

# Parsha Q&A



## Parshas Chayei Sarah

For the week ending 25 Cheshvan 5759  
13 & 14 November 1998

### Parsha Questions

1. Name the four couples buried in *Kiryat Arba*.
2. What did Sara hear that caused her death?
3. What title of honor did the *B'nei Ches* bestow upon Avraham?
4. Where was Avraham born?
5. How were Avraham's camels distinguished?
6. What is meant by "all the good of his master in his hand?"
7. What special character trait did Eliezer seek when choosing a wife for Yitzchak?
8. Why did Avraham's servant, Eliezer, run toward Rivka?
9. Why did Lavan run to greet Eliezer?
10. When Lavan told Eliezer that the house was cleared out, what did he remove?
11. Who did Eliezer want Yitzchak to marry?
12. Aside from Eliezer, to which other people did Rivka offer to give water?
13. Lavan answered Eliezer before his father, Besuel, had a chance. What does this indicate about Lavan's character?
14. What did Rivka mean when she said "I will go?"
15. What blessing did Rivka's family give her before she departed?
16. Who was *Ketura*?
17. What gift did Avraham give to Yitzchak?
18. How old was Avraham when he died?
19. For how many years did Yaakov attend the Yeshiva of *Ever*?
20. How many times is Eliezer's name mentioned in this week's Parsha?

### Sherlox and the Jewelry Mystery

Watstein stood at the door of the mahogany study. "Someone's out here to see you, Mr. Holmes. He says you weren't expecting him but that it's an emergency."

"You mean the wealthy-looking, neatly-dressed man sitting comfortably in the burgundy chair with his right leg crossed over his left and his hands clasped together?" asked world famous detective Sherlock Holmes.

"Why, how in heaven did you know all that?"

"Simple. On the wall behind you I see a reflection whose shape and position indicate beyond a doubt that it originates from a highly polished shoe resting just at the left knee of someone sitting in the burgundy chair. Above that and to the right is the reflection of a diamond-studded ring, whose position indicates hands clasped about the middle. There's so much information one can gather from a simple little ring."

"Speaking of rings," said Watstein, "can you help me understand this verse: *The man took a gold ring weighing a beka, and two bracelets for her hand, their weight being ten sela.* (Bereishis 24:22)"

"Is it surprising that Eliezer would give Rivka presents, hoping to win her as Yitzchak's bride?" said Sherlock.

"Not at all," said Watstein. "But why does Rashi need to comment? Rashi says that by the *beka* weight, Eliezer hinted to the *beka* that future Jews would donate to the Temple. The two bracelets hinted to the Two Tablets, and the weight of *ten sela* hinted to the ten commandments contained therein."

"Isn't that poetic!" said Sherlock. "The very inception of the Jewish people, Yitzchak's marriage to Rivka, is suffused with hidden metaphors symbolizing their ultimate goal: Receiving the Two Tablets containing the ten commandments!"

"But Rashi wasn't writing poetry! Rashi himself says: *I come only to explain the plain meaning of the text, or to offer aggadic explanations which answer difficulties in the text.* (Bereishis 3:8) So, I ask you, Mr. Homes: What's bothering Rashi?"

"There's so much information one can gather from a simple little ring," said Sherlock.

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Parshas **Chayei Sarah** — 25 Cheshvan 5759, 13 & 14 November 1998

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## Answer

“The beka and ten sela weights are completely ordinary for a ring and bracelets. There’s nothing unusual about them at all,” said Sherlock.

“So,” said Watstein.

“So, why does the verse bother mentioning them?”

“I see,” said Watstein. “The verse could simply have said that Eliezer gave Rivka a gold ring and gold bracelets. These are common enough objects, such that we don’t need to be told their exact weight — unless it’s unusually big or small. But, as you pointed out, Mr. Holmes, there’s nothing outstanding about a beka ring or two bracelets of ten sela. Hence, Rashi cites a midrash to explain why these seemingly ordinary weights are extra ordinary.”

“Extraordinary, Dr. Watstein. Now, please show that man in...”

*(Source: Sifsei Chachamim; Sherlock” is by Reuven Subar, inspired by Dr. Avigdor Bonchek’s “What’s Bothering Rashi”)*

## I Did Not Know That!

The first section of this week’s Parsha describing the purchase of Sara’s burial site contains seven references to “burying a dead person.” These refer prophetically to the seven people to be buried there — Avraham & Sara, Yitzchak & Rivka, Yaakov & Leah — and the wicked Esav, whose head is buried there.

*Vilna Gaon*

## Recommended Reading List

### Ramban

22:9	The Cave of <i>Machpela</i>
24:1	Blessed in all Things
24:64	Rivka’s Modesty
25:8	Full of Years

### Sforno

24:14	Prayer or Divination
24:65	The Awe of Yitzchak
25:8	Avraham’s Death

## Answers to this Week’s Questions

*All references are to the verses and Rashi’s commentary, unless otherwise stated*

1. 23:2 - Adam and Chava, Avraham and Sara, Yitzchak and Rivka, Yaakov and Leah.
2. 23:2 - That Yitzchak was almost slaughtered.
3. 23:6 - Prince of G-d.
4. 24:7 - Ur Kasdim.
5. 24:10 - They were muzzled, so they wouldn’t graze in the fields of others.
6. 24:10 - Eliezer carried a document in which Avraham gave all he owned to Yitzchak so that people would want their daughter to marry him.
7. 24:14 - He sought someone who excelled in performing acts of kindness.
8. 24:17 - He saw that the waters of the well rose when she approached.
9. 24:29 - Lavan coveted his money.
10. 24:31 - Idols.
11. 24:39 - His own daughter.
12. 24:44 - To the men who accompanied Eliezer.
13. 24:50 - That he was wicked.
14. 24:58 - I will go even if you don’t want me to go.
15. 24:60 - That the blessings given to Avraham would continue through her children.
16. 25:1 - Hagar.
17. 25:5 - The power of blessing.
18. 25:7 - One hundred and seventy five years old.
19. 25:17 - Fourteen years.
20. None!