

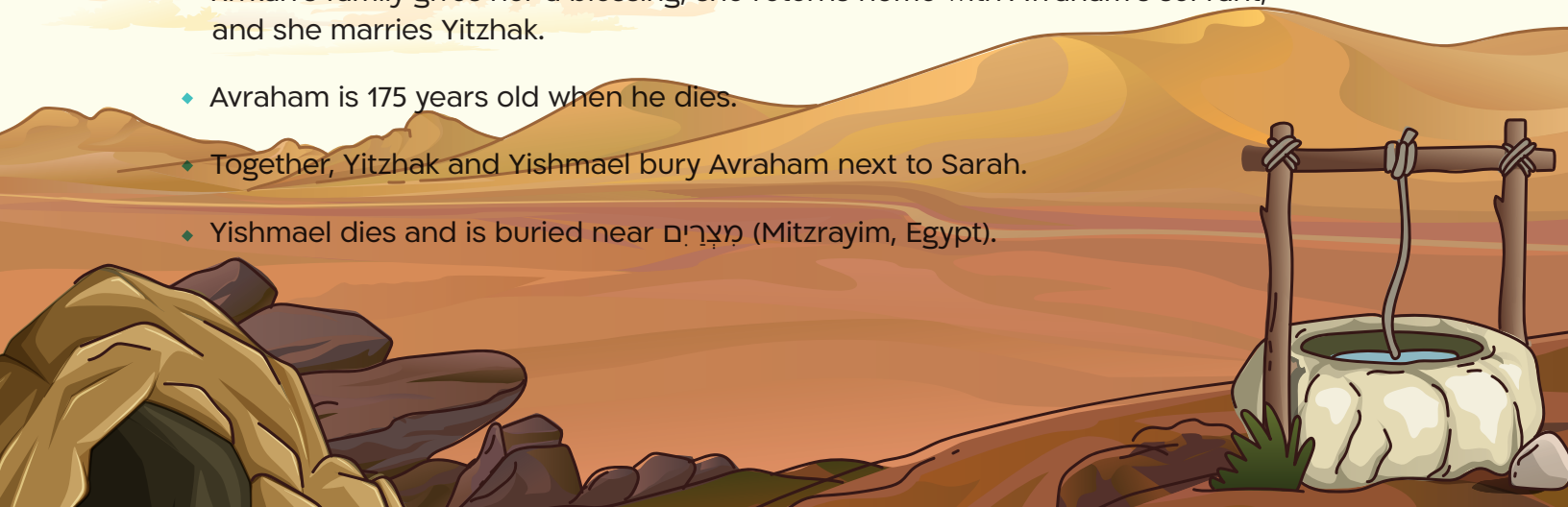


October 24 - 30, 2021 י"ח - כ"ד מרחשון תשפ"ב



קַה בַּפָּרָשָׁה • In This Week's Parashah

- ◆ Sarah is 127 years old when she dies. Avraham buys a burial place for her.
- ◆ 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 to his camels, then he will know that she is the one.
- ◆ Rivkah arrives at the well. She quickly brings water to him and also to his camels, fulfilling the sign.
- ◆ 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.
- ◆ Yishmael dies and is buried near מִצְרַיִם (Mitzrayim, Egypt).





מִדְרָשׁ • Midrash



When Avraham's servant first arrives at Rivkah's home, her brother, Lavan, and her father, Betuel, both speak to him, both expressing their support of Rivkah's marriage to Yitzhak. But, after Avraham's servant stays the night, Betuel vanishes from the story. Instead, only Lavan speaks, along with Rivkah's mother:

Midrashim are ideas or stories that explain the Torah. They often come from listening very carefully to what the Torah says and how it says it. Here, we will look for what clues this midrash sees in the Torah's words, and try to understand its messages.

Bereishit 24:55

Her brother and her mother said, "Let the young girl (Rivkah) stay with us..."

בראשית כד:נח

וַיֹּאמֶר אָחִיהָ וְאִמָּהּ תֵּשֶׁב הַנְּעָר אִתָּנוּ...

What happened to Betuel? If both he and Lavan were speaking to Avraham's servant before, why is Lavan speaking without him at this point? The following midrash suggests that Betuel is left out of the pasuk not by accident, but because he wasn't around to speak anymore because he had died overnight!.



Bereishit Rabbah 60:12

Where was Betuel? He tried to prevent [the marriage] and was struck during the night.

בראשית רבה ס"ב

וּבִתּוּאֵל אֵיכָן הוּא? בִּיקֹשׁ לַעֲכֹב וּנִיגַף בַּלַּיְלָה.



- ♦ Can you find evidence to support the midrash? Can you think of other explanations why Betuel disappears from the story at this point that don't involve him dying?
- ♦ Why would Betuel be punished so seriously for trying to stop Rivkah from marrying Yitzhak?



פְּרָשְׁנוֹת • Commentary

When Rivkah meets Avraham's servant and hears about Yitzhak, she brings him back to her house to tell her family what happened and to give him a place to stay. This is when we first meet her brother, Lavan. The Torah tells us that Lavan ran out to the man at the well.

Why did Lavan run? Here are two ways of understanding his actions. See if you can tell the difference between the two.



Rashi (11th century, France)

For what and why did he run? "When he saw the nose ring [Avraham's servant had given Rivkah]" (Bereishit 24:30), he said, "This person is rich!" and he set his eyes on riches.

רש"י

לְמָה רָץ וְעַל מָה רָץ? "וַיְהִי כִּרְאֹת אֶת־הַנֶּזֶם" (בראשית כד:ל), אָמַר עֲשִׂיר הוּא זֶה, וְנָתַן עֵינָיו בַּמָּמוֹן:

Rashi notices that the next pasuk tells us that Lavan saw the golden nose ring on his sister's face (which was sort of like an engagement ring back then). Why is that important for us to know? Rashi suggests that the Torah must be telling us that Lavan was really focused on that jewelry. Lavan must have been thinking that Avraham, who sent the servant, was extremely rich. So he ran out of the house to try to see whether he could get any of those riches for himself.



Ha'amek Davar (19th century, Eastern Europe)

[If Rashi's reading were correct, then the Torah] should have written [these two pesukim] in the opposite order: "He saw the nose ring... and [then] he ran!" But, in fact, he was running even without seeing the nose ring, in order to greet one of Avraham's house to ask after him...

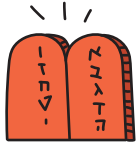
העמק דבר

לְהִיפֹךְ מִיבְעֵי לְכַתֵּב.
וְיִהְיֶה כְּרֹאוֹת וְגו' וְיָרָץ.
אֲלָא אֶפִּילוּ בְּלִי
רֹאוֹת הַנֶּזֶם הָיָה רָץ
לְקִרְאָת אֶחָד מִבֵּית
אַבְרָהָם לְחַקוֹר עָלָיו...

Ha'amek Davar (also known as the Netziv) suggests instead that Lavan wasn't running out of selfishness or just to make himself rich. He thinks that Lavan was running because he wanted to meet someone from Avraham's house, so he could find out how his relatives were doing (Lavan's grandfather, Nahor, was Avraham's brother).



- ◆ What evidence can you find in the pesukim (and the larger story of Lavan) to support each of these interpretations?
- ◆ Are these readings really contradictory? Could Lavan have wanted both Avraham's wealth and to know more about how he was doing?

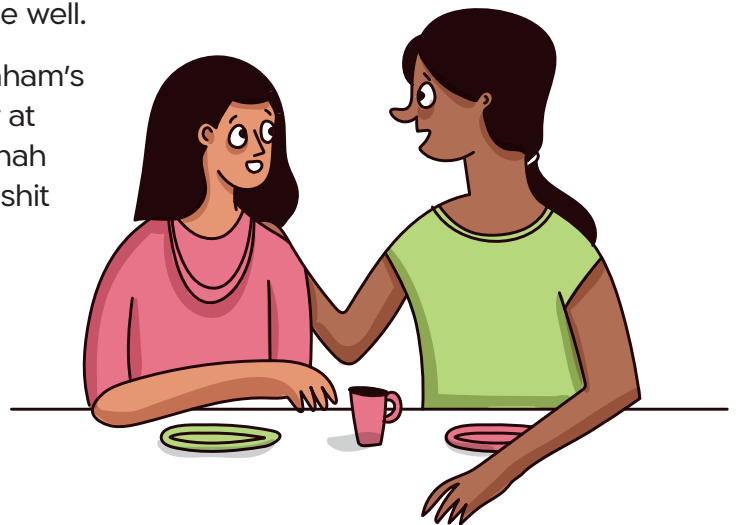


הלכה • Halakhah

When Avraham's servant returns with Rivkah to her home, he is invited in for a meal. But before he has a bite to eat, he insists on first sharing his story to explain to Lavan who he is and what happened at the well.

The Torah doesn't say why, but perhaps Avraham's servant wanted to avoid eating and speaking at the same time! This is actually a rule in halakhah (referred to in Sforno's commentary on Bereishit 24:19).

The Talmud warns against speaking while eating. Not only is it impolite; it can also be dangerous!



Talmud Bavli Ta'anit 5b

Rav Nahman and Rabbi Yitzhak were sitting at a meal. Rav Nahman said to Rabbi Yitzhak: "Let the Master share a word." He said to him, "So said Rabbi Yohanan: One may not speak during a meal, perhaps the windpipe will precede the food pipe and cause danger (choking)."

תלמוד בבלי תענית ה:

רב נחמן ורבי יצחק הוו יתבי
בסעודתא אמר ליה רב נחמן
לרבי יצחק לימא מר מילתא
אמר ליה הכי אמר רבי יוחנן אין
מסיחין בסעודה שמא יקדים
קנה לנשט ויבא לידי סכנה

There is a debate about whether this prohibition only applies when one is eating while reclining (which is how people used to eat at fancy meals, like on Seder night), when there is more danger in talking while eating.

Rabbi Eliezer Melamed cites positions on either side of this debate, and then writes as follows:



Peninei Halakhah, Berakhot 13:8 (20th century, Israel)

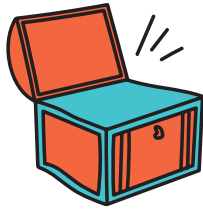
Nevertheless, even someone who is lenient [and thinks that the prohibition only applies while reclining] will make sure to speak in a polite manner, so that those eating will not see the food in your mouth, and certainly that no bits of food spit out of your mouth while speaking.

פניני הלכה, ברכות יג:ח

ומכל מקום, גם מי שמיקל,
יקפיד על הנימוס, שדבורו
יהיה בצורה נאה, שלא
יראו הסועדים את האכל
שבתוך פיו, וקל וחמר
שלא ינתזו מפיו שיירי
מאכלים תוך כדי דבור.

This is the Jewish source for the common rule:





מה קורה • What's Going On Here?

Why was the cave called "Makhpelah"?

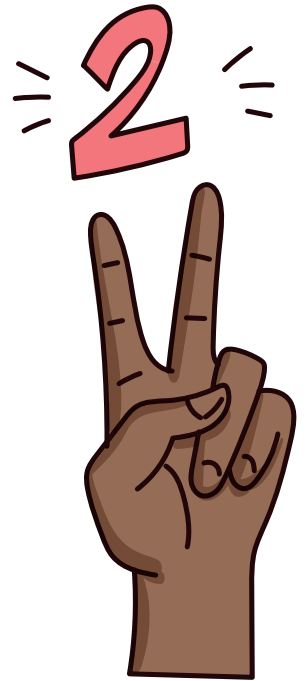
Avraham refers to the cave he purchases as the "Cave of Makhpelah," which remains its Hebrew name even today!

What does Makhpelah mean?

Rashi points out that "Makhpelah" comes from the שורש (shoresh, root), "כפל" (kefel, double)." Based on this, he offers two explanations:

1. It is a double-cave, with two levels – an upper level and a lower one.
2. It is a cave of doubles, or couples, because it became a burial place for married couples: Sarah and Avraham, Rivkah and Yitzhak, and Leah and Yaakov.

The only one of the אמהות (imahot, matriarchs) who is not buried in the Cave of Makhpelah is Rahel. She dies near Beit Lehem and is buried there (Bereishit 35:19-20). The Torah never mentions where Bilhah and Zilpah are buried.



רגע של עברית • A Moment of Hebrew

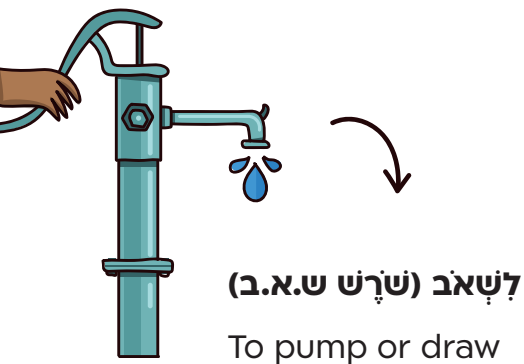
Bereishit 24:19

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

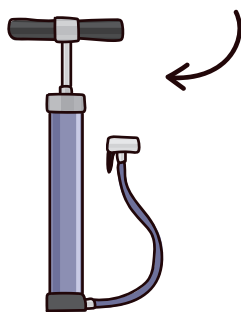
בראשית כד:יט

וְתָכַל לְהַשְׁקֵתוֹ וְתֹאמַר
גַּם לְגַמְלֵיךְ אֶשְׁאֵב עַד
אִם-כָּלוּ לִשְׁתֵּת:





Pump = מְשַׁאֲבָה



Vacuum cleaner = שׁוּאֵב אֲבָקָה

Find the Word!

Have you heard this word before?

Open a Tanakh to Yeshayahu 12:3. Can you find the word that has the same שׁוֹרֵשׁ (shoresh, root)? Have you heard this before? Where? (Hint: we say it every week after Shabbat, so you could also find it by looking at Havdalah in a Siddur.)



דְּבָרָה שֶׁל דִּין • One-Minute Debate

How to play:

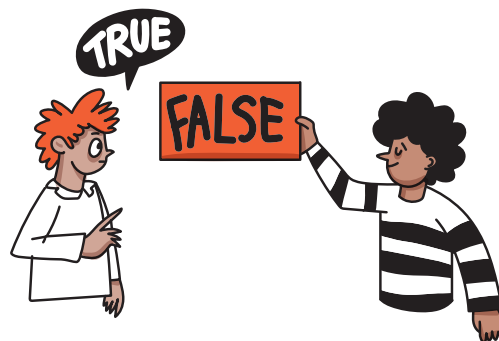
Here is a topic for debate along with some suggested arguments, but feel free to come up with your own.

- ◆ Assign people to the "true" or "false" sides.
- ◆ Each side gets 30 seconds to make their case.
- ◆ At the end, the group votes on a winner.

Efron offered to give Avraham the Cave of Makhpelah for free, but Avraham insisted on paying for it.

Debate: Avraham should have accepted it for free.

- ◆ True:
 - ◆ When someone offers you a gift, it's rude not to take it.
 - ◆ Save your hard-earned money for when you actually need it!
- ◆ False:
 - ◆ When you buy something with your own money, you feel more ownership over it than if someone just gives it to you.
 - ◆ Buying is better because there will be no take-backs!





שְׂאִלוֹת הַשְּׁבוּיָה • 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 the last three are harder and can come from anywhere in the parashah.

Good luck!

1 With what group of people must Avraham negotiate in order to get a burial site for Sarah?

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

3 What does Rivkah do that passes the servant's test?

4 What does the servant refuse to do before he tells his tale?

5 Where was Yitzhak coming from when Rivkah met him?

6 Avraham got married again. What was his new wife's name?

7 Who was Yishmael's oldest son?

8 How much money does Avraham pay Efron for the Makhpelah cave and its surrounding field?

9 One additional person goes with Rivkah on her journey. Who is it?

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





Can you spot what looks different about this word?

וּלְבַכְתָּהּ

That's right, the kaf is smaller than the other letters! There are eight letters like this in the Torah, written smaller than all the others. It is a very old tradition, and there is no agreement on the reason for this, but each place where it happens leads people to wonder why. Look at the larger phrase here:

בראשית כג:

וַיָּבֹא אַבְרָהָם לְסַפֵּד לְשָׂרָה וּלְבַכְתָּהּ:

Bereishit 23:2

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

The word וּלְבַכְתָּהּ (ve-livkotah, to cry for her) is the one with the small kaf. One tradition says that the kaf is small because Avraham did not cry that much when Sarah died because she was already very old. She had lived a full life, had a child, and had helped to start the Jewish people.



- ♦ What do you think of that? Does it make sense to you that Sarah's death would have been easier for Avraham because he knew she ended up having a good and meaningful life? Or would you expect him to cry even more because his partner of so many years, with whom he shared so much, was now gone?
- ♦ What else could this small letter mean here? Do you have other ideas?



מי היו חכמינו • Who Were Our Sages?

Ovadyah ben Yaakov Sforno (often just called "**Sforno**"), mentioned in this week's Halakhah section (p. 5), was an Italian rabbi, doctor, and פֶּרֶשׁן (parshan, commentator from 500 years ago). He is best known for his commentary on the Torah, where he tries to stick to literal interpretations and often comes up with his own original readings of the text.

The Sforno family was a very important one in Jewish Italy and was well-connected. For example, he taught Hebrew to the famous German philosopher, Johann Reichlin. One of his books on philosophy, אור עמים (Or Amim, Light of the Nations), he translated into Latin, and sent this translated copy to King Henry II of France!





Shabbat Shalom!

~ שבת שלום ~

Parashah Scavenger Hunt Answers:

1. Benei Het or Hittites
2. He doesn't have one! He is referred to as Avraham's servant throughout, although many readers assume he is Damesek Eliezer, who was mentioned in last week's parashah
3. She offers to give water to both the servant and his camels
4. Eat
5. Be'er Lahai Ro'i
6. Keturah
7. Nevayot
8. 400 shekels of silver
9. Her nurse
10. When they speak, it says "וַיַּעַן לָבָן וּבְתוּאֵל וַיֹּאמְרוּ (va-ya'an Lavan u-Vtuel va-yomru, Lavan answered and Betuel, and they said)," suggesting that Lavan jumped in to speak first before his father



Devash is a weekly parashah magazine that makes Torah learning sweet. By engaging directly with texts and taking kids seriously as Jews, Devash helps children and grownups discover new ideas, values, and sweet morsels in the weekly Torah portion. Devash is designed for kids aged 7-11 to read independently, or together with families and teachers.



This publication contains words of Torah,
so please treat it with appropriate reverence

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