

**1.** The explanation is simple and unexpected. Throughout the story of Abraham and Sarah, God promises them two things: children and a land. The promise of the land (“Rise, walk in the land throughout its length and breadth, for I will give it to you,” Gen. 13:17) is repeated no less than seven times. The promise of children occurs four times. Abraham’s descendants will be “a great nation” (Gen. 12:2), as many as “the dust of the earth” (Gen. 13:16), and “the stars in the sky” (Gen. 15:5); he will be the father not of one nation but of many (Gen. 17:5).

Despite this, when Sarah dies, Abraham has not a single inch of land that he can call his own, and he has only one child who will continue the covenant, Isaac, who is currently unmarried. Neither promise has been fulfilled. Hence the extraordinary detail of the two main stories in Chayei Sarah: the purchase of land and the finding of a wife for Isaac. There is a moral here, and the Torah slows down the speed of the narrative as it speeds up the action, so that we will not miss the point.

*God promises, but we have to act.* God promised Abraham the land, but he had to buy the first field. God promised Abraham many descendants, but Abraham had to ensure that his son was married, and to a woman who would share the life of the covenant, so that Abraham would have, as we say today, “Jewish grandchildren.”

R' Sacks Z"L - <https://www.rabbisacks.org/covenant-conversation/chayei-sarah/beginning-the-journey/>

## **2. Genesis 23:16**

Avraham accepted Ephron’s terms. Avraham paid out to Ephron the money that he had named in the hearing of the Bnei Chet—four hundred shekels of silver at the going merchants’ rate.

## **בראשית כ"ג:ט"ז**

וַיִּשְׁמַע אַבְרָהָם אֶל-עֶפְרוֹן וַיִּשְׁקַל אַבְרָהָם  
לְעֶפְרוֹן אֶת-הַכֶּסֶף אֲשֶׁר דִּבֶּר בְּאָזְנֵי בְנֵי-חֵת  
אַרְבַּע מֵאוֹת שֶׁקֶל כֶּסֶף עֹבֵר לְסַחֵר׃

## **3. Rashi on Genesis 23:16:1**

AND ABRAHAM WEIGHED TO EPHRON [THE SILVER] — The name Ephron is written defectively (without the ך) to indicate that there was something missing in Ephron viz, sincerity — because he promised much but did not do even the very least (Bava Metzia 87a): He took from him big Shekels, viz., centenaria (worth a full 100 smaller units) as it is said, “money current with the merchant” which means, such coins as were everywhere accepted as worth a full Shekel — for there are places where their Shekels are of large size, centenaria; old French Centenars (cf. Ruth R. 7).

## **רש"י על בראשית כ"ג:ט"ז:א'**

וישקל אברהם לעפרון. חסר וי"ו; לפי  
שאמר הרבה, ואפלו מעט לא עשה (בבא  
מציעא פ"ז), שנטל ממנו שקלים גדולים  
שהו קנטרין, שנטל עבר לסחר,  
שמתקבלים בשקל בכל מקום (שם ובכורות  
ג'), ויש מקום ששקליהו גדולים, שהו  
קנטרין צנטינא"רש בלע"ז:

## **4. Genesis 24:17-19**

(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.

## **בראשית כ"ד:י"ז-י"ט**

(יז) וַיָּרֵץ הַעֶבֶד לְקִרְאָתָהּ וַיֹּאמֶר הַגְּמִיאֵנִי  
נָא מֵעֵט-מַיִם מִכַּדְּי׃ (יח) וַתֹּאמֶר שְׂתֵה  
אֲדֹנָי וַתְּמַהֵר וַתִּנְדֹּף כַּדָּהּ עַל-יָדָהּ וַתִּשְׁקֶהוּ׃

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

(יט) ותכל להשקותו ותאמר גם לגמליה  
אשאב עד אם-כלו לשתת.

**5. Genesis 18:4-7**

(4) Let a little water be brought; bathe your feet and recline under the tree. (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.” (6) Abraham hastened into the tent to Sarah, and said, “Quick, three seahs of choice flour! Knead and make cakes!” (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.

**בראשית י"ח:ד-ז**

(ד) יקח-נא מעט-מים ורחצו רגליכם והשענו  
תחת העץ. (ה) ואקחה פת-לחם וסעדו  
לבכם אחר תעברו כיעל-כן עברתם  
על-עבדכם ויאמרו כן תעשה פאשר דברת.  
(ו) וימהר אברהם האלה אל-שרה ויאמר  
מהר! שלש סאים קמח סלת לושי ועשי  
עגות. (ז) ואליה-בקר רץ אברהם ויקח  
בן-בקר רה וטוב ויתן אליה-הנער וימהר  
לעשות אתו.

**6. Genesis 24:29**

Now Rebekah had a brother whose name was Laban. Laban ran out to the man at the spring—

**בראשית כ"ד:כ"ט**

ולרבקה אח ושמו לבן וירץ לבן אל-האיש  
החוצה אל-העין.

**7. Rashi on Genesis 24:29:1**

AND HE RAN — Why did he run and what did he run for? (The next verse explains why). AND IT CAME TO PASS WHEN HE SAW THE RING —he said, “This must be a rich man”, and he had an eye to his money.

**רש"י על בראשית כ"ד:ט"א**

וירץ. למה רץ ועל מה רץ? ויהי כראות את  
הנזם, אמר עשיר הוא זה, ונתן עיניו בממון:

**8. Genesis 24:50**

Then Laban and Bethuel answered, “The matter was decreed by the LORD; we cannot speak to you bad or good.

**בראשית כ"ד:נ**

ויען לבן ובתואל ויאמרו מה יצא הדבר לא נוכל דבר  
אליה רע או-טוב.

**9. Rashi on Genesis 24:50:1**

THEN LABAN AND BETHUEL ANSWERED —He (Laban) was a wicked person and so rushed in to answer before his father.

**רש"י על בראשית כ"ד:נ:א**

ויען לבן ובתואל. רשע היה, וקפץ להשיב לפני אביו:

**10. Genesis 24:14**

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.”

**בראשית כ"ד:י"ד**

והיה הנער אשר אמר אליה הטי-נא כדה  
ואשתה ואמרה שתה וגם-גמליה אשקה אתה  
הכחת לעבדה ליצחק ובה אדע כיעשית חסד  
עם-אדני.

### **11. Rashi on Genesis 24:14:1**

אתה הכחת HER THOU HAST APPOINTED — She is fit for him since she will be charitable and will therefore be worthy of admission into the house of Abraham. The word הכחת means selected; old French approuvest; English thou hast selected.

### **רש"י על בראשית כ"ד:י"ד:א'**

אתה הכחת. ראוייה היא לו שתהא גומלת חסדים, וכדאי לקנא בביתו של אברהם; ולשון הכחת בררת, אפרו"בישט בלע"ו:

### **12. Genesis 24:64**

Raising her eyes, Rebekah saw Isaac. She alighted from the camel

### **בראשית כ"ד:ס"ד**

ותשא רבקה את עיניה ותרא את יצחק ותפל מעל הגמל:

### **13. Haamek Davar on Genesis 24:64:2**

Because of fear and humility, as if she understood that she was not fitting to be a wife to him (Yitzchak) and from then, fear entered her heart. She was not with Yitzchak like Sara was with Avraham or Rachel with Yaakov...

### **העמק דבר על בראשית כ"ד:ס"ד:ב'**

ותקח הצעיף ותתכס. מרוב פחד ובושה כמו שמבינה שאינה ראויה להיות לו לאשה ומאז והלאה נקבע בלבה פחד. ולא היתה עם יצחק כמו שרה עם אברהם. ורחל עם יעקב...

### **14. Aznaim L'Torah**

Yitzchak loved Eisav... and Rivka loved Yaakov. Yitzchak was a 'complete/pure offering' and did not experience any trickery or deception in his father's house. When Eisav would ask him how to tithe the straw - he believed in his righteousness. Rivka however, saw trickery in Aram and the house of her father. Therefore, she was able to distinguish between good and bad and recognized Eisav.

### **אזנים לתורה על בראשית כ"ה:כ"ח**

ויאהב יצחק את עשו... ורבקה אוהבת את יעקב. יצחק היה "עולה תמימה" ולא ראה בבית אביו און ומרמה, וכשעשו שאל אותו איך מעשרין את התבן, - האמין בצדקתו. אבל רבקה ראתה בארם ובבית אביה תוך ומרמה ולפיכך ידעה להבחין בין טוב לרע, והכירה את עשו

### **15. Pirkei Avot 1:2**

Shimon the Righteous was one of the last of the men of the great assembly. He used to say: the world stands upon three things: the Torah, the Temple service, and the practice of acts of piety.

### **משנה אבות א'ב'**

שמעון הצדיק היה משירי כנסת הגדולה. הוא היה אומר, על שלשה דברים העולם עומד, על התורה ועל העבודה ועל גמילות חסדים: