

## Spotlight on...Avraham and Ephron

Parashat Chayei Sarah opens with the news that Sarah died at the age of 127. Avraham mourns for Sarah, and then approaches the Hittites to ask them to sell him a burial plot. Avraham opens his request with an interesting choice of words in Chapter 23 pasuk 4:

גֵר־וְתוֹשֵׁב אֲנִי עִמָּכֶם תְּנוּ לִי אֶחְזֵית־קֶבֶר עִמָּכֶם וְאֶקְבְּרָה מִתּוֹ מִלְפָּנַי:

“I am a *ger* and *toshav* among you; sell me a burial site among you, that I may remove my dead for burial.”

There are many different ways to translate this pasuk. The main reason is because *ger* and *toshav* mean different things! *Ger* means stranger, and *toshav* means resident. It seems confusing to say that Avraham could be both at the same time, so some commentaries (like the Rashbam) understand it to refer to one status - that Avraham was from a foreign land and now living amongst them (some would call it a “resident alien”). However, other commentaries (like Rashi) understand Avraham as saying something else - that he is either a stranger OR a resident, and they have to decide how they want to treat him. After a lot of back and forth, Ephron the Hittite agrees to sell Avraham Ma’arat Hamachpela so that he can bury Sarah.

### Questions:

1. According to positions like the Rashbam - that Avraham here is speaking out himself as one status - why do you think that Avraham would begin his request to purchase land this way? Why would being a resident alien affect Ephron’s decision to sell Avraham the land?
2. According to positions like Rash - that Avraham is saying that they should treat him like either a stranger OR a resident - why would Avraham begin his request to purchase the land this way? Do you think Ephron would be more willing to sell him the land if Avraham were a stranger, or a resident?
3. Who do you think is a stranger today? Who is a resident? How do they get treated differently?

BONUS QUESTION!!! Who are the 9 people buried in the Ma’arat Hamachpela? Email your answer to [MaharatRuth@ostns.org](mailto:MaharatRuth@ostns.org) to win a free ice cream!!!