

Fill Your Own Cup – Year Two
Parshat Chayei Sarah - Was Rebecca One of the Patriarchs?

1) Genesis 24: 1 – 27

1) Abraham was now old, advanced in years, and God had blessed Abraham in all things.

2) And Abraham said to the senior servant of his household, who had charge of all that he owned, "Put your hand under my thigh

3) and I will make you swear by God, the God of heaven and the God of the earth, that you will not take a wife for my son from the daughters of the Canaanites among whom I dwell,

4) but will go to the land of my birth and get a wife for my son Isaac."

5) And the servant said to him, "What if the woman does not consent to follow me to this land, shall I then take your son back to the land from which you came?"

6) Abraham answered him, "On no account must you take my son back there!

7) God, the God of heaven—who took me from my father's house and from my native land, who promised me on oath, saying, 'I will assign this land to your offspring'—will send a messenger before you, and you will get a wife for my son from there.

8) And if the woman does not consent to follow you, you shall then be clear of this oath to me; but do not take my son back there."

9) So the servant put his hand under the thigh of his master Abraham and swore to him as bidden.

10) Then the servant took ten of his master's camels and set out, taking with him all the bounty of his master; and he made his way to Aram-naharaim, to the city of Nahor.

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

12) And he said, "O God, God of my master Abraham's [house], grant me good fortune this day, and deal graciously with my master Abraham:

13) Here I stand by the spring as the daughters of the townspeople come out to draw water;

14) let the maiden to whom I say, 'Please, lower your jar that I may drink,' and who replies, 'Drink, and I will also water your camels'—let her be the one whom You have decreed for Your servant Isaac. Thereby shall I know that You have dealt graciously with my master."

15) He had scarcely finished speaking, when Rebekah, who was born to Bethuel, the son of Milcah the wife of Abraham's brother Nahor, came out with her jar on her shoulder.

16) The maiden was very beautiful—[and] a virgin, no man having known her. She went down to the spring, filled her jar, and came up.

17) The servant ran toward her and said, "Please, let me sip a little water from your jar."

18) "Drink, my lord," she said, and she quickly lowered her jar upon her hand and let him drink.

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

20) Quickly emptying her jar into the trough, she ran back to the well to draw, and she drew for all his camels.

21) The man, meanwhile, stood gazing at her, silently wondering whether God had made his errand successful or not.

22) When the camels had finished drinking, the man took a gold nose-ring weighing a half-shekel, and two gold bands for her arms, ten shekels in weight.

בראשית כד-א-כז

(א) וַאֲבִרְהִם זָקֵן גַּם בַּיָּמִים וַיהוָה בֵּרַךְ אֶת-אַבְרָהָם בְּכָל:

(ב) וַיֹּאמֶר אַבְרָהָם אֶל-עַבְדּוֹ זָקֵן בֵּיתוֹ הַמְשַׁל בְּכָל-אֲשֶׁר-לוֹ שֵׁים-גָּם יָדָךְ תַּחַת יָרְכִי:

(ג) וְאֲשַׁבְּעֶךָ בַּיהוָה אֱלֹהֵי הַשָּׁמַיִם וְאֱלֹהֵי הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר לֹא-תִקַּח אִשָּׁה לְבְנִי מִבְּנוֹת הַכְּנַעֲנִי אֲשֶׁר אֲנִי יוֹשֵׁב בְּקִרְבָּם:

(ד) כִּי אֶל-אֶרֶצִי וְאֶל-מוֹלַדְתִּי תֵלֵךְ וְלִקַּחְתָּ אִשָּׁה לְבְנִי לְיִצְחָק:

(ה) וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלָיו הַעֲבֹד אוֹלִי לֹא-תֵאָבֵהּ הָאִשָּׁה לְלֶכֶת אַחֲרַי אֶל-הָאָרֶץ הַזֹּאת הַהֹשֵׁב אֲשִׁיב אֶת-בְּנִי אֶל-הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר-יֵצֵאת מִשָּׁם:

(ו) וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלָיו אַבְרָהָם הֲשִׁמְרָה לְךָ פֶן-תִּשְׁיֵב אֶת-בְּנִי שָׁמָּה:

(ז) וַהֲוֵהוּ אֱלֹהֵי הַשָּׁמַיִם אֲשֶׁר לִקַּחְתִּי מִבְּיַת אָבִי וּמֵאֶרֶץ מוֹלַדְתִּי וְאֲשֶׁר דִּבַּר-לִי וְאֲשֶׁר נִשְׁבַּע-לִי לֵאמֹר לְזַרְעֶךָ אֶתֵּן אֶת-הָאָרֶץ הַזֹּאת הוּא יִשְׁלַח מִלֵּאכֹל לְפָנֶיךָ וְלִקַּחְתָּ אִשָּׁה לְבְנִי מִשָּׁם:

(ח) וְאִם-לֹא תֵאָבֵהּ הָאִשָּׁה לְלֶכֶת אַחֲרָי וְנִלְקִית מִשְׁבַּעְתִּי זֹאת רַק אֶת-בְּנִי לֹא תִשָּׁב שָׁמָּה:

(ט) וַיִּשָּׂם הַעֲבָד אֶת-יָדוֹ תַּחַת יָרֵךְ אַבְרָהָם אֲדֹנָיו וַיִּשְׁבַּע לוֹ עַל-הַדָּבָר הַזֶּה:

(י) וַיִּקַּח הַעֲבָד עֶשְׂרֵה גַמְלִיִּים מִגַּמְלֵי אֲדִנִּי וַיֵּלֶךְ וְכָל-טוֹב אֲדִנִּי בִידּוֹ וַיֵּקֶם וַיֵּלֶךְ אֶל-אָרְם נְהָרַיִם אֶל-עִיר נְחוֹר:

(יא) וַיִּבְרַךְ הַגַּמְלִיִּים מִחוּץ לְעִיר אֶל-בְּאֵר הַמַּיִם לַעֵת עֶרֶב לַעֵת צֵאת הַשָּׂאֵבֹת:

(יב) וַיֹּאמֶר וַיהוָה אֱלֹהֵי אֲדֹנָי אַבְרָהָם הַקָּרֵה-גָּם לְפָנַי הַיּוֹם וְעֲשֵׂה-חֶסֶד עִם אֲדֹנָי אַבְרָהָם:

(יג) הִנֵּה אֲנִי נֹצֵב עַל-עֵינֵי הַמַּיִם וּבְנוֹת אֲנָשֵׁי הָעִיר יֵצְאוֹת לְשָׂאֵב מַיִם:

(יד) וְהִנֵּה הַנְּעוּר אֲשֶׁר אָמַר אֵלַי הֵיאֵה הֵטִי-גָּם כַּדָּי וְאִשְׁתָּהּ וְאִמְרָה שְׂתֵה וְגַם-גַּמְלֵיךָ אֲשַׁקֶּה אֹתָהּ הֲלֹחֶת לְעַבְדְּךָ לְיִצְחָק וְכֵה אֲדַע כִּי-עֲשִׂיתָ חֶסֶד עִם-אֲדֹנָי:

(טו) וַיהִי-הוּא טָרֵם כֹּלָה לְדַבֵּר וְהִנֵּה רַבְּקָה יֵצְאת אֲשֶׁר יֵלְדָה לְבְתוּאֵל בֶּן-מִלְכָּה אִשְׁתֵּי נְחוֹר אֹחֵי אַבְרָהָם וְכַדָּה עַל-שִׁכְמָהּ:

(טז) וְהַנְּעוּר טַבַּת מִרְאֵה מֵאֹד בְּתוֹלָה וְאִישׁ לֹא יִדְעָה וַתֵּרָד הָעֵינָה וַתִּמְלֵא כַדָּהּ וַתַּעַל:

(יז) וַיֵּרַץ הַעֲבָד לְקִרְאתָהּ וַיֹּאמֶר הַגְּמִיאִינִי גָּם מֵעַט-מַיִם מִפְּדָר:

(יח) וַתֹּאמֶר שְׂתֵה אֲדֹנָי וַתִּמְחַר וַתֵּרָד כַּדָּהּ עַל-יָדָהּ וַתִּשְׁקֶהוּ:

(יט) וַתִּכַּל לְהִשְׁקֹתוֹ וַתֹּאמֶר גַּם לְגַמְלֵיךָ אֲשַׁבֵּב עַד אִם-כָּלִי לְשִׁתֵּי:

(כ) וַתִּמְחַר וַתַּעַר כַּדָּהּ אֶל-הַשִּׁקֵּת וַתֵּרַץ עוֹד אֶל-הַבְּאֵר לְשָׂאֵב וַתִּשָּׂאֵב לְכָל-גַּמְלָיו:

(כא) וְהָאִישׁ מִשְׁתַּאֲהָ לָהּ מִחֲרָיִשׁ לְדַעַת הַהֲצִלִּים וַהֲוֵה דְרָכָּהּ אִם-לֹא:

(כב) וַיהִי כַּאֲשֶׁר כָּלִי הַגַּמְלִיִּים לְשִׁתוֹת וַיִּקַּח הָאִישׁ גָּזֵם זָהָב בְּקַע מִשְׁקָלוֹ וְשֵׁנִי צְמִידִים עַל-יְדָיָהּ עֶשְׂרֵה זָהָב מִשְׁקָלָם:

<p>23) "Pray tell me," he said, "whose daughter are you? Is there room in your father's house for us to spend the night?"</p> <p>24) She replied, "I am the daughter of Bethuel the son of Milcah, whom she bore to Nahor."</p> <p>25) And she went on, "There is plenty of straw and feed at home, and also room to spend the night."</p> <p>26) The man bowed low in homage to God.</p> <p>27) and said, "Blessed be God, the God of my master Abraham's [house], who has not withheld steadfast faithfulness from my master. For I have been guided on my errand by God, to the house of my master's kin."</p>	<p>(כג) וַיֹּאמֶר בְּתֻמִּי אֶתְּ הַגִּידִי גַּא לִי הַיֵּשׁ בֵּית־אֲבִיךָ מְקוֹם לָנוּ לָלוּן: (כד) וַתֹּאמֶר אֵלָיו בַּת־בְּתוּאֵל אֲנִי בִן־מִלְכָה אֲשֶׁר יָלְדָה לְנָחוֹר: (כה) וַתֹּאמֶר אֵלָיו גַּם־תֵּבֶן גַּם־מִסְפּוֹא רַב עִמָּנוּ גַּם־ מְקוֹם לָלוּן: (כו) וַיִּקְדַּ הָאִישׁ וַיִּשְׁתַּחֲוֶ לַיהוָה: (כז) וַיֹּאמֶר בְּרוּךְ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי אֲדֹנָי אַבְרָהָם אֲשֶׁר לֹא־ עָזַב סִדְקוֹ וְאִמְתּוֹ מִעַם אֲדֹנָי אֲנִי בְּדֶרֶךְ נְתַנִּי יְהוָה בֵּית אֲחֵי אֲדֹנָי:</p>
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Rivka – the next Abraham?

<p>2) Genesis 12:1-2</p> <p>God said to Abram, "Go forth from your native land and from your father's house to the land that I will show you.</p> <p>2 I will make of you a great nation, And I will bless you; I will make your name great, And you shall be a blessing.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>בראשית יב:א-ב</u></p> <p>וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל־אַבְרָם לְהֵלֶךְ מֵאַרְצְךָ וּמִמּוֹלַדְתְּךָ וּמִבְּיַת אָבִיךָ אֶל־הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר אֲרָאָה: ב וְאֶעֱשֶׂךָ לְגוֹי גָּדוֹל וְאַבְרָכְךָ וְאֶגְדַּלְךָ שְׁמִי וְהָיָה בְּרָכָה:</p>
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<p>3) Genesis 24:57-58</p> <p>57) And they said, "Let us call the girl and ask for her reply".</p> <p>58) They called Rebekah and said to her, "Will you go with this man?" And she said, "I will go".</p> <p>59) So they sent off their sister Rebekah and her nurse along with Abraham's servant and his entourage.</p> <p>60) And they blessed Rebekah and said to her, "O sister! May you grow into thousands of myriads; May your descendants seize the gates of their foes."</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>בראשית כ"ד:נ"ז-נ"ח</u></p> <p>(נז) וַיֹּאמְרוּ נִקְרָא לְנַעֲמָה וְנִשְׁאַלְהָ אֶת־פִּיהָ: (נח) וַיִּקְרְאוּ לְרִבְקָה וַיֹּאמְרוּ אֵלֶיהָ הַתְּלִכִי עִם־הָאִישׁ הַזֶּה וַתֹּאמֶר אֵלָהּ: (נט) וַיִּשְׁלְחוּ אֶת־רִבְקָה אֶחָתָם וְאֶת־מִנְקֻתָהּ וְאֶת־ עֶבֶד אַבְרָהָם וְאֶת־אֲנָשָׁיו: (ס) וַיְבָרְכוּ אֶת־רִבְקָה וַיֹּאמְרוּ לָהּ אַחֲתֵנוּ אֵת הָיִי לְאַלְפֵי רִבְבָה וַיִּירָשׁ זֶרְעֵךָ אֶת שַׁעַר שַׁנְאָיו:</p>
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<p>4) Genesis 18:3-7</p> <p>3) He said, "My lords! If it please you, do not go on past your servant .</p> <p>4) Let a little water be brought; bathe your feet and recline under the tree.</p> <p>5) And let me fetch a morsel of bread that you may refresh yourselves; then go on—seeing that you have come your servant's way." They replied, "Do as you have said".</p> <p>6) Abraham hastened into the tent to Sarah, and said, "Quick, three <i>seahs</i> of choice flour! Knead and make cakes"! </p> <p>7) Then Abraham ran to the herd, took a calf, tender and choice, and gave it to a servant-boy, who hastened to prepare it .</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>בראשית י"ח:ג-ז</u></p> <p>(ג) וַיֹּאמֶר אֲדוּנָי אִם־נָא מִצְּאֵתִי חֹן בְּעֵינַיִךְ אֶל־נָא תַּעֲבֹר מֵעַל עַבְדְּךָ: (ד) יִקַּח־נָא מֵעֵט־מַיִם וְרוֹחֲצוּ רַגְלֵיכֶם וְהִשְׁעֲנוּ תַּחַת הָעֵץ: (ה) וְאֶקְחָה פַת־לֶחֶם וְסַעֲדוּ לְבַבְכֶם אַחַר תַּעֲבְרוּ כִּי־עַלְיָן עֲבַרְתֶּם עַל־ עַבְדְּכֶם וַיֹּאמְרוּ כֵן תַּעֲשֶׂה כַּאֲשֶׁר דִּבַּרְתָּ: (ו) וַיִּמְהַר אַבְרָהָם הָאֵהָלָה אֶל־שָׂרָה וַיֹּאמֶר מַה־לִּי שְׁלֹשׁ סְאִים קָמַח סֵלֶת לֹוִשִׁי וְעָשִׂי עֲגוֹת: (ז) וְאֶל־הַבְּקָר הָרַץ אַבְרָהָם וַיִּקַּח בֶּן־בְּקָר רֶךָ וְטוֹב וַיִּתֵּן אֶל־הַנְּעָר וַיִּמְהַר לַעֲשׂוֹת אֹתוֹ:</p>
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Rivka – the next Sara?

<p>5) Genesis Rabbah 60:12</p> <p>"And Isaac brought her into the tent of Sarah, his mother-" All the days that Sarah was alive, a cloud was connected (lit. tied) to the entrance of her tent. When she died, the cloud stopped [resting at her tent.] And when Rebecca came, the cloud returned. All the days that Sarah was alive, the doors were open wide. When she died, the wideness stopped. And when Rebecca came, the wideness returned. And all the days that Sarah was alive, there was a blessing in her dough, and when Sarah died, that blessing ended. When Rebecca came, [the blessing] returned. All the days that Sarah was alive, there was a candle that would burn from Sabbath Eve to [the next] Sabbath Eve, and when she died, the candle stopped [burning for so long]. And when Rebecca came, [the week-long flame of the candle] returned. And as soon as [Isaac] saw her, that she did the deeds of his mother, separating her challah in purity and separating her dough in purity, he brought her into the tent.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>בראשית רבה ס"ב</u></p> <p>וַיְבִאָהּ יִצְחָק הָאֵהָלָה שָׂרָה אִמּוֹ (בראשית כד, טז), כָּל יָמִים שֶׁהָיְתָה שָׂרָה קִיָּמָת הָיָה עָנָן קָשׁוּר עַל פֶּתַח אֵהָלָהּ, כִּי־וַיָּבֵא אֹתוֹ עָנָן, וְכִי־וַיָּבֵאת רִבְקָה חָזַר אֹתוֹ עָנָן. כָּל יָמִים שֶׁהָיְתָה שָׂרָה קִיָּמָת הָיָה דְּלֹתוֹת פְּתוּחוֹת לְרוּחָהּ, וְכִי־וַיָּבֵאת שָׂרָה פִּסְקָה אֹתָהּ הָרוּחָהּ, וְכִי־וַיָּבֵאת רִבְקָה חָזַר אֹתָהּ הָרוּחָהּ. וְכָל יָמִים שֶׁהָיְתָה שָׂרָה קִיָּמָת הָיָה בְּרָכָה מִשְׁלַחַת בַּעֲסָה, וְכִי־וַיָּבֵאת שָׂרָה פִּסְקָה אֹתָהּ הַבְּרָכָה, כִּי־וַיָּבֵאת רִבְקָה חָזַר אֹתָהּ. כָּל יָמִים שֶ׈הָיְתָה שָׂרָה קִיָּמָת הָיָה נֵר דּוֹלֵק מִלִּיל שַׁבָּת וְעַד לִילֵי שַׁבָּת, וְכִי־וַיָּבֵאת רִבְקָה חָזַר אֹתוֹ הַנֵּר, וְכִי־וַיָּבֵאת רִבְקָה חָזַר. וְכִי־וַיִּרְאֶה אֹתָהּ שֶׁהָיָה עוֹשֶׂה כַּמַּעֲשֶׂה אִמּוֹ, קוֹצֵה חֲלָתָהּ בְּטַהֲרָה וְקוֹצֵה עֲסָתָהּ בְּטַהֲרָה, מִיַּד וַיְבִאָהּ יִצְחָק הָאֵהָלָהּ.</p>
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6) Rabbi Aharon Lichtenstein z"l, Was the Test of Rivka Appropriate?

<https://www.etzion.org.il/en/tanakh/torah/sefer-bereishit/parashat-chayei-sara/chayei-sara-was-test-rivka-appropriate>

Generally speaking, the ability to take initiative is a very positive quality. But when speaking of a potential mate for Yitzchak, it becomes crucial. Generally, Yitzchak is portrayed as a relatively passive character. When he decides to leave Eretz Yisrael in a time of famine ([Bereishit 26:3](#)), God tells him not to move, but to stay where he is. In the akeida, he is the archetype of sacrifice: Avraham is tested, but Yitzchak never reacts; he is sacrificed, quietly and willingly. Later, when Yitzchak digs wells, he gives them the same names his father gave them ([Bereishit 26:18](#)).

In short, Avraham is a spiritual revolutionary, while Yitzchak is far more passive, willing to walk in his father's footsteps and never feeling the need to step out of his father's shadow. Most indicative of his passivity is the fact that towards the end of his life, he becomes blind - to the extent that Rivka controls the entire issue of succession and the dispute over the birthright, working around him when necessary! Ya'akov, too, was transformed from the child who does as his mother bids him into a resourceful planner and executor of a broad strategy - as is evident in his conflicts with both Lavan and Esav. Thus, we see that a highly motivated, active figure was needed to balance the more quiet and introspective Yitzchak.