesped. Here is how the Shulhan Arukh describes it:

### Shulhan Arukh Yoreh De'ah 344:1

It is a huge mitzvah to offer a proper hesped for someone who has died. It should be done with a loud voice, saying things that will break people's hearts, so that they will cry a lot and remember the good things about the person.

### שלחן ערוך יורה דעה שמד:א

מִצְוָה גְדוֹלָה לְהִסְפִּיד עַל הַיָּמִת  
כְּרֵאוֹי. וּמִצְוָתוֹ שְׂרִירִים קוֹלּוֹ לִזְמַר  
עָלָיו דְּבָרִים הַמְשַׁבְּרִים אֶת הַלֵּב,  
כְּדִי לְהַרְבּוֹת בְּכִיָּה וּלְהַזְכִּיר שְׂבָחוֹ.

A hesped is supposed to make people sad. There is a mitzvah to comfort mourners after the person who died has been buried, but before burial it is actually important to encourage people to cry and to really feel the sadness of the person who died.

Because the hesped is meant to be so sad, it is shortened or eliminated on various happy days, like Hol Hamoed, Rosh Hodesh, Hanukkah, or Purim. (See Shulhan Arukh Yoreh De'ah 401.)

Can you find someone else who receives a hesped in the Torah?

## Parashah Scavenger Hunt Answers:

1. He calls himself גֵּר וְתוֹשָׁב (ger v'toshav, an outsider who is a resident) (23:3)
2. He doesn't have one! He is referred to as Avraham's servant throughout, although many commentators assume he is Damesek Eliezer, who was mentioned in Lekh Lekha (see p. 9).
3. Betuel (24:15)
4. God! (24:50)
5. Sarah's tent (24:16)
6. Yitzhak and Yishmael (25:9)
7. 12 (25:13-16)
8. When they speak, it says Lavan's name first, suggesting that Lavan jumped in to speak before his father (24:50)
9. נַעֲרָה (na'arah) and עַלְמָה (almah) (24:14 and 24:43)
10. Adoniyahu



## תפילה • Prayer in the Parashah

One of the most common words in our tefillot is בָּרוּךְ (barukh, bless). It's the first word of every berakhah: בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה (barukh atah, Blessed are You, God). But what does "bless" mean here? What does it mean to bless God?

Check out this word that comes up in our parashah.

### Bereishit 24:11

Avraham's servant made the camels kneel down outside the city by the water well...

### בראשית כד:יא

וַיִּכְרֹךְ הַגְּמָלִים מְחוּץ לְעִיר  
אֶל בְּאֵר הַמַּיִם...

The first word in this pasuk, vayavreikh, is a little strange. Many commentators think it means that Avraham's servant caused the camels to kneel on their knees (that's how we translated it). Do you see the connection between וַיִּכְרֹךְ (vayavreikh) and the Hebrew word בִּרְכַיִם (birkayim, knees)?

Rabbeinu Bahaye notices that this also connects to the word בְּרָכָה (berakhah, blessing). Here's one of his interpretations:

### Rabbeinu Bahaye

When we give the Holy One a berakhah...it's connected to bending and bowing, to the One for Whom all knees bend...like it says, "to Me all knees bend" (Yeshayahu 45).

### רבינו בחיי

וְהִנֵּה כַּאֲשֶׁר אָנוּ מְבָרְכִים לְקָדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ  
הוּא יֵשׁ בְּזֶה... מְלָשׁוֹן בְּרִיכָה וּכְרִיעָה,  
מִי שֶׁכָּל בָּרוּךְ כּוֹרֵעַ לוֹ... שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר "כִּי לִי  
תִכְרַע כָּל בָּרוּךְ" (ישעיהו מה).

Bowing is a pretty important part of the tefillah experience. There are times to sit, times to stand, and times to bow.

- What do you think of when you bow to God?
- What does bowing show, and what is the point of bowing? What does it mean when we do this in tefillah?
- What will you think of the next time you say the words, barukh atah..., in a berakhah?
- What if it's hard for you to bow, like if you're in a wheelchair or on a plane or not feeling well? What are some other ways to express to God what bowing is meant to show?



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