

The Pardes Center for Jewish Educators presents

# An Interactive PARSHA EXPERIENCE



**Parsha:** Chaye Sarah

**Title:** In Search of a Wife for Yitzhak

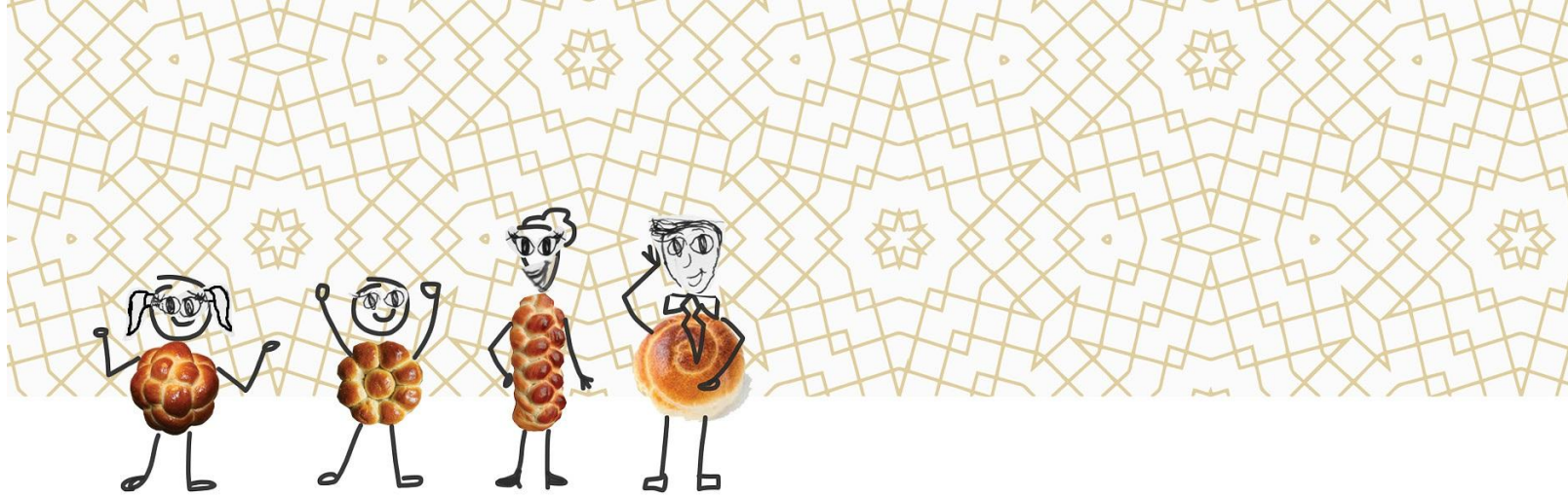
**Contributor:** Aviva Golbert, Director of the Pardes Center for Jewish Educators

## The Parsha at First Glance

### Spotlight on the Parsha:

At the beginning of *Parshat Chaye Sarah* – which, weirdly enough, actually means "The Life of Sarah" – Avraham's wife Sarah dies at the very old age of 127.

Avraham, also quite old at that time, feels that he has been blessed with a full, wonderful life and has just one more thing to settle: finding a wife for his son,



Yitzhak. But Avraham doesn't want just *any* wife for Yitzhak – he wants someone very special. In fact, he wants someone *so* special that he feels the need to make sure Yitzhak doesn't marry a local woman from Canaan, since they don't follow the same practices or have the same good values as Avraham and family. So he asks his most trusted servant – basically his butler – to take a long trip back to Aram Nahara'im, where Avraham was originally from, and find a wife there for Yitzhak.

### Zooming In:

The butler, whom tradition identifies as Eliezer, spends days and days on the road. He knows that the woman he is looking for must be very special. She must have the same good values that Avraham and his family hold close. Will he be able to find someone like that?

When he arrives at the edge of town, he prays to God:

יב ויאמר--יהוה אלהי אדני אברהם, הקרה נא לפני היום; ועשה חסד עם אדני אברהם:

יג הנה אנכי נצב על-עין המים; ובנות אנשי העיר יצאת לשאב מים:

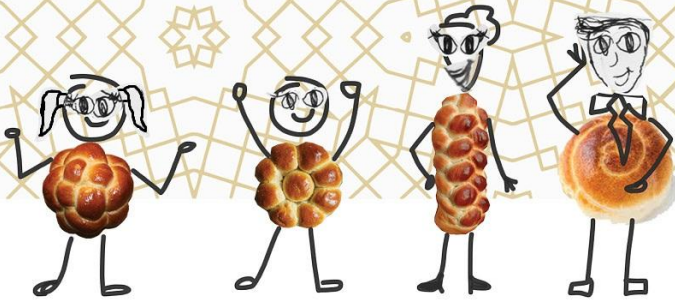
יד והיה הנער אשר אמר אליה הטי-נא כדך ואשתה, ואמרה שתה, וגם-גמליך אשקה--אתה הכחת לעבדך ליצחק, ובה אדע כי-עשית חסד עם-אדני:

**12** And he said, “O Lord, God of my master Avraham, grant me good fortune this day, and deal graciously with my master Avraham:

**13** Here I stand by the spring as the daughters of the townsmen 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 Yitzhak. Thereby shall I know that You have dealt graciously with my master.”





## Questions for Consideration:

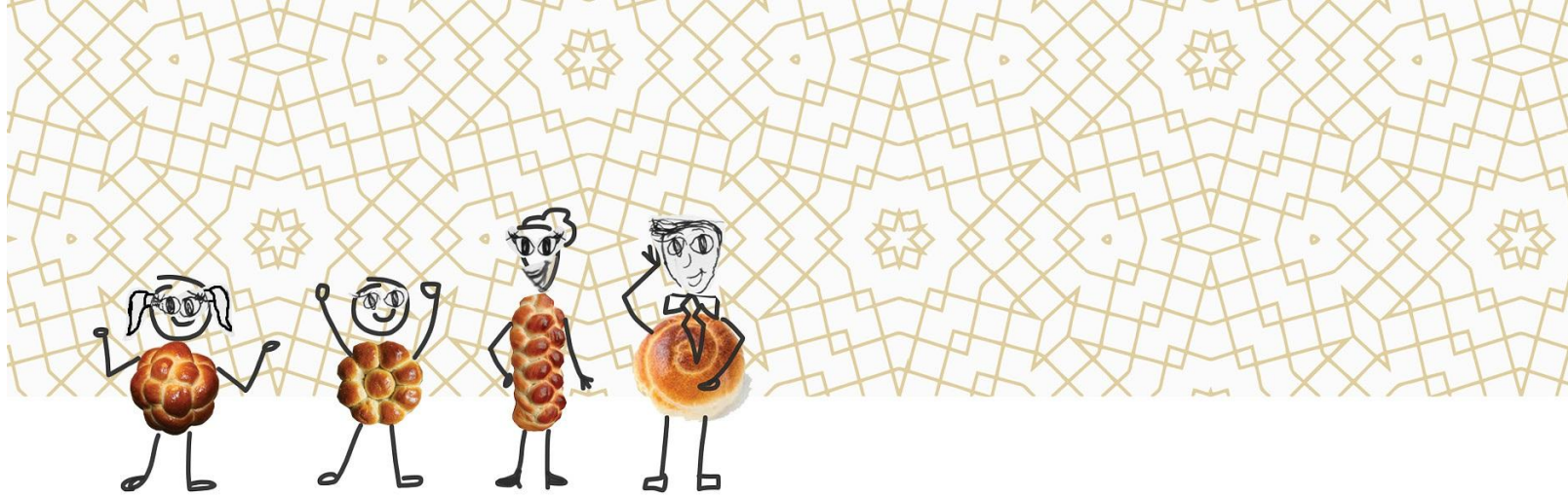
- Why do you think Eliezer specifically prays for a woman who will offer both him and his camels a drink? What would that mean about her? What would it mean if she only offered him a drink but not the camels? What would it mean if she offered to *sell* him water?
- Based on Avraham and Eliezer's choices and actions in the *parsha* so far, what values do they seem to hold dear?

## The Parsha Through Another Lens

### Parsha Poetry:

The poet, Shel Silverstein, wrote a poem called "In Search of Cinderella" (if need be, you might retell the story of Cinderella for context before reading the poem aloud):

From dusk to dawn,  
From town to town,  
Without a single clue,  
I seek the tender, slender foot  
To fit this crystal shoe.  
From dusk to dawn,  
I try it on  
Each damsel that I meet.  
And I still love her so, but oh,  
I've started hating feet.



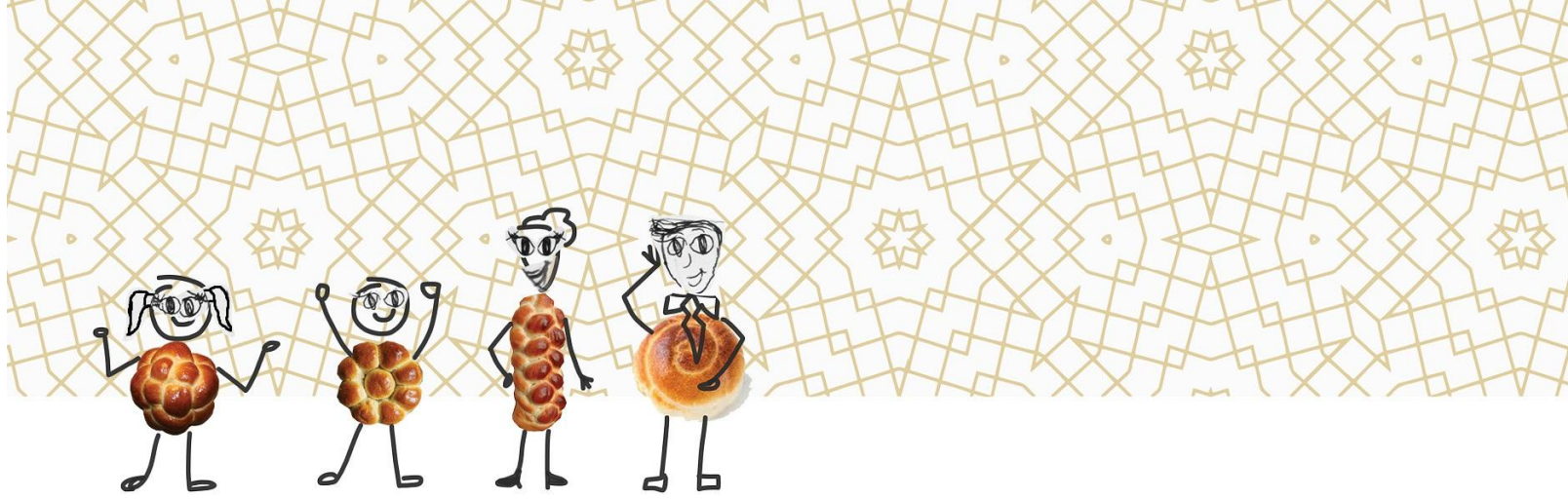
### Questions for Discussion and Reflection:

- a) Who is speaking in this poem? Why has the speaker started hating feet by the end of the poem?
- b) How do you think Eliezer feels about the mission he has been given? How would you feel if you were in his shoes? Try to imagine that you are him, on his journey:
  1. What do you see around you? Does the scenery change as you travel farther and farther from home? Who do you meet on this journey?
  2. How do you feel about this mission? Do you have one main feeling or maybe some mixed emotions? What are they?
  3. Are you a servant who came with Avraham from his home country to Canaan – meaning, is this a trip back home to a place you never thought you'd visit again? How does that feel? Or are you a Canaanite servant of Avraham? If so, how does this mission make you feel?

### Crafting Our Own Poems:

Again, imagine you are Eliezer going on the journey, searching for the perfect woman to be Yitzhak's wife. How do you feel? What might you be nervous about? Excited about? What do you think you might start to hate by the end of the journey (like Prince Charming hating feet)? What might you be most looking forward to back home?

Make up a poem as a family that starts just like Silverstein's poem, in the voice of a traveling Eliezer. You might have each family member add a line in turn! Begin with:



From dusk to dawn,  
From town to town,  
Without a single clue,  
I seek...

**Shabbat Shalom!**