

אַ שטיקל תורה A LITTLE SLICE OF TORAH

פון פרשת דער וואָך FROM THE WEEKLY PORTION

November 07, 2026

"Fostering diverse modes of attention to textual details cultivates correlative forms of attention to the world and divine reality"

Michael Fishbane (1943-), *Sacred Attunement: A Jewish Theology*

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ, אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,
אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו, וְצִוָּנוּ לַעֲסוֹק בְּדִבְרֵי תוֹרָה׃

"Tachometer Torah"



...read down to the red line

Parashat-haShavu'a Stats

Weekly Portion: *Chayei Sarah*

Consists of: Genesis 23:1-25:18

Sequence—

in Genesis: 5th of 12

in annual Torah cycle: 5th of 54



A Salient Selection from the Portion -

Genesis 24:49-58

Context: *Genesis, first of the Five Books of the Torah, is an outline of the Creation of the physical universe; a description of the origin of the human family by their respective nations; and an account of Abraham's and Sarah's lineage through their grandson Jacob as the foundation of the Israelite people.*

Content: *Abraham's most trusted servant, having journeyed to his master's family in Haran in search of a bride for Isaac, reports to them how God had led him directly to Rivkah.*

וְעַתָּה אִם יֶשְׁכֶם עֹשִׂים חֶסֶד וֶאֱמֶת
אֶת אֲדֹנִי הַגִּידוּ לִי וְאִם לֹא הַגִּידוּ
לִי וְאֶפְנֶה עַל יָמִין אוֹ עַל שְׂמֹאל

24:49] - "So, now, if you mean to treat my master with true kindness, tell me; if not, then tell me that, too, that I may go on with my search elsewhere."

וַיַּעַן לָבָן וּבְתוּאֵל וַיֹּאמְרוּ מֵיהוָה
יָצָא הַדָּבָר לֹא נוּכַל דַּבֵּר אֵלֶיךָּ רַע
אוֹ טוֹב הִנֵּה רִבְקָה לְפָנֶיךָ **קַח וָלֵךְ**
וּתְהִי אִשָּׁה לְבֶן אֲדֹנֶיךָ כַּאֲשֶׁר דִּבֶּר
יְהוָה

24:50] - To that Lavan and B'tuEil responded: "The matter comes forth from The Eternal One; we are unable to respond for bad or good! [24:51] - Here is Rivqah before you— **take her and go**, that she may be a wife to your master's son, as The Eternal One has decreed."

וַיְהִי כַּאֲשֶׁר שָׁמַע עֶבֶד אַבְרָהָם אֶת
דִּבְרֵיהֶם וַיִּשְׁתַּחוּ אַרְצָה לַיהוָה
וַיּוֹצֵא הָעֶבֶד כְּלֵי כֶסֶף וּכְלֵי זָהָב
וּבְגָדִים וַיִּתֵּן לְרִבְקָה וּמִגְדָּנֹת נָתַן
לְאָחִיהָ וּלְאִמָּהּ וַיֹּאכְלוּ וַיִּשְׁתּוּ הוּא
וְהָאֲנָשִׁים אֲשֶׁר עִמּוֹ וַיָּלִינוּ

24:52] - Hearing their words, Abraham's servant bowed low to the ground before The Eternal One. [24:53] - He produced objects of silver and gold, and garments, and gave them to Rivqah, also giving presents to her brother and her mother. [24:54a] - Then he [and the attendants who had come] with him ate and drank, then lodged there for the night.

- more over

24:54] - Then, when they arose next morning, he said "Release me, to return to my master." [24:55] - But her brother and her mother said, "Let the maiden remain with us some time—perhaps ten days; then you may go."

וַיָּקוּמוּ בַבֹּקֶר וַיֹּאמֶר שַׁלְּחֻנִי לַאדֹנִי וַיֹּאמֶר אָחִיהָ וְאִמָּהּ תֵּשֶׁב הַנַּעֲרָ אִתָּנוּ יָמִים אוֹ עָשׂוֹר אַחַר תֵּלֵךְ

24:56] - He urged them, "Do not delay me, now that The Eternal One has made my errand successful. Give me leave that I may go to my master." [24:57] - At which they said, "We will summon the girl; let us ask if from her own mouth."

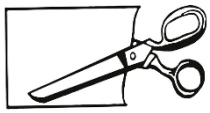
וַיֹּאמֶר אֲלֵהֶם אַל תְּאַחֲרוּ אֹתִי וַיהוָה הִצְלִיחַ דַּרְכִּי שַׁלְּחוּנִי וְאֵלְכָה לַאדֹנִי וַיֹּאמְרוּ נִקְרָא לַנַּעֲרָ וְנִשְׁאֲלָה אֶת פִּיהָ

24:58a] - So they summoned Rivqah, asking her: "**Will you go** with this man**?**",

וַיִּקְרְאוּ לְרִבְקָה וַיֹּאמְרוּ אֵלֶיהָ **הֲתֵלְכִי** עִם הָאִישׁ הַזֶּה

24:58b] - to which she replied, "**I will go**."

וַתֹּאמֶר **אֵלֵךְ**



תורה Snippet as a warm-up

הֲתֵלְכִי עִם הָאִישׁ הַזֶּה

24:58 - "**Will you go** with this man**?**"

וַתֹּאמֶר **אֵלֵךְ**

to which she replied, "**I will**."

Genesis 27:23-24 - וַיֹּאמֶר **אַתָּה** זֶה בְּנִי עֵשָׂו

[Isaac] said: "[Are] **you** my son, Eisav?"

וַיֹּאמֶר **אָנִי**

to which [Jacob] replied: "**I** [am]."

Ruth 4:10-11 – **עֵדִים** אַתֶּם הַיּוֹם

[Bo'az declared:] "All of you today are **witnesses** [to that]."

וַיֹּאמְרוּ כָּל הָעָם אֲשֶׁר בַּשַּׁעַר וְהַזְּקֵנִים **עֵדִים**

To which all the people in the gate, as well as the leaders, declared: "**Witnesses**."



הִנֵּה רִבְקָה לְפָנֶיךָ **קַח וָלֵךְ**

24:51 - Here is Rivqah before you— **take her and go**,

וּתְהִי אִשָּׁה לְבֶן אֲדֹנֶיךָ

that she may be a wife to your master's son.

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שְׁמָעֵנִי הַשָּׂדֶה **נָתַתִּי** לָךְ

A) Genesis 23:11, 23:15 - "Hear me, my lord, **I am giving you the whole field**!

וְהַמְּעָרָה אֲשֶׁר בּוֹ לְךָ נְתַתִּיהָ לְעֵינֵי בְנֵי עַמִּי

"As for the cave within it, I have given it to you, with my own people as witness!

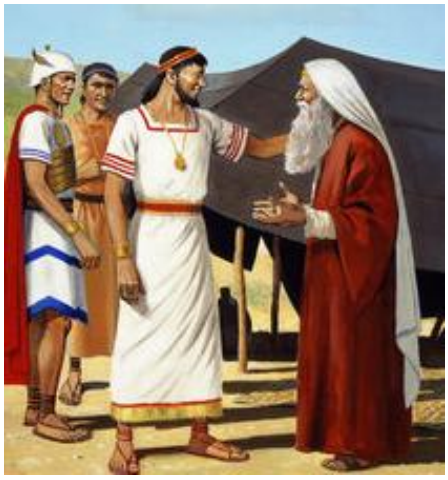
נְתַתִּיהָ לָּךְ קְבֹר מֵתֶךָ

"I have given it to you— bury your dead."

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אֲדֹנִי שְׁמָעֵנִי אֶרֶץ אַרְבַּע מֵאֹת שֶׁקֶל כֶּסֶף בֵּינִי וּבֵינְךָ מַה הִוא

"My lord, hearken to me: [the little matter of] **a piece of land worth four hundred *sh'qalim*** [= 10 pounds] **of silver— what's that, between us two?"**



וְהוֹכַח אַבְרָהָם אֶת-אֲבִימֶלֶךְ עַל-אֹדוֹת בְּאֵר הַמַּיִם אֲשֶׁר גָּזְלוּ עַבְדֵי אֲבִימֶלֶךְ

B) Genesis 21:25-26 - Abraham reproached Avi-Melech about the wells which the King's servants had stolen from him. *cf.* Genesis 26:15ff esp. 26:20

וַיֹּאמֶר אֲבִימֶלֶךְ **לֹא יָדַעְתִּי מִי עָשָׂה אֶת-הַדָּבָר הַזֶּה**

But AviMelech protested: "**I know nothing about who could have done such a thing**—

וְגַם אַתָּה לֹא הִגַּדְתָּ לִי וְגַם אָנֹכִי לֹא שָׁמַעְתִּי בִּלְתִּי הַיּוֹם

"nor did you ever tell me about it. This is the first I am hearing about it, today!"

C) Joseph Herman Hertz (1872-1946), *The Pentateuch and Haftorahs* - "Take her and go" - as is usual in the Orient, **the preliminary negotiations** in regard to the marriage **take place without consultation with the maiden**.

וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלָיו הָעֶבֶד **אוּלַי לֹא תֹאבֶה הָאִשָּׁה לָלֶכֶת אַחֲרַי** אֶל הָאָרֶץ הַזֹּאת

D) Genesis 24:5 - The servant asked [Abraham]: "**Perhaps the woman will not be willing to come after me** to this land;

הֲהָשֵׁב אָשִׁיב אֶת בִּנְךָ אֶל הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר יָצָאתָ מִשָּׁם

shall I, in such a case, bring your son back to that land from which you came?"

וַיִּקְרְאוּ לְרִבְקָה וַיֹּאמְרוּ אֵלֶיהָ הֲתֵלְכִי עִם הָאִישׁ הַזֶּה **וַתֹּאמֶר אֵלֵךְ** **וַיְשַׁלְּחוּ אֶת רִבְקָה** אֲחֹתָם

- more over

E) Genesis 24:58, 24:65 - So they summoned Rivqah, asking her: "Will you go with this man?" **Only once she had said "I will go" did they release** their sister, **Rivqah**.

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וַתֹּאמֶר אֶל הָעֶבֶד מִי הָאִישׁ הַלָּזֶה הַהֹלֵךְ בַּשָּׂדֶה לִקְרָאתֵנוּ

[Once they had arrived at Be'er-Sheva,] she asked the servant: "Who is that fellow, walking towards us in the field?"

וַיֹּאמֶר הָעֶבֶד הוּא אֲדֹנִי **וַתִּקַּח הַצָּעִיף וַתִּתְכָּס**

When the servant replied, "that is my master," **she took the veil and covered herself**.

F) W[olf] Gunther Plaut (1912-2012), *The Torah: A Modern Commentary* - "We will summon the girl" - note that Rivqah is asked **to consent to the marriage**, as was customary also in [legal documents unearthed from 4500 years ago at the Hurrian crossroads trade center of] Nuzi.



Legal text from Nuzi - collection of The Semitic Museum, Harvard ⟹

G) Jonathan Paradise, "Marriage Contracts of Free Persons at Nuzi" in *Journal of Cuneiform Studies* 39:1 (1987) - One clause that these documents have in common is **a certification formula stating the bride's consent to the marriage**, often found in conjunction with the phrase *lišanu ša* ["her own speech"].

וַתֹּאמֶר אֵלֵךְ - **מעצמי**

H) RaSHI (Shlomo Yitzchaqi, 1040-1105) - "She said 'I will go'" - signifies [that I am willing and preparing to accompany this man] "**of my own accord**,

ואף אם אינכם רוצים

"even if you [my parents and brother] are not willing."

Midrash Genesis Rabbah 60:12 -

על כרחכם שלא בטובתכם

"against your will, because it is not to your advantage."

I) Joseph Herman Hertz (1872-1946), *The Pentateuch and Haftorahs* -

i) Genesis 24:30	ii) Genesis 24:50	iii) Genesis 24:55
כִּרְאֹת **אֶת הַנֶּזֶם וְאֶת הַצְּמִדִים** עַל יְדֵי אֲחֹתוֹ	**וַיַּעַן לָבָן** וּבְתוּאֵל וַיֹּאמְרוּ	**וַיֹּאמֶר אָחִיהָ** וְאִמָּהּ תֵּשֶׁב הַנַּעֲרָ אִתָּנוּ
When [Lavan] *saw* ***the*** [gold] ***nose ring, and the bracelets*** *on his sister's hands....*	**[Her brother]** Lavan and [her father] B'tuEil **answered**....	**Her brother** and her mother **said**, "Let the lass remain...."
[Her brother] **Lavan** lacked the true spirit of hospitality, and **was actuated solely by sordid motives**.	It is to be noted that Lavan is mentioned first. **He disrespectfully answered before his father**.	**Yet once again, Lavan rudely interposes** before his parents.

משהשיאה **אין לאביה רשות בה**

J) Mishnah K'tuvot 4:2 - [The consensus of the other sages is that– regardless of her

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age–] once she is a married woman, **her father has neither advantage from; access to; nor authority over his daughter**.

האיש מקדש את בתו

K) Mishnah Qiddushin 2:1 - A man may implement betrothal for his daughter—

כשהיא נערה בו ובשלוחו

personally, or through an agent— **only once she is of age**.

תִּינוֹקֶת	suckling	0-3
יַלְדָּה	child	3-10
נַעֲרָה	**lass**	**12-16**
אִשָּׁה	adult	16-

L) Yosef Karo (1488-1575), *Shulchan Aruch* - Even haEzer 37:8 -

מצוה שלא יקדש בתו **כשהיא קטנה**

It is a religious duty not to implement betrothal for his **underage** daughter,

M) Babylonian Talmud, Qiddushin 41a -

אסור לאדם שיקדש את בתו **כשהיא קטנה**

It is forbidden for a person to implement betrothal for his **underage daughter**,

עד שתגדיל ותאמר **בפלוני אני רוצה**

before she is old enough to say: **"it is such-and-so that I desire."**

ארבעים יום קודם יצירת הולד

N) Babylonian Talmud, Sotah 2a - Forty days before the formation of the embryo,

בת קול יוצאת ואומרת **בת פלוני לפלוני**

a Celestial Voice goes forth, proclaiming: "**the daughter of So-and-so** [is destined for marriage] **to Such-and-such.**"

O) Jewfaq.org, "Judaism 101" - **In Yiddish, this perfect match is called בַּאשערט *bashert***, a word meaning "fated" or "destined." Finding your *bashert* doesn't mean that your marriage will be trouble-free. Marriage, like everything worthwhile in life, requires dedication, effort and energy. Even when two people are meant for each other, it is possible for them to ruin their marriage. That is why Judaism allows divorce.

How do you know if you have found your *bashert*? Should you hold off on marrying someone, out of concern that the person you want to marry might not be your *bashert*, and there might be a better match out there waiting for you?

The traditional view is that **you cannot know who your *bashert* is, but once you get married, the person you married is by definition your *bashert***.

P) Tamara Cohn Eskanazi (1951-), *The Torah: A Women's Commentary* - "She said 'I will go'" - Rivqah's decision to leave her homeland and her family, go to a new place, and live with a man unknown to her, is reminiscent of [her uncle] Abraham, who left everything behind him in order to fulfill a divine command [Genesis 12:1]. **Women's contribution to the national destiny finds its expression** not only in their role as child bearers but also **in their ability to take bold and vital action at critical moments**.

- more over

Rivqah's actions will later find an echo in Ruth's leaving her father, mother, and land of her own accord [Ruth 1:16-17]. When Ruth joins her fate with that of her mother-in-law, Naomi, and subsequently marries Naomi's kinsman, Bo'az, Ruth, too, contributes to fulfilling the national destiny, in that King David would be the future offspring of that union.

The apparent role of chance in both stories, as expressed by the Hebrew verb קרה *q-r-h* ["occur, happen"], links the book of Ruth and the story of Rivqah. The servant, standing at the well upon his arrival at Charan, requests of God

קְרֵה נָא לְפָנַי הַיּוֹם

please bring good fortune to me this day [Genesis 24:12],

while of Ruth it is written

וַיִּקֶר מִקְרֶהָ חֶלְקַת הַשָּׂדֶה לְבֹעַז

as it just so happened, it was
the piece of land belonging to Bo'az [Ruth 2:3].

"Luck," in the form of Divine Providence, seems to direct the fate of both these women. And the players in this drama recognize that fact. When the servant learns Rivqah's identity, he at once blesses God, saying

בָּרוּךְ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי אֲדֹנִי אַבְרָהָם אֲשֶׁר לֹא עָזַב חַסְדּוֹ וַאֲמִתּוֹ מֵעִם אֲדֹנִי

blessed is The Eternal One, the God of my master Abraham, Whose faithful kindness has not deserted my master [Genesis 24:27].

Likewise, when Naomi learns where Ruth gleaned, she pronounces a similar blessing:

בָּרוּךְ הוּא לַיהוָה אֲשֶׁר לֹא עָזַב חַסְדּוֹ

blessed be he of The Eternal One, Who has not failed in kindness [Ruth 2:20].



Ruth Gleaning in Bo'az's Field
by James Tissot, 1896

הֲתֵלְכִי עִם הָאִישׁ הַזֶּה וַתֹּאמֶר אֵלֵךְ - **נתנה בטחונה על אביה שבשמים**

Q) Midrash Tanna d'Bei EliYahu Rabbah 25:7 - "'Will you go with this man?', to which she replied 'I will go'" - **she put her trust in her Celestial Parent**,

בשכר שתפסה רחל את בלהה והעלתה למטתו של יעקב

for the same reward that accrued to Racheil[, when, in the face of her persistent infertility, she took steps to help secure the destiny of her people by] sending her maid-servant Bilhah to Jacob's bed [Genesis 30:3-8];

בשכר שתפסה לאה את זלפה והעלתה למטתו של יעקב

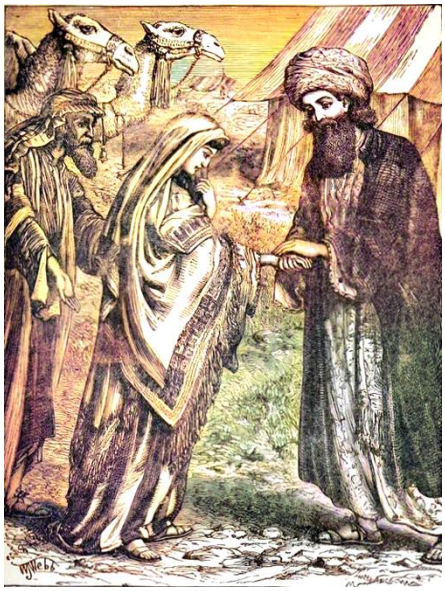
for the same reward that accrued to Lei'ah, when [she enlarged the destiny of her people, beyond the four sons and a daughter she had already borne, by] sending her maid-servant Zil-

- continued

pah to Jacob's bed [Genesis 30:9-13, giving her the merit thereby to subsequently birth two more of her own].

לכך גילגל הקב״ה **והוציא את ישראל ממצרים בשביל מעשה שרה ורבקה ורחל ולאה** לכך נאמר אֱלֹהִים מוֹשִׁיב יְחִידִים בַּיְתָה וגו׳

In was on account of all of them that The Holy And Blessed One changed the course of history and **brought the Israelites out of Egypt— because of the deeds of Sarah, Rivqah, Racheil, and Lei'ah**. Therefore it is said in Scripture: "God restores the lowly to their home[, bringing the captive out to freedom" - Psalm 68:7].



Genesis 24:67 –

וַיְבִאֶהָ יִצְחָק הָאֹהֱלָה שָׂרָה אִמּוֹ
*Then Isaac **brought her***
into the tent of his mother, Sarah.

וַיִּקַּח אֶת רִבְקָה וַתְּהִי לוֹ לְאִשָּׁה
***Thereby, taking** Rivqah to become his wife,*

וַיֶּאֱהָבֶהָ **וַיִּנָּחֵם** יִצְחָק אַחֲרֵי אִמּוֹ
and loving her**, Isaac **was comforted
for the loss of his mother.

טעם וַיֶּאֱהָבֶהָ וַיִּנָּחֵם ירמוז שהיה מצטער מאד על אמו ורחק ממנו מנחם עד שנחם באשתו באהבתו אותה

R) RaMBaN (Bonastruc da Porta, 1194-1270) - The significance of "**he loved her and he was comforted**" is to intimate that he had been profoundly grieved on account of his mother, with consolation far from him— until he was comforted by his wife, and by his love for her.

כי מה טעם שיזכיר הכתוב אהבת האיש באשתו ואונקלוס פירש וַיְבִאֶהָ יִצְחָק הָאֹהֱלָה והנה היא שָׂרָה אִמּוֹ

What purpose otherwise would there be, for Scripture to mention the man's love for his wife? [The Aramaic translation of] Onkelos renders it "'Then Isaac brought her into the tent' and behold she was [in the place of his heart previously held by] 'his mother, Sarah'."

ולכן הזכיר האהבה כי **מפני צדקתה וכשרון מעשיה אהבה** ונחם בה

That is why it mentions the "love"— because **it was on account of** [Rivqah's] **righteousness, and the aptness of her worthy deeds, that he loved her** and was comforted by them.

וכך הזכירו בבראשית רבה **עד שלא מתה שרה היתה מצויה**

Therefore the Midrash Genesis Rabbah mentions [that the birth of Rivqah] **had been Divinely provided for, prior to the death of Sarah**.

- more over

S) Samson Raphael Hirsch (1808-1888) *Uebersetzung und Erklärung des Pentateuchs* - "He took her . . . she became his wife . . . and he loved her" - Here we have a character trait which, thank Heaven, has not vanished from among the descendants of Abraham and Sarah, Isaac and Rivqah: **the more she became his wife, the more he loved her**.

When marriages are made on the basis of what is popularly described as "love," we see how dull and empty everything seems after marriage, with each new step into the future bringing new disillusionment.

By contrast, Jewish marriages are contracted not on the basis of passion but on the strength of reason and judgment as to whether the young partners are suited to each other— and this is why **their love only grows as they come to know each other better**.

PRESENTATION NOTES for this session –

WARM-UP: no way in Biblical Hebrew to say "yes"
(or, in this week's wedding context, "I do")

Is the declaration of Rivqah's family ("she's all yours; take her away")
a) awed acceptance of Divine Providence at work,
or
b) B.S. hyperbole of Near Eastern business?

similar pronouncements
opening gambit in a negotiation

an exercise in plausible deniability

negotiation began with Rivqah's family alone,
but servant's question presupposes that decision is the bride's

family present's Rivqah with the choice:
actualize or to nullify their tentative initial…

…and even then, it's only effected "on approval.

presupposition of consensual betrothal regional norm,
but it established Jewish norm:
- in *k'tubah* (וצביאת מרת פלונית)
- in procession (no one "gives away" the bride)
- under *chuppah* (he cannot put the ring on)

Tradition draws our attention to the scope of Rivqah's commitment, willingly accepting of her own initiative the groom-- and the destiny-- God had chosen for her
(even to the disadvantage of a family whose dedication to self-service is amply demonstrated elsewhere)

This conditions our presumptions about marriage,
establishing betrothal only for a daughter who is of age,
and not without her knowledge and permission

Divine Providence is still involved in the assignment of life-partners--
for all of us, not just the primeval Patriarchs and Matriarchs

TWO CORROLARIES:

1) marriage ("blending together") arranged On High is an ongoing process, needing serious and ongoing work here below
2) Because the process bringing us together may look like random chance, it takes a person of imagination and spirit to recognize and acknowledge the God's Hand

In both those senses, the willingness to grasp destiny by the horns for the larger good-- along the lines of Pirqei Avot 3:15, הכל צפוי והרשות נתונה-- is the index of the greatness not just of Rivqah but of her nieces and successors, the subsequent Matriarchs of Israel, each of whom in turn has the moral courage to say as Rivqah does: אֵלֵךְ "I will go."

And the courage of "going"— taking the risk of stepping away from family and under the *chuppah*— is what makes marriage work.

That commitment goes both ways:
the groom likewise takes the risk
of "leaving his father and his mother, and cleaving to his wife" [Gen 2:24]

But it is not the gratification of becoming בשר אחד that makes marriage work;
it is the act of consistently and progressively <u>being</u> married
that makes love happen.