Parashah Chayei Sara

The one that revolves around the death of Sarah, the purchase of the Cave of Machpelah for her burial, the mission of Abraham's servant Eliezer to find a wife for Isaac, and the marriage of Isaac to Rebekah.

Parashah Chayei Sara (the Life of Sarah) begins in the land of Canaan, where the matriarch Sarah passes away at the age of 127. The city of Hebron feels her loss deeply, and Abraham, her loving husband, mourns. Abraham approaches the Hittites to buy a burial plot. He expresses his desire to purchase the Cave of Machpelah from Ephron the Hittite. After some negotiation, Abraham buys the cave and its surrounding field for 400 shekels of silver. This transaction marks the first piece of the Promised Land that Abraham legally owns.

Abraham decides that it's time for his son Isaac to marry. However, he doesn't want Isaac to marry a Canaanite woman. So, he sends his trusted servant (often identified as Eliezer) to his former homeland to find a wife.

Upon reaching the city of Nahor, the servant stops by a well. He forms a plan: He will ask a woman for a drink, and if she offers water to him and his camels without being asked, she'll be the one chosen for Isaac. Rebekah, a young woman from Abraham's extended family, arrives at the well and fulfills this sign, indicating that she is the chosen one. In gratitude, the servant gives her gifts and jewelry.

The servant is invited to Rebekah's home and meets her family, including her brother Laban and her father, Bethuel. He recounts his journey, the sign he had devised, and Rebekah's kind act at the well. They acknowledge that the matter has been determined by higher powers and cannot be interfered with. They then ask Rebekah if she's willing to leave and marry Isaac, to which she agrees.

Rebekah travels with the servant to Canaan. As they approach their destination, Isaac, who has been meditating in the field, sees them. Rebekah and Isaac have an immediate connection. They get married, and Isaac finds solace in Rebekah's companionship after the loss of his mother.

Abraham marries another woman named Keturah after Sarah's death and has more children. To ensure that there are no disputes over inheritance, Abraham gives gifts to these children and sends them away to the east, solidifying Isaac's position as his primary heir.

The portion ends with the passing of Abraham at 175 years old. He is laid to rest by his sons, Isaac and Ishmael, in the Cave of Machpelah, alongside Sarah.

Thus, Chayei Sarah, despite beginning with the theme of death, is largely about continuity - passing on Abraham's legacy to the next generation and establishing the roots of the Israelite nation in the land of Canaan.

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Teen Takeaways from Parashah Chayei Sara

1. **Respect for the deceased**: When Sarah passed away, Abraham showed deep respect for her by ensuring she had a proper burial. It teaches us to honor and show respect to those who have passed away, especially our loved ones.
2. **Marriage and relationships**: The parashah tells the story of Isaac and Rebekah's arranged marriage. It reminds us that love and relationships are important parts of life, and that it's crucial to choose a partner who shares our values and beliefs.
3. **Seeking guidance**: Abraham's servant Eliezer prayed for guidance when choosing a wife for Isaac. It highlights the importance of seeking advice and guidance from trusted sources when making important decisions, whether it's about friendships, school, or life choices.
4. **Family values**: The parashah emphasizes the importance of family traditions and values. It's a reminder that your family plays a significant role in shaping who you are, and it's worth cherishing those connections.
5. **Honesty and fairness**: Abraham insisted on paying a fair price for the burial plot. It's a lesson in honesty and doing what's right, even when it comes to financial matters. Understanding that paying the full value for something reduces the possible consequences of someone calling you a cheater ... or cheap.
6. **Responsibility**: After Sarah's passing, Abraham took on the responsibility of finding a wife for Isaac. It shows that as you grow older, you may have responsibilities for your family's well-being, which can be both challenging and rewarding. What Abraham does is often characterized as being a "Jewish mother." Perhaps that role is not reserved for mothers alone.
7. **Cultural awareness**: The parashah gives us a glimpse into the customs and practices of the time. It's a reminder that cultures have different traditions and practices, which can be fascinating to learn about and respect. Do you have friends who come from different backgrounds than you? What do you find interesting about their traditions?
8. **Power of prayer**: Isaac's prayer for Rebekah's fertility highlights the power of prayer. It's a reminder that in difficult times, turning to prayer and belief in a higher power can provide hope and strength.

Summary

These lessons from **Parashah Chayei Sara** can help you navigate important aspects of life, from relationships to values, and they offer valuable guidance as you grow and face new experiences.

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