

## פרשת חיי שרה

בראשית כד:ב-ו

וַיֹּאמֶר אַבְרָהָם אֶל-עֶבְדוֹ זֶקֶן בֵּיתוֹ הַמִּשְׁלָל בְּכָל-אֲשֶׁר-לוֹ שָׂיִם-נָא יָדְךָ תַּחַת יָרְכִי:  
וְאֲשַׁבְּעֶךָ בַּיהוָה אֱלֹהֵי הַשָּׁמַיִם וְאֱלֹהֵי הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר לֹא-תִקַּח אִשָּׁה לְבְנִי מִבְּנוֹת הַכְּנַעֲנִי אֲשֶׁר  
אָנֹכִי יוֹשֵׁב בְּקִרְבָּו: כִּי אֶל-אֶרֶצִי וְאֶל-מִוְלַדְתִּי תֵלֵךְ וְלִקַּחְתָּ אִשָּׁה לְבְנִי לִיִצְחָק: וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלָיו  
הָעֶבֶד אֲחִי לֹא-תֵאבֵד הָאִשָּׁה לְלֶכֶת אַחֲרַי אֶל-הָאָרֶץ הַזֹּאת הֲשִׁיב אֶת-בְּנֶךָ  
אֶל-הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר-יֵצֵאתָ מִשָּׁם: וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלָיו אַבְרָהָם הֲשָׁמַר לְךָ פֶן-תָּשִׁיב אֶת-בְּנִי שָׁמָּה:

**And Abraham said to his servant, the elder of his house, who ruled over all that was his, "Please place your hand under my thigh. And I will adjure you by the Lord, the God of the heaven and the God of the earth, that you will not take a wife for my son from the daughters of the Canaanites, in whose midst I dwell. But you shall go to my land and to my birthplace, and you shall take a wife for my son, for Isaac." And the servant said to him, "Perhaps the woman will not wish to go after me to this land. Shall I return your son to the land from which you came?" And Abraham said to him, "Beware, lest you return my son back there.**

### Molly Goldstein- Class of 2021

These set of pesukim are in the context of Abraham aging and wanting to find a wife for his son Isaac. Sarah has just died, and Abraham buried her in Maarat Hamachpela. He is now asking Eliezer to find a wife for Isaac in order to insure the covenant with Hashem that he will be a great nation and continue his line. Abraham asks Eleizer to find a wife from his birth place, not Canaan, and make sure the woman comes back to Canaan to live with the family. On these pesukim I wanted to point out a few things. First, I find it interesting that Eliezer has to put his hand under Abraham's thigh, as a sign of servitude and Brit Milah. Clearly the thigh/hip is a significant part of the body because it foreshadows to Yaakov's fight with the angel when it says "וַיִּגַע בְּכַף-יָרְכֵוֹ" The second idea I would like to point out is that Abraham is sending Eliezer, or as it says here "his servant" to go find a wife for Isaac, but

Abraham seems to have very specific instructions and a clear picture of who he would want for Issaac, why doesn't he just do it himself?

I would like to propose two thoughts. First, maybe Abraham was very busy at home. He was the leader of the monotheistic community, and he probably had a lot of stuff to do. Also, Abraham might be slightly ashamed of himself in regards to Isaac, because he almost sacrificed him, he put him through a lot of trauma, and ended up not killing him. He probably doesn't know how to act around him, and even never speaks to him again (at least dialogue is never recorded in the Torah again). We can learn from this that even Abraham, our great leader who started it all, was human too. He had ups and downs in his tests with HaShem, just like all of us do.

### **Daniel Gross- Class of 2020: Shadal- "An Issue of Inheritance"**

The Shadal ( Shmuel David Luzzato) is a nineteenth century commentator from Italy, who was a very influential poet and philosopher as well. In parashat Chayei Sarah, Avraham specifies to his servant not to take a wife from the Canaanites he was dwelling among. This begs a very important question: Why? Seriously, why would he not be able to find a wife from their contemporaries? At this point, it doesn't seem as though the Canaanites have done much of anything wrong to Avraham that would warrant such treatment. Further, perhaps Yitzchak will have more in common with someone from the same area, or even find and fall in love with someone himself. No, the Shadal says, the issue isn't with Yitzchak and his absolutely raw pickup lines, or the Canaanites that he would be giving a proverbial rose to. Rather, it is an issue of inheritance. Had the Jewish bloodline had such an important and visible ancestor be a Canaanite, this would have created major issues with regards to claiming the land hundreds of years later. The Jews would not have been able to kick out their own brothers to establish Israel. The Canaanites would have had as much claim to the land as us. Therefore, Yitzchak is destined to put a ring on someone he never met before, who also happens to be his cousin.

I appreciated this commentary a lot because it addresses a major issue in the text: no story exists in a vacuum. The narratives should fit together like a puzzle, not like pineapple on pizza. Other commentaries try to justify the decree from Avraham as having to do with the impurity of Canaan, or a host of related issues. But a commentary like the Shadal explains a tangible reasoning for the ruling that relates to future results.

## Ilay K.- Class of 2021

In this pesukim you can see that there is a special relationship between Abraham and Eliezer his slave. Abraham sends Eliezer to theoretically pick who will be his offspring and to decide the future of the Jewish nation.

You can see an interesting thing that happens between the pesukim. Abraham doubts Eliezer and makes him swear that he will do exactly what he is sending him for. Which in this case, to pick the shidduch not from Canaan but from Abraham "country".

וְאֶשְׁבִיעֶךָ בַּיהוָה אֱלֹהֵי הַשָּׁמַיִם וְאֵלֵהֶי הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר לֹא-תִקַּח אִשָּׁה לְבְנִי מִבְּנוֹת הַכְּנָעִנִי אֲשֶׁר אֲנִי יוֹשֵׁב בְּקֶרְבָּו: כִּי”  
”אֶל-אֶרְצִי וְאֶל-מִוְלַדְתִּי תֵלֵךְ”.

Rabbi Yossi, a second century Tanna, suggests that Abraham wanted to make sure that he doesn't send him as a slave but as a true friend. "This is not just another work that I want you to do. This is my son's life and it will affect a lot. Therefore I want you to swear to me".

רבי יוסי אומר: "אברהם אבינו רצה להבטיח כי אליעזר עבדו איננו יחשוב כי זו אותה עבודה הרגילה לנוחיותו אלא כשליחות אלוקית ממשית הכרוכה בייסורי הלבטים".

The name Eliezer is mentioned only one time in the Torah. And yet Eliezer is a big character in the Torah and in Abraham's life.

. I think that the fact that Avraham told Eliezer to swear, and show him that he can say everything to him, even if it's something difficult like admitting that he needs him to swear because he may not trust him fully enough for this work, shows that the connection between them was something ELSE besides a slave/master relationship.

You can be positive, that if you will give a way out to Eliezer of being the slave of Abraham, he would laugh at you and ask you if you are crazy since the term slave was not always a negative term and I think that in the times of the Torah, it wasn't a bad thing to be a slave like it was later in history.

## Rabbi Asher Block- " Don't you trust me? What's with the Oath?"

### Upper School *Rebbe*/Judaics Instructor

These four pesukim describe the loyalty of Eliezer to his master Avraham, and his impeccable reputation of being an upstanding and responsible servant. We also see how careful Eliezer is with Avraham's instructions to find a wife for Yitzchak as Eliezer carefully clarifies and follows up with Avraham in the event that a suitable match can't be found. If Eliezer is in fact righteous, why does Avraham command Eliezer to swear that he will not look to Canaan for Yitzchak's future wife? Why wouldn't Eliezer be trusted to carry out Avraham's wishes without an oath if Eliezer is in fact a pious man. Isn't Avraham highly insulting Eliezer by implying that he couldn't be trusted without a

promise on a holy object?

Similarly, we find at the end of the book of Breishit that Yaakov made his sons swear before his death not to bury him in Egypt. Are Yaakov's holy sons not trustworthy enough to follow their father's request without a formal oath? The Ramban in his commentary on Chumash in Parshat Vayechi answers that requiring Eliezer and Yaakov's sons to promise is actually a sign of affirmation of their holiness. Avraham and Yaakov wanted their respective requests to be carried out with the utmost seriousness and energy. Knowing Eliezer and Yaakov's sons' incredible righteousness and their value of one's word of honor, they knew that having them swear would infuse them with additional resolve and zeal to carry out their assigned missions to even higher levels of physical and spiritual purpose.