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Multiple Methodologies of Interpretation in The Book of Genesis

An Adult Education Curriculum

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Multiple Methodologies of Interpretation in the Book of Genesis[1]
Introduction

Goals

This curriculum consists of eleven units which can be taught to adult learners. As a course it consists of ten different methodologies that can be utilized to analyze the Biblical text plus an evaluation unit at the end of the course. Each unit has a brief overview of the specific methodology to be presented. The Book of Genesis is the basic text to be studied. For each methodology, participants will analyze the Biblical text utilizing that specific approach. We will look at the statements of many of the experts in these methodologies and utilize their exegeses on a specific Genesis tale.

This curriculum can be utilized in various ways. It can be approached one unit each session and the instructor can choose which materials to be used that session. Alternatively, the instructor may choose to do a more in depth study of each subject over several sessions and thus there are numerous examples provided in many of the units. The instructor may choose to have the participants do outside reading in advance of the class or they may read the material together in class.

Rationale for this offering

The study of Torah has always been of major importance in Judaism. For some *Torah lishmah*, study of Torah for its own sake, is the highest value in all of Judaism. In the Mishnah we learn about qualities which are beyond measure such as "honoring one's parents, charity and making peace."[2] It is here that we find the statement of our sages that "the study of the Torah is equal to them all."[3] This is recited each morning in the *Shacharit* service. When we look at the history of Jewish education, we find that the study of Torah has always been central to the education of the Jew and that his learning did not end with Bar Mitzvah as it does with some today.

In the introduction to Nehama Leibowitz's book *New Studies in Bereshit*, we find the following statement she made concerning her students. This quotation comes from a letter that she sent to the students who studied with her in a weekly series of "teach-yourself studies" which she did over a period of eleven years. She found that people studied Torah for its own sake.

> I am enthralled by this vast army of old and young, mothers and girls, teachers male and female, clerks and laborers, veterans and newcomers of all communities, hundreds of thousands (literally!) studying Torah for its own sake. For our joint studies involved no certificates, examinations, marks, prizes; no credits, scholarships, income-tax rebates but simply the joy so deep of the one who studies Torah.[4]

In an article discussing the values of Jewish education Abraham Joshua Heschel states the following about the Bible:

> Our claim is that without being related to the words of the Bible, a Jew ceases to exist spiritually as a Jew; that, in order to retain our likeness, we must learn to be attached to

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[1] I want to thank my senior project advisors, Dr. Sarah Lieberman and Dr. Livia Selmanowitz Straus, who read through this curriculum and made valuable suggestions as well as corrections. I also want to thank Rabbi Dr. David Greenstein, our faculty advisor for the senior project, whose insights and comments were also incorporated into this curriculum.

[2] Mishnah, *Peah* 1.1.

[3] Ibid., *Peah* 1.1.

[4] Nehama Leibowitz, *New Studies in Bereshit*, Jerusalem: Hemed Press, p. XIV

> the words created in the likeness of the spirit of God. Our ability to respond to the living God, depends, to a large degree, upon our ability to be sensitive to the presence of God in the Bible. . . Surely *Talmud Torah* is vital, and the advice to study is not hard to give. Yet the tragedy is that our generation does not know how to study, how to relate itself to the classical sources of our tradition.[5]

The goal of this course is to provide adult learners with skills to study and relate to our oldest and most sacred text, the Torah.

Description of curriculum topics:

Unit 1 – Rabbinic Interpretation

This unit focuses on Chapters 1 and 2 of Genesis and the creation of the world. We will look at this text through rabbinic commentaries. Participants will be exposed to the concepts of *peshat* and *midrash.* We will study *midrashim* written over a period of 1200 years. Participants will be exposed to the aggadah found in the Talmud as well as *Genesis Rabbah, Legends of the Jews, Midrash ha-Gadol, Midrash ha-Hefes, Nur al-Zahan, Pesikta De-Rab Kahana, Siraj al-Uqul, Tanna Debe Eliahu, and Tz'enah Ur'enah.*

Unit 2 - Second Temple Period Commentators

This unit focuses on Chapters 2 and 3 of Genesis and the story of Adam and Eve. We will look at this text through the eyes commentaries of the Second Temple period. The participants will take part in a trial of Adam, Eve, and the serpent by taking on the roles of the different Second Temple commentators who will appear as witnesses to the trial. The participants will gain an appreciation of the writings of different scholars whose work appears in texts such as the *Pseudepigrapha* and *Apocrypha.* The philosophy of Philo is also included.

Unit 3 - Documentary Hypothesis

In the 19th century scholars began to look at the Biblical text with critical eyes and posited that the Bible was not dictated to Moses at Mt. Sinai, but was a text that included the contributions of a number of different authors. This unit will look at this theory of Biblical criticism and review statements of a number of these scholars regarding the Documentary Hypothesis. The Biblical text that will be studied is the Noah story. In this unit a chapter in Richard Elliot Friedman's *Who Wrote the Bible* illustrates what could be seen as seams in the Noah story. Accordingly, he presents the Noah story as separated by different authors. We will also go back to Chapters 1 and 2 of Genesis to review the creation story and look at some of the language of creation which is repeated in the Noah story.

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[5] Abraham Heschel, "The Values of Jewish Education", pp. 24-25.

Unit 4 – Visual Imagery

In recent years some people have begun to use visual imagery to personally experience the Biblical text. In this unit we will use Chapter 12, *Lech Lecha*, as the text. Gerald Epstein's technique of visualization will be taught to the participants. They will then be led through a visualization utilizing the concept of leaving one's home and going into the unknown. The concept of faith in God will be central in this unit. After the participants experience their personal *Lech Lecha*, they will be given time to either write or collage their experience. The Biblical text will be studied, as well as related *midrashim* found in Louis Ginsberg's *Legends of the Jews*.

Unit 5 - Form Criticism

Form criticism is a methodology which was developed by Hermann Gunkel who was a scholar that expanded on the Documentary Hypothesis. We will look at Gunkel's method of analyzing the text through form critical genres by looking at the three "Wife as Sister" stories in Genesis. Gunkel states that "every genre shows its individuality in defined characteristics."[6] By utilizing Gunkel's theory, we will study two stories involving Abraham and Sarah and a third involving their son Isaac with his wife Rebecca. Gunkel's theory is helpful in explaining how it is that the story appears three times. Two *midrashim* concerning the first story will also be used to illustrate how the rabbis sought to understand this story. We will also look at Ramban's explanation. Susan Niditch, the author of *Underdogs and Tricksters*, provides some interesting insights, as well, in her explanation of the story as part of the genre of the trickster.

Unit 6 - Feminist Criticism

Biblical texts which have received attention by feminist critics are Chapters 16 and 21: 9-16 of Genesis, the stories of the relationship between Sarai and Hagar. This unit will discuss feminist criticism methodology, as we explore explanations of Phyllis Trible, Elyse Goldstein, and Tikva Frymer-Kensky. Trible explains that "it is not a narrow focus upon women, but rather a critique of culture in light of misogyny. This critique affects the issues of race and class, psychology, ecology, and human sexuality."[7] Frymer-Kensky informs us that "the first impact of women's studies on Biblical studies has been the recognition that the Bible is a patriarchal document from a patriarchal society."[8] We will look at a number of feminist commentaries and articles and explore

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[6] John H. Hayes, *An Introduction to Old Testament Study.* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1979), p. 127.

[7] Phyliis Trible, *God and the Rhetoric of Sexuality*, (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1978), p. 7.

[8] Tikva Frymer-Kensky, "The Bible and Women's Studies," in *Feminist Perspectives on Jewish Studies*, edited by Lynn Davidman and Shelly Tenebaum, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994), p. 17.

the relationship between Sarai and Hagar in these texts.

Unit 7 – Paper *Midrash*

In this unit we will explore Genesis 22 through Jo Milgram's workshop in visual theology. "The goal of the handmade *midrash* exercises is to awaken and nourish each individual's capacity for the creation of *midrash* by introducing to the study of Bible and religion a visual language that is parallel but antecedent to the language of words."[9] Participants will be taught this approach to text which combines text and personal *midrash* with art, discussion, and writing. We will begin with the study of the *Akedah* followed by some *midrashim* on the story. Students will then be exposed to art work that has depicted this story from *Genesis,* and then be asked to spend some time creating their own personal paper *midrash* on the story. These will be shared and discussed. Finally the students will have a writing exercise as part of this process.

Unit 8 - Mystical Interpretation

We will look at the Biblical text through the eyes of the mystic. This unit will focus on Genesis 28:10-22, Jacob and the ladder, with specific attention being paid to the words, "God was in this place and I did not know." In the Zohar we find a mystical commentary on each *parasha* in the Torah. We will look at what the Zohar teaches us about this verse. We will also look at a number of Hasidic masters to see how they interpreted the text.

Unit 9 - Medieval Jewish Biblical Interpretation

We will explore the world of Medieval Jewish Biblical interpretation. We will review the historical time period in order to understand the literary and spiritual approach of this interpretative methodology. The Biblical text that will be used will be *Genesis* 32:23-33, Jacob and his fight with the angel. Participants will be introduced to *Torat Chaim Mikraot Gedolot*: *Bereshit* as well as the translated works of Ibn Ezra, Rashi, Ramban and Sforno.

Unit 10 – Literary Criticism

This unit will introduce the method of looking at Biblical text through literary criticism. Robert Alter's *The Art of Biblical Narrative* will be used to explain this methodology. Harold Fisch's article "Ruth and the Structure of Covenant History will be utilized when we study the following texts: Lot and his daughters, Judah and Tamar, and The Book of Ruth. These texts basically tell a similar story and each story helps the reader understand the others. The extra benefit in using these texts is that Ruth comes from the line of Lot and his daughters, and Boaz from the line

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[9] Jo Milgrom, *Handmade Midrash: Workshops in Visual Theology*, (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society, 1992), p. 3.

of Judah and Tamar. Thus, we find that as we follow the genealogy of these two families, we end up with the Davidic line.

Unit 11 - Review and Evaluation

This unit will tie the entire course together. The instructor and participants will review feminist criticism, multiple authors, and *peshat* and *derash*. Then the participants will work together as a group reviewing a Biblical text, *Genesis* 24, the story of Abraham's servant and Rebecca at the well. We will look at this text from the four following methodological perspectives: form criticism, literary criticism, feminist criticism, and *peshat* and *derash*. The instructor will ask the participants to discuss the text and to break down the text into these different categories. Once we have done this as a group, the instructor will give the participants *Genesis* 29:1-28. The group will discuss the similarity of the texts with emphasis on the betrothal type-scene. After discussion, the participants will be asked to analyze *Genesis* 24 and *Genesis* 18:1-8. They will be provided with a number of questions based on some of the methodologies to assist them in their analysis. In this review of *Genesis* 24, a comparison will be made between Rebecca and her encounter with Abraham's servant and Abraham's encounter with the three angels in *Genesis* 18:1-8.

Unit 1: Rabbinic Interpretation

The Central Concept for the Lesson

This unit will focus on rabbinic interpretation found in various *midrashim*. Participants will be introduced to *midrash* written from 400 - 1430 C.E.

Goal: Participants will be able to analyze the Biblical text with the rabbinic *midrashic* methodology.

Objectives:
1. Participants will be able to summarize the methodology of rabbinic *midrash.*
2. Participants will be exposed to different rabbinic texts of *midrash* that look at the book of Genesis.
3. Participants will be able to summarize the *midrashim* concerning the story of the binding of Isaac.

Texts:

Babylonian Talmud
Genesis 1-2
Genesis Rabbah
Ein Yaakov
Legends of the Jews
Midrash ha-Gadol
Midrash ha-Hefetz
Nur al-Zahan
Pesikia De-Rab Kahana
Siraj al-Uqul
Tanna Debe Eliahu
Tz'enah Ur'enah

I. The *Midrashic* Method of Analysis

A. Discuss what constitutes a *midrash.*
   1. It is a homiletical method of interpretation of Biblical verses.
   2. It "endeavors to decipher and spell out the latent meanings of the text."[1]
   3. The *derash* method is acontextual because it disregards the historical, literary, and linguistic context of the text. It teaches values and ethics.
   4. This methodology goes back to at least the Second Temple Period. There are some scholars who believe that there are some parts of the Bible which are a d*erash* on other earlier parts of the text.

B. Discuss rabbinic *Midrash.*
   1. There are numerous collections of *midrashim* that were compiled at various times and by different authors and editors.
   2. "The great flowering *of midrash* was roughly between the years 400 and 1200 C.E."[2] Many of them belong to some of the great sages of the past.
   3. *Midrash,* preached in synagogues and in classes, was originally oral and later written down. The author was known as a *darshan* (preacher).

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[1] Edward Greenstein, *Back to the Sources*, edited by Barry W. Holtz, (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1984), p. 216.
[2] Barry Holtz, *Back to the Sources*, (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1984), p. 178.

4. One should think of *midrash* in two different ways.
    a. The word *midrash* means to search out and thus it is a process of interpreting.
    b. It is also refers to a collection of these interpretations.
5. There are two types of *midrash: halakhah* and *aggadah.*
    a. *Halakhah* is primarily concerned with codes of behavior and laws.
    b. *Aggadah* "is a looser and more wide-ranging term referring to narrative literature, parables, theological or ethical statements, and homilies. It is a kind of imaginative literature."[3]
6. Within *aggadah* there are a number of different types.
    a. Homiletical- these are basically fragments of ancient sermons that were later written down. *Pesikia de-Rab Kahana* is an example.
    b. Exegetical - A set of "short pithy comments on individual verses of the Bible, many of which may have been collected from a variety of sermons or public teachings of the various sages."[4] *Genesis Rabbah* is an example.
    c. Narrative - "there is little connection in a direct or organized fashion to the task of explicating the Bible, but instead there is occasion for stories and legends, either about individual rabbis or about Biblical characters."[5] *Pirkei De Rebbe Eliezer* is an example.
    d. Philosophic - philosophic interpretation of the Bible. This was done by the Yemenites and was influenced by the teachings of Maimonides.

C. Reading a *midrashic* text.
1. There are two major characteristics of *midrashic* style.
    a. Creative historiography - "the imaginative filling in of gaps, the search for reasons, the explication of meaning and motivation."[6]
    b. Creative philology - the rabbis used "puns and wordplays, reversals of letters and convergences of sounds."[7]
2. The first thing that one should do when reading a *midrash* is to try to discern the question with which the author is concerned. Is the author troubled or inspired by a certain text and why?
3. The author may be trying to fill in the gaps of the text. An example of this would be in the Cain and Abel story. The *darshan* would be searching to figure out why God preferred Abel's offering to Cain's.
4. There may be problems for the English reader because they are obviously going to miss the puns and wordplays that are in the Hebrew text.

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[3] Ibid., p. 178.
[4] Ibid., p. 186.
[5] Ibid., pp. 187-188.
[6] Ibid., p. 189.
[7] Ibid., p. 189.

5. "The Hebrew of the Bible differs from the Hebrew of rabbinic times, both in vocabulary usage and in points of syntax. The rabbis on occasion read Biblical Hebrew as if it were *Mishnaic* Hebrew, and thus they may discover problems where none actually exist."[8]
6. When reading a *midrash* it is important to read the entire verse that the *midrash* discusses. Often only the first part of the verse is quoted in the *midrash* and the *darshan* discusses the last part of the verse or the next verse.
7. The literary homily form of *midrash* structured "each chapter around three basic types of sermon forms.
    a. Proem (*petihta*) - Some believe that it may have been an introductory sermon preached in the synagogue immediately prior to the Torah reading. It usually began with a quotation from either Writings such as Job or Psalms. Then the *darshan* wove "a string of verbal connections in which he linked this 'verse from afar,' as it is termed, to the opening verse of the Torah reading of the day. . . and it culminated with the first verse of the Torah *parasha*."[9]
    b. Body (*gufa*) - It was more variable and less defined than a proem.
    c. Messianic peroration (*siyyum*)- The *darshan* would conclude with a message that would speak of the messianic era.
8. Rabbi Avraham, the son of the Rambam provides the following four categories of Scriptural interpretations
    a. *Derashot* that are actually to be understood in their literal plain sense meaning.
    b. *Derashot* that have interpretations which are both literal and also have a figurative meaning. "Since the Sages meant to convey the figurative rather than the plain meaning of these sayings, they couched them in such a way that their plain meaning represents the opposite of the figurative and true meaning."[10]
    c. This type has a simple meaning but it is so puzzling the one cannot understand it. It is easy with this type to reach the wrong conclusion because people tend to make hasty conclusions without questioning the true meaning.
    d. This type consists of interpretations of verses that are metaphoric in nature.

II. Text - *Genesis* 1-2

A. Participants will take turns reading the text.
B. Participants will discuss the text and its meaning.
    1. Each of the creation stories will be discussed.
    2. Particular attention will be paid to the creation of man and woman.

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[8] Ibid., p. 190.
[9] Ibid., p. 198.
[10] Jacob Ben Solomon, Ibn Habib, Yaakov Ibn Chaviv, Avraham Yaakar Finkel, *Ein Yaakov, The Ethical and Inspirational Teachings of the Talmud*, (New Jersey: Jason Aaronson, 1999), p. xxxii.

III. Reading of different *midrashim*

A. *Midrash Rabbah*
   1. It is a collection of writings by different authors collected by editors at different times. The estimated time that it was written is between 400 and 650 C.E. It was written in Hebrew.
   2. Participants will take turns reading each of the *midrashim.*
   3. Participants will discuss each *midrash* in relation to the Biblical text and determine what the author was trying to solve by writing the *midrash.*

B. *Midrash ha-Gadol*
   1. Origin
      a. "It is by far one of the longest *midrash* to come out of Yemen and is the only one without a single word of Arabic."[11]
      b. The author was David Adani who lived in Aden. He was a direct descendant of Maimonides and a leader of the Jews in Egypt.
      c. It was written in Yeminite in the middle of the fourteenth century.
   2. A participant will read the *midrash.*
   3. Participants will discuss the *midrash* in relation to the Biblical text and determine what the author was trying to solve by writing the *midrash.*

C. *Midrash ha-Hefetz*
   1. Origin
      a. It was written by Zekharya ha-Rofe who was a physician and was completed in the year 1430 C.E.
      b. It is Yemenite and is a philosophical *midrash* on the Torah.
   2. A participant will read the *midrash.*
   3. Participants will discuss the *midrash* in relation to the Biblical text and determine what the author was trying to solve by writing the *midrash.*

D. *Nur al-Zahan*
   1. Origin
      a. It was written in 1329 by Natan'el ben Yeshaya.
      b. It is the earliest Yemeni philosophical *midrash.*
      c. It has been suggested that the entire composition may have been written to provide an alternative philosophical interpretation of the Torah which did not threaten or contradict halakhah.
   2. Participants will take turns reading each *midrash.*
   3. Participants will discuss each *midrash* in relation to the Biblical text and determine what the author was trying to solve by writing the *midrash.*

E. *Siraj al-Uqul*
   1. Origin
      a. It was composed by Hoter ben Shlomo (Mansur bin Sulayman al-Dhamari) during the 15th century. It is written in Yeminite.
      b. It was written during the rift between the traditionalists and those committed to philosophy.
      c. There is no complete manuscript but rather only three fragments.

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[11] Yitzhak Tzvi Langermann, *Philosophical commentaries on the Torah: Yemenite Midrash,* (California: AltaMira Press, 1996) p. 267).

F. *Tanna Debe Eliyyahu: The Lore of the School of Elijah*
   1. Origin
      a. It was composed in Hebrew between the 3rd and 10th centuries.
      b. It does not appear as other compilations of *midrashim* but rather is a unified work that appears to be written by one author
      c. There is a detailed legendary account of the work's origin that attributes it to Elijah the prophet. According to the legend, the prophet dictated the two parts of the work over two separate periods to R. Anan, a Babylonian teacher and judge who lived in the third century C.E.
   2. Participants will take turns reading each of the *midrashim.*
   3. Participants will discuss each *midrash* in relation to the Biblical text and determine what the author was trying to solve by writing the *midrash.*

G. *Pesikta De-Rab Kahana*
   1. Origin
      a. The work is attributed to R. Kahana because he gathered, compiled, and edited it.
      b. It is made up of *pesikta'ot,* which were sermons or homilies that were delivered on Shabbat or on a feast day. These homilies usually were presented prior to the Torah reading.
      c. R. Kahana was a fifth century Palestinian sage. It was written in Hebrew.
   2. Participants will take turns reading each *midrash.*
   3. Participants will discuss each *midrash* in relation to the Biblical text and determine what the author was trying to solve by writing the *midrash.*

H. *Legends of the Jews*
   1. Origin
      a. Written by Louis Ginzberg and was published in 1909.
      b. He was recognized as the world's outstanding scholar in the field of Talmudic learning.
      c. Ginzberg found these *aggadot* in the *Apocrypha* and in the writings of the early Church Fathers.
      d. "*Legends of the Jews* is arguably the single most important contribution to the study of Rabbinic Aggadah in the modern period."[12]
      e. "It was the first comprehensive and critical attempt to analyze the legends and trace their development and place in both Jewish tradition and world folklore."[13]
   2. Participants will take turns reading by each reading a paragraph.
   3. Participants will discuss the *midrash* in relation to the Biblical text and determine what the author was trying to solve by writing the *midrash.*

I. *Tz'enah Ur'enah*
   1. Origin

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[12] David Stem, "Introduction to the 2003 Edition," found in *Legends of the Jews* by Louis Ginzberg, (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society, 2003), p. XV.
[13] Ibid., p. XVII.

a. It is an anthology of Torah interpretation and *midrashic* texts that was complied by Rabbi Yaakov ben Yitzchak Ashkenazi in the 17th century.

b. It was written in Yiddish and was used mostly by women as a review of the weekly Torah portion.

2. Participants will take turns reading.
3. Participants will discuss *midrash* in relation to the Biblical text and determine what the author was trying to solve by writing the *midrash.*

J. Babylonian Talmud

1. Origin

a. It was developed from about 200 to 500 C.E. in Babylonia.

b. The text is made up of the Mishnah and the Gemara. It was written in Hebrew and Aramaic.

1) "The Mishnah is the authorized codification of the oral or unwritten law which, on the basis of the written law contained in the Pentateuch, developed during the second Temple and down to the end of the second century of the common era."[14] The permanent transmission of the Oral Torah began to be organized within a century of the destruction of the Temple in 70 C.E. There was a fear that with the dispersion of the Jewish people outside of the land of Israel that the knowledge of the Oral Torah would be lost and thus it was decided that it would be recorded.

2) The Mishnah was codified by Rabbi Judah Ha-Nasi around the year 200 C.E. He classified most of the subjects of law into 6 categories, the Six Orders of the Mishnah. These orders were divided into smaller called *masekhets* or tractates. The tractates are divided into smaller units called *mishnayot* which deal with a specific *halakhic* issue.

3) The Gemara is a commentary on the Mishnah. There are two different sets of commentaries:

a) Jerusalem or Palestinian Talmud which was completed in the fifth century.

b) Babylonian Talmud was completed in the seventh century.

c. Although much of the text discusses Jewish law, there is *aggadic midrashim* found in the Talmud.

2. Participants will take turns reading.
3. Participants will discuss the *midrash* in relation to the Biblical text and determine what the author was trying to solve by writing this *midrash.*

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[14] Moses Mielziner, *Introduction to the Talmud,* (New York: Bloch Publishing Co., 1968), p. 4.

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בראשית

GENESIS

When God began to create[a] heaven and earth—2the earth being unformed and void, with darkness over the surface of the deep and a wind from[b] God sweeping over the water—3God said, "Let there be light"; and there was light. 4God saw that the light was good, and God separated the light from the darkness. 5God called the light Day, and the darkness He called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, a first day.[c]

6God said, "Let there be an expanse in the midst of the water, that it may separate water from water." 7God made the expanse, and it separated the water which was below the expanse from the water which was above the expanse. And it was so. 8God called the expanse Sky. And there was evening and there was morning, a second day.

9God said, "Let the water below the sky be gathered into one area, that the dry land may appear." And it was so. 10God called the dry land Earth, and the gathering of waters He called Seas. And God saw that this was good. 11And God said, "Let the earth sprout vegetation: seed-bearing plants, fruit trees of every kind on earth that bear fruit with the seed in it." And it was so. 12The earth brought forth vegetation: seed-bearing plants of every kind, and trees of every kind bearing fruit with the seed in it. And God saw that this was good. 13And there was evening and there was morning, a third day.

14God said, "Let there be lights in the expanse

בְּ רֵאשִׁית* בָּרָא אֱלֹהִים אֵת הַשָּׁמַיִם
וְאֵת הָאָרֶץ׃ 2 וְהָאָרֶץ הָיְתָה תֹהוּ וָבֹהוּ
וְחֹשֶׁךְ עַל־פְּנֵי תְהוֹם וְרוּחַ אֱלֹהִים
מְרַחֶפֶת עַל־פְּנֵי הַמָּיִם׃ 3 וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים
יְהִי אוֹר וַיְהִי־אוֹר׃ 4 וַיַּרְא אֱלֹהִים אֶת־
הָאוֹר כִּי־טוֹב וַיַּבְדֵּל אֱלֹהִים בֵּין הָאוֹר
וּבֵין הַחֹשֶׁךְ׃ 5 וַיִּקְרָא אֱלֹהִים | לָאוֹר יוֹם
וְלַחֹשֶׁךְ קָרָא לָיְלָה וַיְהִי־עֶרֶב וַיְהִי־בֹקֶר
יוֹם אֶחָד׃ פ
6 וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים יְהִי רָקִיעַ בְּתוֹךְ הַמָּיִם
וִיהִי מַבְדִּיל בֵּין מַיִם לָמָיִם׃ 7 וַיַּעַשׂ
אֱלֹהִים אֶת־הָרָקִיעַ וַיַּבְדֵּל בֵּין הַמַּיִם
אֲשֶׁר מִתַּחַת לָרָקִיעַ וּבֵין הַמַּיִם אֲשֶׁר
מֵעַל לָרָקִיעַ וַיְהִי־כֵן׃ 8 וַיִּקְרָא אֱלֹהִים
לָרָקִיעַ שָׁמָיִם וַיְהִי־עֶרֶב וַיְהִי־בֹקֶר יוֹם
שֵׁנִי׃ פ
9 וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים יִקָּווּ הַמַּיִם מִתַּחַת
הַשָּׁמַיִם אֶל־מָקוֹם אֶחָד וְתֵרָאֶה הַיַּבָּשָׁה
וַיְהִי־כֵן׃ 10 וַיִּקְרָא אֱלֹהִים | לַיַּבָּשָׁה אֶרֶץ
וּלְמִקְוֵה הַמַּיִם קָרָא יַמִּים וַיַּרְא אֱלֹהִים
כִּי־טוֹב׃ 11 וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים תַּדְשֵׁא הָאָרֶץ
דֶּשֶׁא עֵשֶׂב מַזְרִיעַ זֶרַע עֵץ פְּרִי עֹשֶׂה פְּרִי
לְמִינוֹ אֲשֶׁר זַרְעוֹ־בוֹ עַל־הָאָרֶץ וַיְהִי־כֵן׃
12 וַתּוֹצֵא הָאָרֶץ דֶּשֶׁא עֵשֶׂב מַזְרִיעַ זֶרַע
לְמִינֵהוּ וְעֵץ עֹשֶׂה פְּרִי אֲשֶׁר זַרְעוֹ־בוֹ
לְמִינֵהוּ וַיַּרְא אֱלֹהִים כִּי־טוֹב׃ 13 וַיְהִי־
עֶרֶב וַיְהִי־בֹקֶר יוֹם שְׁלִישִׁי׃ פ
14 וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים יְהִי מְאֹרֹת בִּרְקִיעַ

ב׳ רבתי לפי נוסחים המקובלים *v. 1.*

a *Others "In the beginning God created."*
b *Others "the spirit of."*
c *Others "one day."*

of the sky to separate day from night; they shall serve as signs for the set times—the days and the years; 15and they shall serve as lights in the expanse of the sky to shine upon the earth." And it was so. 16God made the two great lights, the greater light to dominate the day and the lesser light to dominate the night, and the stars. 17And God set them in the expanse of the sky to shine upon the earth, 18to dominate the day and the night, and to separate light from darkness. And God saw that this was good. 19And there was evening and there was morning, a fourth day.

20God said, "Let the waters bring forth swarms of living creatures, and birds that fly above the earth across the expanse of the sky." 21God created the great sea monsters, and all the living creatures of every kind that creep, which the waters brought forth in swarms, and all the winged birds of every kind. And God saw that this was good. 22God blessed them, saying, "Be fertile and increase, fill the waters in the seas, and let the birds increase on the earth." 23And there was evening and there was morning, a fifth day.

24God said, "Let the earth bring forth every kind of living creature: cattle, creeping things, and wild beasts of every kind." And it was so. 25God made wild beasts of every kind and cattle of every kind, and all kinds of creeping things of the earth. And God saw that this was good. 26And God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. They shall rule the fish of the sea, the birds of the sky, the cattle, the whole earth, and all the creeping things that creep on earth." 27And God created man in His image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. 28God blessed them and God said to them, "Be fertile and increase, fill the earth and master it; and rule the fish of the sea, the birds of the sky, and all the living things that creep on earth."

הַשָּׁמַיִם לְהַבְדִּיל בֵּין הַיּוֹם וּבֵין הַלָּיְלָה
וְהָיוּ לְאֹתֹת וּלְמוֹעֲדִים וּלְיָמִים וְשָׁנִים׃
15 וְהָיוּ לִמְאוֹרֹת בִּרְקִיעַ הַשָּׁמַיִם לְהָאִיר
עַל־הָאָרֶץ וַיְהִי־כֵן׃ 16 וַיַּעַשׂ אֱלֹהִים אֶת־
שְׁנֵי הַמְּאֹרֹת הַגְּדֹלִים אֶת־הַמָּאוֹר הַגָּדֹל
לְמֶמְשֶׁלֶת הַיּוֹם וְאֶת־הַמָּאוֹר הַקָּטֹן
לְמֶמְשֶׁלֶת הַלַּיְלָה וְאֵת הַכּוֹכָבִים׃ 17 וַיִּתֵּן
אֹתָם אֱלֹהִים בִּרְקִיעַ הַשָּׁמָיִם לְהָאִיר
עַל־הָאָרֶץ׃ 18 וְלִמְשֹׁל בַּיּוֹם וּבַלַּיְלָה
וּלְהַבְדִּיל בֵּין הָאוֹר וּבֵין הַחֹשֶׁךְ וַיַּרְא
אֱלֹהִים כִּי־טוֹב׃ 19 וַיְהִי־עֶרֶב וַיְהִי־בֹקֶר
יוֹם רְבִיעִי׃ פ
20 וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים יִשְׁרְצוּ הַמַּיִם שֶׁרֶץ נֶפֶשׁ
חַיָּה וְעוֹף יְעוֹפֵף עַל־הָאָרֶץ עַל־פְּנֵי רְקִיעַ
הַשָּׁמָיִם׃ 21 וַיִּבְרָא אֱלֹהִים אֶת־הַתַּנִּינִם*
הַגְּדֹלִים וְאֵת כָּל־נֶפֶשׁ הַחַיָּה | הָרֹמֶשֶׂת
אֲשֶׁר שָׁרְצוּ הַמַּיִם לְמִינֵהֶם וְאֵת כָּל־
עוֹף כָּנָף לְמִינֵהוּ וַיַּרְא אֱלֹהִים כִּי־
טוֹב׃ 22 וַיְבָרֶךְ אֹתָם אֱלֹהִים לֵאמֹר פְּרוּ
וּרְבוּ וּמִלְאוּ אֶת־הַמַּיִם בַּיַּמִּים וְהָעוֹף
יִרֶב בָּאָרֶץ׃ 23 וַיְהִי־עֶרֶב וַיְהִי־בֹקֶר יוֹם
חֲמִישִׁי׃ פ
24 וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים תּוֹצֵא הָאָרֶץ נֶפֶשׁ חַיָּה
לְמִינָהּ בְּהֵמָה וָרֶמֶשׂ וְחַיְתוֹ־אֶרֶץ לְמִינָהּ
וַיְהִי־כֵן׃ 25 וַיַּעַשׂ אֱלֹהִים אֶת־חַיַּת הָאָרֶץ
לְמִינָהּ וְאֶת־הַבְּהֵמָה לְמִינָהּ וְאֵת כָּל־
רֶמֶשׂ הָאֲדָמָה לְמִינֵהוּ וַיַּרְא אֱלֹהִים כִּי־
טוֹב׃ 26 וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים נַעֲשֶׂה אָדָם
בְּצַלְמֵנוּ כִּדְמוּתֵנוּ וְיִרְדּוּ בִדְגַת הַיָּם וּבְעוֹף
הַשָּׁמַיִם וּבַבְּהֵמָה וּבְכָל־הָאָרֶץ וּבְכָל־
הָרֶמֶשׂ הָרֹמֵשׂ עַל־הָאָרֶץ׃ 27 וַיִּבְרָא
אֱלֹהִים | אֶת־הָאָדָם בְּצַלְמוֹ בְּצֶלֶם
אֱלֹהִים בָּרָא אֹתוֹ זָכָר וּנְקֵבָה בָּרָא אֹתָם׃
28 וַיְבָרֶךְ אֹתָם אֱלֹהִים וַיֹּאמֶר לָהֶם
אֱלֹהִים פְּרוּ וּרְבוּ וּמִלְאוּ אֶת־הָאָרֶץ
וְכִבְשֻׁהָ וּרְדוּ בִּדְגַת הַיָּם וּבְעוֹף הַשָּׁמַיִם
וּבְכָל־חַיָּה הָרֹמֶשֶׂת עַל־הָאָרֶץ׃

חסר י׳ בתראה *v. 21.*

29 God said, "See, I give you every seed-bearing plant that is upon all the earth, and every tree that has seed-bearing fruit; they shall be yours for food. 30 And to all the animals on land, to all the birds of the sky, and to everything that creeps on earth, in which there is the breath of life, [I give] all the green plants for food." And it was so. 31 And God saw all that He had made, and found it very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.

29 וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים הִנֵּה נָתַתִּי לָכֶם אֶת־
כָּל־עֵשֶׂב ׀ זֹרֵעַ זֶרַע אֲשֶׁר עַל־פְּנֵי כָל־
הָאָרֶץ וְאֶת־כָּל־הָעֵץ אֲשֶׁר־בּוֹ פְרִי־עֵץ
זֹרֵעַ זָרַע לָכֶם יִהְיֶה לְאָכְלָה׃ 30 וּלְכָל־חַיַּת
הָאָרֶץ וּלְכָל־עוֹף הַשָּׁמַיִם וּלְכֹל ׀ רוֹמֵשׂ
עַל־הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר־בּוֹ נֶפֶשׁ חַיָּה אֶת־כָּל־יֶרֶק
עֵשֶׂב לְאָכְלָה וַיְהִי־כֵן׃ 31 וַיַּרְא אֱלֹהִים
אֶת־כָּל־אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה וְהִנֵּה־טוֹב מְאֹד וַיְהִי־
עֶרֶב וַיְהִי־בֹקֶר יוֹם הַשִּׁשִּׁי׃ פ

2 The heaven and the earth were finished, and all their array. 2 On the seventh day God finished the work that He had been doing, and He ceased[a] on the seventh day from all the work that He had done. 3 And God blessed the seventh day and declared it holy, because on it God ceased from all the work of creation that He had done. 4 Such is the story of heaven and earth when they were created.

ב וַיְכֻלּוּ הַשָּׁמַיִם וְהָאָרֶץ וְכָל־צְבָאָם׃
2 וַיְכַל אֱלֹהִים בַּיּוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי מְלַאכְתּוֹ
אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה וַיִּשְׁבֹּת בַּיּוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי מִכָּל־
מְלַאכְתּוֹ אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה׃ 3 וַיְבָרֶךְ אֱלֹהִים
אֶת־יוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי וַיְקַדֵּשׁ אֹתוֹ כִּי בוֹ
שָׁבַת מִכָּל־מְלַאכְתּוֹ אֲשֶׁר־בָּרָא אֱלֹהִים
לַעֲשׂוֹת׃ פ 4 אֵלֶּה תוֹלְדוֹת הַשָּׁמַיִם
וְהָאָרֶץ בְּהִבָּרְאָם*

When the LORD God made earth and heaven—5 when no shrub of the field was yet on earth and no grasses of the field had yet sprouted, because the LORD God had not sent rain upon the earth and there was no man to till the soil, 6 but a flow would well up from the ground and water the whole surface of the earth—7 the LORD God formed man[b] from the dust of the earth.[c] He blew into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living being.

8 The LORD God planted a garden in Eden, in the east, and placed there the man whom He had formed. 9 And from the ground the LORD God caused to grow every tree that was pleasing to the sight and good for food, with the tree of life in the middle of the garden, and the tree of knowledge of good and bad.

בְּיוֹם עֲשׂוֹת יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים אֶרֶץ וְשָׁמָיִם׃
5 וְכֹל ׀ שִׂיחַ הַשָּׂדֶה טֶרֶם יִהְיֶה בָּאָרֶץ
וְכָל־עֵשֶׂב הַשָּׂדֶה טֶרֶם יִצְמָח כִּי לֹא
הִמְטִיר יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים עַל־הָאָרֶץ וְאָדָם
אַיִן לַעֲבֹד אֶת־הָאֲדָמָה׃ 6 וְאֵד יַעֲלֶה
מִן־הָאָרֶץ וְהִשְׁקָה אֶת־כָּל־פְּנֵי הָאֲדָמָה׃
7 וַיִּיצֶר יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים אֶת־הָאָדָם עָפָר
מִן־הָאֲדָמָה וַיִּפַּח בְּאַפָּיו נִשְׁמַת חַיִּים
וַיְהִי הָאָדָם לְנֶפֶשׁ חַיָּה׃
8 וַיִּטַּע יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים גַּן־בְּעֵדֶן מִקֶּדֶם וַיָּשֶׂם
שָׁם אֶת־הָאָדָם אֲשֶׁר יָצָר׃ 9 וַיַּצְמַח
יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים מִן־הָאֲדָמָה כָּל־עֵץ נֶחְמָד
לְמַרְאֶה וְטוֹב לְמַאֲכָל וְעֵץ הַחַיִּים בְּתוֹךְ
הַגָּן וְעֵץ הַדַּעַת טוֹב וָרָע׃

v. 4. * ה׳ זעירא לפי נוסחים המקובלים

a *Or "rested."*
b *Heb.* 'adam.
c *Heb.* 'adamah.

10 A river issues from Eden to water the garden, and it then divides and becomes four branches. 11 The name of the first is Pishon, the one that winds through the whole land of Havilah, where the gold is. (12 The gold of that land is good; bdellium is there, and lapis lazuli.[d]) 13 The name of the second river is Gihon, the one that winds through the whole land of Cush. 14 The name of the third river is Tigris, the one that flows east of Asshur. And the fourth river is the Euphrates.

15 The LORD God took the man and placed him in the garden of Eden, to till it and tend it. 16 And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, "Of every tree of the garden you are free to eat; 17 but as for the tree of knowledge of good and bad, you must not eat of it; for as soon as you eat of it, you shall die."

18 The LORD God said, "It is not good for man to be alone; I will make a fitting helper for him." 19 And the LORD God formed out of the earth all the wild beasts and all the birds of the sky, and brought them to the man to see what he would call them; and whatever the man called each living creature, that would be its name. 20 And the man gave names to all the cattle and to the birds of the sky and to all the wild beasts; but for Adam no fitting helper was found. 21 So the LORD God cast a deep sleep upon the man; and, while he slept, He took one of his ribs and closed up the flesh at that spot. 22 And the LORD God fashioned the rib that He had taken from the man into a woman; and He brought her to the man. 23 Then the man said,

"This one at last
Is bone of my bones
And flesh of my flesh.
This one shall be called Woman,[e]
For from man[f] was she taken."

10 וְנָהָר֙ יֹצֵ֣א מֵעֵ֔דֶן לְהַשְׁקוֹת֙ אֶת־הַגָּ֔ן
וּמִשָּׁ֖ם יִפָּרֵ֑ד וְהָיָ֖ה לְאַרְבָּעָ֥ה רָאשִֽׁים׃
11 שֵׁ֚ם הָאֶחָ֣ד פִּישׁ֔וֹן הֽוּא֙ הַסֹּבֵ֔ב אֵ֖ת
כָּל־אֶ֣רֶץ הַחֲוִילָ֑ה אֲשֶׁר־שָׁ֖ם הַזָּהָֽב׃
12 וּזְהַ֥ב הָאָ֛רֶץ הַהִ֖וא ט֑וֹב שָׁ֣ם הַבְּדֹלַ֔ח
וְאֶ֥בֶן הַשֹּׁ֖הַם׃ 13 וְשֵׁם־הַנָּהָ֥ר הַשֵּׁנִ֖י גִּיח֑וֹן
הֽוּא֙ הַסּוֹבֵ֔ב אֵ֖ת כָּל־אֶ֥רֶץ כּֽוּשׁ׃ 14 וְשֵׁם֙
הַנָּהָ֣ר הַשְּׁלִישִׁ֔י חִדֶּ֑קֶל הַה֣וֹלֵךְ קִדְמַ֔ת
אַשּׁ֖וּר וְהַנָּהָ֥ר הָרְבִיעִ֖י הֽוּא־פְּרָֽת׃
15 וַיִּקַּ֨ח יְהוָ֤ה אֱלֹהִים֙ אֶת־הָאָדָ֔ם וַיַּנִּחֵ֖הוּ
בְּגַן־עֵ֑דֶן לְעָבְדָ֖הּ וּלְשָׁמְרָֽהּ׃ 16 וַיְצַ֥ו יְהוָ֖ה
אֱלֹהִ֑ים עַל־הָאָדָ֣ם לֵאמֹ֔ר מִכֹּ֥ל עֵֽץ־הַגָּ֖ן
אָכֹ֥ל תֹּאכֵֽל׃ 17 וּמֵעֵ֗ץ הַדַּ֙עַת֙ ט֣וֹב וָרָ֔ע
לֹ֥א תֹאכַ֖ל מִמֶּ֑נּוּ כִּ֗י בְּי֛וֹם אֲכָלְךָ֥ מִמֶּ֖נּוּ
מ֥וֹת תָּמֽוּת׃
18 וַיֹּ֣אמֶר יְהוָ֣ה אֱלֹהִ֔ים לֹא־ט֥וֹב הֱי֖וֹת
הָאָדָ֣ם לְבַדּ֑וֹ אֶֽעֱשֶׂה־לּ֥וֹ עֵ֖זֶר כְּנֶגְדּֽוֹ׃
19 וַיִּצֶר֩ יְהוָ֨ה אֱלֹהִ֜ים מִן־הָאֲדָמָ֗ה כָּל־
חַיַּ֤ת הַשָּׂדֶה֙ וְאֵת֙ כָּל־עוֹף֙ הַשָּׁמַ֔יִם וַיָּבֵ֕א
אֶל־הָאָדָ֖ם לִרְאוֹת֑ מַה־יִּקְרָא־ל֔וֹ וְכֹל֩
אֲשֶׁר֙ יִקְרָא־ל֣וֹ הָאָדָ֔ם נֶ֥פֶשׁ חַיָּ֖ה הִ֥וא
שְׁמֽוֹ׃ 20 וַיִּקְרָ֨א הָאָדָ֜ם שֵׁמ֗וֹת לְכָל־
הַבְּהֵמָה֙ וּלְע֣וֹף הַשָּׁמַ֔יִם וּלְכֹ֖ל חַיַּ֣ת
הַשָּׂדֶ֑ה וּלְאָדָ֗ם לֹא־מָצָ֥א עֵ֖זֶר כְּנֶגְדּֽוֹ׃
21 וַיַּפֶּל֩ יְהוָ֨ה אֱלֹהִ֜ים | תַּרְדֵּמָ֗ה עַל־הָאָדָם֙
וַיִּישָׁ֔ן וַיִּקַּ֕ח אַחַ֖ת מִצַּלְעֹתָ֑יו וַיִּסְגֹּ֥ר בָּשָׂ֖ר
תַּחְתֶּֽנָּה׃ 22 וַיִּבֶן֩ יְהוָ֨ה אֱלֹהִ֜ים | אֶת־
הַצֵּלָ֣ע אֲשֶׁר־לָקַ֣ח מִן־הָאָדָ֔ם לְאִשָּׁ֑ה
וַיְבִאֶ֖הָ אֶל־הָאָדָֽם׃ 23 וַיֹּ֣אמֶר הָאָדָ֗ם

זֹ֚את הַפַּ֣עַם
עֶ֔צֶם מֵעֲצָמַ֖י
וּבָשָׂ֣ר מִבְּשָׂרִ֑י
לְזֹ֣את יִקָּרֵ֣א אִשָּׁ֔ה
כִּ֥י מֵאִ֖ישׁ לֻקְחָה־זֹּֽאת׃

d *Others "onyx"; meaning of Heb.* shoham *uncertain.*
e *Heb.* 'ishshah.
f *Heb.* 'ish.

24 Hence a man leaves his father and mother
and clings to his wife, so that they become one
flesh.

25 The two of them were naked,[g] the man and
his wife, yet they felt no shame. 3 1 Now the
serpent was the shrewdest of all the wild
beasts that the LORD God had made. He said
to the woman, "Did God really say: You shall
not eat of any tree of the garden?" 2 The woman
replied to the serpent, "We may eat of the fruit
of the other trees of the garden. 3 It is only about
fruit of the tree in the middle of the garden that
God said: 'You shall not eat of it or touch it,
lest you die.'" 4 And the serpent said to the
woman, "You are not going to die, 5 but God
knows that as soon as you eat of it your eyes
will be opened and you will be like [a-]divine be-
ings who know[-a] good and bad." 6 When the
woman saw that the tree was good for eating
and a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was
desirable as a source of wisdom, she took of its
fruit and ate. She also gave some to her husband,
and he ate. 7 Then the eyes of both of them were
opened and they perceived that they were na-
ked; and they sewed together fig leaves and
made themselves loincloths.

8 They heard the sound of the LORD God mov-
ing about in the garden at the breezy time of
day; and the man and his wife hid from the LORD
God among the trees of the garden. 9 The LORD
God called out to the man and said to him,
"Where are you?" 10 He replied, "I heard the
sound of You in the garden, and I was afraid
because I was naked, so I hid." 11 Then He asked,
"Who told you that you were naked? Did you
eat of the tree from which I had forbidden you
to eat?" 12 The man said, "The woman You put
at my side—she gave me of the tree, and I ate."
13 And the LORD God said to the woman, "What

24 עַל־כֵּן יַעֲזָב־אִישׁ אֶת־אָבִיו וְאֶת־אִמּוֹ
וְדָבַק בְּאִשְׁתּוֹ וְהָיוּ לְבָשָׂר אֶחָד׃

25 וַיִּהְיוּ שְׁנֵיהֶם עֲרוּמִּים הָאָדָם וְאִשְׁתּוֹ
וְלֹא יִתְבּוֹשָׁשׁוּ׃ ג 1 וְהַנָּחָשׁ הָיָה עָרוּם
מִכֹּל חַיַּת הַשָּׂדֶה אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה יְהוָה
אֱלֹהִים וַיֹּאמֶר אֶל־הָאִשָּׁה אַף כִּי־אָמַר
אֱלֹהִים לֹא תֹאכְלוּ מִכֹּל עֵץ הַגָּן׃
2 וַתֹּאמֶר הָאִשָּׁה אֶל־הַנָּחָשׁ מִפְּרִי עֵץ־
הַגָּן נֹאכֵל׃ 3 וּמִפְּרִי הָעֵץ אֲשֶׁר בְּתוֹךְ־הַגָּן
אָמַר אֱלֹהִים לֹא תֹאכְלוּ מִמֶּנּוּ וְלֹא תִגְּעוּ
בּוֹ פֶּן־תְּמֻתוּן׃ 4 וַיֹּאמֶר הַנָּחָשׁ אֶל־הָאִשָּׁה
לֹא־מוֹת תְּמֻתוּן׃ 5 כִּי יֹדֵעַ אֱלֹהִים כִּי
בְּיוֹם אֲכָלְכֶם מִמֶּנּוּ וְנִפְקְחוּ עֵינֵיכֶם
וִהְיִיתֶם כֵּאלֹהִים יֹדְעֵי טוֹב וָרָע׃ 6 וַתֵּרֶא
הָאִשָּׁה כִּי טוֹב הָעֵץ לְמַאֲכָל וְכִי תַאֲוָה־
הוּא לָעֵינַיִם וְנֶחְמָד הָעֵץ לְהַשְׂכִּיל וַתִּקַּח
מִפִּרְיוֹ וַתֹּאכַל וַתִּתֵּן גַּם־לְאִישָׁהּ עִמָּהּ
וַיֹּאכַל׃ 7 וַתִּפָּקַחְנָה עֵינֵי שְׁנֵיהֶם וַיֵּדְעוּ
כִּי עֵירֻמִּם הֵם וַיִּתְפְּרוּ עֲלֵה תְאֵנָה וַיַּעֲשׂוּ
לָהֶם חֲגֹרֹת׃
8 וַיִּשְׁמְעוּ אֶת־קוֹל יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים מִתְהַלֵּךְ
בַּגָּן לְרוּחַ הַיּוֹם וַיִּתְחַבֵּא הָאָדָם וְאִשְׁתּוֹ
מִפְּנֵי יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים בְּתוֹךְ עֵץ הַגָּן׃
9 וַיִּקְרָא יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים אֶל־הָאָדָם וַיֹּאמֶר
לוֹ אַיֶּכָּה׃ 10 וַיֹּאמֶר אֶת־קֹלְךָ שָׁמַעְתִּי בַגָּן
וָאִירָא כִּי־עֵירֹם אָנֹכִי וָאֵחָבֵא׃ 11 וַיֹּאמֶר
מִי הִגִּיד לְךָ כִּי עֵירֹם אָתָּה הֲמִן־הָעֵץ
אֲשֶׁר צִוִּיתִיךָ לְבִלְתִּי אֲכָל־מִמֶּנּוּ אָכָלְתָּ׃
12 וַיֹּאמֶר הָאָדָם הָאִשָּׁה אֲשֶׁר נָתַתָּה
עִמָּדִי הִוא נָתְנָה־לִּי מִן־הָעֵץ וָאֹכֵל׃
13 וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים לָאִשָּׁה מַה־זֹּאת
עָשִׂית וַתֹּאמֶר הָאִשָּׁה הַנָּחָשׁ הִשִּׁיאַנִי
וָאֹכֵל׃ 14 וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים ו אֶל־הַנָּחָשׁ
כִּי עָשִׂיתָ זֹּאת

g *Heb.* 'arummim, *play on* 'arum *"shrewd" in 3.1.*

a-a *Others "God, who knows."*

Midrash Rabbah - Genesis VIII:1

1. AND GOD SAID: LET US MAKE MAN, etc. (I, 26). R. Johanan commenced [his discourse]: Thou hast formed me behind and before, etc. (Ps. CXXXIX, 5). Said R. Johanan: If a man is worthy enough, he enjoys both worlds, for it says, 'Thou hast formed me for a later [world] and an earlier [world].' But if not, he will have to render a full account [of his misdeeds], as it is said, And laid Thy hand upon me (ib.). R. Jeremiah b. Leazar said: When the Holy One, blessed be He, created Adam, He created him an hermaphrodite [bi-sexual], for it is said, Male and female created He them and called their name Adam (Gen.V, 2). R. Samuel b. Nahman said: When the Lord created Adam He created him double-faced, then He split him and made him of two backs, one back on this side and one back on the other side. To this it is objected: But it is written, And He took one of his ribs, etc. (Gen. II, 21)? [Mi-zalothaw means] one of his sides, replied he, as you read, And for the second side (zela') of the tabernacle, etc. (Ex.XXVI 20). R. Tanhuma in the name of R. Banayah and R. Berekiah in the name of R. Leazar said: He created him as a lifeless mass extending from one end of the world to the other; thus it is written, Thine eyes did see mine unformed substance (Ps. CXXXIX, 16). R. Joshua b. R. Nehemiah and R. Judah b. R. Simon in R. Leazar's name said: He created him filling the whole world. How do we know [that he stretched] from east to west? Because it is said, 'Thou hast formed me behind (ahor) and before (kedem).' From north to south? Because it says, Since the day that God created man upon the earth, and from the one end of heaven unto the other (Deut. IV, 32). And how do we know that he filled the empty spaces of the world? From the verse, 'And laid Thy hand upon me' (as you read, Withdraw Thy hand from me (Job XIII, 21)). R. Leazar interereted it: He was the latest (ahor) in the work of the last day, and the earliest (kedem) in the work of the last day. That is R. Leazar's view, for he said: Let the earth bring forth a soul of a living creature (Gen. I, 24) refers to the soul of Adam. R. Simeon b. Lakish maintained: He was the latest in the work of the last day and the earliest in the work of the first day. That is consistent with the view of R. Simeon b. Lakish, for he said: And the spirit of God hovered (ib. 1,2) refers to the soul of Adam, as you read, And the spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him (Isa. XL 2). R. Nahman said: Last in creation and first in punishment. R. Samuel b. R. Tanhum said: His praise [of God], too, comes only at the last, as it is written, Hallelujah. Praise ye the Lord from the heavens, the passage continuing until, He hath made a decree which shall not be transgressed. This is followed by, Praise ye the Lord from the earth, etc., and only after all that, Kings of the earth and all peoples (Ps. CXLVIII, 1-11). R. Simlai said: Just as his praise comes after that of cattle, beasts, and fowls, so does his creation come after that of cattle, beasts, and fowl. First we have 'And God said: Let the waters swarm', and after them all, LET US MAKE MAN.

Midrash Rabbah - Genesis VIII:4

4. R. Berekiah said: When the Holy One, blessed be He, came to create Adam, He saw righteous and wicked arising from him. Said He: 'If I create him, wicked men will spring from him; if I do not create him, how are the righteous to spring from him? What then did the Lord do? He removed the way of the wicked out of His sight1 and associated the quality of mercy with Himself and created him, as it is written, For the Lord regardeth the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked tobed- E.V. 'shall perish' (Ps. I, 6): what does 'tobed' mean? He destroyed it (ibbedah) from before His sight and associated the quality of mercy with Himself and created him. R. Hanina did not say thus, but [he said that] when He came to create Adam He took counsel with the ministering angels, saying to them, 'LET US MAKE MAN.' 'What shall his character be?' asked they. 'Righteous men shall spring from him,' He answered, as it is written, 'For the Lord knoweth (yodea') the way of the righteous,' which means that the Lord made known (hodia') the way of the righteous to the ministering angels; 'But the way of the wicked shall perish': He destroyed [hid] it from them. He revealed to them that the righteous would arise from him, but He did not reveal to them that the wicked would spring from him, for had He

revealed to them that the wicked would spring from him; the quality of Justice would not have permitted him to be created.

Midrash Rabbah - Genesis VIII:5

5. R. Simon said: When the Holy One, blessed be He, came to create Adam, the ministering angels formed themselves into groups and parties, some of them saying, 'Let him be created,' whilst others urged, 'let him not be created.' Thus it is written, Love and Truth fought together, Righteousness and Peace combated each other (Ps. LXXXV, 11): Love said, 'Let him be created, because he will dispense acts of love'; Truth said, 'Let him not be created, because he is compounded of falsehood'; Righteousness said, ' Let him be created, because he will perform righteous deeds'; Peace said, 'Let him not be created, because he is full of strife"' What did the Lord do? He took Truth and cast it to the ground" said the ministering angels before the Holy One, blessed be He, 'Sovereign of the Universe! Why dost Thou despise Thy seal? Let Truth arise from the earth!' Hence it is written, Let truth spring up from the earth (ib. 12). All our Rabbis say the following in the name of R. Hanina, while R. Phinehas and R. Hilkiah say it in the name of R. Simon: Me'od (E.V. ' very') is identical with Adam; as it is written, And God saw everything that He had made, and, behold, it was good-me'od (Gen. 1, 31), i.e. and behold Adam was good. R. Huna the Elder of Sepphoris, said: While the ministering angels were arguing with each other and disputing with each other, the Holy One, blessed be He, created him. Said He to them: 'What can ye avail? Man has already been made!'

Midrash Rabbah - Genesis XX:11

11. AND THE MAN CALLED HIS WIFE'S NAME EVE---HAWWAH, i.e. life (III, 2). She was given to him for an adviser, but she played the eavesdropper like the serpent. [Another interpretation]: He showed her how many generations she had destroyed. R. Aba interpreted it: The serpent was thy [Eve's] serpent [i.e. seducer], and thou art Adam's serpent. BECAUSE SHE WAS THE MOTHER (EM) OF ALL LIVING. R. Simeon b. Eleazar said: That means that she is associated with ('im) all living. It was taught: If [her husband] becomes wealthy, she rises with him; if he becomes poor, she does not descend with him. R. Simon said: THE MOTHER OF ALL LIVING means, the mother of all life. For R. Simon said: Throughout the entire one hundred and thirty years during which Adam held aloof from Eve the male demons were made ardent by her and she bore, while the female demons were inflamed by Adam and they bore, as it is written, If he commit iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men, and with the afflictions of the children of man-Adam (II Sam. VII, 14), which means, the children of the first man." (The reason for the view that house spirits are benevolent is because they dwell with him [man], while the opinion that they are harmful is based on the fact that they understand man's evil inclinations. He who maintains that the spirits of the field are benevolent does so because they do not grow up.

Yemenite Midrash

4.1 The essence and meaning of this remark is that *one of his ribs* [Gen. 2.21] tends towards matter. There are two aspects to the soul: an aspect that tends towards matter, and another that tends towards form. The aspect that tends towards matter is that of which it was said, *and He enclosed it with flesh from below.* That is to say, it acts only by means of the bodily devices. Understand this very well.

Midrash ha- Hefetz

4.2 Know that the deficiency that befalls man is due to his matter. and whatever perfection he achieves is due to his form. Deficiency is called "woman" and perfection is called "man"; this shall be clarified shortly. Therefore, *a man leaves his father* [Gen. 2.24]. It is the nature of man to take delight in and associate with that which is closest to him and is of his own kind, with that with which he blends and with which he has more contact than anything else—for example, his father and mother. The two of them become a single entity, as it said *and they become one flesh* [Gen. 2.241. So also is the situation of matter and form: they unite with one another so that they become a single entity.

You already know that one does not encounter in the lower world form without matter, nor matter without form; this is well known. Our sages have given a parable. They said, "Adam and Eve were joined back to back, and each one of them was directed away from the other. But when Adam leaned toward his passions, he became separated. His [other] half was taken and set up in front of him, and He said, *this time* [Gen 2.23]."

After close examination it has become clear that [the biblical narrative must be understood] according to this arrangement. The story of the serpent comes before *He slept, and He took one of his ribs* [Gen. 2.21]. However, the idea [of the separation, i.e. the "fall"] was [first] completed, and then it [the narrative] went back and told the story of Eve and the serpent. For Eve was the cause of Adam's turning away from that for which he had been intended.

Nur al-Zahan

4.3 *And the two of them were naked* [Gen. 2.25]. This teaches us that their thought was not turned to "that matter" [sexual relations], and they were not embarrassed about being naked. Instead, their thoughts were connected with knowing and worshipping the Proprietor of the universe. Indeed, they were created as consummate and doubly wise beings, and for that reason the divine presence descended upon them, and they received a divine command. Just as in our day, a person is not embarrassed if his hand or foot is uncovered, so they were not embarrassed to have their private parts exposed. Once they sinned, however, the radiance of their countenances changed, and their thoughts turned to "another matter". They sensed their nakedness, and they were embarrassed about each other, until the loincloths were made for them.

Midrash ha-Gadol, Genesis

4.4 *And the two of them were "naked"* [Gen. 2.25]. Adam and Eve were stripped of their innate apprehension, not of their clothing Therefore, they became "naked", just like the serpent, of which it was said and the serpent was "naked" [Gen .3. 1]. There its meaning ["naked"] is something like "craftiness". Their defect is obvious: they moved away from the [contemplation of] universals to particulars, nothing else. A word to the wise is enough.

That thing which, as indicated above, was created along with them [i.e. the ability to apprehend universals] is that very thing that was mentioned in connection with the first day [of creation]. It is that of which it was said, "Adam's stature extended from one end of the world to the other, from the earth to the orb, as it says, *from the day on which* God *created man on the earth ... to the end of the heavens* [Deut. 4.32]. God placed His right [hand] upon him and shortened his stature to four cubits"—that is, the four cubits of halakhah—"as it says, *You surround me in back and in front, and You have placed Your hand upon me* [Ps. 139.5." For this reason, "the angels of [the Lord's] service feared him." This is [the meaning of] that which was said of him, "The print of the ball of Adam's foot dimmed the disc of the sun; how much more so, the radiance of his face."

Siraj al - Uqul

4.22

Our rabbis taught: There were twelve [outstanding] women in the world. Three brought death upon their husbands: Eve, Delilah, and Jezebel. Three saved their husbands from death: the wife of On, Mikhal the daughter of Saul, and Serah, the daughter of Asher. Three were promiscuous, and on their account the world survived; they are Tamar and Lot's two daughters. Three intended to the promiscuous, but the world did not survive on their account; they are Rahav, Yael, and the wife of Potiphar.

Midrash ha-Gadol, Numbers

Tanna debe Eliyyahu

***Eliyyahu Rabbah*, p. 3**

In His wisdom and with His understanding God created His world and set it on its foundation. He then created Adam and had him lie prone before Him. As He scrutinized him till the end of all the generations that would come from him, He foresaw that his descendants would provoke His wrath. Hence He said: If I hold mankind to account for its successive misdeeds, the world will not endure; I must therefore have its successive misdeeds pass out of mind. And He had them do so, As for the proof, you can readily see it for yourself. When Israel were in the wilderness, they befouled themselves with their misdeeds. Thereupon He proceeded to have all that they had done pass out of mind, as is said, *The Lord passed before him* (Exod. 34:6). Do not read *passed,* but "had pass"—that is, He had all their evil pass away from before Him, so that He was able to proclaim Himself *Lord, Lord* [*of mercy*] *(ibid.)*.

***Eliyyahu Rabbah*, p. 154**

Another comment: The verse in hand, *My soul shall weep in secret (ibid.),* goes on to say, *Mine eye shall weep sore, and run down with tears because the Lord's flock is carried away captive.* But Scripture says elsewhere, *Let them make haste and take up a wailing for us, that our eyes may run down with tears, and our eyelids gush out with waters* (Jer. 9:17). Why *mine eye* in the former verse and *our eyes* in the latter? The answer—if one dare say such a thing—is that in comparison with other beings, no one feels such compassion for Israel as does the Holy One, who from the beginning intended His world for them, as is indicated by His saying *Let us make man in Our image, after Our likeness* (Gen. 1:26). [By *man* He meant Israel, for Israel in their worship of Him, their Creator, and not of His creation, alone deserved the designation of 'man".] Hence *Mine eye* [alone, says the Holy One], *shall weep sore, and run down with tears because the Lord's flock is carried away captive* (Jer. 13:17).

Pesikta de-Rab Kahana

2. In a Mishnah we learn: "If a man takes a wife and lives with her for ten years and she bears him no child, he is no longer permitted to nullify his obligation to be fruitful and multiply. After he divorces her, she may be married to another, and the second husband may also live with her [no more than] ten years [if she bears him no child. In either marriage], if she miscarries, the period of ten years is reckoned from the time of her miscarriage.

A man is under obligation to fulfill the commandment, "Be fruitful and multiply," but a woman is not under such obligation. R. Johanan ben Beroka taught, however: of both man and woman Scripture says, *God blessed them; and God said unto them: "Be fruitful and multiply"* (Gen. 1:28) (Yeb 6:6).

In Sidon it happened that a man took a wife with whom he lived for ten years, and she bore no children. When they came to R. Simeon ben Yobai to be divorced, the man said to his wife: Take any precious object I have in my house—take it and go back to your father's house. Thereupon, R. Simeon ben Yohai said: Even as you were wed with food and drink [being served], so you are not to separate save with food and drink [being served]. What did the wife do? She prepared a great feast, gave her husband too much to drink [so that he fell asleep], then beckoned to her man-servants and maid-servants, saying, "Take him to my father's house." At midnight he woke up from his sleep and asked: "Where am I?" She replied: "Did you not say, 'Whatever precious object I have in my house—take it and go back to your father's house'? I have no object more precious than you." When R. Simeon ben Yohai heard what the wife had done, he prayed in the couple's behalf, and they were remembered with children. For, even as the Holy One remembers barren women, righteous men [such as R. Simeoni] also have the power to remember barren women. Now may not the matter be argued a *fortiori?* If one mortal saying to another mortal, I have no more precious object in the world than you, is able to rejoice and bring joy to everybody, all the more will Israel rejoice and give joy, Israel who for so many years and for ever so many ages have been looking forward to deliverance by the Holy One. Hence *Rejoicing in the Lord I will give joy* (Isa.61:10).

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· II ·

Adam

Man and the World

WITH TEN Sayings God created the world, although a single Saying would have sufficed. God desired to make known how severe is the punishment to be meted out to the wicked, who destroy a world created with as many as ten Sayings, and how goodly the reward destined for the righteous, who preserve a world created with as many as ten Sayings.

The world was made for man, though he was the lastcomer among its creatures. This was design. He was to find all things ready for him. God was the host who prepared dainty dishes, set the table, and then led His guest to his seat. At the same time man's late appearance on earth is to convey an admonition to humility. Let him beware of being proud, lest he invite the retort that the gnat is older than he.

The superiority of man to the other creatures is apparent in the very manner of his creation, altogether different from theirs. He is the only one who was created by the hand of God. The rest sprang from the word of God. The body of man is a microcosm, the whole world in miniature, and the world in turn is a reflex of man. The hair upon his head corresponds to the woods of the earth, his tears to a river, his mouth to the ocean. Also, the world resembles the ball of his eye: the ocean that encircles the earth is like unto the white of the eye, the dry land is the iris, Jerusalem the pupil, and the Temple the image mirrored in the pupil of the eye.

But man is more than a mere image of this world. He unites both heavenly and earthly qualities within himself. In four he resembles the angels, in four the beasts. His power of speech, his discriminating intellect, his upright walk, the glance of his eye—they all make an angel of him. But, on the other hand, he eats and drinks, secretes the waste

matter in his body, propagates his kind, and dies, like the beast of the field. Therefore God said before the creation of man: "The celestials are not propagated, but they are immortal; the beings on earth are propagated, but they die. I will create man to be the union of the two, so that when he sins, when he behaves like a beast, death shall overtake him; but if he refrains from sin, he shall live forever." God now bade all beings in heaven and on earth contribute to the creation of man, and He Himself took part in it. Thus they all will love man, and if he should sin, they will be interested in his preservation.

The Angels and the Creation of Man

GOD in His wisdom having resolved to create man, He asked counsel of all around Him before He proceeded to execute His purpose—an example to man, be he never so great and distinguished, not to scorn the advice of the humble and lowly. First God called upon heaven and earth, then upon all other things He had created, and last upon the angels.

The angels were not all of one opinion. The Angel of Love favored the creation of man, because he would be affectionate and loving; but the Angel of Truth opposed it, because he would be full of lies. And while the Angel of Justice favored it, because he would practice justice, the Angel of Peace opposed it, because he would be quarrelsome.

To invalidate his protest, God cast the Angel of Truth down from heaven to earth, and when the others cried out against such contemptuous treatment of their companion, He said, "Truth will spring back out of the earth."

The objections of the angels would have been much stronger, had they known the whole truth about man. God had told them only about the pious, and had concealed from them that there would be reprobates among mankind, too. And yet, though they knew but half the truth, the angels were nevertheless prompted to cry out: "What is man, that Thou art mindful of him? And the son of man, that Thou visitest him?" God replied: "The fowl of the air and the fish of the sea, what were they created for? Of what avail a larder full of appetizing dainties, and no guest to enjoy them?" And the angels could not but exclaim: "O Lord, our Lord, how excellent is Thy name in all the earth! Do as is pleasing in Thy sight."

For not a few of the angels their opposition bore fatal consequences. When God summoned the band under the archangel Michael, and asked their opinion on the creation of man, they answered scornfully: "What is man, that Thou art mindful of him? And the son of man, that Thou visitest him?" God thereupon stretched forth His little fin-

ger, and all were consumed by fire except their chief Michael. And the same fate befell the band under the leadership of the archangel Gabriel; he alone of all was saved from destruction.

The third band consulted was commanded by the archangel Labbiel. Taught by the horrible fate of his predecessors, he warned his troop: "You have seen what misfortune overtook the angels who said, 'What is man, that Thou art mindful of him?' Let us have a care not to do likewise, lest we suffer the same dire punishment. For God will not refrain from doing in the end what He has planned. Therefore it is advisable for us to yield to His wishes." Thus warned, the angels spoke: "Lord of the world, it is well that Thou hast thought of creating man. Do Thou create him according to Thy will. And as for us, we will be his attendants and his ministers, and reveal unto him all our secrets." Thereupon God changed Labbiel's name to Raphael, the Rescuer, because his host of angels had been rescued by his sage advice. He was appointed the Angel of Healing, who has in his safe-keeping all the celestial remedies, the types of the medical remedies used on earth.

The Creation of Adam

WHEN at last the assent of the angels to the creation of man was given, God said to Gabriel: "Go and fetch Me dust from the four corners of the earth, and I will create man therewith." Gabriel went forth to do the bidding of the Lord, but the earth drove him away, and refused to let him gather up dust from it. Gabriel remonstrated: "Why, O Earth, dost thou not hearken unto the voice of the Lord, who founded thee upon the waters without props or pillars?" The earth replied, and said: "I am destined to become a curse, and to be cursed through man, and if God Himself does not take the dust from me, no one else shall ever do it." When God heard this, He stretched out His hand, took of the dust of the ground, and created the first man therewith.

Of set purpose the dust was taken from all four corners of the earth, so that if a man from the east should happen to die in the west, or a man from the west in the east, the earth should not dare refuse to receive the dead, and tell him to go whence he was taken. Wherever a man chances to die, and wheresoever he is buried, there will he return to the earth from which he sprang. Also, the dust was of various colors—red, black, white, and green—red for the blood, black for the bowels, white for the bones and veins, and green for the pale skin.

At this early moment the Torah interfered. She addressed herself to God: "O Lord of the world! The world is Thine, Thou canst do with it as seemeth good in Thine eyes. But the man Thou art now creating will be few of days and full of trouble and sin. If it be not Thy pur-

pose to have forbearance and patience with him, it were better not to call him into being." God replied, "Is it for naught I am called long-suffering and merciful?"

The grace and lovingkindness of God revealed themselves particularly in His taking one spoonful of dust from the spot where in time to come the altar would stand, saying, "I shall take man from the place of atonement, that he may endure."

The Soul of Man

THE CARE which God exercised in fashioning every detail of the body of man is as naught in comparison with His solicitude for the human soul. The soul of man was created on the first day, for it is the spirit of God moving upon the face of the waters. Thus, instead of being the last, man is really the first work of creation.

This spirit, or, to call it by its usual name, the soul of man, possesses five different powers. By means of one of them she escapes from the body every night, rises up to heaven, and fetches new life thence for man.

With the soul of Adam the souls of all the generations of men were created. They are stored up in a promptuary, in the seventh of the heavens, whence they are drawn as they are needed for human body after human body.

The soul and body of man are united in this way: When a woman has conceived, the Angel of the Night, Laïlah, carries the sperm before God, and God decrees what manner of human being shall become of it—whether it shall be male or female, strong or weak, rich or poor, beautiful or ugly, long or short, fat or thin, and what all its other qualities shall be. Piety and wickedness alone are left to the determination of man himself. Then God makes a sign to the angel appointed over the souls, saying, "Bring Me the soul so-and-so, which is hidden in Paradise, whose name is so-and-so, and whose form is so-and-so." The angel brings the designated soul, and she bows down when she appears in the presence of God, and prostrates herself before Him. At that moment, God issues the command, "Enter this sperm." The soul opens her mouth, and pleads: "O Lord of the world! I am well pleased with the world in which I have been living since the day on which Thou didst call me into being. Why dost Thou now desire to have me enter this impure sperm, I who am holy and pure, and a part of Thy glory?" God consoles her: "The world which I shall cause thee to enter is better than the world in which thou hast lived hitherto, and when I created thee, it was only for this purpose." The soul is then forced to enter the sperm against her will, and the angel carries her back to the

womb of the mother. Two angels are detailed to watch that she shall not leave it, nor drop out of it, and a light is set above her, whereby the soul can see from one end of the world to the other. In the morning an angel carries her to Paradise, and shows her the righteous, who sit there in their glory, with crowns upon their heads. The angel then says to the soul, "Dost thou know who these are?" She replies in the negative, and the angel goes on: "These whom thou beholdest here were formed, like unto thee, in the womb of their mother. When they came into the world, they observed God's Torah and His commandments. Therefore they became the partakers of this bliss which thou seest them enjoy. Know, also thou wilt one day depart from the world below, and if thou wilt observe God's Torah, then wilt thou be found worthy of sitting with these pious ones. But if not, thou wilt be doomed to the other place."

In the evening, the angel takes the soul to hell, and there points out the sinners whom the Angels of Destruction are smiting with fiery scourges, the sinners all the while crying out Woe! Woe! but no mercy is shown unto them. The angel then questions the soul as before, "Dost thou know who these are?" and as before the reply is negative. The angel continues: "These who are consumed with fire were created like unto thee. When they were put into the world, they did not observe God's Torah and His commandments. Therefore have they come to this disgrace which thou seest them suffer. Know, thy destiny is also to depart from the world. Be just, therefore, and not wicked, that thou mayest gain the future world."

Between morning and evening the angel carries the soul around, and shows her where she will live and where she will die, and the place where she will be buried, and he takes her through the whole world, and points out the just and the sinners and all things. In the evening, he replaces her in the womb of the mother, and there she remains for nine months.

When the time arrives for her to emerge from the womb into the open world, the same angel addresses the soul, "The time has come for thee to go abroad into the open world." The soul demurs, "Why dost thou want to make me go forth into the open world?" The angel replies: "Know that as thou wert formed against thy will, so now thou wilt be born against thy will, and against thy will thou shalt die, and against thy will thou shalt give account of thyself before the King of kings, the Holy One, blessed be He." But the soul is reluctant to leave her place. Then the angel fillips the babe on the nose, extinguishes the light at his head, and brings him forth into the world against his will. Immediately the child forgets all his soul has seen and learnt, and he

comes into the world crying, for he loses a place of shelter and security and rest.

When the time arrives for man to quit this world, the same angel appears and asks him, "Dost thou recognize me?" And man replies, "Yes; but why dost thou come to me to-day, and thou didst come on no other day?" The angel says, "To take thee away from the world, for the time of thy departure has arrived." Then man falls to weeping, and his voice penetrates to all ends of the world, yet no creature hears his voice, except the cock alone. Man remonstrates with the angel, "From two worlds thou didst take me, and into this world thou didst bring me." But the angel reminds him: "Did I not tell thee that thou wert formed against thy will, and thou wouldst be born against thy will, and against thy will thou wouldst die? And against thy will thou wilt have to give account and reckoning of thyself before the Holy One, blessed be He."

The Ideal Man

LIKE ALL CREATURES formed on the six days of creation, Adam came from the hands of the Creator fully and completely developed. He was not like a child, but like a man of twenty years of age. The dimensions of his body were gigantic, reaching from heaven to earth, or, what amounts to the same, from east to west. Among later generations of men, there were but few who in a measure resembled Adam in his extraordinary size and physical perfections. Samson possessed his strength, Saul his neck, Absalom his hair, Asahel his fleetness of foot, Uzziah his forehead, Josiah his nostrils, Zedekiah his eyes, and Zerubbabel his voice. History shows that these physical excellencies were no blessings to many of their possessors; they invited the ruin of almost all. Samson's extraordinary strength caused his death; Saul killed himself by cutting his neck with his own sword; while speeding swiftly, Asahel was pierced by Abner's spear; Absalom was caught up by his hair in an oak, and thus suspended met his death; Uzziah was smitten with leprosy upon his forehead; the darts that killed Josiah entered through his nostrils, and Zedekiah's eyes were blinded.

The generality of men inherited as little of the beauty as of the portentous size of their first father. The fairest women compared with Sarah are as apes compared with a human being. Sarah's relation to Eve is the same, and, again, Eve was but as an ape compared with Adam. His person was so handsome that the very sole of his foot obscured the splendor of the sun.

His spiritual qualities kept pace with his personal charm, for God had fashioned his soul with particular care. She is the image of God, and as

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God fills the world, so the soul fills the human body; as God sees all things, and is seen by none, so the soul sees, but cannot be seen; as God guides the world, so the soul guides the body; as God in His holiness is pure, so is the soul; and as God dwells in secret, so doth the soul.

When God was about to put a soul into Adam's clod-like body, He said: "At which point shall I breathe the soul into him? Into the mouth? Nay, for he will use it to speak ill of his fellow-man. Into the eyes? With them he will wink lustfully. Into the ears? They will hearken to slander and blasphemy. I will breathe her into his nostrils; as they discern the unclean and reject it, and take in the fragrant, so the pious will shun sin, and will cleave to the words of the Torah."

The perfections of Adam's soul showed themselves as soon as he received her, indeed, while he was still without life. In the hour that intervened between breathing a soul into the first man and his becoming alive, God revealed the whole history of mankind to him. He showed him each generation and its leaders; each generation and its prophets; each generation and its teachers; each generation and its scholars; each generation and its statesmen; each generation and its judges; each generation and its pious members; each generation and its average, commonplace members; and each generation and its impious members. The tale of their years, the number of their days, the reckoning of their hours, and the measure of their steps, all were made known unto him.

Of his own free will Adam relinquished seventy of his allotted years. His appointed span was to be a thousand years, one of the Lord's days. But he saw that only a single minute of life was apportioned to the great soul of David, and he made a gift of seventy years to her, reducing his own years to nine hundred and thirty.

The wisdom of Adam displayed itself to greatest advantage when he gave names to the animals. Then it appeared that God, in combating the arguments of the angels that opposed the creation of man, had spoken well when He insisted that man would possess more wisdom than they themselves. When Adam was barely an hour old, God assembled the whole world of animals before him and the angels. The latter were called upon to name the different kinds, but they were not equal to the task. Adam, however, spoke without hesitation: "O Lord of the world! The proper name for this animal is ox, for this one horse, for this one lion, for this one camel." And so he called all in turn by name, suiting the name to the peculiarity of the animal. Then God asked him what his name was to be, and he said Adam, because he had been created out of Adamah, dust of the earth. Again, God asked him His own name, and he said: "Adonaï, Lord, because Thou art Lord over all creatures"—the very name God had given unto Himself, the name by which the angels call Him, the name that will remain immutable

evermore. But without the gift of the holy spirit, Adam could not have found names for all; he was in very truth a prophet, and his wisdom a prophetic quality.

The names of the animals were not the only inheritance handed down by Adam to the generations after him, for mankind owes all crafts to him, especially the art of writing, and he was the inventor of all the seventy languages. And still another task he accomplished for his descendants. God showed Adam the whole earth, and Adam designated what places were to be settled later by men, and what places were to remain waste.

The Fall of Satan

THE EXTRAORDINARY QUALITIES with which Adam was blessed, physical and spiritual as well, aroused the envy of the angels. They attempted to consume him with fire, and he would have perished, had not the protecting hand of God rested upon him, and established peace between him and the heavenly host. In particular, Satan was jealous of the first man, and his evil thoughts finally led to his fall. After Adam had been endowed with a soul, God invited all the angels to come and pay him reverence and homage. Satan, the greatest of the angels in heaven, with twelve wings, instead of six like all the others, refused to pay heed to the behest of God, saying, "Thou didst create us angels from the splendor of the Shekinah, and now Thou dost command us to cast ourselves down before the creature which Thou didst fashion out of the dust of the ground!" God answered, "Yet this dust of the ground has more wisdom and understanding than thou." Satan demanded a trial of wit with Adam, and God assented thereto, saying: "I have created beasts, birds, and reptiles. I shall have them all come before thee and before Adam. If thou art able to give them names, I shall command Adam to show honor unto thee, and thou shalt rest next to the Shekinah of My glory. But if not, and Adam calls them by the names I have assigned to them, then thou wilt be subject to Adam, and he shall have a place in My garden, and cultivate it." Thus spake God, and He betook Himself to Paradise, Satan following Him. When Adam beheld God, he said to his wife, "O come, let us worship and bow down; let us kneel before the Lord our Maker." Now Satan attempted to assign names to the animals. He failed with the first two that presented themselves, the ox and the cow. God led two others before him, the camel and the donkey, with the same result. Then God turned to Adam, and questioned him regarding the names of the same animals, framing His questions in such wise that the first letter of the first word was the same as the first letter of the name of the animal standing before him. Thus Adam divined the

proper name, and Satan was forced to acknowledge the superiority of the first man. Nevertheless he broke out in wild outcries that reached the heavens, and he refused to do homage unto Adam as he had been bidden. The host of angels led by him did likewise, in spite of the urgent representations of Michael, who was the first to prostrate himself before Adam in order to show a good example to the other angels. Michael addressed Satan: "Give adoration to the image of God! But if thou doest it not, then the Lord God will break out in wrath against thee." Satan replied: "If He breaks out in wrath against me, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God, I will be like the Most High!" At once God flung Satan and his host out of heaven, down to the earth, and from that moment dates the enmity between Satan and man.

Woman

WHEN Adam opened his eyes the first time, and beheld the world about him, he broke into praise of God, "How great are Thy works, O Lord!" But his admiration for the world surrounding him did not exceed the admiration all creatures conceived for Adam. They took him to be their creator, and they all came to offer him adoration. But he spoke: "Why do you come to worship me? Nay, you and I together will acknowledge the majesty and the might of Him who hath created us all. 'The Lord reigneth,' " he continued, " 'He is apparelled with majesty.' "

And not alone the creatures on earth, even the angels thought Adam the lord of all, and they were about to salute him with "Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts," when God caused sleep to fall upon him, and then the angels knew that he was but a human being.

The purpose of the sleep that enfolded Adam was to give him a wife, so that the human race might develop, and all creatures recognize the difference between God and man. When the earth heard what God had resolved to do, it began to tremble and quake. "I have not the strength," it said, "to provide food for the herd of Adam's descendants." But God pacified it with the words, "I and thou together, we will find food for the herd." Accordingly, time was divided between God and the earth; God took the night, and the earth took the day. Refreshing sleep nourishes and strengthens man, it affords him life and rest, while the earth brings forth produce with the help of God, who waters it. Yet man must work the earth to earn his food.

The Divine resolution to bestow a companion on Adam met the wishes of man, who had been overcome by a feeling of isolation when the animals came to him in pairs to be named. To banish his loneliness, Lilith was first given to Adam as wife. Like him she had been

created out of the dust of the ground. But she remained with him only a short time, because she insisted upon enjoying full equality with her husband. She derived her rights from their identical origin. With the help of the Ineffable Name, which she pronounced, Lilith flew away from Adam, and vanished in the air. Adam complained before God that the wife He had given him had deserted him, and God sent forth three angels to capture her. They found her in the Red Sea, and they sought to make her go back with the threat that, unless she went, she would lose a hundred of her demon children daily by death. But Lilith preferred this punishment to living with Adam. She takes her revenge by injuring babes—baby boys during the first night of their life, while baby girls are exposed to her wicked designs until they are twenty days old. The only way to ward off the evil is to attach an amulet bearing the names of her three angel captors to the children, for such had been the agreement between them.

The woman destined to become the true companion of man was taken from Adam's body, for "only when like is joined unto like the union is indissoluble." The creation of woman from man was possible because Adam originally had two faces, which were separated at the birth of Eve.

When God was on the point of making Eve, He said: "I will not make her from the head of man, lest she carry her head high in arrogant pride; not from the eye, lest she be wanton-eyed; not from the ear, lest she be an eavesdropper; not from the neck, lest she be insolent; not from the mouth, lest she be a tattler; not from the heart, lest she be inclined to envy; not from the hand, lest she be a meddler; not from the foot, lest she be a gadabout. I will form her from a chaste portion of the body," and to every limb and organ as He formed it, God said, "Be chaste! Be chaste!" Nevertheless, in spite of the great caution used, woman has all the faults God tried to obviate. The daughters of Zion were haughty and walked with stretched forth necks and wanton eyes; Sarah was an eavesdropper in her own tent, when the angel spoke with Abraham; Miriam was a talebearer, accusing Moses; Rachel was envious of her sister Leah; Eve put out her hand to take the forbidden fruit, and Dinah was a gadabout.

The physical formation of woman is far more complicated than that of man, as it must be for the function of childbearing, and likewise the intelligence of woman matures more quickly than the intelligence of man. Many of the physical and psychical differences between the two sexes must be attributed to the fact that man was formed from the ground and woman from bone. Women need perfumes, while men do not; dust of the ground remains the same no matter how long it is kept;

flesh, however, requires salt to keep it in good condition. The voice of women is shrill, not so the voice of men; when soft viands are cooked, no sound is heard, but let a bone be put in a pot, and at once it crackles. A man is easily placated, not so a woman; a few drops of water suffice to soften a clod of earth; a bone stays hard, and if it were to soak in water for days. The man must ask the woman to be his wife, and not the woman the man to be her husband, because it is man who has sustained the loss of his rib, and he sallies forth to make good his loss again. The very differences between the sexes in garb and social forms go back to the origin of man and woman for their reasons. Woman covers her hair in token of Eve's having brought sin into the world; she tries to hide her shame; and women precede men in a funeral cortege, because it was woman who brought death into the world. And the religious commands addressed to women alone are connected with the history of Eve. Adam was the heave offering of the world, and Eve defiled it. As expiation, all women are commanded to separate a heave offering from the dough. And because woman extinguished the light of man's soul, she is bidden to kindle the Sabbath light.

Adam was first made to fall into a deep sleep before the rib for Eve was taken from his side. For, had he watched her creation, she would not have awakened love in him. To this day it is true that men do not appreciate the charms of women whom they have known and observed from childhood up. Indeed, God had created a wife for Adam before Eve, but he would not have her, because she had been made in his presence. Knowing well all the details of her formation, he was repelled by her. But when he roused himself from his profound sleep, and saw Eve before him in all her surprising beauty and grace, he exclaimed, "This is she who caused my heart to throb many a night!" Yet he discerned at once what the nature of woman was. She would, he knew, seek to carry her point with man either by entreaties and tears, or flattery and caresses. He said, therefore, "This is my never-silent bell!"

The wedding of the first couple was celebrated with pomp never since repeated in the whole course of history. God Himself, before presenting her to Adam, attired and adorned Eve as a bride. Yea, He appealed to the angels, saying: "Come, let us perform services of friendship for Adam and his helpmate, for the world rests upon friendly services, and they are more pleasing in My sight than the sacrifices Israel will offer upon the altar." The angels accordingly surrounded the marriage canopy, and God pronounced the blessings upon the bridal couple, as the Hazan does under the Huppah. The angels then danced and played upon musical instruments before Adam and Eve in their ten bridal chambers of gold, pearls, and precious stones, which God had prepared for them.

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Adam and Eve in Paradise

IN PARADISE stand the tree of life and the tree of knowledge, the latter forming a hedge about the former. Only he who has cleared a path for himself through the tree of knowledge can come close to the tree of life, which is so huge that it would take a man five hundred years to traverse a distance equal to the diameter of the trunk, and no less vast is the space shaded by its crown of branches. From beneath it flows forth the water that irrigates the whole earth, parting thence into four streams, the Ganges, the Nile, the Tigris, and the Euphrates. But it was only during the days of creation that the realm of plants looked to the waters of the earth for nourishment. Later on God made the plants dependent upon the rain, the upper waters. The clouds rise from earth to heaven, where water is poured into them as from a conduit. The plants began to feel the effect of the water only after Adam was created. Although they had been brought forth on the third day, God did not permit them to sprout and appear above the surface of the earth, until Adam prayed to Him to give food unto them, for God longs for the prayers of the pious.

Paradise being such as it was, it was, naturally, not necessary for Adam to work the land. True, the Lord God put the man into the Garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it, but that only means he is to study the Torah there and fulfil the commandments of God. There were especially six commandments which every human being is expected to heed: man should not worship idols; nor blaspheme God; nor commit murder, nor incest, nor theft and robbery; and all generations have the duty of instituting measures of law and order. One more such command there was, but it was a temporary injunction. Adam was to eat only the green things of the field. But the prohibition against the use of animals for food was revoked in Noah's time, after the deluge. Nevertheless, Adam was not cut off from the enjoyment of meat dishes. Though he was not permitted to slaughter animals for the appeasing of his appetite, the angels brought him meat and wine, serving him like attendants. And as the angels ministered to his wants, so also the animals. They were wholly under his dominion, and their food they took out of his hand and out of Eve's. In all respects, the animal world had a different relation to Adam from their relation to his descendants. Not only did they know the language of man, but they respected the image of God, and they feared the first human couple, all of which changed into the opposite after the fall of man.

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The Fall of Man

AMONG THE ANIMALS the serpent was notable. Of all of them he had the most excellent qualities, in some of which he resembled man. Like man he stood upright upon two feet, and in height he was equal to the camel. Had it not been for the fall of man, which brought misfortune to them, too, one pair of serpents would have sufficed to perform all the work man has to do, and, besides, they would have supplied him with silver, gold, gems, and pearls. As a matter of fact, it was the very ability of the serpent that led to the ruin of man and his own ruin. His superior mental gifts caused him to become an infidel. It likewise explains his envy of man, especially of his conjugal relations. Envy made him meditate ways and means of bringing about the death of Adam. He was too well acquainted with the character of the man to attempt to exercise tricks of persuasion upon him, and he approached the woman, knowing that women are beguiled easily. The conversation with Eve was cunningly planned, she could not but be caught in a trap. The serpent began, "Is it true that God hath said, Ye shall not eat of every tree in the garden?" "We may," rejoined Eve, "eat of the fruit of all the trees in the garden, except that which is in the midst of the garden, and that we may not even touch, lest we be stricken with death." She spoke thus, because in his zeal to guard her against the transgressing of the Divine command, Adam had forbidden Eve to touch the tree, though God had mentioned only the eating of the fruit. It remains a truth, what the proverb says, "Better a wall ten hands high that stands, than a wall a hundred ells high that cannot stand." It was Adam's exaggeration that afforded the serpent the possibility of persuading Eve to taste of the forbidden fruit. The serpent pushed Eve against the tree, and said: "Thou seest that touching the tree has not caused thy death. As little will it hurt thee to eat the fruit of the tree. Naught but malevolence has prompted the prohibition, for as soon as ye eat thereof, ye shall be as God. As He creates and destroys worlds, so will ye have the power to create and destroy. As He doth slay and revive, so will ye have the power to slay and revive. He Himself ate first of the fruit of the tree, and then He created the world. Therefore doth He forbid you to eat thereof, lest you create other worlds. Everyone knows that 'artisans of the same guild hate one another.' Furthermore, have ye not observed that every creature hath dominion over the creature fashioned before itself? The heavens were made on the first day, and they are kept in place by the firmament made on the second day. The firmament, in turn, is ruled by the plants, the creation of the third day, for they take up all the water of the firmament. The sun and the other celestial bodies,

which were created on the fourth day, have power over the world of plants. They can ripen their fruits and flourish only through their influence. The creation of the fifth day, the animal world, rules over the celestial spheres. Witness the ziz, which can darken the sun with its pinions. But ye are masters of the whole of creation, because ye were the last to be created. Hasten now and eat of the fruit of the tree in the midst of the garden, and become independent of God, lest He bring forth still other creatures to bear rule over you."

To give due weight to these words, the serpent began to shake the tree violently and bring down its fruit. He ate thereof, saying: "As I do not die of eating the fruit, so wilt thou not die." Now Eve could not but say to herself, "All that my master"—so she called Adam—"commanded me is but lies," and she determined to follow the advice of the serpent. Yet she could not bring herself to disobey the command of God utterly. She made a compromise with her conscience. First she ate only the outside skin of the fruit, and then, seeing that death did not fell her, she ate the fruit itself. Scarce had she finished, when she saw the Angel of Death before her. Expecting her end to come immediately, she resolved to make Adam eat of the forbidden fruit, too, lest he espouse another wife after her death. It required tears and lamentations on her part to prevail upon Adam to take the baleful step. Not yet satisfied, she gave of the fruit to all other living beings, that they, too, might be subject to death. All ate, and they all are mortal, with the exception of the bird malham, who refused the fruit, with the words: "Is it not enough that ye have sinned against God, and have brought death to others? Must ye still come to me and seek to persuade me into disobeying God's command, that I may eat and die thereof? I will not do your bidding." A heavenly voice was heard then to say to Adam and Eve: "To you was the command given. Ye did not heed it; ye did transgress it, and ye did seek to persuade the bird malham. He was steadfast, and he feared Me, although I gave him no command. Therefore he shall never taste of death, neither he nor his descendants—they all shall live forever in Paradise."

Adam spoke to Eve: "Didst thou give me of the tree of which I forbade thee to eat? Thou didst give me thereof, for my eyes are opened, and the teeth in my mouth are set on edge." Eve made answer, "As my teeth were set on edge, so may the teeth of all living beings be set on edge."

The first result was that Adam and Eve became naked. Before, their bodies had been overlaid with a horny skin, and enveloped with the cloud of glory. No sooner had they violated the command given them than the cloud of glory and the horny skin dropped from them, and they stood there in their nakedness, and ashamed. Adam tried to gath-

er leaves from the trees to cover part of their bodies, but he heard one tree after the other say: "There is the thief that deceived his Creator. Nay, the foot of pride shall not come against me, nor the hand of the wicked touch me. Hence, and take no leaves from me!" Only the fig-tree granted him permission to take of its leaves. That was because the fig was the forbidden fruit itself. Adam had the same experience as that prince who seduced one of the maid-servants in the palace. When the king, his father, chased him out, he vainly sought a refuge with the other maidservants, but only she who had caused his disgrace would grant him assistance.

The Punishment

AS LONG as Adam stood naked, casting about for means of escape from his embarrassment, God did not appear unto him, for one should not "strive to see a man in the hour of his disgrace." He waited until Adam and Eve had covered themselves with fig leaves. But even before God spoke to him, Adam knew what was impending. He heard the angels announce, "God betaketh Himself unto those that dwell in Paradise." He heard more, too. He heard what the angels were saying to one another about his fall, and what they were saying to God. In astonishment the angels exclaimed: "What! He still walks about in Paradise? He is not yet dead?" Whereupon God: "I said to him, 'In the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die!' Now, ye know not what manner of day I meant—one of My days of a thousand years, or one of your days. I will give him one of My days. He shall have nine hundred and thirty years to live, and seventy to leave to his descendants."

When Adam and Eve heard God approaching, they hid among the trees—which would not have been possible before the fall. Before he committed his trespass, Adam's height was from the heavens to the earth, but afterward it was reduced to one hundred ells. Another consequence of his sin was the fear Adam felt when he heard the voice of God: before his fall it had not disquieted him in the least. Hence it was that when Adam said, "I heard Thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid," God replied, "Aforetime thou wert not afraid, and now thou art afraid?"

God refrained from reproaches at first. Standing at the gate of Paradise, He but asked, "Where art thou, Adam?" Thus did God desire to teach man a rule of polite behavior, never to enter the house of another without announcing himself. It cannot be denied, the words "Where art thou?" were pregnant with meaning. They were intended to bring home to Adam the vast difference between his latter and his former state—between his supernatural size then and his shrunken size now; between the

lordship of God over him then and the lordship of the serpent over him now. At the same time, God wanted to give Adam the opportunity of repenting of his sin, and he would have received Divine forgiveness for it. But so far from repenting of it, Adam slandered God, and uttered blasphemies against Him. When God asked him, "Hast thou eatun of the tree whereof I commanded thee thou shouldst not eat?" he did not confess his sin, but excused himself with the words: "O Lord of the world! As long as I was alone, I did not fall into sin, but as soon as this woman came to me, she tempted me." God replied: "I gave her unto thee as a help, and thou art ungrateful when thou accusest her, saying, 'She gave me of the tree.' Thou shouldst not have obeyed her, for thou art the head, and not she." God, who knows all things, had forseen exactly this, and He had not created Eve until Adam had asked Him for a helpmate, so that he might not have apparently good reason for reproaching God with having created woman.

As Adam tried to shift the blame for his misdeed from himself, so also Eve. She, like her husband, did not confess her transgression and pray for pardon, which would have been granted to her. Gracious as God is, He did not pronounce the doom upon Adam and Eve until they showed themselves stiff-necked. Not so with the serpent. God inflicted the curse upon the serpent without hearing his defense; for the serpent is a villain, and the wicked are good debaters. If God had questioned him, the serpent would have answered: "Thou didst give them a command, and I did contradict it. Why did they obey me, and not Thee?" Therefore God did not enter into an argument with the serpent, but straightway decreed the following ten punishments: The mouth of the serpent was closed, and his power of speech taken away; his hands and feet were hacked off; the earth was given him as food; he must suffer great pain in sloughing his skin; enmity is to exist between him and man; if he eats the choicest viands, or drinks the sweetest beverages, they all change into dust in his mouth; the pregnancy of the female serpent lasts seven years; men shall seek to kill him as soon as they catch sight of him; even in the future world, where all beings will be blessed, he will not escape the punishment decreed for him; he will vanish from out of the Holy Land if Israel walks in the ways of God.

Furthermore, God spake to the serpent: "I created thee to be king over all animals, cattle and the beasts of the field alike; but thou wast not satisfied. Therefore thou shalt be cursed above all cattle and above every beast of the field. I created thee of upright posture; but thou wast not satisfied. Therefore thou shalt go upon thy belly. I created thee to eat the same food as man; but thou wast not satisfied. Therefore thou shalt eat dust all the days of thy life. Thou didst seek to cause the death of Adam in order to espouse his wife. Therefore I will put enmity between thee

and the woman." How true it is—he who lusts after what is not his due, not only does he not attain his desire, but he also loses what he has!

As angels had been present when the doom was pronounced upon the serpent—for God had convoked a Sanhedrin of seventy-one angels when He sat in judgment upon him—so the execution of the decree against him was entrusted to angels. They descended from heaven, and chopped off his hands and feet. His suffering was so great that his agonized cries could be heard from one end of the world to the other.

The verdict against Eve also consisted of ten curses, the effect of which is noticeable to this day in the physical, spiritual, and social state of woman. It was not God Himself who announced her fate to Eve. The only woman with whom God ever spoke was Sarah. In the case of Eve, He made use of the services of an interpreter.

Finally, also the punishment of Adam was tenfold: he lost his celestial clothing—God stripped it off him; in sorrow he was to earn his daily bread; the food he ate was to be turned from good into bad; his children were to wander from land to land; his body was to exude sweat; he was to have an evil inclination; in death his body was to be a prey of the worms; animals were to have power over him, in that they could slay him; his days were to be few and full of trouble; in the end he was to render account of all his doings on earth.

These three sinners were not the only ones to have punishment dealt out to them. The earth fared no better, for it had been guilty of various misdemeanors. In the first place, it had not entirely heeded the command of God given on the third day, to bring forth "tree of fruit." What God had desired was a tree the wood of which was to be as pleasant to the taste as the fruit thereof. The earth, however, produced a tree bearing fruit, the tree itself not being edible. Again, the earth did not do its whole duty in connection with the sin of Adam. God had appointed the sun and the earth witnesses to testify against Adam in case he committed a trespass. The sun, accordingly, had grown dark the instant Adam became guilty of disobedience, but the earth, not knowing how to take notice of Adam's fall, disregarded it altogether. The earth also had to suffer a tenfold punishment: independent before, she was hereafter to wait to be watered by the rain from above; sometimes the fruits of the earth fail; the grain she brings forth is stricken with blasting and mildew; she must produce all sorts of noxious vermin; thenceforth she was to be divided into valleys and mountains; she must grow barren trees, bearing no fruit; thorns and thistles sprout from her; much is sown in the earth, but little is harvested; in time to come the earth will have to disclose her blood, and shall no more cover her slain; and. finally, she shall, one day, "wax old like a garment."

When Adam heard the words, "Thorns and thistles shall it bring

forth," concerning the ground, a sweat broke out on his face, and he said: "What! Shall I and my cattle eat from the same manger?" The Lord had mercy upon him, and spoke, "In view of the sweat of thy face, thou shalt eat bread."

The earth is not the only thing created that was made to suffer through the sin of Adam. The same fate overtook the moon. When the serpent seduced Adam and Eve, and exposed their nakedness, they wept bitterly, and with them wept the heavens, and the sun and the stars, and all created beings and things up to the throne of God. The very angels and the celestial beings were grieved by the transgression of Adam. The moon alone laughed, wherefore God grew wroth, and obscured her light. Instead of shining steadily like the sun, all the length of the day, she grows old quickly, and must be born and reborn, again and again. The callous conduct of the moon offended God, not only by way of contrast with the compassion of all other creatures, but because He Himself was full of pity for Adam and his wife. He made clothes for them out of the skin stripped from the serpent. He would have done even more. He would have permitted them to remain in Paradise, if only they had been penitent. But they refused to repent, and they had to leave, lest their godlike understanding urge them to ravage the tree of life, and they learn to live forever. As it was, when God dismissed them from Paradise, He did not allow the Divine quality of justice to prevail entirely. He associated mercy with it. As they left, He said: "O what a pity that Adam was not able to observe the command laid upon him for even a brief span of time!"

To guard the entrance to Paradise, God appointed the cherubim, called also the ever-turning sword of flames, because angels can turn themselves from one shape into another at need. Instead of the tree of life, God gave Adam the Torah, which likewise is a tree of life to them that lay hold upon her, and he was permitted to take up his abode in the vicinity of Paradise in the east.

Sentence pronounced upon Adam and Eve and the serpent, the Lord commanded the angels to turn the man and the woman out of Paradise. They began to weep and supplicate bitterly, and the angels took pity upon them and left the Divine command unfulfilled, until they could petition God to mitigate His severe verdict. But the Lord was inexorable, saying, "Was it I that committed a trespass, or did I pronounce a false judgment?" Also Adam's prayer, to be given of the fruit of the tree of life, was turned aside, with the promise, however, that if he would lead a pious life, he would be given of the fruit on the day of resurrection, and he would then live forever.

Seeing that God had resolved unalterably, Adam began to weep again and implore the angels to grant him at least permission to take sweet-

scented spices with him out of Paradise, that outside, too, he might be able to bring offerings unto God, and his prayers be accepted before the Lord. Thereupon the angels came before God, and spake: "King unto everlasting, command Thou us to give Adam sweet-scented spices of Paradise," and God heard their prayer. Thus Adam gathered saffron, nard, calamus, and cinnamon, and all sorts of seeds besides for his sustenance. Laden with these, Adam and Eve left Paradise, and came upon earth.

They had enjoyed the splendors of Paradise but a brief span of time —but a few hours. It was in the first hour of the sixth day of creation that God conceived the idea of creating man; in the second hour, He took counsel with the angels; in the third, He gathered the dust for the body of man; in the fourth, He formed Adam; in the fifth, He clothed him with skin; in the sixth, the soulless shape was complete, so that it could stand upright; in the seventh, a soul was breathed into it; in the eighth, man was led into Paradise; in the ninth, the Divine command prohibiting the fruit of the tree in the midst of the garden was issued to him; in the tenth, he transgressed the command; in the eleventh, he was judged; and in the twelfth hour of the day, he was cast out of Paradise, in atonement for his sin.

This eventful day was the first of the month of Tishri. Therefore God spoke to Adam: "Thou shalt be the prototype of thy children. As thou hast been judged by Me on this day and absolved, so thy children Israel shall be judged by Me on this New Year's Day, and they shall be absolved."

Each day of creation brought forth three things: the first, heaven, earth, and light; the second, the firmament, Gehenna, and the angels; the third, trees, herbs, and Paradise; the fourth, sun, moon, and stars; and the fifth, fishes, birds, and leviathan. As God intended to rest on the seventh day, the Sabbath, the sixth day had to do double duty. It brought forth six creations: Adam, Eve, cattle, reptiles, the beasts of the field, and demons. The demons were made shortly before the Sabbath came in, and they are, therefore, incorporeal spirits—the Lord had no time to create bodies for them.

In the twilight, between the sixth day and the Sabbath, ten creations were brought forth: the rainbow, invisible until Noah's time; the manna; watersprings, whence Israel drew water for his thirst in the desert; the writing upon the two tables of stone given at Sinai; the pen with which the writing was written; the two tables themselves; the mouth of Balaam's she-ass; the grave of Moses; the cave in which Moses and Elijah dwelt; and the rod of Aaron, with its blossoms and its ripe almonds.

וּמֵעֵץ הַדַּעַת טוֹב וָרָע לֹא תֹאכַל מִמֶּנּוּ כִּי בְיוֹם אֲכָלְךָ מִמֶּנּוּ מוֹת תָּמוּת – *And from the Tree of Knowledge of good and evil, do not eat, for the day you eat of it, you shall die* (2:17). God told Adam that he would die on the day that he ate of the Tree of Knowledge. God then pitied him and allowed him to live one day of His days. God's day is a thousand years long. Adam should thus have lived a thousand years, but he saw in prophecy that King David was destined to be stillborn, and so gave him seventy of his years, and lived to nine hundred and thirty.

Some Sages say that what God meant when He said "you will die on the day that you eat of it," is that he would die on the same day of the week that he ate the fruit. Adam ate on Friday, and after many years died on a Friday.

Other Sages say that when God said he would die on that day, he meant that this would happen only if he did not repent. This is similar to what we find in the city of Nineveh. God sent Yonah to Nineveh to tell them that in forty days the city would be destroyed. But He did not destroy it, because they repented. So it was in this case: because Adam repented God postponed taking his life.

Adam's Helpmate

וַיֹּאמֶר ה' אֱלֹהִים לֹא טוֹב הֱיוֹת הָאָדָם לְבַדּוֹ אֶעֱשֶׂה לּוֹ עֵזֶר כְּנֶגְדּוֹ – *And God said, "It is not good for a man to be alone, I will make him a helpmate"* (2:18). God said that it is not good for man to be without a wife. All the creations would see that man is one on the earth, and they would worship him as a god. They would say that just as there is one God in heaven, so Adam is one on earth. Besides, God gave him a wife so that she should help him.

A Name for Each Creature

וַיָּבֵא אֶל הָאָדָם לִרְאוֹת מַה יִקְרָא לוֹ וְכֹל אֲשֶׁר יִקְרָא לוֹ הָאָדָם נֶפֶשׁ חַיָּה הוּא שְׁמוֹ – *And [God] brought [the animals] to the man to see what he would call them. And all that the man called each living creature, that is its name* (2:19).

God brought all of the animals before Adam in order that he should give them names. Being very gifted, Adam gave them each a

name which reflected their nature.

He saw that the donkey was a foolish creature and called it a *chamor,* which means he is as slow and dull as a dummy of clay *(chomer* — "clay"). He saw that the horse was always gay, and called it *sus (sason* — "joy"). He saw that every ten years the eagle loses its feathers and grows new ones, and so named it *nesher* (from the root meaning "to slough"). When the eagle is a hundred years old, it flies so high up in the heavens that it dies of the extreme heat there, and falls into the ocean.

God asked Adam, "What shall My name be?" Adam answered, "Your name will be *Adon-oy,* for You are the Master *(adon* — "master") over the entire creation." Because of this it is written, אֲנִי ה׳ הוּא שְׁמִי — *I am God, that is My Name.* My name has been that for many years, since Adam's time.

The Key to Marital Harmony

וַיַּפֵּל ה׳ אֱלֹהִים תַּרְדֵּמָה — *And God placed [him] in a deep sleep* (2:21). God made Adam sleep to teach us that a man should not constantly fight with his wife. If he sees that she does something which displeases him, he should pretend that he does not see it and "sleep" through it.

When God brought all the creations to Adam so that he could give them names, Adam saw that each animal had a mate except he. For this reason it says, *And for Adam he could not find a helpmate,* that is, Adam did not find a female who was worthy of being his wife. Therefore God placed Adam in a deep sleep and took a rib from his body and created a wife for him. Why did God make him sleep? So that he should not see that she came from his body, and find her displeasing.

When a man is worthy God gives him a wife whom he loves and who helps him, but when he is evil, He sends him a wife like himself, who causes him to lose both this world and the next. A good wife brings her husband to the World to Come.

There is a story of righteous man who had a wife who was a very good woman. They had no children, so they divorced. She then married an evil man and made him righteous, and he married an evil woman who turned him evil.

Woman Made from Man

וַיִּבֶן ה׳ אֱלֹהִים אֶת הַצֵּלָע אֲשֶׁר לָקַח מִן הָאָדָם לְאִשָּׁה וַיְבִאֶהָ אֶל הָאָדָם — *And God built the rib which he took from the man into a woman and He brought her to Adam* (2:22). R' Yehoshua said in the name of R' Levi: God wondered which part of the body to build the

woman from. He said: "I do not want to create her from Adam's head, or she will be haughty and hold up her head in pride. If I create her from his eye she will have a roving eye; from the ear, she will want to hear everything; from the mouth, she will talk too much; from the heart, she will be envious; from the hand, she will grasp for everything; from the feet, she will be foot-loose. Therefore I will create her from a part of the body which is hidden — the rib, which does not show even when a man is naked."

But all of this did not help. God said: "I did not create her from the head, so that she should not be haughty, but the Prophet says, וְתִלַכְנָה נְטוּיוֹת גָּרוֹן — *and they walked with outstretched necks (Yeshayahu* 3:16); I did not create her from the eye, so she should not want to see everything, yet it is written וּמְשַׁקְּרוֹת עֵינָיִם — *with wandering eyes (ibid.);* I did not create her from the ear, so that she should not listen to things which she ought not hear — but it is written וְשָׂרָה שֹׁמַעַת פֶּתַח הָאֹהֶל — *and Sarah heard at the door of the tent* (18:10); I did not create her from the heart, so that she should not be jealous, but it states וַתְּקַנֵּא רָחֵל בַּאֲחֹתָהּ — *and Rachel envied her sister* (30:1); I did not create her from the hand, so they should not wish to take everything, yet it is written, וַתִּגְנֹב רָחֵל אֶת הַתְּרָפִים — *and Rachel stole the idols* (31:19); I did not create her from the feet, so that they should not wander, and yet it is written, וַתֵּצֵא דִינָה — *and Dinah wandered out* (34:1)."

R' Yehoshua asked: Why is it that when a child leaves his mother's womb, if it is a male he faces downward, and if it is a female she faces upward? He was answered: Because Adam was created from the earth, a male faces the earth, looking at the place where he was created. But Chavah was created from Adam, so a female faces upward, for she was created from man.

Women have sweet voices, because they were created from a bone. Strike one bone against another and it tinkles and echoes, but if you strike earth against earth it makes no such sound.

A woman is slow to forgive, for she was created from a bone. If one pours water on a bone, nothing will change, but if one pours water on the earth, it will dissolve immediately. Because of this we say, "as a father has mercy on a child," for a father is more merciful than a mother.

A man seeks a wife: a woman does not seek a husband. Woman was taken from man, and so he searches for her. It is as if someone has lost something and searches for it. But the woman has not lost anything and therefore need not search.

This is also the reason that a man goes with his hair uncovered, while a woman covers her hair. Chavah caused Adam to sin and so

she walks in shame, her hair covered. Women customarily walk behind the dead, ahead of the men, for they brought death to the world. God gave women the commandment of *niddah* (ritual purity), for they spilled the blood of man [and can thereby rectify this wrong]; the commandment of *challah*, for they caused Adam to be separated from the world, and therefore they separate *challah* from the dough; and the commandment of candle lighting, for they extinguished the light of Adam's soul.

A Bone from His Bones

עַל כֵּן יַעֲזָב אִישׁ אֶת אָבִיו וְאֶת אִמּוֹ וְדָבַק בְּאִשְׁתּוֹ וְהָיוּ לְבָשָׂר אֶחָד — *Therefore shall a man leave his father and mother and cleave to his wife and they shall be one flesh* (2:24). A man must leave his parents and take himself a wife, for woman is his flesh and blood, *a bone from his bones.* A woman is strong by nature because she was created from a bone, and a man is weak for he was created from earth, which dissolves quickly.

Adding to God's Prohibitions

וַיִּהְיוּ שְׁנֵיהֶם עֲרוּמִּים — *And the two were naked* (2:25). Adam and Chavah were naked and unashamed, like animals. The evil snake hoped for Adam's death, because he desired Chavah. He asked Chavah if God had forbidden them to eat of all of the trees in the Garden. Although he knew that God had forbidden only the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge, he wanted to begin conversing with her.

Chavah answered that God had forbidden not only eating from the Tree of Knowledge but touching it as well. The Sages say that we should not add to what God has forbidden us. God had forbidden eating from the Tree; Chavah added the prohibition against touching, and ultimately sinned.

The snake pushed her hand onto the Tree and said, "Just as touching the Tree did not bring you death, so too you can eat without fearing death. God knows that when you eat from the fruit you will be like the angels and therefore He has forbidden you to eat from the Tree."

Chavah thought that the snake spoke truthfully: it would be good for them to have their eyes open like the eyes of the angels. So she ate, and gave some fruit to her husband to eat also. She thought to herself that if she would die, let her husband die too and not take another woman as a wife. She also gave all of the animals and birds and beasts to eat, so that they too should die. All of the creatures ate — with the exception of one bird which is called *chol.* The *chol* refused to eat from the Tree's fruit. R' Yudin says in the name of R' Shimon that the *chol* lives for one thousand years and then it begins

to fade away; it loses all of its feathers and becomes as small as an egg. It then begins to grow again.

The First Sin

כִּי טוֹב הָעֵץ לְמַאֲכָל — *That the Tree was good for eating* (3:6). Some of our Sages say that this was a fig tree. As soon as they ate of the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge their eyes were opened and they were ashamed of their nakedness. This is why they used fig leaves to cover themselves.

Other Sages say that the Tree was a grapevine. Chavah squeezed grapes and gave Adam blood-red wine to drink. Still others say that it was an *esrog* (citron) tree. This is why it is customary for some women to take the *esrog* on the festival of Hoshana Rabbah and bite off the tip, and to give charity as well, and to ask God to spare them from the pangs of childbirth. For if Chavah had not eaten from the Tree every woman would have given birth easily, much like a hen, which lays its eggs painlessly. A woman should say this prayer (when she bites the tip off the *esrog*): "Master of the Universe: Because Chavah ate of the Tree of Knowledge must we women all give birth in deathly pain? If I had been there I would have had no enjoyment from the fruit. I did not want to make the *esrog* invalid (by biting off the tip) during the seven days of Succos, because it is part of a *mitzvah*. Today is Hoshana Rabbah (which comes at the conclusion of the festival of Succos) and the commandment of the *esrog* is no longer upon us. I have rendered the *esrog* invalid, and yet have not hastened to eat it. Just as I have derived almost no enjoyment from the tip of the *esrog*, so I would have derived no enjoyment from the Tree which You forbade."

The Most Cursed of Animals; A Fatal Misunderstanding

וַתִּפָּקַחְנָה עֵינֵי שְׁנֵיהֶם — *And the eyes of them both were opened* (3:7). God opened their eyes, and when they became aware that they were naked, they plucked off fig leaves and covered themselves with them. They then heard God's voice in the Garden. It was two hours before nightfall, and they hid themselves from Him. God came to them, pretending that He did not know what they had done, so that they should not be frightened. He asked them, "Where are you?" Adam answered, "I hid myself when I heard Your voice in the Garden, because I was naked." God asked, "How did you know that you should be ashamed of your nakedness? Have you eaten from the forbidden fruit?" Adam replied, "The woman whom You gave me gave it to me to eat." God turned to the woman and asked, "Why did you eat from the forbidden Tree?" She answered, "The snake

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R. Nahman b. R. Hisda expounded: What is meant by the text, Then the Lord God formed [wa-yizer] man? [The word wa-yizer] is written with two yods, to show that God created two inclinations, one good and the other evil. R. Nahman b. Isaac demurred to this. According to this, he said, animals, of which it is not written wa-yizer, should have no evil inclination ' yet we see that they injure and bite and kick? In truth [the point of the two yods] is as stated by R. Simeon b. Pazzi; for R. Simeon b. Pazzi said: Woe is me because of my Creator [yozri], woe is me because of my evil inclination [yizri]! Or again as explained by R. Jeremiah b. Eleazar; for R. Jeremiah b. Eleazar said: God created two countenances in the first man, as it says, Behind and before hast Thou formed me.

And the rib which the Lord God had taken from man made he a woman. Rab and Samuel explained this differently. One said that [this 'rib'] was a face, the other that it was a tail. No objection can be raised against the one who says it was a face, since so it is written, 'Behind and before hast Thou formed me'. But how does he who says it was a tail explain 'Behind and before hast Thou formed me'? — As stated by R. Ammi; for R. Ammi said: 'Behind' [i.e.,last] in the work of creation, and 'before' [i.e., first] for punishment. We grant you he was last in the work of creation, for he was not created till the eve of Sabbath. But when you say 'first for punishment', to what punishment do you refer? Do you mean the punishment in connection with the serpent? Surely it has been taught: Rabbi says, in conferring honor we commence with the greatest , in cursing with the least important . 'In conferring honor we commence with the greatest', as it is written, And Moses spoke to Aaron and to Eleazar and to Ithamar his sons that were left, Take the meal-offering that remaineth etc. 'In cursing we commence with the least'; first the serpent was cursed then Eve and then Adam! I must say then that the punishment of the Flood is meant, as it is written, And He blotted out every living substance which was upon the face of the ground, both man and cattle. No difficulty arises for the one who says that Eve was created from the face, for so it is written, wa-yizer, with two yods. But he who says it was a tail , what does he make of wa-yizer? — As explained by R. Simeon b. Pazzi? For R. Simeon b. Pazzi said: Woe is me because of my Creator [yozri,] woe is me because of my evil inclination [yizri]! No difficulty arises for one who says it was a face, for so it is written, Male and female created He them', But he who says it was a tail, what does he make of 'male and female created He them'? — As explained by R. Abbahu. For R. Abbahu contrasted two texts. It is written, 'Male and female created He them', and it is also written, For in the image of God made He man. How are these statements to be reconciled? At first the intention was to create two, but in the end only one was created. No difficulty arises for him who says it was a face, since so it is written, He closed up the place with flesh instead thereof. But he who says it was a tail, how does he explain, 'he closed up the place with flesh instead thereof — R. Jeremiah, or as some say R. Zebid, or again as some say, R. Nahman b. Isaac, replied: These words are meant to apply only to the place of the cut. No difficulty arises for the one who says it was a tail, for so it is written, And God built.18 But he who says, it was a face, what does he make of the words 'And God built'? As explained by R. Simeon b. Menasia. For R. Simeon b. Menasia expounded: What is meant by the words, 'And the Lord built the rib'? It teaches that the Holy One, blessed be He, plaited Eve's hair and brought her to Adam; for in the seacoast towns 'plaiting' [keli'atha] is called, 'building' [binyatha]. Another explanation: R. Hisda said (some say, it was taught in a Baraitha): It teaches that [God] built Eve after the fashion of a storehouse. Just as a storehouse is narrow at the top and broad at the bottom so as to hold the produce [safely], so a woman is narrower above and broader below so as to hold the embryo. And he brought her to the man. R. Jeremiah b. Eleazar said: This teaches that [God] acted as best man to Adam. Here the Torah teaches a maxim of behavior, that a man of eminence should associate himself with a lesser man in acting as best man, and he should not take it amiss.

According to the one who says it was a face, which of the two faces went in front? — R. Nahman b. Isaac answered: It is reasonable to suppose that the man's face went in front, since it has been taught: A man

should not walk behind a woman on the road, and even if his wife happens to be in front of him on a bridge he should let her pass on one side, and whoever crosses a river behind a woman will have no portion in the future world.

Our Rabbis taught: If a man counts out money from his hand into the hand of a woman so as to have the opportunity of gazing at her, even if he can vie in Torah and good deeds with Moses our teacher, he shall not escape the punishment of Gehinnom, as it says, Hand to hand, he shall not escape from evil, he shall not escape from the punishment of Gehinnom.

R. Nahman said: Manoah was an 'am ha-arez:, since it is written, And Manoah went after his wife. R. Nahman b. Isaac demurred to this. According to this, [he said,] in the case of Elkanah when it says, 'And Elkanah went after his wife', and in the case of Elisha when it says, And he rose and went after her, are we to suppose that this means literally after her? No; it means, after her words and her advice. So here [in the case of Manoah] it means, after her words and her advice! Said R. Ashi: On the view of R. Nahman that Manoah was an 'am ha'arez, he cannot even have known as much of Scripture as a schoolboy; for it says, And Rebekah arose and her damsels, and they rode upon the camels and followed the man, [after the man] and not in front of the man.

R. Johanan said: Better go behind a lion than behind a woman; better go behind a woman than behind an idol; better go behind an idol than behind the synagogue when the congregation is praying. This, however, is the case only when he is not carrying a load; if he is carrying a load, there is no objection. And also this is the case only when there is no other entrance; but if there is another entrance there is no objection. And again this is the case only when he is not riding on an ass, but if he is riding on an ass, there is no objection. And again this is the case only when he is not wearing tefillin; but if he is wearing tefillin there is no objection.

THE *AGGADOT* OF THE TALMUD

by Rabbi Avraham, son of the Rambam

Tránslator's note: This classic essay on the approach to the aggadot *was written about three hundred years before* Ein Yaakov *appeared. Because of its timeless significance it has been included in most editions of the work.* (EIN YAAKOV PUBLISHED 1516 CE)

ESSAY ON THE MEANING OF THE *AGGADOT*

It is important to understand that the homiletic expositions and stories in the Talmud have underlying meanings that are shrouded in secrecy, and most of the commentators did not even attempt to probe their deeper meaning.

My father, (the Rambam), had in mind writing a commentary on the *aggadot*, as he mentions in his *Commentary on the Mishnah*. Yet in the end he decided against it, as he stated in the beginning of his *Moreh Nevuchim* (Guide for the Perplexed), applying to himself the passage, "Moses was afraid to come close to it."[1]

However, after my father's death, I decided to write a few explanatory remarks on this subject in the hope that it will be helpful to students of this field. If you follow my guidelines in understanding the aggadic teachings of the Sages, you will come to grasp their deeper meaning, and, as a result, you will not make light of them or deny that they are true. Neither will you fall into the trap of thinking that the miracles that happened to the Sages are as momentous as those that happened to Moses and Israel at the parting of the Red Sea, or as remarkable as the parting of the Jordan for Elisha and Elijah.[2] Such misconceptions arise when you take the *derash* (i.e., homiletic interpretations) literally and accept only the surface meaning of the text. But there is abundant evidence to show that the aggadic tales and teachings, aside from their plain meaning, have profound hidden significance. My father already made this clear in his book; I merely want to explain it in greater detail by classifying the *aggadot* into different categories and citing examples for each category. But first I want to make a few introductory remarks.

EVERY THEORY MUST BE SUBSTANTIATED

To begin with, let me point out that if a person puts forward a certain theory without offering proof, expecting people to accept it at face value just because they respect him, he is sadly mistaken; his approach flies in the face of both the Torah and common sense. It goes against common sense, because he wants people to believe something without evaluating and investigating whether it squares with the facts. And it runs counter to the Torah, because it goes against the truth and is unethical. The Torah [tells us not to curry favor with anyone], saying [to a judge], "Do not give special consideration to the poor, nor show respect to the great" (Leviticus 19:15). And it says also, "Do not give anyone special consideration when rendering judgment" (Deuteronomy 1:17). And there is no difference between a person who believes an idea without supporting evidence and one who trusts a person's statement simply because he respects him and holds that it must be true since it comes from a great scholar. This does not prove that the statement is true.

Accordingly, we are not required to endorse all the theories of the Sages of the Talmud on medicine, physics, and astronomy in every respect just because we know the authors to be outstanding personalities and eminent scholars in all facets of the Torah. Of course, when it comes to Torah knowledge, the scholarship of the Sages is unsurpassed, and it is their responsibility to teach it to us, as it says, "You must keep the Torah as they interpret it for you" (Deuteronomy 17:11), but this does not necessarily apply to all other branches of knowledge. You can see that even the Sages themselves when faced with an issue that could not be proven by debate and logical arguments, said, "I swear, that even if Joshua b. Nun had said it, I would not have obeyed him!"[3] Which means, "I would not believe him although he was a prophet, since he cannot prove his point by the talmudical rules of logical argument."

Let me offer you one conclusive proof that no one will refute. It is this: We find that the Sages themselves said that the opinions expressed in the Gemara with regard to general medicine are not borne out, like for instance when the Gemara says that wearing a "preserving stone"[4] is a safeguard against miscarriage, or other things mentioned in tractate Shabbat. They tested these remedies and found them not to have any therapeutic value.

DEDICATION TO THE TRUTH

You should realize, however, that there are exceptions to the rule, (that the medical advice of the Sages is unreliable). For example, the admonition of the Sages, "If you are hungry, eat; if you are thirsty, drink; if your dish is cooked, pour it out while it is hot," is certainly true. What it means is that you should not eat until you are hungry or drink until you are thirsty, and when you sense the call of nature, you should not delay relieving yourself. This dictum is the key to healthful living; it has been verified by experience and by medical testing.

By the same token, it would be wrong to argue as follows: While Aristotle, the great philosopher, has proved by indisputable facts that the Creator exists, as well as other things that are true, he holds the false belief that the universe never had a beginning but always was, and he propounds the fallacy that the Creator does not know every detail. Now you should not say that since he erred on these points, therefore, all his theories are untrue. You should carefully examine each of this statements on its own merits and accept that which passes muster and reject that which does not hold up. You should refrain from ruling on things that cannot be decided either way, regardless of who says it. As our Sages said [about a law R. Shimon proposed], "If this is a tradition [he received from his teachers] we will accept it, but if it is only an inference, we want to raise an objection."[5] In the same way, when the Sages were faced with an issue they were unable to decide either way, they said *teiku* which means, "the question remains unsolved." Similarly, we find that when they discovered that the opinion they held was wrong, they reversed themselves, and frankly took back what they had said, like, "Bet Hillel retracted their earlier decision and decided in accordance with Bet Shammai."[6] Indeed, their dedication to the truth was so great that the Gemara tells us that Rava appointed an Amora to say in his name, "The statement I made to you was an error on my part."[7] Don't accept theories with blind faith just because the author is an outstanding scholar. You should accept teachings only on the basis of solid evidence, as my father said in his commentary. Anyone who is objective and has an open mind will agree with this.

CATEGORIES OF SCRIPTURAL INTERPRETATIONS

With God's help I will now proceed to classify the *derashot* [scriptural expositions] in the Talmud, breaking them down into five categories.

1. The first category consists of *derashot* that should be understood in their literal sense, since they contain nothing but their plain, obvious meaning. Although this category needs no illustration, I will give you an example anyway, to make it unmistakably clear. I have in mind the Gemara in Berachot 31a that expounds, "You are forbidden to fill your mouth with laughter in this world, for it says, 'When God will return the captivity of Zion . . . then our mouths will be filled with laughter' (Psalms 126:2);" (the word *then* implies that we will laugh only after the Redemption, but not while we are still in *galut* (exile).
2. The second category of *derashot* covers interpretations that have both a literal and a figurative meaning. Since the Sages meant to convey the figurative rather than the plain meaning of these sayings, they couched them in such a way that their plain meaning represents the opposite of their figurative and true meaning. Most of these have been explained in *Moreh Nevuchim* (Guide for the Perplexed, volume 3:43) and in the *Commentary on the Mishnah* [by the Rambam]. An example of this kind of rabbinic exposition is found in the Gemara in Taanit 31a, where it says, "R. Eliezer said: In days to come, the Holy One, blessed be He, will make a circle for the righteous, and He will sit among them in Gan Eden. Every one of them will point his finger at Him, as it says, 'And they will say on that day: Behold, this is our God . . . let us exult and rejoice in His deliverance'" (Isaiah 25:9).

   Of course, no intelligent person will take this *derash* in its literal sense. What R. Eliezer meant to say is that the reward of the righteous in the world to come will be that they receive from God a lucid perception of the absolute truth, something they could never attain in this world. This is the supreme and ultimate good. He therefore compares the joy of gaining this insight to a dance, and likens the blissful delight each individual experiences to the pointing with their fingers at the Holy One, blessed be He. Thus he illustrates this lofty idea through a concise allegory. This exemplifies all other interpretations of this kind.
3. The third category embraces expositions that have only a simple meaning, but this simple meaning is so puzzling that most people cannot understand it. And if you do understand it, you find that the composition of the piece is unclear and confused and its wording vague and ambiguous. Therefore, be careful when you study such expositions, and don't be hasty in figuring out what they mean, because you can easily reach the wrong conclusion and get the wrong idea.

   To give you an example, the Gemara says, "A person should always incite (*yargiz*) his *yetzer tov* (good impulse) to fight against his *yetzer hara* (evil impulse). For it says, 'Incite (*rigzu*) [your inner powers] and don't sin' (Psalms 4:5).[8] If he overcomes his evil impulse, fine. But if he can-

not, he should recite the *Shema*, for the verse continues, 'Reflect in your hearts while on your beds [*mishkavchem*] (ibid.) [this alludes to the *Shema*, for it says, *beshochbecha*, you should recite the *Shema* when you retire]. If this works, fine. If not, he should remind himself of the day of death, for the verse concludes, 'and be silent' (ibid.)" (Berachot 5a).

Although this exposition means exactly what it says, it is difficult to understand it because the terms "good and evil impulse" are unfamiliar, and the suggested ways of overcoming the evil impulse are baffling. I think it is important that I explain this *derashah* to help you understand it and similar expositions in this category.

Note that the word *yargiz*, "incite," means also, "to rule, to control." The term *yetzer tov* refers to your intellect, and *yetzer hara* denotes your passions and physical desires. So the real meaning of the statement is that you shóuld strive to make your mind control your physical desires, and that you should reflect on this all the time. If reflecting on this is enough to restrain your passions, well and good; but if not, you should reinforce your thoughts by articulating this concept, uttering passages that will make you submissive, help you subdue your passion, and stop you from having lustful thoughts. The passage you should recite is the *Shema*, because the *Shema* stresses the fact that the *yetzer tov* encourages you to believe in the Oneness of God, to love and serve Him and to trust in the principle of Divine reward and punishment. The *Shema* tells you to subdue the *yetzer hara* when it says, "Do not stray after your heart and eyes" (Numbers 15:30), and it tells you to bolster your *yetzer tov*, saying, "Be holy to your God" (ibid. v. 40).

The *derashah* continues, "If reciting the *Shema* works, fine. If not, he should remind himself of the day of death." This means that if the *yetzer hara* continues to stir your passion and is not subdued by your recitation of the *Shema*, you will overcome it by thinking of the day of death. Remembering that man is mortal is enough to break the arrogance of your *yetzer hara*, as Akavya b. Mehalalel said, "Consider three things and you will not come in the grip of sin: . . . 'Where you are going'—to a place of dust, worms and maggots. . ." (Avot 3:5).

4. The fourth category consists of metaphoric interpretations of certain verses. However, the Sages did not suggest that their figurative interpretation is the actual meaning of the verse, God forbid to think that.

   An example of this kind of exposition is the Gemara in Taanit 9a, where R. Yochanan said: What is the meaning of the passage, "*Asseir te'asseir*, You shall tithe" (Deuteronomy 14:22)? It means, "Give tithe, so that you will become rich."[9] [And there is a verse to prove it. God says: "If you give tithes,] I will pour upon you a blessing without end" (Malachi 3:10). What is the meaning of the words, "without [*beli*] end"?—Until your lips grow weary (*yivlu*) from saying, "It is enough!"[10]

   Don't think like people who are unable to grasp the real truth and who think that such metaphoric interpretations are traditions like the expositions of the laws of the Torah. That is not so. The fact is that the interpretations of passages that do not involve fundamental laws and principles are not based on tradition. Such expositions were thought up by the authors according to their own understanding. Many of these interpretations are vehicles to express lofty ideas through allegories, parables, and symbolism. Take the commentary[11] on the verse, "Jethro heard . . . and he came to the desert where Moses was staying, near God's mountain" (Exodus 18:1), where R. Yehoshua asked: What did Jethro hear? and answered: He heard about the war of Amalek.[12] I have no doubt that this is merely R. Yehoshua's opinion and not a tradition. The fact that he cites evidence to support his opinion proves it, because for a tradition we need no evidence. Furthermore, the fact that all other Sages disagree with him, proves it also. If it was a tradition they would not dispute him.

   The fifth category comprises *derashot* [metaphoric expositions] that contain exaggerations, like the following: Mar Zutra said, Between *Atzel* and *Atzel* there are four hundred camel-loads of *derashot* (scriptural interpretations) (Pesachim 62b). Mar Zutra has in mind the verse, "Atzel had six sons, and these were their names: Azrikam, Bocheri, Ishmael, Sheariah, Obadiah, and Hanan, all these were the sons of Atzel" (1 Chronicles 8:38). The first *Atzel* is at the beginning of the verse, the second is at the end. To say that this verse has four hundred camel-loads of interpretations is clearly an exaggeration. For if in the whole book of Chronicles there are not four hundred camel-loads of scriptural interpretations, how could there be that many in one passage? Therefore, it must be an exaggeration.

AGGADIC ANECDOTES

The aggadic anecdotes can be divided into four parts:

1. True stories to serve as precedents for the purpose of deciding a law. An example is the case of a person who is sitting with his head and the greater part of his body inside the sukkah but with the table inside the house (because the

sukkah is too small). Bet Shammai declared the sukkah invalid, but Bet Hillel ruled that it was valid. Said Bet Hillel to Bet Shammai: "Did it not happen that the elders of Bet Hillel and the elders of Bet Shammai once went on a visit to R. Yochanan b. Hachoranit, and they found him sitting with his head and greater part of his body within the sukkah while his table was in the house?" [The fact that R. Yochanan sat in such a sukkah proves our view that it is valid.] Retorted Bet Shammai: "On the contrary. This incident proves that our view is right, for they told him, 'If you have always sat in a sukkah like this, you have never fulfilled the mitzvah of sukkah!'" (Ketubot 13b). [Thus the anecdote is told to serve as a precedent for a law concerning the minimum size of a sukkah.]

2. Stories that are told to teach a moral lesson, like the following: A person should always be gentle like Hillel and not impatient like Shammai. The story is told about two people who made a wager between themselves. They said: "Whoever will go and make Hillel angry will receive 400 *zuz* . . . and Hillel did not become angry" (Shabbat 30b). The moral of this story is that you should try to emulate Hillel and not be overly particular or become angry even when provoked, for forbearance is an admirable trait. There are many similar stories in the Talmud.
3. Anecdotes that convey a fundamental religious principle, like the following: It happened once that the people said to Choni Hame'agel: Pray that it should rain. He drew a circle around him and said, "Master of the universe! Your children have turned to me . . ." (Taanit 19a). This story shows the power of perfect faith, that God listens to the prayer of His righteous servants and answers them when they are in distress, as it says, "What nation is so great that they have God close to it, as God our Lord is, whenever we call Him?" (Deuteronomy 4:8). The prophets too, expressed this thought, saying, "Then you will call, and God will respond" (Isaiah 58:9), and also, "He will call upon Me, and I will answer him" (Psalms 91:15). A similar story is told about Nakdimon b. Gurion in Taanit 19a, and there are a great number of such anecdotes in the Talmud.
4. Tales that point out a miracle or an amazing incident, like the following story about R. Meir, R. Yehudah, and R. Yose who were traveling on the road. R. Meir deduced from the innkeeper's name that he was dishonest, and subsequent events proved him right (Yoma 83a). Many similar incidents can be found in the Talmud.

DREAMS PRESENTED AS REAL EVENTS

Then there are stories that did not actually happen but were seen in a dream. The Sages express them in terms of real events, because they believed that no reasonable person would ever mistake dreams for actual facts, like the following: R. Yishmael b. Elisha [the High Priest] said: It once happened on Yom Kippur that I entered the innermost part of the Sanctuary to burn the incense and saw the Lord of Hosts seated on a high and exalted throne . . . (Berachot 7a), and many other similar stories. And the same is true of stories that tell of visions of the prophets, how God spoke to them, and stories about demons. A naive person who thinks that these things happened exactly as they were recorded and believes things that are impossible, is foolish and ignorant of the laws of nature. For in telling the stories of miracles the Sages followed the example of the prophets who told in plain language what they saw in their visions, as my father explained it in the *Moreh Nevuchim*.

EXAGGERATIONS

There are many incidents that actually happened but were exaggerated in the belief that no reasonable person would mistake their meaning. The Rabbis condoned the use of exaggeration, saying, "The Torah used overstatement, the prophets used overstatement, and the Sages used overstatement. The Torah used hyperbole, like in the verse, "Great cities fortified to the skies" (Deuteronomy 1:28). The prophets used hyperbole, like in the verse, "The people were playing flutes and rejoicing with great joy; the ground burst from their noise" (1 Kings 1:40). The Sages exaggerated when they described the heap of ashes on the altar [saying that there were three hundred *kor* of ashes—an immense quantity—on the altar]; they exaggerated when they spoke of the golden vine [on which the people used to hang their gifts of gold for the *Bet Hamikdash*, saying that it took three hundred *kohanim* to collect those gifts]; and they exaggerated when they described the curtain that separated the Holy of Holies from the Sanctuary, [saying that it was so heavy that it took three hundred *kohanim* to immerse it in a *mikveh*] (Tamid 29a). These are just three examples in the Mishnah, but in the Gemara there are countless cases of exaggeration. To cite one example: Rabbah and R. Zeira had the Purim feast together. They became intoxicated, and Rava got up and slew R. Zeira. On the next day Rabbah prayed for R. Zeira and revived him (Megillah 7b). What it means is that Rabbah beat R. Zeira and wounded him so badly that R. Zeira was near death. The Gemara uses the phrase "he slew him" because the wound was life-threatening, or it might have been on the throat. And the word *achyei* [he revived him] means "he recovered." The term *achyei* is

often used for that meaning. Many similar stories are found in the Talmud.

PARABLES

Some *aggadot* tell stories that actually took place but are told in the form of parables or metaphors so that only a person who grasps the author's intent can understand them. In some cases even fools and children can make sense of the symbolism. An example of this kind of *aggadah* is found in the following Gemara in Sukkah:

> Once there were two Kushites who served King Solomon as scribes, Elichoref and Achiyah.[13] One day Solomon noticed that the Angel of Death was sad. "Why are you sad?" he asked. "Because in heaven they have demanded from me the souls of the two Kushites who are sitting here," the Angel of Death replied. [Their time to die had arrived, but they were not at the place where they were destined to die.] To save their lives, Solomon placed them in the custody of the demons [over whom he ruled] and sent them to the sity of Luz, [where the Angel of Death has no power].[14] However, as they reached the gate of Luz, they died. The next day Solomon saw that the Angel of Death was cheerful. "Why are you cheerful?" he asked. "Because you sent the men to the place where I was ordered to take their lives, [namely, at the gate of Luz]," replied the Angel of Death. Thereupon Solomon coined the phrase: A man's feet are responsible for him; they carry him to the place where he is wanted (Sukkah 53a).

The meaning of this *aggadah* is obscure. It seems to me that it actually happened. In other words, Solomon knew that the two scribes were going to die of a sickness they had, and in an effort to save their lives he sent them to a place with a good climate where they would be cured. But they died there at God's behest, from which there is no escape. That's why Solomon said: A man's feet carry him to the place where he is wanted. You can find deeper meaning in each detail of the story, but I don't want to go into that at this time.

Don't be surprised that the Sages use parables and allegories rather than plain ordinary language; they also use this method to interpret verses of the Prophets. See the Gemara in Berachot 18a where they interpret the passage, "He (Benaiah) struck the two altar-fires of Moab" (2 Samuel 23:20) in a figurative sense,[15] although the prophets stated it in plain language as if it had no other meaning. I want to make it clear that these verses have no meaning other than the symbolism by which the Sages explained them. Now, if the words of the prophets are explained in a figurative sense, surely symbolism should be applied to the words of the Sages that are difficult to understand. My father pointed this out in his *Shemonah Perakim*.[16]

ALLEGORIES, SYMBOLISMS, AND PARABLES

We found a source in the Talmud that proves beyond doubt that most of the sayings of the Sages are allegories and symbolisms, and should not be taken literally. The Gemara relates:

> R. Eliezer had a disciple who once rendered a halachic decision in his presence. Said R. Eliezer to his wife Ima Shalom, "I wonder whether this student will live through the year." The student, in fact, did not live out the year. "Are you a prophet [that you knew that he was going to die]" his wife asked. "I am neither a prophet nor the son of a prophet," R. Eliezer replied, "but I have this tradition: Whoever renders a halachic ruling in the presence of his rabbi is liable to the death penalty at the hands of Heaven," [and that is what this student was guilty of] . . . The name of this disciple was Yehudah ben Gurya.

The Gemara continues: The reason that the disciple's name and that of his father were mentioned is so that you should not say that the whole story is a parable. From this you can infer that in many instances the words of the Sages were not taken literally, but were seen as parables. Fix this proof in your mind and keep your eyes open to it, for it is a marvelous thing and a superb piece of evidence. (This proof was pointed out to me by a great Torah scholar.)

This last group of figurative *aggadot* is very much like the second category of *derashot* mentioned above that deals with allegorical interpretations. They are both important portions of *Aggadah*, containing magnificent and lofty concepts that could not be revealed to the masses, and, therefore, they were veiled in parables and metaphors.

COMPOSITES

One important thing for you to remember and which will be very helpful to you in determining whether a story is real, a dream, a parable, or a metaphor, is that many *aggadot* contain a mixture of all these elements. If you are going to explain an entire story according to one single form, either in its plain meaning or in any other way, you will be bewildered and confused.

An example of an aggadah with a blend of two or more meanings is the following story: Once R. Yochana b. Zakkai was traveling on the road, riding on his donkey, and R. Elazar b. Arach was driving the donkey from behind. R. Elazar said to him, "Rabbi, please teach me one chapter of the Account of the

Divine Chariot."[17] "My son," replied R. Yochanan, "Did I not teach you that the Divine Chariot should not be taught to one person unless he is a sage and understands it by himself?" R. Elazar then said, "Rabbi, allow me to say one thing that you taught me." He answered, "Go ahead and say it!" R. Elazar then expounded the Divine Chariot, and as he did, fire came down from heaven and encircled all the trees in the field. Then all the trees broke out in song, singing, "Praise God from the earth, sea giants and all watery depths . . . fruitful trees and all cedars . . . Halleluyah!" An angel then called out from the fire and said, "This exposition is truly the Account of the Divine Chariot!" R. Yochanan b. Zakkai stood up and kissed R. Elazar b. Arach on the head and said, "Blessed be the Lord, God of Israel, Who gave to our father Abraham a son who knows, understands, and is able to delve into and expound the Divine Chariot." This story and the one after it are mixtures of all these elements and forms of meaning. I cannot analyze these things in depth because they are profound mysteries that should not be revealed.

SUMMARY

I have attempted to clarify the *aggadot* for the thoughtful student by classifying the anecdotes and Scriptural expositions, citing examples for each category. I am confident that, after studying my comments, when you come across a story or a *derash*, you will have no difficulty recognizing what type of *aggadah* it is.

Knowing these things, you will avoid casting aspersions on the words of the Sages like the Karaites[18] and the fools did. This will also prevent a person from going to the other extreme of foolishly believing in impossible things and in events that never happened. In the end, he will deny the spiritual essence of God by ascribing to Him physical attributes. This comes from taking certain passages about God in a literal sense and believing that God is a tangible Being.

Think seriously about the principle I propound in this essay. It is a towering pillar and a strong wall against confusion and error.

And now be blessed by God;[19] place me like a seal on your heart[20] and like *tefillin* between your eyes.[21] Let this be a gateway and an introduction for whatever you will read or hear in the future of any *derash* (explanation of a verse) or story; you will benefit greatly from it. Join the ranks of those that recognize and understand the truth, stay away from the opponents of the truth who go after delusion and are deluded.[22]

May God in His mercy lead us in the right course and guide our steps so that we may walk in the pathways of the truth and follow His direction. May His Name be blessed. Amen.

NOTES

1. An allusion to Exodus 34:30.
2. 2 Kings 2:14.
3. Berachot 24b, where the Gemara says, "Even if R. Yehoshua b. Levi had said it . . ."
4. Also called eaglestone.
5. Yevamot 76b.
6. Pesachim 88b; Yevamot 116b; Gittin 41b; Eduyot 1, 12, 13, 14.
7. Chullin 100a; Eiruvin 16b; Gittin 43a; Sanhedrin 44a et al.
8. *Rigzu*, from the same root as *yargiz*, means both "tremble" and "incite to fight."
9. The second part of the compound verb, *asseir te'asseir*, can be read *te'asheir*, "you will become rich."
10. The words *beli* and *yivlu* have letters *bet*, *lamed*, *yud* in common.
11. Zevachim 116a.
12. Exodus 17:8–14.
13. 1 Kings 4:3.
14. Sotah 46b.
15. Ariel, translated here as "the two altar-fires of Moab," symbolizes the two Temples. *Ari*, lion, represents the Sanctuary which, like a lion, is wide in the front and narrow in the back. The reference to Moab alludes to David and Solomon who are descendants of Ruth the Moabitess.
16. The Rambam's introduction to *Perek Cheilek*, the tenth chapter of tractate Sanhedrin.
17. The first chapter of Ezekiel in which he describes his mystical vision of the Divine Throne.
18. A breakaway sect founded late in the eighth century. Karaites rejected the Oral Torah and rabbinic traditions of Talmudic law. During the last few centuries they have gradually faded into oblivion.
19. Genesis 26:29.
20. Song of Songs 8:6.
21. Deuteronomy 6:8.
22. 2 Kings 17:15.

Unit 2: The Use of Midrash in the Second Temple Period

The Central Concept for the Lesson

This unit will focus on the *midrashic* writers of the Second Temple Period and their method of analyzing the Biblical text. Participants will be introduced to texts, such as the *Pseudepigraphia* and the *Apocrypha*, and a brief history of the various Jewish sects of that time period.

Goal: Participants will be able to analyze the Biblical text utilizing the *midrashic* methodology[1] of the Second Temple Period.

Objectives:
1. Participants will be able to summarize the methodology of *midrash.*
2. Participants will examine some of the work of the authors of the Second Temple Period. They will be able to identify five different commentators from this time period who did not represent woman in a positive way and who blamed Eve as the reason why we no longer live in paradise.
3. Participants will be able to summarize the *midrashim* concerning the story of Adam and Eve in the garden.

Texts:

Genesis 2:16-17
Genesis 2:23
Genesis 3
The Wisdom of Ben Sira 25:13-24
The Wisdom of Solomon 2:21-24
The Works of Philo
On the Creation 156
Questions and Answers on Genesis I 33, 35-37
The Life of Adam and Eve 9-16
Apocalypse of Moses 7-8, 15-21

[1] The commentators who wrote during this time period did not refer to what they were doing as *midrash.* I have borrowed this term from a later time period to define their approach to text.

I. The *Midrashic* Method of Analysis

A. Ask the participants to tell the class what was learned about *midrash* from unit one.

B. Review what constitutes a *midrash*.

1. It is a homiletical method of interpretation of Biblical verses.

2. It "endeavors to decipher and spell out the latent meanings of the text."[2]

3. The *derash* method is acontextual because it disregards the historical, literary and linguistic context of the text.

4. This methodology goes back to at least the Second Temple Period. There are some scholars who believe that there are some parts of the Bible which are a *derash* on other earlier parts of the text.

II. Introduction to the Second Temple Period Commentators

A. Brief mention of the texts of this time period

1. Scholars believe that the codification of Hebrew Bible occurred around 500 B.C.E.[3]

2. The literature of the Second Temple period was begun in the beginning of the 4th century B.C.E. during the time when rabbinic Judaism and Christianity began to emerge.

a. *Apocrypha* and *Pseudepigrapha*.

1. These are collections of writings that include some of the Jewish writers of the Second Temple period.

b. Philo and Josephus were authors whose writing has been preserved from this time period.

B. Mention some of the different sects of Judaism present at this time.

1. Pharisees[4]

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[2]Edward Greenstein, *Back to the Sources,* edited by Barry W. Holtz, (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1984), p. 216.

[3]Ibid., p. 131.

[4]Ibid., p. 130.

a. represented the middle and lower classes.
b. the Hasmonean period Hasidim were their forerunners.
c. believed in the "tradition of the fathers" which is the Oral Law that had been passed down.
d. wanted people to live holy lives which extended from the Temple into their lives.
e. followed the Levitical laws of purity.
f. this concern for ritual detail underlies the critique of the early Christians.
g. scholars believe that the early rabbis were heirs to the Pharisees.
h. believed in the notion of reward and punishment after death.
i. believed in the immortality of the soul.

2. Sadducees[5]
   a. was a recognizable group from around 150 B.C.E.
   b. they were predominantly an aristocratic group.
   c. most were priests or married into the high priestly families.
   d. tended to be moderate Hellenizers whose religion was loyalty to the religion of Israel but whose culture was influenced by the culture they lived in.
   e. they rejected the "tradition of the fathers" (i.e. the Oral Law) which the Pharisees considered as law.
   f. saw the purity laws as referring to the Temple and its priests, and saw no reason for extending them into the daily life of all Israel.
3. Essenes[6]
   a. they were noted for their piety.

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[5]Lawrence H. Schiffman, *From Text to Tradition*, (New Jersey: Ktav Publishing, 1991), pp. 107-112.

[6]Ibid., pp. 113-116.

b. until the 20th century the only documentation concerning the Essenes was found in the literature of Philo and Josephus.
c. in 1947 when the Dead Sea Scrolls were found and consensus was made that the group that had written the scrolls may have been the Essenes.
d. there were approximately 4,000 Essenes that were scattered in communities throughout Palestine.
e. only adult males could enter the Essene sect.
f. all members handed over their property when they entered and thus all members shared wealth equally with no distinctions between rich and poor.
g. it seems that after they had children, the members became celibate and as mentioned above, only the males entered the sect.
h. prayer was very important in their lives.
i. although they accepted the notion of the Temple in Jerusalem, they disagreed with the manner in which the purity and sacrificial laws were understood by the Temple authorities
j. ritual purity was emphasized
k. they believed in unalterable destiny
l. studied the Bible and interpreted it allegorically
m. they believed in the immortality of the soul

III. Text - Garden of Eden

A. Read together *Genesis* 2:16-17, 2:23, and 3. Participants will take turns reading.

B. Briefly discuss the events that occurred in the Garden of Eden.

1. Have the participants describe the details of what occurred in the garden.
2. Who was responsible for their eating of the forbidden fruit?

IV. Reading of the play – Who's to Blame?

A. Structure of the drama – Through the use of overheads and role playing by the participants, the writings of the Second Temple commentators will be presented as witness testimony in the trial of Adam, Eve, and the serpent.

1. The writings of the some of the Second Temple authors are used as testimony in the play.
2. Assignment of roles to students by the instructor.
    a. The participants will take on the roles of the different commentators. Thus, a participant will become a witness in the court room drama.
3. As the instructor, who will be the narrator, proceeds through the play, different participants will be called upon to read the text of a particular Second Temple author.
4. As each witness is called forward to testify, the participants will be introduced to the Second Temple author. They will learn something about this author's history and life.
5. After the witness/writing has testified, the instructor will highlight the material and how it affects the reading of the garden story.

V. Discussion of Who's to Blame: Adam, Eve or the Serpent?

A. A detailed discussion of each commentator by the instructor will be presented through the play. As the play proceeds through, the participants will see how each commentator expresses his opinion as to who is to blame.

B. After the play, we will look at these commentators and their comments to see how the garden story affected the role of women in society.

1. Ask students to discuss how these authors of the Second Temple Period viewed women.
    a. ask them to list those commentators who were favorable to women
    b. ask them to list those commentators who had a negative view of women

2. Did the commentators of the Second Temple Period help define the inferior role of women in society?

    a. ask participants whether they feel that these writers helped define a woman's role.

3. Do you feel that the Bible's account of the garden story affected the role of women in society?

4. Do you think that women already had an inferior role and the garden story in the Bible sought to justify their position in society?

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29 God said, "See, I give you every seed-bearing plant that is upon all the earth, and every tree that has seed-bearing fruit; they shall be yours for food. 30 And to all the animals on land, to all the birds of the sky, and to everything that creeps on earth, in which there is the breath of life, [I give] all the green plants for food." And it was so. 31 And God saw all that He had made, and found it very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.

29 וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים הִנֵּה נָתַתִּי לָכֶם אֶת־
כָּל־עֵשֶׂב ׀ זֹרֵעַ זֶרַע אֲשֶׁר עַל־פְּנֵי כָל־
הָאָרֶץ וְאֶת־כָּל־הָעֵץ אֲשֶׁר־בּוֹ פְרִי־עֵץ
זֹרֵעַ זָרַע לָכֶם יִהְיֶה לְאָכְלָה׃ 30 וּלְכָל־חַיַּת
הָאָרֶץ וּלְכָל־עוֹף הַשָּׁמַיִם וּלְכֹל ׀ רוֹמֵשׂ
עַל־הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר־בּוֹ נֶפֶשׁ חַיָּה אֶת־כָּל־יֶרֶק
עֵשֶׂב לְאָכְלָה וַיְהִי־כֵן׃ 31 וַיַּרְא אֱלֹהִים
אֶת־כָּל־אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה וְהִנֵּה־טוֹב מְאֹד וַיְהִי־
עֶרֶב וַיְהִי־בֹקֶר יוֹם הַשִּׁשִּׁי׃ פ

2 The heaven and the earth were finished, and all their array. 2 On the seventh day God finished the work that He had been doing, and He ceased[a] on the seventh day from all the work that He had done. 3 And God blessed the seventh day and declared it holy, because on it God ceased from all the work of creation that He had done. 4 Such is the story of heaven and earth when they were created.

ב וַיְכֻלּוּ הַשָּׁמַיִם וְהָאָרֶץ וְכָל־צְבָאָם׃
2 וַיְכַל אֱלֹהִים בַּיּוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי מְלַאכְתּוֹ
אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה וַיִּשְׁבֹּת בַּיּוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי מִכָּל־
מְלַאכְתּוֹ אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה׃ 3 וַיְבָרֶךְ אֱלֹהִים
אֶת־יוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי וַיְקַדֵּשׁ אֹתוֹ כִּי בוֹ
שָׁבַת מִכָּל־מְלַאכְתּוֹ אֲשֶׁר־בָּרָא אֱלֹהִים
לַעֲשׂוֹת׃ פ 4 אֵלֶּה תוֹלְדוֹת הַשָּׁמַיִם
וְהָאָרֶץ בְּהִבָּרְאָם*

When the LORD God made earth and heaven—5 when no shrub of the field was yet on earth and no grasses of the field had yet sprouted, because the LORD God had not sent rain upon the earth and there was no man to till the soil, 6 but a flow would well up from the ground and water the whole surface of the earth—7 the LORD God formed man[b] from the dust of the earth.[c] He blew into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living being.

8 The LORD God planted a garden in Eden, in the east, and placed there the man whom He had formed. 9 And from the ground the LORD God caused to grow every tree that was pleasing to the sight and good for food, with the tree of life in the middle of the garden, and the tree of knowledge of good and bad.

בְּיוֹם עֲשׂוֹת יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים אֶרֶץ וְשָׁמָיִם׃
5 וְכֹל ׀ שִׂיחַ הַשָּׂדֶה טֶרֶם יִהְיֶה בָּאָרֶץ
וְכָל־עֵשֶׂב הַשָּׂדֶה טֶרֶם יִצְמָח כִּי לֹא
הִמְטִיר יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים עַל־הָאָרֶץ וְאָדָם
אַיִן לַעֲבֹד אֶת־הָאֲדָמָה׃ 6 וְאֵד יַעֲלֶה
מִן־הָאָרֶץ וְהִשְׁקָה אֶת־כָּל־פְּנֵי־הָאֲדָמָה׃
7 וַיִּיצֶר יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים אֶת־הָאָדָם עָפָר
מִן־הָאֲדָמָה וַיִּפַּח בְּאַפָּיו נִשְׁמַת חַיִּים
וַיְהִי הָאָדָם לְנֶפֶשׁ חַיָּה׃
8 וַיִּטַּע יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים גַּן־בְּעֵדֶן מִקֶּדֶם וַיָּשֶׂם
שָׁם אֶת־הָאָדָם אֲשֶׁר יָצָר׃ 9 וַיַּצְמַח
יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים מִן־הָאֲדָמָה כָּל־עֵץ נֶחְמָד
לְמַרְאֶה וְטוֹב לְמַאֲכָל וְעֵץ הַחַיִּים בְּתוֹךְ
הַגָּן וְעֵץ הַדַּעַת טוֹב וָרָע׃

v. 4. * ה׳ זעירא לפי נוסחים המקובלים

a *Or "rested."*
b *Heb.* 'adam.
c *Heb.* 'adamah.

10 A river issues from Eden to water the garden, and it then divides and becomes four branches. 11 The name of the first is Pishon, the one that winds through the whole land of Havilah, where the gold is. (12 The gold of that land is good; bdellium is there, and lapis lazuli.[d]) 13 The name of the second river is Gihon, the one that winds through the whole land of Cush. 14 The name of the third river is Tigris, the one that flows east of Asshur. And the fourth river is the Euphrates.

15 The LORD God took the man and placed him in the garden of Eden, to till it and tend it. 16 And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, "Of every tree of the garden you are free to eat; 17 but as for the tree of knowledge of good and bad, you must not eat of it; for as soon as you eat of it, you shall die."

18 The LORD God said, "It is not good for man to be alone; I will make a fitting helper for him." 19 And the LORD God formed out of the earth all the wild beasts and all the birds of the sky, and brought them to the man to see what he would call them; and whatever the man called each living creature, that would be its name. 20 And the man gave names to all the cattle and to the birds of the sky and to all the wild beasts; but for Adam no fitting helper was found. 21 So the LORD God cast a deep sleep upon the man; and, while he slept, He took one of his ribs and closed up the flesh at that spot. 22 And the LORD God fashioned the rib that He had taken from the man into a woman; and He brought her to the man. 23 Then the man said,

"This one at last
Is bone of my bones
And flesh of my flesh.
This one shall be called Woman,[e]
For from man[f] was she taken."

10 וְנָהָר יֹצֵא מֵעֵדֶן לְהַשְׁקוֹת אֶת־הַגָּן
וּמִשָּׁם יִפָּרֵד וְהָיָה לְאַרְבָּעָה רָאשִׁים׃
11 שֵׁם הָאֶחָד פִּישׁוֹן הוּא הַסֹּבֵב אֵת
כָּל־אֶרֶץ הַחֲוִילָה אֲשֶׁר־שָׁם הַזָּהָב׃
12 וּזְהַב הָאָרֶץ הַהִוא טוֹב שָׁם הַבְּדֹלַח
וְאֶבֶן הַשֹּׁהַם׃ 13 וְשֵׁם־הַנָּהָר הַשֵּׁנִי גִּיחוֹן
הוּא הַסּוֹבֵב אֵת כָּל־אֶרֶץ כּוּשׁ׃ 14 וְשֵׁם
הַנָּהָר הַשְּׁלִישִׁי חִדֶּקֶל הוּא הַהֹלֵךְ קִדְמַת
אַשּׁוּר וְהַנָּהָר הָרְבִיעִי הוּא פְּרָת׃
15 וַיִּקַּח יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים אֶת־הָאָדָם וַיַּנִּחֵהוּ
בְּגַן־עֵדֶן לְעָבְדָהּ וּלְשָׁמְרָהּ׃ 16 וַיְצַו יְהוָה
אֱלֹהִים עַל־הָאָדָם לֵאמֹר מִכֹּל עֵץ־הַגָּן
אָכֹל תֹּאכֵל׃ 17 וּמֵעֵץ הַדַּעַת טוֹב וָרָע
לֹא תֹאכַל מִמֶּנּוּ כִּי בְּיוֹם אֲכָלְךָ מִמֶּנּוּ
מוֹת תָּמוּת׃
18 וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים לֹא־טוֹב הֱיוֹת
הָאָדָם לְבַדּוֹ אֶעֱשֶׂה־לּוֹ עֵזֶר כְּנֶגְדּוֹ׃
19 וַיִּצֶר יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים מִן־הָאֲדָמָה כָּל־
חַיַּת הַשָּׂדֶה וְאֵת כָּל־עוֹף הַשָּׁמַיִם וַיָּבֵא
אֶל־הָאָדָם לִרְאוֹת מַה־יִּקְרָא־לוֹ וְכֹל
אֲשֶׁר יִקְרָא־לוֹ הָאָדָם נֶפֶשׁ חַיָּה הוּא
שְׁמוֹ׃ 20 וַיִּקְרָא הָאָדָם שֵׁמוֹת לְכָל־
הַבְּהֵמָה וּלְעוֹף הַשָּׁמַיִם וּלְכֹל חַיַּת
הַשָּׂדֶה וּלְאָדָם לֹא־מָצָא עֵזֶר כְּנֶגְדּוֹ׃
21 וַיַּפֶּל יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים | תַּרְדֵּמָה עַל־הָאָדָם
וַיִּישָׁן וַיִּקַּח אַחַת מִצַּלְעֹתָיו וַיִּסְגֹּר בָּשָׂר
תַּחְתֶּנָּה׃ 22 וַיִּבֶן יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים | אֶת־
הַצֵּלָע אֲשֶׁר־לָקַח מִן־הָאָדָם לְאִשָּׁה
וַיְבִאֶהָ אֶל־הָאָדָם׃ 23 וַיֹּאמֶר הָאָדָם

זֹאת הַפַּעַם
עֶצֶם מֵעֲצָמַי
וּבָשָׂר מִבְּשָׂרִי
לְזֹאת יִקָּרֵא אִשָּׁה
כִּי מֵאִישׁ לֻקְחָה־זֹּאת׃

d *Others "onyx"; meaning of Heb.* shoham *uncertain.*
e *Heb.* 'ishshah.
f *Heb.* 'ish.

24 עַל־כֵּן יַעֲזָב־אִישׁ אֶת־אָבִיו וְאֶת־אִמּוֹ
וְדָבַק בְּאִשְׁתּוֹ וְהָיוּ לְבָשָׂר אֶחָד׃

24Hence a man leaves his father and mother and clings to his wife, so that they become one flesh.

25 וַיִּהְיוּ שְׁנֵיהֶם עֲרוּמִּים הָאָדָם וְאִשְׁתּוֹ
וְלֹא יִתְבּוֹשָׁשׁוּ׃ ג 1 וְהַנָּחָשׁ הָיָה עָרוּם
מִכֹּל חַיַּת הַשָּׂדֶה אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה יְהוָה
אֱלֹהִים וַיֹּאמֶר אֶל־הָאִשָּׁה אַף כִּי־אָמַר
אֱלֹהִים לֹא תֹאכְלוּ מִכֹּל עֵץ הַגָּן׃
2 וַתֹּאמֶר הָאִשָּׁה אֶל־הַנָּחָשׁ מִפְּרִי עֵץ־
הַגָּן נֹאכֵל׃ 3 וּמִפְּרִי הָעֵץ אֲשֶׁר בְּתוֹךְ־הַגָּן
אָמַר אֱלֹהִים לֹא תֹאכְלוּ מִמֶּנּוּ וְלֹא תִגְּעוּ
בּוֹ פֶּן־תְּמֻתוּן׃ 4 וַיֹּאמֶר הַנָּחָשׁ אֶל־הָאִשָּׁה
לֹא־מוֹת תְּמֻתוּן׃ 5 כִּי יֹדֵעַ אֱלֹהִים כִּי
בְיוֹם אֲכָלְכֶם מִמֶּנּוּ וְנִפְקְחוּ עֵינֵיכֶם
וִהְיִיתֶם כֵּאלֹהִים יֹדְעֵי טוֹב וָרָע׃ 6 וַתֵּרֶא
הָאִשָּׁה כִּי טוֹב הָעֵץ לְמַאֲכָל וְכִי תַאֲוָה־
הוּא לָעֵינַיִם וְנֶחְמָד הָעֵץ לְהַשְׂכִּיל וַתִּקַּח
מִפִּרְיוֹ וַתֹּאכַל וַתִּתֵּן גַּם־לְאִישָׁהּ עִמָּהּ
וַיֹּאכַל׃ 7 וַתִּפָּקַחְנָה עֵינֵי שְׁנֵיהֶם וַיֵּדְעוּ
כִּי עֵירֻמִּם הֵם וַיִּתְפְּרוּ עֲלֵה תְאֵנָה וַיַּעֲשׂוּ
לָהֶם חֲגֹרֹת׃
8 וַיִּשְׁמְעוּ אֶת־קוֹל יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים מִתְהַלֵּךְ
בַּגָּן לְרוּחַ הַיּוֹם וַיִּתְחַבֵּא הָאָדָם וְאִשְׁתּוֹ
מִפְּנֵי יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים בְּתוֹךְ עֵץ הַגָּן׃
9 וַיִּקְרָא יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים אֶל־הָאָדָם וַיֹּאמֶר
לוֹ אַיֶּכָּה׃ 10 וַיֹּאמֶר אֶת־קֹלְךָ שָׁמַעְתִּי בַגָּן
וָאִירָא כִּי־עֵירֹם אָנֹכִי וָאֵחָבֵא׃ 11 וַיֹּאמֶר
מִי הִגִּיד לְךָ כִּי עֵירֹם אָתָּה הֲמִן־הָעֵץ
אֲשֶׁר צִוִּיתִיךָ לְבִלְתִּי אֲכָל־מִמֶּנּוּ אָכָלְתָּ׃
12 וַיֹּאמֶר הָאָדָם הָאִשָּׁה אֲשֶׁר נָתַתָּה
עִמָּדִי הִוא נָתְנָה־לִּי מִן־הָעֵץ וָאֹכֵל׃
13 וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים לָאִשָּׁה מַה־זֹּאת
עָשִׂית וַתֹּאמֶר הָאִשָּׁה הַנָּחָשׁ הִשִּׁיאַנִי
וָאֹכֵל׃ 14 וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים | אֶל־הַנָּחָשׁ
כִּי עָשִׂיתָ זֹּאת

25The two of them were naked,*g* the man and his wife, yet they felt no shame. 3 1Now the serpent was the shrewdest of all the wild beasts that the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, "Did God really say: You shall not eat of any tree of the garden?" 2The woman replied to the serpent, "We may eat of the fruit of the other trees of the garden. 3It is only about fruit of the tree in the middle of the garden that God said: 'You shall not eat of it or touch it, lest you die.'" 4And the serpent said to the woman, "You are not going to die, 5but God knows that as soon as you eat of it your eyes will be opened and you will be like *a*-divine beings who know-*a* good and bad." 6When the woman saw that the tree was good for eating and a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was desirable as a source of wisdom, she took of its fruit and ate. She also gave some to her husband, and he ate. 7Then the eyes of both of them were opened and they perceived that they were naked; and they sewed together fig leaves and made themselves loincloths.

8They heard the sound of the LORD God moving about in the garden at the breezy time of day; and the man and his wife hid from the LORD God among the trees of the garden. 9The LORD God called out to the man and said to him, "Where are you?" 10He replied, "I heard the sound of You in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked, so I hid." 11Then He asked, "Who told you that you were naked? Did you eat of the tree from which I had forbidden you to eat?" 12The man said, "The woman You put at my side—she gave me of the tree, and I ate." 13And the LORD God said to the woman, "What

g *Heb.* 'arummim, *play on* 'arum *"shrewd" in 3.1.*

a-a *Others "God, who knows."*

is this you have done!" The woman replied,
"The serpent duped me, and I ate." 14Then the
LORD God said to the serpent,
"Because you did this,
More cursed shall you be
Than all cattle
And all the wild beasts:
On your belly shall you crawl
And dirt shall you eat
All the days of your life.
15I will put enmity
Between you and the woman,
And between your offspring and hers;
They shall strike at your head,
And you shall strike at their heel."
16And to the woman He said,
"I will make most severe
Your pangs in childbearing;
In pain shall you bear children.
Yet your urge shall be for your husband,
And he shall rule over you."
17To Adam He said, "Because you did as your
wife said and ate of the tree about which I
commanded you, 'You shall not eat of it,'
Cursed be the ground because of you;
By toil shall you eat of it
All the days of your life:
18Thorns and thistles shall it sprout for you.
But your food shall be the grasses of the field;
19By the sweat of your brow
Shall you get bread to eat,
Until you return to the ground—
For from it you were taken.
For dust you are,
And to dust you shall return."

20The man named his wife Eve,[b] because she
was the mother of all the living.[c] 21And the
LORD God made garments of skins for Adam
and his wife, and clothed them.

b *Heb.* ḥawwah.
c *Heb.* ḥay.

אָרוּר אַתָּה
מִכָּל־הַבְּהֵמָה
וּמִכֹּל חַיַּת הַשָּׂדֶה
עַל־גְּחֹנְךָ תֵלֵךְ
וְעָפָר תֹּאכַל
כָּל־יְמֵי חַיֶּיךָ׃
15 וְאֵיבָה | אָשִׁית
בֵּינְךָ וּבֵין הָאִשָּׁה
וּבֵין זַרְעֲךָ וּבֵין זַרְעָהּ
הוּא יְשׁוּפְךָ רֹאשׁ
וְאַתָּה תְּשׁוּפֶנּוּ עָקֵב׃ ס
16 אֶל־הָאִשָּׁה אָמַר
הַרְבָּה אַרְבֶּה
עִצְּבוֹנֵךְ וְהֵרֹנֵךְ
בְּעֶצֶב תֵּלְדִי בָנִים
וְאֶל־אִישֵׁךְ תְּשׁוּקָתֵךְ
וְהוּא יִמְשָׁל־בָּךְ׃ ס
17 וּלְאָדָם אָמַר כִּי־שָׁמַעְתָּ לְקוֹל אִשְׁתֶּךָ
וַתֹּאכַל מִן־הָעֵץ אֲשֶׁר צִוִּיתִיךָ לֵאמֹר לֹא
תֹאכַל מִמֶּנּוּ
אֲרוּרָה הָאֲדָמָה בַּעֲבוּרֶךָ
בְּעִצָּבוֹן תֹּאכְלֶנָּה
כֹּל יְמֵי חַיֶּיךָ׃
18 וְקוֹץ וְדַרְדַּר תַּצְמִיחַ לָךְ
וְאָכַלְתָּ אֶת־עֵשֶׂב הַשָּׂדֶה׃
19 בְּזֵעַת אַפֶּיךָ
תֹּאכַל לֶחֶם
עַד שׁוּבְךָ אֶל־הָאֲדָמָה
כִּי מִמֶּנָּה לֻקָּחְתָּ
כִּי־עָפָר אַתָּה
וְאֶל־עָפָר תָּשׁוּב׃

20 וַיִּקְרָא הָאָדָם שֵׁם אִשְׁתּוֹ חַוָּה כִּי
הִוא הָיְתָה אֵם כָּל־חָי׃ 21 וַיַּעַשׂ יְהוָה
אֱלֹהִים לְאָדָם וּלְאִשְׁתּוֹ כָּתְנוֹת עוֹר
וַיַּלְבִּשֵׁם׃ פ

22 וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים הֵן הָאָדָם הָיָה
כְּאַחַד מִמֶּנּוּ לָדַעַת טוֹב וָרָע וְעַתָּה
פֶּן־יִשְׁלַח יָדוֹ וְלָקַח גַּם מֵעֵץ הַחַיִּים
וְאָכַל וָחַי לְעֹלָם׃ 23 וַיְשַׁלְּחֵהוּ יְהוָה
אֱלֹהִים מִגַּן־עֵדֶן לַעֲבֹד אֶת־הָאֲדָמָה
אֲשֶׁר לֻקַּח מִשָּׁם׃ 24 וַיְגָרֶשׁ אֶת־הָאָדָם
וַיַּשְׁכֵּן מִקֶּדֶם לְגַן־עֵדֶן אֶת־הַכְּרֻבִים וְאֵת
לַהַט הַחֶרֶב הַמִּתְהַפֶּכֶת לִשְׁמֹר אֶת־דֶּרֶךְ
עֵץ הַחַיִּים׃ ס

22And the LORD God said, "Now that the man has become like one of us, knowing good and bad, what if he should stretch out his hand and take also from the tree of life and eat, and live forever!" 23So the LORD God banished him from the garden of Eden, to till the soil from which he was taken. 24He drove the man out, and stationed east of the garden of Eden the cherubim and the fiery ever-turning sword, to guard the way to the tree of life.

ד וְהָאָדָם יָדַע אֶת־חַוָּה אִשְׁתּוֹ וַתַּהַר
וַתֵּלֶד אֶת־קַיִן וַתֹּאמֶר קָנִיתִי אִישׁ אֶת־
יְהוָה׃ 2 וַתֹּסֶף לָלֶדֶת אֶת־אָחִיו אֶת־הָבֶל
וַיְהִי־הֶבֶל רֹעֵה צֹאן וְקַיִן הָיָה עֹבֵד
אֲדָמָה׃ 3 וַיְהִי מִקֵּץ יָמִים וַיָּבֵא קַיִן מִפְּרִי
הָאֲדָמָה מִנְחָה לַיהוָה׃ 4 וְהֶבֶל הֵבִיא
גַם־הוּא מִבְּכֹרוֹת צֹאנוֹ וּמֵחֶלְבֵהֶן* וַיִּשַׁע
יְהוָה אֶל־הֶבֶל וְאֶל־מִנְחָתוֹ׃ 5 וְאֶל־קַיִן
וְאֶל־מִנְחָתוֹ לֹא שָׁעָה וַיִּחַר לְקַיִן מְאֹד
וַיִּפְּלוּ פָּנָיו׃ 6 וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל־קָיִן
לָמָּה חָרָה לָךְ
וְלָמָּה נָפְלוּ פָנֶיךָ׃
7 הֲלוֹא אִם־תֵּיטִיב
שְׂאֵת
וְאִם לֹא תֵיטִיב
לַפֶּתַח חַטָּאת רֹבֵץ
וְאֵלֶיךָ תְּשׁוּקָתוֹ
וְאַתָּה תִּמְשָׁל־בּוֹ׃
8 וַיֹּאמֶר קַיִן אֶל־הֶבֶל אָחִיו וַיְהִי בִּהְיוֹתָם
בַּשָּׂדֶה וַיָּקָם קַיִן אֶל־הֶבֶל אָחִיו וַיַּהַרְגֵהוּ׃
9 וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל־קַיִן אֵי הֶבֶל אָחִיךָ
וַיֹּאמֶר לֹא יָדַעְתִּי הַשֹּׁמֵר אָחִי אָנֹכִי׃
10 וַיֹּאמֶר מָה עָשִׂיתָ קוֹל דְּמֵי אָחִיךָ

v. 4. ב׳ רפה

4 Now the man knew[a] his wife Eve, and she conceived and bore Cain, saying, "I have gained[b] a male child with the help of the LORD." 2She then bore his brother Abel. Abel became a keeper of sheep, and Cain became a tiller of the soil. 3In the course of time, Cain brought an offering to the LORD from the fruit of the soil; 4and Abel, for his part, brought the choicest of the firstlings of his flock. The LORD paid heed to Abel and his offering, 5but to Cain and his offering He paid no heed. Cain was much distressed and his face fell. 6And the LORD said to Cain,

"Why are you distressed,
And why is your face fallen?
7[c]Surely, if you do right,
There is uplift.
But if you do not do right
Sin couches at the door;
Its urge is toward you,
Yet you can be its master."

8Cain said to his brother Abel[d] ... and when they were in the field, Cain set upon his brother Abel and killed him. 9The LORD said to Cain, "Where is your brother Abel?" And he said, "I do not know. Am I my brother's keeper?" 10Then He said, "What have you done? Hark,

a *Heb.* yada', *often in a sexual sense.*
b *Heb.* qanithi, *connected with "Cain."*
c *Meaning of verse uncertain.*
d *Ancient versions, including the Targum, read "Come, let us go out into the field."*

WHO'S TO BLAME: ADAM, EVE, OR THE SERPENT?

INTRODUCTION

This trial will focus on the events that took place in the Garden of Eden. You are now present at a Beit Din which will attempt to establish which of the defendants is guilty. I have decided to have some of you assist me as I present the trial of Adam, Eve, and the serpent.

In chapter 1 of Bereshit, the text states:

בְּרֵאשִׁית בָּרָא אֱלֹהִים אֵת הַשָּׁמַיִם וְאֵת הָאָרֶץ׃

In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. In his commentary, Rashi questions what does it mean that God created? He states that "it does not say בָּרָא יְהוָה. The Lord, the Merciful One created, because at first God intended to create the world to be placed under the attribute of strict justice, but God realized that the world could not thus endure and therefore gave precedence to Divine Mercy and allied it with Divine Justice."[i] Thus we find in Bereshit chapter 2 verse 4 it states "In the day that the Lord God made earth and heaven". This discussion by Rashi teaches us that if God had made the world with strict law, our defendants would have no chance for a trial because they violated the law. But, the world exists with both attributes and thus we are present today to review the facts of the case and present witnesses to determine who is to blame.

For centuries biblical scholars have discussed Genesis 2:4-3:24, and have arrived at various conclusions as to whom they blame for the crime. As many of you are aware, when a person witnesses a crime and provides his version of the story, it often differs from that of another witness. Today we are going to hear testimony from some of these ancient witnesses as to their account of the crime.

DEFENDANTS

First, let me present to you the defendants in this case.

ADAM

We first encounter man on the sixth day of creation.

"And God created man in His image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them" (Gen. 1:27).

When you listen to the verse closely you see that it appears that they are created as one, male and female. This version of the creation story has

created much controversy over the centuries. Did God create man alone, or a creature that was both male and female? This discussion deserves a review of its own and will not be discussed any further today. I just wanted to establish, that according to the Bible, man was created on Day 6.

We next encounter the second version of man's creation in Gen. 2:4-7 where we find the following:

> "When the Lord God made earth and heaven -- when no shrub of the field was yet on earth and no grasses of the field had yet sprouted, because the Lord God had not sent rain upon the earth and there was no man to till the soil, but a flow would well up from the ground and water the whole surface of the earth -- the Lord God formed man from the dust of the earth. He blew into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living being."

We learn also that God creates a garden in a place called Eden and in the middle of it plants the Tree of Life and the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil. God places man there to "to till it and tend it." God gives man the following instructions concerning the garden. "Of every tree of the garden you are free to eat; but as for the tree of knowledge of good and evil, you must not eat of it; for as soon as you eat of it, you shall die" (Gen. 2:16-17). Please take note that at this point, man is the only one who has been given the warning about the Tree of Knowledge.

God realizes that man is alone and decides to make him a fitting helper. He creates all the wild beasts and the birds of the sky and brings them to man to be named. The man names them but does not find a fitting helper.

EVE

Our second defendant is Eve. When God realizes that there is no fitting helper for man, God decides to create her. God creates her by casting a deep sleep upon Adam, and while the man is asleep, God removes one of his ribs and fashions the rib into a woman. God then brings her to Adam who states:

"This one at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh. This one shall be called אִשָּׁה, for from אִישׁ was she taken" (Gen. 2:23).

There is one more piece of evidence concerning these two defendants that you need to know before we move on to the next one. The Bible informs us that they were naked and that they felt no shame.

THE SERPENT

The information concerning the third defendant is that "the serpent was the shrewdest of all the wild beasts that the Lord God had made" (Gen. 3:1).

THE CRIME

We are about to hear the account of the crime as recorded for us in the Bible. Please pay careful attention to the scene, as you will later find, many of our witnesses have provided us with versions that differ from the actual crime.

> Now the serpent was the shrewdest of all the wild beasts that the Lord God had made. He said to the woman, "Did God really say: You shall not eat of any tree of the garden?" The woman replied to the serpent, "We may eat of the fruit of the other trees of the garden. It is only about fruit of the tree in the middle of the garden that God said: 'You shall not eat of it or touch it, lest you die.'" And the serpent said to the woman, "You are not going to die, but God knows that as soon as you eat of it your eyes will be opened and you will be like divine beings who know good and bad." When the woman saw that the tree was good for eating and a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was desirable as a source of wisdom, she took of its fruit and ate. She also gave some to her husband, and he ate. Then the eyes of both of them were opened and they perceived that they were naked; and they sewed together fig leaves and made themselves loincloths. They heard the sound of the Lord God moving about in the garden at the breezy time of day; and the man and his wife hid from the Lord God among the trees of the garden (Gen. 3:1-8).

ISSUES THAT WE WILL DISCUSS

As we listen to the different accounts by our witnesses please be aware that they are concerned with certain issues of the story. A major one, of course, is who really is the one to blame for their being thrown out of the Garden of Eden? Another issue is what did they obtain by eating from the

Tree of Knowledge? We will see that each witness made their decision concerning the case and they often rendered a decision.

WITNESSES

The witnesses of the Second Temple Period are a group of writers whose material either was not included in the Bible or who were writing after it was canonized. The Second Temple Period begins by the beginning of the fourth century B.C.E., and it spans to the middle of the second century C.E. when both rabbinic Judaism and early Christianity begin to emerge. The majority of these witnesses are found in the writings of the Apocrypha and the Pseudepigraphia. I have also called into testimony Philo of Alexandria.

YESHUA BEN ELEAZAR - AUTHOR OF BEN SIRA

The first witnesses' name is Yeshua ben Eleazar and he is from Jerusalem. He wrote *The Wisdom of Ben Sira,* known also as *Ecclesiasticus*, in Hebrew around 190 B.C.E. He is married and has children and grandchildren. He is a counsellor of the government and is eminent in Jerusalem society. He is also a scribe. He has spent much of his time reading and meditating on the Prophets and Writings. As you will see, this testimony is quite similar in literary style to Proverbs. (Have person read).

Testimony

Worst of all wounds is that of the heart
worst of all evils is that of a woman.
Worst of all afflictions is that from one's foes,
worst of all vengeance is that of one's enemies:
No poison worse than that of a serpent,
no venom greater than that of a woman.
With a dragon or a lion I would rather dwell
than live with an evil woman.
Wickedness changes a woman's looks,
and makes her sullen as a female bear.
When her husband sits among his neighbors,
a bitter sigh escapes him unawares.
There is scarce any evil like that in a woman;

may she fall to the lot of the sinner!
Like a sandy hill to aged feet
is a railing wife to a quiet man.
Stumble not through a woman's beauty,
nor be greedy for her wealth:
Harsh is the slavery, great the shame,
when a wife supports her husband.
Depressed mind, saddened face,
broken heart - these from an evil wife.
Feeble hands and quaking knees -
from a wife who brings no happiness to her husband.
In a woman was sin's beginning:
on her account we all die (Sir. 25:13-2).

Discussion

This text is an example of one where the witness focuses on the evil woman. As I mentioned, the style of Ben Sira is very similar to Proverbs. In Proverbs, the author talks about the forbidden woman, the אִשָּׁה זָרָה, and here he discusses the evil wife. As you can see, he equates a woman as being as evil as a serpent (Sir. 25:15), and he places the blame on a woman for man's loss of immortality (Sir. 25:24). "Whether or not the 'woman' to which this witness refers is Eve, or the 'evil wife' of the surrounding verses, or even the "daughters of men" of Gen. 6:1-4, however, is not clear. If it does refer to Eve, then this is the earliest post-Genesis association of Eve with the entrance of sin and death into the world."[ii]

AUTHOR OF THE WISDOM OF SOLOMON

It is believed that our next witness wrote his testimony in Egypt. Although the contents of the testimony are exclusively Jewish, the *Wisdom of Solomon* was not originally written in Hebrew but rather in Greek. The time period in which it was written is assumed to be from 30 B.C.E.- 100 C.E. This testimony is found in the Apocrypha. It is in the third part of the book where we find this witness' interpretation of Chapter 3 in Genesis and the origin of death. (Have person read).

Testimony

> Thus they reasoned, but they were led astray,
> for their wickedness blinded them,
> and they did not know the secret purposes of God,
> nor hope for the wages of holiness,
> nor discern the prize for blameless souls;
> for God created man for incorruption,
> and made him in the image of his own eternity,
> but through the devil's envy death entered the world,
> and those who belong to his party experience it (Wisd. 2:21-24).

Discussion

This witness believes that the major punishment that man and woman received was their mortality. The text states that "God created man for incorruption" or immortality and made him in his own image. This witness provides us with a *midrash* which attributes the loss of immortality to the devil because of his envy of man and woman. Although the testimony is not clear as to whether it is stating that the serpent was the devil or helped the devil, it is apparent that this witness associates the serpent with the devil. It is also of note that this is one of the earliest references to the devil. Thus this witness does not blame Adam and Eve for bringing death into the world, but rather brings in another suspect for us to consider, the devil.

PHILO

The next witness that we will hear testimony from is Philo. It is estimated that the time period he comes from is approximately 20 B.C.E. to 50 C.E. He lives in the city of Alexandria, Egypt which has a large Jewish population. Philo comes from a wealthy family and has been well educated. In the past he has been active in the Jewish community and in 38 C.E. was the leader of a delegation to Rome to protest the "pogrom" that was initiated by the prefect Flaccus. Philo is the main surviving literary figure of the Hellenized Judaism of the Second Temple period of ancient Judaism. His approach to text was influenced by the philosophers and thus he is Socratic and utilizes metaphor in his approach to text.

Philo was obviously intrigued with his witnessing the crime and therefore he wrote about it in two different places. Our first testimony from him comes from his writing entitled *On the Creation.* (Have person read).

Testimony

> It is said that the old poisonous and earthborn reptile, the serpent, uttered the voice of a man. And he on one occasion coming to the wife of the first created man, reproached her with her slowness and her excessive prudence, because she delayed and hesitated to gather the fruit which was completely beautiful to look at, and exceedingly sweet to enjoy, and was, moreover, most useful as being a means by which men might be able to distinguish between good and evil. And she, without any inquiry, prompted by an unstable and rash mind, acquiesced in his advice, and ate of the fruit, and gave a portion of it to her husband. And this conduct suddenly changed both of them from innocence and simplicity of character to all kinds of wickedness; at which the Father of all was indignant. For their actions deserved his anger inasmuch as they, passing by the tree of eternal life, the tree which might have endowed them with perfection of virtue, and by means of which they might have enjoyed a long and happy life, preferred a brief and mortal (I will not call it life) time full of unhappiness; and, accordingly, he appointed them such punishments as was befitting (Creat. 156).

Discussion

As you heard, Philo provides us with an account of Eve's interaction with the serpent which differs from the account we find in the Bible. He informs us that the serpent "on one occasion coming to the wife of the first created man reproached her with her slowness and her excessive prudence. . .And she, without any inquiry, prompted by an unstable and rash mind, acquiesced in his advice, and ate of the fruit, and gave a portion of it to her husband" (Creat. 156). In his testimony we find that Philo indicates that there was no discussion between Eve and the serpent but rather he indicates that she was unstable and rash in her decision to eat the fruit. Another change in his version of the story is that he informs us that the result of eating the fruit was that Adam and Eve were transformed from "innocence

and simplicity of character to all kinds of wickedness" and that they would now live a life of "full of unhappiness."

We have to question the reliability of this witness for we will now see that he changes some of his testimony in *Questions and Answers on Genesis, I.* (Have person read).

Testimony

> Why, when it was commanded them to avoid eating of one plant alone, the woman made also a further addition to this injunction, saying, "He said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it?" In the first place she says this, because taste and every other sense after its kind consists in the touch appropriate to it. In the second place she says it that it may seem to condemn them themselves, who did what they had been forbidden. For if even the mere act of touching it was prohibited, how could they who, besides touching the tree, presumed to eat of the fruit, and so added a greater transgression to the lesser one, be anything but condemners and punishers of themselves? (QG 35)

Discussion

We find that our witness now contradicts what he previously informed us concerning Eve. He testified that Eve added the additional command that she was not to touch the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil as well as not to eat of it. In the first testimony he had stated that she ate the fruit without inquiry and now we find that he questions why she added the fact that she could not touch the tree.

Our witness has also questioned the role of the serpent in the crime and in his written testimony has informed us of the following: "Moreover, the devil proceeds with great art, speaking by the mouth of the serpent" (QG 36). Thus we find that Philo, like our witness who wrote the *Wisdom of Solomon*, believes that the devil was the instigator of the crime.

> Philo also provides us with his understanding of why the serpent chose Eve rather than Adam to accost. (Have person read).

Testimony

> The serpent, having formed his estimate of virtue, devised a treacherous stratagem against them, for the sake of bringing mortality on them. But the woman was more accustomed to be deceived than the man. For his counsels as well as his body are of a masculine sort, and competent to disentangle the notions of seduction; but the mind of the woman is more effeminate, so that through her softness she easily yields and is easily caught by the persuasions of falsehood, which imitate the resemblance of truth (QG 33).

Discussion

Our witness informs us that the reason why Eve was chosen is because he believes that a woman can easily be deceived because she is accustomed to deception. He feels that women yield and can be swayed into believing falsehoods.

There is one more statement which I wish to have this witness make concerning the reason why it was the woman who first touched the tree and ate the fruit, and the man afterwards. (Have person read).

Testimony

> The words used first of all, by their own intrinsic force, assert that it was suitable that immortality and every good thing should be represented as under the power of the man, and death and every evil under that of the woman (QC 37).

Discussion

As you can all see, this witness associates death and every evil with woman. He obviously places the blame upon the woman who, as he stated, yielded to the persuasions of falsehood. He has also indicated that the devil, working through the serpent, was involved in this crime and thus has provided us with an additional suspect. This witness clearly does not have a high regard for women and I question whether we should admit his testimony for evidence as his prejudice towards woman might have colored his testimony against Eve.

THE BOOKS OF ADAM AND EVE

There are two different texts that have preserved the story of Adam and Eve after they have left the garden. One is a Latin version known as the *Life of Adam and Eve* and the Greek version is titled the *Apocalypse of Moses*. "Given the relationship with the Pseudepigrapha, Josephus, and Rabbinic traditions, and perhaps Paul, the most natural span for the original composition would be between 100 B.C.E. and 200 C.E., more probably toward the end of the first Christian century."[iii] Scholars believe that the Greek and Latin texts were probably produced between that time and 400 C.E. As the work is similar to the *midrash* or *aggadah* so typical of Qumran and the Rabbis, it is believed that this witness wrote in Hebrew, his theology is that of Pharisaic Judaism, and that he probably lived in Palestine.

Although these texts are very similar, I will present them as separate witnesses, as there are passages in one text that are absent in another. The first witness that I will call to testify is found in the *Life of Adam and Eve*. This witness will now provide us with an understanding of why the serpent persuaded Eve to eat from the Tree of Knowledge. At this point in the story, Adam and Eve have been repenting for their sin hoping that God will take pity on them.

Testimony

Satan was angry and transformed himself into the brightness of angels and went away to the Tigris River to Eve and found her weeping. And the devil himself, as if to grieve with her, began to weep and said to her, "Step out of the river and cry no more. Cease now from sadness and sighs. Why are you and your husband Adam disturbed? The Lord God has heard your sighs and accepted your repentance; and all we angels have entreated for you and interceded with the Lord, and he sent me to bring you up from the water and give you food which you had in Paradise, and for which you have been lamenting. Now therefore come out of the water and I will lead you to the place where your food has been prepared. Now when Eve heard this she believed and came out of the water of the river, and her flesh was as grass from the cold of the water. And when she came out, she fell on the ground and the devil raised her and led her to Adam. But when Adam saw her and the devil with her, he cried out with tears and said, "O Eve, Eve, where is the work of your penitence? How have you again been seduced by our enemy

by whom we have been deprived of our dwelling in Paradise and of spiritual joy?" When Eve heard this, she knew that the devil had persuaded her to come out of the river and fell on her face to the ground and her sorrow and sighing and lamenting were doubled. She cried out, saying, "Woe to you, O devil, Why do you assault us for nothing? What have you to do with us? What have we done to you, that you should pursue us with deceit? Why does your malice fall on us? Have we stolen your glory and made you to be without honor? Why do you treacherously and enviously pursue us, O enemy, all the way to death?

Discussion

This witness has questioned to serpent's motivation for committing the crime and introduces us to devil, who was responsible for the crime occurring. In this scene, the witness also provides us with another situation where Eve is deceived by the devil. This witness apparently felt the need to remind us of how Eve can easily be deceived and that she was responsible for the original deception which was the cause of all of their problems.

The next testimony is made by the devil who explains why he plotted the crime.

Testimony

> And the devil sighed and said, "O Adam, all my enmity and envy and sorrow concern you, since because of you I am expelled and deprived of my glory which I had in the heavens in the midst of angels, and because of you I was cast onto the earth." Adam answered, "What have I done to you, and what is my blame with you? Since you are neither harmed nor hurt by us, why do you pursue us?"
>
> The devil replied, "Adam, what are you telling me? It is because of you that I have been thrown out of there. When you were created, I was cast out from the presence of God and was sent out from the fellowship of the angels. When God blew into you the *breath of life* and your countenance and likeness were made *in the image of God*, Michael brought you and made (us) worship you in the sight of God, and the Lord God said, 'Behold Adam! I have made you in our image and likeness.'

> And Michael went out and called all the angels, saying, 'Worship the image of the Lord God, as the Lord God has instructed.' And Michael himself worshiped first, and called me and said, 'Worship the image of God, Yahweh.' And I answered, 'I do not worship Adam.' And when Michael kept forcing me to worship, I said to him, 'Why do you compel me? I will not worship one inferior and subsequent to me. I am prior to him in creation; before he was made, I was already made. He ought to worship me.'
>
> When they heard this, other angels who were under me refused to worship him. And Michael asserted, 'Worship the image of God. But if now you will not worship, the Lord God will be wrathful with you.' And I said, 'If he be wrathful with me, I will set my throne above the stars of heaven and will be like the Most High.'
>
> And the Lord God was angry with me and sent me with my angels out from our glory; and because of you, we were expelled into this world from our dwellings and have been cast onto the earth. And immediately we were made to grieve, since we had been deprived of so great a glory. And we were pained to see you in such bliss of delights. So with deceit I assailed your wife and made you to be expelled through her from the joys of your bliss, as I have been expelled from my glory."

Discussion

Our witness, through this *midrash*, provides us with the devil's motivation in causing all of the problems for the first couple. The emphasis in his testimony is on Adam as being created in the image of God, and his anger over being asked to worship Adam. We are informed that the devil is angry with the first couple because he was expelled into this world from his home and has been cast onto the earth. He thus sought to remove the joy from their life by assailing Eve and deceiving her into eating from the tree of knowledge.

The next witness that will be called to testify will be Adam. In the Greek version of the text we actually find Adam explaining to his children what happened that day in Paradise. (Have person read).

Apocalypse of Moses - Adam's Testimony

Adam said to him [Seth], "When God made us, me and your mother, through whom I am dying, he gave us every plant in Paradise, but concerning one he commanded us not to eat of it, (for) we would die by it. And the hour drew near for the angels who were guarding your mother to ascend and worship the LORD. And the enemy gave to her and she ate from the tree, since he knew that neither I nor the holy angels were near her. Then she gave also to me to eat. When we both had eaten, God was angry with us. And the LORD came into Paradise and called with a frightful voice, saying, 'Adam, where are you? And why do you hide from my face? Can the house hide from its builder? And He said, "Since you have forsaken My covenant, I have submitted your body to seventy plagues (*Apoc. Mos.* 7:2-8:2).

Discussion

Adam's testimony differs in a number of places from the biblical text. This version of the story informs us that there are angels present in the garden that guard Eve, although we are not informed why she needs guarding. Adam does not go into detail concerning the encounter with the serpent nor does he explain why he took the fruit from Eve, as all he says is that "she gave also to me to eat." The witness is uncomfortable with the concept of God not knowing where Adam and Eve were as God is supposed to know everything; thus he added the words "Can the house hide from its builder" (*Apoc. Mos.* 8:1).

Our last witness will be Eve. In the Greek version, Eve is provided the opportunity of explaining to her children what had actually happened in the Garden of Eden. (Have person read).

Eve's Testimony

Testimony

Then Eve said to them, "Listen, all my children and my children's children, and I will tell you how our enemy deceived us. It happened while we were guarding Paradise, each his portion allotted from God. Now I was watching in my share, the South and West, and the devil came into Adam's portion, where the male animals were,

since God divided the animals among us, and all the males he gave to your father, and all the females to me, and each of us kept his own.

And the devil spoke to the serpent, saying, 'Rise and come to me, and I will tell you something to your advantage.' Then the serpent came to him, and the devil said to him, 'I hear that you are wiser than all the beasts; so I came to observe you. I found you greater than all the beasts, and they associate with you; but yet you are prostrate to the very least. Why do you eat of the weeds of Adam and not of the fruit of Paradise? Rise and come and let us make him to be cast out of Paradise through his wife, just as we were cast out through him.' The serpent said to him, 'I fear lest the Lord be wrathful to me.' The devil said to him, 'Do not fear; only become my vessel, and I will speak a word through your mouth by which you will be able to deceive him.'

"And immediately he suspended himself from the walls of Paradise about the time when the angels of God went up to worship. Then Satan came in the form of an angel and sang hymns to God as the angels. And I saw him bending over the wall, like an angel. And he said to me, 'Are you Eve?' And I said to him, 'I am.' And he said to me, 'What are you doing in Paradise?' I replied, 'God placed us to guard it and eat from it.' The devil answered me through the mouth of the serpent, 'You do well, but you do not eat of every plant.' And I said to him, 'Yes, we eat from every plant except one only, which is in the midst of Paradise, concerning which God commanded us not to eat of it, else *you shall most surely die.*

"Then the serpent said to me, 'May God live! For I am grieved over you, that you are like animals. For I do not want you to be ignorant; but rise, come and eat, and observe the glory of the tree.' And I said to him, 'I fear lest God be angry with me, just as he told us.' He said to me, 'Fear not; for at the very time you eat, *your eyes will be opened and you will be like gods, knowing good and evil.* But since God knew this, that you would be like him, he begrudged you and said, "Do not eat of it." But come to the plant, and see its great glory,' And I turned to the plant and saw its great glory. And I said to him, 'It is pleasing to consider with the eyes', yet I was afraid to take of the fruit. And he said to me, 'Come, I will give it to you. Follow me.'

"And I opened (the gate) for him, and he entered into Paradise, passing through in front of me. After he had walked a little, he turned and said to me, 'I have changed my mind and will not allow you to eat.' He said these things, wishing in the end to entice and ruin me. And he said to me, 'Swear to me that you are giving (it) also to your husband. And I said to him, 'I do not know by what sort of oath I should swear to you; however, that which I do know I tell you: By the throne of the Lord and the cherubim and the tree of life, I shall give (it) also to my husband to eat.' When he had received the oath from me, he went, climbed the tree, and sprinkled his evil poison on the fruit which he gave me to eat which is his covetousness. For covetousness is the origin of every sin. And I bent the branch toward the earth, took of the fruit, and ate.

"And at that very moment my eyes were opened and I knew that I was naked of the righteousness with which I had been clothed. And I wept saying, 'Why have you done this to me, that I have been estranged from my glory with which I was clothed?" And I wept also about the oath. But that one came down from the tree and vanished. I looked for leaves in my region so that I might cover my shame, but I did not find (any) from the trees of Paradise, since while I ate, the leaves of all the trees of my portion fell, except (those) of the fig tree only. And I took its leaves and made for myself skirts; they were from the same plants of which I ate.

"And I cried out with a loud voice, saying, 'Adam, Adam, where are you? Rise, come to me and I will show you a great mystery.' And when your father came, I spoke to him unlawful words of transgression such as brought us down from glory. For when he came, I opened my mouth and the devil was speaking, and I began to admonish him, saying, 'Come, my lord Adam, listen to me and eat of the fruit of the tree of which God told us not to eat from it, and you shall be as God.' Your father answered and said, 'I fear lest God be angry with me.' And I said to him, 'Do not fear; for as soon as you eat, you shall know good and evil.' Then I quickly persuaded him. He ate, and his eyes were opened, and he realized his nakedness. And he said to me, 'O evil woman! Why have you wrought destruction among us? You have estranged me from the glory of God.'

Discussion

John Levison suggests that Eve's testimony, chapters 15 through 30, may have originally been an independent story since the other chapters differ so radically from it. Levison notes that it exonerates Eve in the following ways:

1. Eve is given authority to present her own autobiography.
2. Eve is a victim of Satan's deception--he appears to her as an angel and sings hymns to God (17:1-2).
3. Twice Eve resists Satan because she is afraid (18:2 and 6).
4. Eve takes an oath to give Adam the fruit and, although she wants to break it, she stands by her word (19:1-2, 20:3).
5. When Eve speaks to Adam, it is not she but Satan who speaks instead (21:3).
6. Satan entered the Garden through Adam's portion, which was left unguarded (15:1-3).
7. Eve relates God's words without adding the command about touching the tree, and thus gets the command "correct" (17:5).[iv]

As we have found, by hearing the testimony from chapters 15 through 30 independently, we hear a voice sympathetic to the first woman which was long obscured by its negative context. "Contemporary analyses of the *Apocalypse of Moses* invariably point out that Eve is blamed for the primeval sin. . . . Obviously, the predominance of negative statements about Eve in the *Apocalypse of Moses* has blocked from these contemporary authors' view the positive evaluation of Eve contained in her testament."[v]

Conclusion

The witnesses who we have just met represent scholars who looked at the text in various ways. We met a philosopher, Philo, who lives in Hellenistic Alexandria, and who combines his Judaism with the philosophy of the Greeks. Ben Sira, whose love of the Proverbs and wisdom literature, has led him to write in that fashion with negative feminine imagery. Our last witnesses were from the two versions of the *midrashic* text on the Life of Adam and Eve. We find in this text a similarity to the rabbinic period and the *midrashim* which were written during that time. This author wants to answer many of the questions which have baffled scholars. By giving the

defendants a voice to explain their story, we have a better understanding of what occurred in Eden that afternoon. And finally, in this period, we are introduced to a new character in the story, Satan. I found it interesting that he was mentioned by three of these exegetes as the instigator of the crime.

GOD'S JUDGEMENT

As we have concluded hearing testimony today from these witnesses, it is now time to consider the case and render a decision. We have heard testimony which places the blame on Eve and the serpent. Due to time constraints, we were not able to hear from the witnesses of the biblical period. It is interesting to note that none of them ever mentioned Eve or the serpent, but rather placed the blame on Adam. Another suspect, the devil, has also been entered into testimony. It is now time for a decision to be made. Who's to blame?

There is one last voice which I feel is important to bring to this trial today. It is that of God and the sentence which is given to the three defendants after they have committed the crime.

SENTENCES

Serpent

Then the Lord God said to the serpent, (have person read).
"Because you did this,
More cursed shall you be
Than all cattle
And all the wild beasts:
On your belly shall you crawl
And dirt shall you eat
All the days of your life.
I will put enmity
Between you and the woman,
And between your offspring and hers;
They shall strike at your head,
And you shall strike at their heel.

Eve

And to the woman He said, (have person read).

"I will make most severe
Your pangs in childbearing;
In pain shall you bear children.
Yet your urge shall be for your husband,
And he shall rule over you."

Adam

To Adam He said, (have person read).
"Because you did as your wife said and ate of the tree about which I commanded you, 'You shall not eat of it,
Cursed be the ground because of you;
By toil shall you eat of it
All the days of your life:
Thorns and thistles shall it sprout for you.
But your food shall be the grasses of the field;
By the sweat of your brow
Shall you get bread to eat,
Until you return to the ground-
For from it you were taken.
For dust you are,
And to dust you shall return."

After providing his judgment on the three defendants, the man names his wife Eve and God makes Adam and Eve clothing. God then has one final statement to Adam. (Have person read).

God's Final statement

> "Now that the man has become like one of us, knowing good and bad, what if he should stretch out his hand and take also from the tree of life and eat, and live forever!"

With this thought in mind, God banishes him from the Garden of Eden, to till the soil from which he was taken. He drove the man out, and stationed east of the Garden of Eden the cherubim and the fiery ever-turning sword, to guard the way to the tree of life.

In this story, it is God who, upon hearing from the defendants, provides his judgment and sentence to them. Unlike the witnesses that we have heard from today, who place blame on only one or two of the

defendants, God sees the blame in each of them and renders a punishment to each according to their degree of fault. As I stated in the beginning of the Beit Din, the world was created with both Divine Mercy and Divine Justice. I have chosen to end the trial with God's sentence of the defendants, because in this story, as in life, God is the ultimate judge and as we are taught, God is aware of the actions of men and women. If the story had occurred according to the viewpoint of our witnesses, God might have rendered His decision differently.

E-mail Version

As many of you are all aware, commentary on this story has continued until the present. Someone recently sent me a modern version of the story, through the internet, that I thought I would share with you.

> Whenever your kids are out of control, you can take comfort from the thought that even God's omnipotence did not extend to God's kids. After creating heaven and earth, God created Adam and Eve. And the first thing God said was, "Don't!"
> "Don't what?" Adam asked.
> "Don't eat the forbidden fruit," God said.
> "Forbidden fruit? We've got forbidden fruit? Hey Eve--we've got forbidden fruit!"
> "No way!"
> "Yes, way."
> "Don't eat that fruit!" said God.
> "Why?
> "Because I am your Father and I said so!" said God wondering why he had not stopped creation after making the elephants. A few minutes later God saw his kids having an apple break and was angry. "Didn't I tell you not to eat that fruit?" the First Parent asked.
> "Uh huh," Adam replied.
> "Then why did you?"
> "I dunno," Eve answered.
> "She started it!" Adam cried.
> "Did not! Did not! DID NOT!"

Having had it with the two of them, God's punishment was that Adam and Eve should have children of their own. Thus the pattern was set and it has never changed. But there is reassurance in this story. If you have persistently and lovingly tried to give them wisdom and they haven't taken it, don't be hard on yourself. If God had trouble handling children, what makes you think it would be a piece of cake for you?

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[i] Rashi, *Chumash with Rashi's Commentary*, edited by Rabbi A. M. Silberman (Jerusalem: Silberman Family, 1945), p. 3.
[ii] Kristen Kvam, Linda S. Schearing, and Valerie H. Ziegler, *Eve & Adam*, (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1999), p. 49.
[iii] M.D. Johnson, "Life of Adam and Eve," in *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha Volume 2*, by James H. Charlesworth, (New York: Doubleday, 1985), p. 252.
[iv] John Levenson quoted in *Eve & Adam* by Kvam, pp. 42-43.
[v] Ibid., p. 43.

Ben Sira

Worst of all wounds is that of the heart
worst of all evils is that of a woman.
Worst of all afflictions is that from one's foes,
worst of all vengeance is that of one's enemies:
No poison worse than that of a serpent,
no venom greater than that of a woman.
With a dragon or a lion I would rather dwell
than live with an evil woman.
Wickedness changes a woman's looks,
and makes her sullen as a female bear.
When her husband sits among his neighbors,
a bitter sigh escapes him unawares.
There is scarce any evil like that in a woman;
may she fall to the lot of the sinner!
Like a sandy hill to aged feet
is a railing wife to a quiet man.
Stumble not through a woman's beauty,
nor be greedy for her wealth:
Harsh is the slavery, great the shame,
when a wife supports her husband.
Depressed mind, saddened face,
broken heart - these from an evil wife.
Feeble hands and quaking knees -
from a wife who brings no happiness to her husband.
In a woman was sin's beginning:
on her account we all die (Sir. 25:13-2).

Wisdom of Solomon

Thus they reasoned, but they were led astray,
for their wickedness blinded them,
and they did not know the secret purposes of God,
nor hope for the wages of holiness,
nor discern the prize for blameless souls;
for God created man for incorruption,
and made him in the image of his own eternity,
but through the devil's envy death entered the world,
and those who belong to his party experience it (Wisd. 2:21-24).

PHILO

ON THE CREATION

It is said that the old poisonous and earthborn reptile, the serpent, uttered the voice of a man. And he on one occasion coming to the wife of the first created man, reproached her with her slowness and her excessive prudence, because she delayed and hesitated to gather the fruit which was completely beautiful to look at, and exceedingly sweet to enjoy, and was, moreover, most useful as being a means by which men might be able to distinguish between good and evil. And she, without any inquiry, prompted by an unstable and rash mind, acquiesced in his advice, and ate of the fruit, and gave a portion of it to her husband. And this conduct suddenly changed both of them from innocence and simplicity of character to all kinds of wickedness; at which the Father of all was indignant. For their actions deserved his anger inasmuch as they, passing by the tree of eternal life, the tree which might have endowed them with perfection of virtue, and by means of which they might have enjoyed a long and happy life, preferred a brief and mortal (I will not call it life) time full of unhappiness; and, accordingly, he appointed them such punishments as was befitting (Creat. 156).

Stop reading.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS ON GENESIS, I

Why, when it was commanded them to avoid eating of one plant alone, the woman made also a further addition to this injuction, saying, "He said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it?"

In the first place she says this, because taste and every other sense after its kind consists in the touch appropriate to it. In the second place she says it that it may seem to condemn them themselves, who did what they had been forbidden. For if even the mere act of touching it was prohibited, how could they who, besides touching the tree, presumed to eat of the fruit, and so added a greater transgression to the lesser one, be anything but condemners and punishers of themselves? (QG 35)

Stop reading.

The serpent, having formed his estimate of virtue, devised a treacherous stratagem against them, for the sake of bringing mortality on them. But the woman was more accustomed to be deceived than the man. For his counsels as well as his body are of

a masculine sort, and competent to disentangle the notions of seduction; but the mind of the woman is more effeminate, so that through her softness she easily yields and is easily caught by the persuasions of falsehood, which imitate the resemblance of truth (QG 33).

Stop reading.

The words used first of all, by their own intrinsic force, assert that it was suitable that immortality and every good thing should be represented as under the power of the man, and death and every evil under that of the woman (QC 37).

The Life of Adam and Eve

Satan was angry and transformed himself into the brightness of angels and went away to the Tigris River to Eve and found her weeping. And the devil himself, as if to grieve with her, began to weep and said to her, "Step out of the river and cry no more. Cease now from sadness and sighs. Why are you and your husband Adam disturbed? The Lord God has heard your sighs and accepted your repentance; and all we angels have entreated for you and interceded with the Lord, and he sent me to bring you up from the water and give you food which you had in Paradise, and for which you have been lamenting. Now therefore come out of the water and I will lead you to the place where your food has been prepared. Now when Eve heard this she believed and came out of the water of the river, and her flesh was as grass from the cold of the water. And when she came out, she fell on the ground and the devil raised her and led her to Adam. But when Adam saw her and the devil with her, he cried out with tears and said, "O Eve, Eve, where is the work of your penitence? How have you again been seduced by our enemy by whom we have been deprived of our dwelling in Paradise and of spiritual joy?" When Eve heard this, she knew that the devil had persuaded her to come out of the river and fell on her face to the ground, and her sorrow and sighing and lamenting were doubled. She cried out, saying, "Woe to you, O devil, Why do you assault us for nothing? What have you to do with us? What have we done to you, that you should pursue us with deceit? Why does your malice fall on us? Have we stolen your glory and made you to be without honor? Why do you treacherously and enviously pursue us, O enemy, all the way to death?

Apocalypse of Moses - Adam's Testimony

Adam said to him [Seth], "When God made us, me and your mother, through whom I am dying, he gave us every plant in Paradise, but concerning one he commanded us not to eat of it, (for) we would die by it. And the hour drew near for the angels who were guarding your mother to ascend and worship the LORD. And the enemy gave to her and she ate from the tree, since he knew that neither I nor the holy angels were near her. Then she gave also to me to eat. When we both had eaten, God was angry with us. And the LORD came into Paradise and called with a frightful voice, saying, 'Adam, where are you? And why do you hide from my face? Can the house hide from its builder? And He said, "Since you have forsaken My covenant, I have submitted your body to seventy plagues (*Apoc. Mos.* 7:2-8:2).

Eve's Testimony

Then Eve said to them, "Listen, all my children and my children's children, and I will tell you how our enemy deceived us. It happened while we were guarding Paradise, each his portion allotted from God. Now I was watching in my share, the South and West, and the devil came into Adam's portion, where the male animals were, since God divided the animals among us, and all the males he gave to your father, and all the females to me, and each of us kept his own.

And the devil spoke to the serpent, saying, 'Rise and come to me, and I will tell you something to your advantage.' Then the serpent came to him, and the devil said to him, 'I hear that you are wiser than all the beasts; so I came to observe you. I found you greater than all the beasts, and they associate with you; but yet you are prostrate to the very least. Why do you eat of the weeds of Adam and not of the fruit of Paradise? Rise and come and let us make him to be cast out of Paradise through his wife, just as we were cast out through him.' The serpent said to him, 'I fear lest the Lord be wrathful to me.' The devil said to him, 'Do not fear; only become my vessel, and I will speak a word through your mouth by which you will be able to deceive him.'

"And immediately he suspended himself from the walls of Paradise about the time when the angels of God went up to worship. Then Satan came in the form of an angel and sang hymns to God as the angels. And I saw him bending over the wall, like an angel. And he said to me, 'Are you Eve?' And I said to him, 'I am.' And he said to me, 'What are you doing in Paradise?' I replied, 'God placed us to guard it and eat from it.' The devil answered me through the mouth of the serpent, 'You do well, but you do not eat of every plant.' And I said to him, 'Yes, we eat from every plant except one only, which is in the midst of Paradise, concerning which God commanded us not to eat of it, else *you shall most surely die.*

"Then the serpent said to me, 'May God live! For I am grieved over you, that you are like animals. For I do not want you to be ignorant; but rise, come and eat, and observe the glory of the tree.' And I said to him, 'I fear lest God be angry with me, just as he told us.' He said to me, 'Fear not; for at the very time you eat, *your eyes will be opened and you will be like gods, knowing good and evil.* But since God knew this, that you would be like him, he begrudged you and said, "Do not eat of it." But come to the plant, and see its great glory,' And I turned to the plant and saw its great glory. And I said to him, 'It is pleasing to consider with the eyes', yet I was afraid to take of the fruit. And he said to me, 'Come, I will give it to you. Follow me.'

"And I opened (the gate) for him, and he entered into Paradise, passing through in front of me. After he had walked a little, he turned and said to me, 'I have changed my mind and will not allow you to eat.' He said these things, wishing in the end to entice and ruin me. And he said to me, 'Swear to me that you are giving (it) also to your husband. And I said to him, 'I do not know by what sort of oath I should swear to you; however, that which I do know I tell you: By the throne of the Lord and the cherubim and the tree of life, I shall give (it) also to my husband to eat.' When he had received the oath from me, he went, climbed the tree, and sprinkled his evil poison on the fruit which he gave me to eat which is his covetousness. For covetousness is the origin of every sin. And I bent the branch toward the earth, took of the fruit, and ate.

"And at that very moment my eyes were opened and I knew that I was naked of the righteousness with which I had been clothed. And I wept saying, 'Why have you done this to me, that I have been estranged from my glory with which I was clothed?" And I wept also about the oath. But that one came down from the tree and vanished. I looked for leaves in my region so that I might cover my shame, but I did not find (any) from the trees of Paradise, since while I ate, the leaves of all the trees of my portion fell, except (those) of the fig tree only. And I took its leaves and made for myself skirts; they were from the same plants of which I ate.

"And I cried out with a loud voice, saying, 'Adam, Adam, where are you? Rise, come to me and I will show you a great mystery.' And when your father came, I spoke to him unlawful words of transgression such as brought us down from glory. For when he came, I opened my mouth and the devil was speaking, and I began to admonish him, saying, 'Come, my lord Adam, listen to me and eat of the fruit of the tree of which God told us not to eat from it, and you shall be as God.' Your father answered and said, 'I fear lest God be angry with me.' And I said to him, 'Do not fear; for as soon as you eat, you shall know good and evil.' Then I quickly persuaded him. He ate, and his eyes were opened, and he realized his nakedness. And he said to me, 'O evil woman! Why have you wrought destruction among us? You have estranged me from the glory of God.'

The Devil

And the devil sighed and said, "O Adam, all my enmity and envy and sorrow concern you, since because of you I am expelled and deprived of my glory which I had in the heavens in the midst of angels, and because of you I was cast onto the earth." Adam answered, "What have I done to you, and what is my blame with you? since you are neither harmed nor hurt by us, why do you pursue us?

The devil replied, "Adam, what are you telling me? It is because of you that I have been thrown out of there. When you were created, I was cast out from the presence of God and was sent out from the fellowship of the angels. When God blew into you the *breath of life* and your countenance and likeness were made *in the image of God*, Michael brought you and made (us) worship you in the sight of God, and the Lord God said, 'Behold Adam! I have made you in our image and likeness.'

And Michael went out and called all the angels, saying, 'Worship the image of the Lord God, as the Lord God has instructed.' And Michael himself worshiped first, and called me and said, 'Worship the image of God, Yahweh.' And I answered, 'I do not worship Adam.' And when Michael kept forcing me to worship, I said to him, 'Why do you compel me? I will not worship one inferior and subsequent to me. I am prior to him in creation; before he was made, I was already made. He ought to worship me.'

When they heard this, other angels who were under me refused to worship him. And Michael asserted, 'Worship the image of God. But if now you will not worship, the Lord God will be wrathful with you.' And I said, 'If he be wrathful with me, I will set my throne above the stars of heaven and will be like the Most High.'

And the Lord God was angry with me and sent me with my angels out from our glory; and because of you, we were expelled into this world from our dwellings and have been cast onto the earth. And immediately we were made to grieve, since we had been deprived of so great a glory. And we were pained to see you in such bliss of delights. So with deceit I assailed your wife and made you to be expelled through her from the joys of your bliss, as I have been expelled from my glory."

GOD'S JUDGEMENT

Serpent

"Because you did this,
More cursed shall you be
Than all cattle
And all the wild beasts:
On your belly shall you crawl
And dirt shall you eat
All the days of your life.
I will put enmity
Between you and the woman,
And between your offspring and hers;
They shall strike at your head,
And you shall strike at their heel.

STOP READING

Eve

"I will make most severe
Your pangs in childbearing;
In pain shall you bear children.
Yet your urge shall be for your husband,
And he shall rule over you."

STOP READING

Adam

"Because you did as your wife said and ate of the tree about which I commanded you, 'You shall not eat of it,
Cursed be the ground because of you;
By toil shall you eat of it
All the days of your life:
Thorns and thistles shall it sprout for you.
But your food shall be the grasses of the field;
By the sweat of your brow
Shall you get bread to eat,

Until you return to the ground-
For from it you were taken.
For dust you are,
And to dust you shall return."

STOP READING

<u>God's Final statement</u>

"Now that the man has become like one of us, knowing good and bad, what if he should stretch out his hand and take also from the tree of life and eat, and live forever!"

Unit 3 Documentary Hypothesis

The Central Concept of the Lesson

This lesson will focus on the theory that the redactors of the Bible included multiple authors which came to be known as the Documentary Hypothesis. Participants will be provided with a history of the development of the Documentary Hypothesis. They will become familiar with the five different authors of the Bible and will have the opportunity to take apart a Biblical text.

Goal: Participants will be able to analyze the Biblical text with the methodology of the Documentary Hypothesis.

Objectives: 1. Participants will be able to define the methodology of the Documentary Hypothesis.

2. Participants will be able to list five different Biblical authors identified by scholars who adhere to the Documentary Hypothesis.

3. Participants will be able to identify different authors in two different texts in the Book of Genesis. These texts include the creation stories and the story of Noah.

4. Participants will be able to take apart a redacted text and reconstruct two separate original texts of different authors.

Texts:

Genesis 6:9-9:28
An Introduction to Old Testament Study by John H. Hayes
Who Wrote the Bible

I. Introduction to the Documentary Hypothesis

A. Introduce the scholars whose work lead to the theory of multiple authorship.

1. Medieval Period

a. Ibn Ezra had questioned how Moses could have written about his own death.

2. Renaissance Period

a. "The most famous case of such criticism was the challenge to the authenticity of the so-called Donation of Constantine, which had been used by the papacy to claim temporal power. Lorenzo Valla in 1439 amassed an overwhelming case against the genuineness of the document."[1] He did not discuss the Hebrew Bible but it was the beginning of this methodology.

3. 17th Century[2]

a. Fundamental presuppositions became hallmarks of the historical-critical approach.

1) The Bible is studied in the same critical manner as any other book.

2) The Biblical material has a history of composition and transmission which can be elucidated by distinguishing the various

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[1] John H. Hayes, *An Introduction to Old Testament Study,* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1979), p. 101.

[2] Ibid., p. 106

historical and sociological circumstances through which the material passed.

3) Internal statements, characteristics of style, and repetitions make possible a denial of the assumption that a single author stands behind the Pentateuch.

4) Behind the various writings in the Hebrew Bible must be discerned human authors who wrote with particular purposes and aims in mind.

b. Benedict (Baruch) de Spinoza

1) A Writ of Excommunication was issued to him on July 27, 1656 by the Sephardi community in Amsterdam. In this writ they ordered "that nobody should communicate with him orally or in writing, or show him any favor, or stay with him under the same roof, or come within four ells of him or read anything composed or written by him."[3]

2) In *Tractatus Theologico-politicus* he wrote that he "set out to examine the Scriptures anew, in a spirit of entire freedom and without prejudice, to affirm nothing as to their meaning and affirm nothing in the shape of doctrine which I did not feel plainly set down in their pages."[4]

3) He further stated: "Anyone who but observes that in these 5 books precept and narrative are jumbled together without order, and that one and the same story is often met with again and again, and occasionally with very important differences in the incidents whosoever observes these things will certainly come to the conclusion that in the Pentateuch we have merely notes and collations to be examined at leisure; materials for history rather than digested history itself."[5]

4. 18th Century

a. Henning Bernhard Witter

1) He was a German pastor who "published a commentary on the Pentateuch in which he isolated documents using differences in the divine name as one criterion."[6]

b. Jean Astruc

1) He said that Moses inherited 2 different sources, one Elohim and the other Yahweh which he used to create Genesis.[7]

5. 19th century

a. By this time the documentary approach had identified 4 sources "relying upon the 5 pillars of documentary criticism:

1) The use of divine names.

2) Language and style.

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[3] Paul Mendes-Flohr and Jehuda Reinharz, *The Jew in the Modern World*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), p. 57.
[4] Hayes, p. 109.
[5] Ibid., p. 109.
[6] Ibid., p. 116.
[7] Ibid., p. 116.

3) Contradictions and divergences within the text.
4) Duplication and repetition of material.
5) The evidence that different accounts have been combined.

b. The four sources were designated PJED."[8]

c. Scholars began to argue about which was the earliest author. By the close of the 19th century, scholars had determined that the order was JEDP. Julius Wellhausen argued for this order. "He wanted to prove that P squeezed the life out of the Bible."[9]

6. 20th century
   a. Israeli school
      1) Most Jewish scholars put P earlier than D because of the language. Thus their order is JEPD. There is also a belief that there is an early P, middle P who wrote the holiness code around 721 B.C.E., and a late P from around 350 B.C.E.[10]

B. Explanation of the different authors.
   1. "J" or Yahwest author
      a. This author used the name Yahweh for God throughout and was found primarily in Genesis and Exodus.
   2. "E" or Elohist author
      a. This author used the name Elohim and did not include any priestly attributes.
   3. "P" or Priestly author
      a. This author wrote the largest section which included most of the legal sections and concentrated on matters that had to do with priests.
   4. "D" or Deuteronomist
      a. This author wrote the book of Deuteronomy.
   5. "R" or Redactor
      a. This is the person(s) that put all of the different sections together.

C. The Redaction Process
   1. "The guideline for the redactor was to retain as much of the original texts as possible without intolerable contradictions. The evidence of this is that when we separate JE from P in Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, and Numbers, each flows sensibly on its own with very few gaps in its story."[11]
   2. There are times, as with the two creation stories, where the redactor chose to keep both. Although they are different, one is a broad story whereas the other is reflects a more earthy, human centered perspective.
   3. The flood story which will be studied below, were two stories which were cut up and then woven together into one.
   4. "The redactor was fashioning a work that reconciled opposing sources."[12]

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[8] Ibid., p. 118.
[9] Diane Sharon, 9/18/00. This was stated in a lecture on Biblical Historiography at AJR.
[10] Ibid. Stated in the above mentioned lecture on 9/11/00.
[11] Richard Elliott Friedman, *Who Wrote The Bible*, (New York: Harper and Row Publishers, 1989), p. 226.
[12] Ibid., p. 231.

II. Text *Genesis* 6:9-9:28

A. Reading of text the way it is found in the Bible by the participants who will take turns reading the text.

B. Discussion of the story.

1. Ask if there are any questions about the text.
2. Discuss any contradictions that may appear.
   a. Example: Did the flood last 40 days or 120 days.

III. Rereading of text, broken into the different authors

A. The participants will take turns reading the text separated by authors.

B. A detailed discussion of the wording of each version will be conducted. Key words and phrases will be reviewed. In addition to looking at the words and phrases in the Noah story, we will also go back and revisit the two creation stories where we will find similar wording and thus conclude that they may have been written by the same authors.

1. How is God portrayed in each source?
   a. A close look at chapter and verse.
2. The nature of the flood in each source.
   a. The length of the flood.
   b. How it occurs?
3. The outcome of the flood in each source. How it affects the relationship between God and humanity.
4. The concerns of each source.
5. The theological perspective and theological message that is conveyed by weaving them together.

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Tanach - Genesis Chapter 6

1. And it came to pass, when men began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born to them,
2. That the sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were pretty; and they took as wives all those whom they chose.
3. And the Lord said, My spirit shall not always strive with man, for he also is flesh; yet his days shall be a hundred and twenty years.
4. There were Nefilim in the earth in those days; and also after that, when the sons of God came in to the daughters of men, and they bore children to them, the same became mighty men of old, men of renown.
5. And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.
6. And the Lord repented that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart.
7. And the Lord said, I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth; both man, and beast, and the creeping thing, and the birds of the air; for I repent that I have made them.
8. And Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord.
9. These are the generations of Noah; Noah was a just man and perfect in his generations, and Noah walked with God.
10. And Noah fathered three sons, Shem, Ham, and Japheth.
11. The earth also was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence.
12. And God looked upon the earth, and, behold, it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted its way upon the earth.
13. And God said to Noah, The end of all flesh has come before me; for the earth is filled with violence through them; and, behold, I will destroy them with the earth.
14. Make an ark of gopher wood; rooms shall you make in the ark, and shall pitch it inside and outside with pitch.
15. And this is the fashion by which you shall make it; The length of the ark shall be three hundred cubits, its breadth fifty cubits, and its height thirty cubits.
16. A window shall you make in the ark, and to a cubit shall you finish it above; and the door of the ark shall you set in its side; with lower, second, and third stories shall you make it.
17. And, behold, I, myself, bring a flood of waters upon the earth, to destroy all flesh, where there is the breath of life, from under heaven; and every thing that is in the earth shall die.
18. But with you will I establish my covenant; and you shall come into the ark, you, and your sons, and your wife, and your sons' wives with you.

19. And of every living thing of all flesh, two of every sort shall you bring into the ark, to keep them alive with you; they shall be male and female.
20. Of birds after their kind, and of cattle after their kind, of every creeping thing of the earth after its kind, two of every sort shall come to you, to keep them alive.
21. And take to you of all food that is eaten, and you shall gather it to you; and it shall be for food for you, and for them.
22. Thus did Noah; according to all that God commanded him, so did he.

Tanach - Genesis Chapter 7
1. And the Lord said to Noah, Come you and all your house into the ark; for you have I seen righteous before me in this generation.
2. Of every clean beast you shall take to you seven pairs, the male and his female; and of beasts that are not clean one pair, the male and his female.
3. Of birds also of the air by seven pairs, the male and the female; to keep seed alive upon the face of all the earth.
4. For in another seven days I will cause it to rain upon the earth forty days and forty nights; and every living substance that I have made will I destroy from off the face of the earth.
5. And Noah did according to all that the Lord commanded him.
6. And Noah was six hundred years old when the flood of waters was upon the earth.
7. And Noah went in, and his sons, and his wife, and his sons' wives with him, into the ark, because of the waters of the flood.
8. Of clean beasts, and of beasts that are not clean, and of birds, and of every thing that creeps upon the earth,
9. There went in two and two to Noah into the ark, the male and the female, as God had commanded Noah.
10. And it came to pass after seven days, that the waters of the flood were upon the earth.
11. In the six hundredth year of Noah's life, in the second month, the seventeenth day of the month, the same day were all the fountains of the great deep broken up, and the windows of heaven were opened.
12. And the rain was upon the earth forty days and forty nights.
13. In the same day entered Noah, and Shem, and Ham, and Japheth, the sons of Noah, and Noah's wife, and the three wives of his sons with them, into the ark;
14. They, and every beast after its kind, and all the cattle after their kind, and every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth after its kind, and every bird after its kind, every bird of every sort.

15. And they went to Noah into the ark, two and two of all flesh, where there is the breath of life.
16. And those who went in, went in male and female of all flesh, as God had commanded him; and the Lord closed him in.
17. And the flood was forty days upon the earth; and the waters increased, and bore up the ark, and it was lifted up above the earth.
18. And the waters prevailed, and were increased greatly upon the earth; and the ark went upon the face of the waters.
19. And the waters prevailed exceedingly upon the earth; and all the high hills, that were under the whole heaven, were covered.
20. Fifteen cubits upward did the waters prevail; and the mountains were covered.
21. And all flesh died that moved upon the earth, both of bird, and of cattle, and of beast, and of every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth, and every man;
22. All in whose nostrils was the breath of life, of all that was in the dry land, died.
23. And every living substance was destroyed which was upon the face of the ground, both man, and cattle, and the creeping things, and the bird of the heaven; and they were destroyed from the earth; and Noah only remained alive, and those who were with him in the ark.
24. And the waters prevailed upon the earth a hundred and fifty days.

Tanach - Genesis Chapter 8

1. And God remembered Noah, and every living thing, and all the cattle that was with him in the ark; and God made a wind to pass over the earth, and the waters subsided;
2. The fountains also of the deep and the windows of heaven were stopped, and the rain from heaven was restrained;
3. And the waters returned from off the earth continually; and after the end of the hundred and fifty days the waters were abated.
4. And the ark rested in the seventh month, on the seventeenth day of the month, upon the mountains of Ararat.
5. And the waters decreased continually until the tenth month; in the tenth month, on the first day of the month, were the tops of the mountains seen.
6. And it came to pass at the end of forty days, that Noah opened the window of the ark which he had made;
7. And he sent forth a raven, which went forth to and fro, until the waters were dried up from off the earth.
8. Also he sent forth a dove from him, to see if the waters were abated from off the face of the ground;

9. But the dove found no rest for the sole of its foot, and she returned to him into the ark, for the waters were on the face of the whole earth; then he put forth his hand, and took her, and pulled her into the ark.
10. And he stayed yet other seven days; and again he sent forth the dove out of the ark;
11. And the dove came in to him in the evening; and, lo, in her mouth was an olive leaf plucked off; so Noah knew that the waters were abated from off the earth.
12. And he stayed yet other seven days; and sent forth the dove; which did not return back to him any more.
13. And it came to pass in the six hundredth and first year, in the first month, the first day of the month, the waters were dried up from off the earth; and Noah removed the covering of the ark, and looked, and, behold, the face of the ground was dry.
14. And in the second month, on the twenty seventh day of the month, was the earth dried.
15. And God spoke to Noah, saying,
16. Go out from the ark, you, and your wife, and your sons, and your sons' wives with you.
17. Bring out with you every living thing that is with you, of all flesh, both of bird, and of cattle, and of every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth; that they may breed abundantly in the earth, and be fruitful, and multiply upon the earth.
18. And Noah went out, and his sons, and his wife, and his sons' wives with him;
19. Every beast, every creeping thing, and every bird, and whatever creeps upon the earth, after their kinds, went out of the ark.
20. And Noah built an altar to the Lord; and took of every clean beast, and of every clean bird, and offered burnt offerings on the altar.
21. And the Lord smelled the pleasing odor; and the Lord said in his heart, I will not again curse the ground any more for man's sake; for the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth; nor will I again destroy every living thing, as I have done.
22. While the earth remains, seed time and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease.

Tanach - Genesis Chapter 9
1. And God blessed Noah and his sons, and said to them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth.
2. And the fear of you and the dread of you shall be upon every beast of the earth, and upon every bird of the air, upon all that moves upon the earth, and upon all the fishes of the sea; to your hand are they delivered.

3. Every moving thing that lives shall be food for you; even as the green herb have I given you all things.
4. But flesh with its life, which is its blood, you shall not eat.
5. And surely your blood of your lives will I require; at the hand of every beast will I require it, and at the hand of man; at the hand of every man's brother will I require the life of man.
6. Whoever sheds man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed; for in the image of God he made man.
7. And you, be fruitful, and multiply; bring forth abundantly in the earth, and multiply in it.
8. And God spoke to Noah, and to his sons with him, saying,
9. And I, behold, I establish my covenant with you, and with your seed after you;
10. And with every living creature that is with you, of the bird, of the cattle, and of every beast of the earth with you; from all that go out of the ark, to every beast of the earth.
11. And I will establish my covenant with you; nor shall all flesh be cut off any more by the waters of a flood; nor shall there any more be a flood to destroy the earth.
12. And God said, This is the sign of the covenant which I make between me and you and every living creature that is with you, for everlasting generations;
13. I set my bow in the cloud, and it shall be for a sign of a covenant between me and the earth.
14. And it shall come to pass, when I bring a cloud over the earth, that the bow shall be seen in the cloud;
15. And I will remember my covenant, which is between me and you and every living creature of all flesh; and the waters shall no more become a flood to destroy all flesh.
16. And the bow shall be in the cloud; and I will look upon it, that I may remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is upon the earth.
17. And God said to Noah, This is the sign of the covenant, which I have established between me and all flesh that is upon the earth.
18. And the sons of Noah, who went out of the ark, were Shem, and Ham, and Japheth; and Ham is the father of Canaan.
19. These are the three sons of Noah; and from them was the whole earth peopled.
20. And Noah began to be a farmer, and he planted a vineyard;
21. And he drank of the wine, and became drunk; and he lay uncovered inside his tent.

22. And Ham, the father of Canaan, saw the nakedness of his father, and told his two brothers outside.
23. And Shem and Japheth took a garment, and laid it upon both their shoulders, and went backward, and covered the nakedness of their father; and their faces were backward, and they saw not their father's nakedness.
24. And Noah awoke from his wine, and knew what his younger son had done to him.
25. And he said, Cursed be Canaan; a slave of slaves shall he be to his brothers.
26. And he said, Blessed be the Lord God of Shem; and Canaan shall be his slave.
27. God shall enlarge Japheth, and he shall live in the tents of Shem; and Canaan shall be his slave.
28. And Noah lived after the flood three hundred and fifty years.
29. And all the days of Noah were nine hundred and fifty years; and he died.

Text by Author

"J" Author

Genesis Chapter 6

5. And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.
6. And the Lord repented that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart.
7. And the Lord said, I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth; both man, and beast, and the creeping thing, and the birds of the air; for I repent that I have made them.
8. And Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord.

Genesis Chapter 7

1. And the Lord said to Noah, Come you and all your house into the ark; for you have I seen righteous before me in this generation.
2. Of every clean beast you shall take to you seven pairs, the male and his female; and of beasts that are not clean one pair, the male and his female.
3. Of birds also of the air by seven pairs, the male and the female; to keep seed alive upon the face of all the earth.
4. For in another seven days I will cause it to rain upon the earth forty days and forty nights; and every living substance that I have made will I destroy from off the face of the earth.
5. And Noah did according to all that the Lord commanded him.
7. And Noah went in, and his sons, and his wife, and his sons' wives with him, into the ark, because of the waters of the flood.
10. And it came to pass after seven days, that the waters of the flood were upon the earth.
16b. and the Lord closed him in.
17. And the flood was forty days upon the earth; and the waters increased, and bore up the ark, and it was lifted up above the earth.
22. All in whose nostrils was the breath of life, of all that was in the dry land, died.
23. And every living substance was destroyed which was upon the face of the ground, both man, and cattle, and the creeping things, and the bird of the heaven; and they were destroyed from the earth; and Noah only remained alive, and those who were with him in the ark.

Gensis Chapter 8

2b. and the rain from heaven was restrained;
3a. And the waters returned from off the earth continually;
6. And it came to pass at the end of forty days, that Noah opened the window of the ark which he had made;
8. (Also) he sent forth a dove from him, to see if the waters were abated from off the face of the ground;
9. But the dove found no rest for the sole of its foot, and she returned to him into the ark, for the waters were on the face of the whole earth; then he put forth his hand, and took her, and pulled her into the ark.
10. And he stayed yet other seven days; and again he sent forth the dove out of the ark;
11. And the dove came in to him in the evening; and, lo, in her mouth was an olive leaf plucked off; so Noah knew that the waters were abated from off the earth.
12. And he stayed yet other seven days; and sent forth the dove; which did not return back to him any more.
13b. and Noah removed the covering of the ark, and looked, and, behold, the face of the ground was dry.
20. And Noah built an altar to the Lord; and took of every clean beast, and of every clean bird, and offered burnt offerings on the altar.
21. And the Lord smelled the pleasing odor; and the Lord said in his heart, I will not again curse the ground any more for man's sake; for the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth; nor will I again destroy every living thing, as I have done.
22. While the earth remains, seed time and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease.

Genesis Chapter 9
18. And the sons of Noah, who went out of the ark, were Shem, and Ham, and Japheth; and Ham is the father of Canaan.
19. These are the three sons of Noah; and from them was the whole earth peopled.
20. And Noah began to be a farmer, and he planted a vineyard;
21. And he drank of the wine, and became drunk; and he lay uncovered inside his tent.
22. And Ham, the father of Canaan, saw the nakedness of his father, and told his two brothers outside.
23. And Shem and Japheth took a garment, and laid it upon both their shoulders, and went backward, and covered the nakedness of their father; and their faces were backward, and they saw not their father's nakedness.

24. And Noah awoke from his wine, and knew what his younger son had done to him.
25. And he said, Cursed be Canaan; a slave of slaves shall he be to his brothers.
26. And he said, Blessed be the Lord God of Shem; and Canaan shall be his slave.
27. God shall enlarge Japheth, and he shall live in the tents of Shem; and Canaan shall be his slave.

Text by Author

"P" Author

Gensis Chapter 6

9. These are the generations of Noah; Noah was a just man and perfect in his generations, and Noah walked with God.
10. And Noah fathered three sons, Shem, Ham, and Japheth.
11. The earth also was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence.
12. And God looked upon the earth, and, behold, it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted its way upon the earth.
13. And God said to Noah, The end of all flesh has come before me; for the earth is filled with violence through them; and, behold, I will destroy them with the earth.
14. Make an ark of gopher wood; rooms shall you make in the ark, and shall pitch it inside and outside with pitch.
15. And this is the fashion by which you shall make it; The length of the ark shall be three hundred cubits, its breadth fifty cubits, and its height thirty cubits.
16. A window shall you make in the ark, and to a cubit shall you finish it above; and the door of the ark shall you set in its side; with lower, second, and third stories shall you make it.
17. And, behold, I, myself, bring a flood of waters upon the earth, to destroy all flesh, where there is the breath of life, from under heaven; and every thing that is in the earth shall die.
18. But with you will I establish my covenant; and you shall come into the ark, you, and your sons, and your wife, and your sons' wives with you.
19. And of every living thing of all flesh, two of every sort shall you bring into the ark, to keep them alive with you; they shall be male and female.
20. Of birds after their kind, and of cattle after their kind, of every creeping thing of the earth after its kind, two of every sort shall come to you, to keep them alive.
21. And take to you of all food that is eaten, and you shall gather it to you; and it shall be for food for you, and for them.
22. Thus did Noah; according to all that God commanded him, so did he.

Chapter 7

6. And Noah was six hundred years old when the flood of waters was upon the earth.
11. In the six hundredth year of Noah's life, in the second month, the seventeenth day of the month, the same day were all the fountains of the great deep broken up, and the windows of heaven were opened.

13. In the same day entered Noah, and Shem, and Ham, and Japheth, the sons of Noah, and Noah's wife, and the three wives of his sons with them, into the ark;
14. They, and every beast after its kind, and all the cattle after their kind, and every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth after its kind, and every bird after its kind, every bird of every sort.
15. And they went to Noah into the ark, two and two of all flesh, where there is the breath of life.
16a. And those who went in, went in male and female of all flesh, as God had commanded him;
18. And the waters prevailed, and were increased greatly upon the earth; and the ark went upon the face of the waters.
19. And the waters prevailed exceedingly upon the earth; and all the high hills, that were under the whole heaven, were covered.
20. Fifteen cubits upward did the waters prevail; and the mountains were covered.
21. And all flesh died that moved upon the earth, both of bird, and of cattle, and of beast, and of every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth, and every man;
24. And the waters prevailed upon the earth a hundred and fifty days.

Genesis Chapter 8
1. And God remembered Noah, and every living thing, and all the cattle that was with him in the ark; and God made a wind to pass over the earth, and the waters subsided;
2a. The fountains also of the deep and the windows of heaven were stopped,
3b. and after the end of the hundred and fifty days the waters were abated.
4. And the ark rested in the seventh month, on the seventeenth day of the month, upon the mountains of Ararat.
5. And the waters decreased continually until the tenth month; in the tenth month, on the first day of the month, were the tops of the mountains seen.
7. And he sent forth a raven, which went forth to and fro, until the waters were dried up from off the earth.
13a. And it came to pass in the six hundredth and first year, in the first month, the first day of the month, the waters were dried up from off the earth;
14. And in the second month, on the twenty seventh day of the month, was the earth dried.
15. And God spoke to Noah, saying,
16. Go out from the ark, you, and your wife, and your sons, and your sons' wives with you.

17. Bring out with you every living thing that is with you, of all flesh, both of bird, and of cattle, and of every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth; that they may breed abundantly in the earth, and be fruitful, and multiply upon the earth.
18. And Noah went out, and his sons, and his wife, and his sons' wives with him;
19. Every beast, every creeping thing, and every bird, and whatever creeps upon the earth, after their kinds, went out of the ark.

Genesis Chapter 9

1. And God blessed Noah and his sons, and said to them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth.
2. And the fear of you and the dread of you shall be upon every beast of the earth, and upon every bird of the air, upon all that moves upon the earth, and upon all the fishes of the sea; to your hand are they delivered.
3. Every moving thing that lives shall be food for you; even as the green herb have I given you all things.
4. But flesh with its life, which is its blood, you shall not eat.
5. And surely your blood of your lives will I require; at the hand of every beast will I require it, and at the hand of man; at the hand of every man's brother will I require the life of man.
6. Whoever sheds man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed; for in the image of God he made man.
7. And you, be fruitful, and multiply; bring forth abundantly in the earth, and multiply in it.
8. And God spoke to Noah, and to his sons with him, saying,
9. And I, behold, I establish my covenant with you, and with your seed after you;
10. And with every living creature that is with you, of the bird, of the cattle, and of every beast of the earth with you; from all that go out of the ark, to every beast of the earth.
11. And I will establish my covenant with you; nor shall all flesh be cut off any more by the waters of a flood; nor shall there any more be a flood to destroy the earth.
12. And God said, This is the sign of the covenant which I make between me and you and every living creature that is with you, for everlasting generations;
13. I set my bow in the cloud, and it shall be for a sign of a covenant between me and the earth.
14. And it shall come to pass, when I bring a cloud over the earth, that the bow shall be seen in the cloud;

15. And I will remember my covenant, which is between me and you and every living creature of all flesh; and the waters shall no more become a flood to destroy all flesh.
16. And the bow shall be in the cloud; and I will look upon it, that I may remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is upon the earth.
17. And God said to Noah, This is the sign of the covenant, which I have established between me and all flesh that is upon the earth.
28. And Noah lived after the flood three hundred and fifty years.
29. And all the days of Noah were nine hundred and fifty years; and he died.

Other Author
Genesis 7:8-9
8. Of clean beasts, and of beasts that are not clean, and of birds, and of every thing that creeps upon the earth,
9. There went in two and two to Noah into the ark, the male and the female, as God had commanded Noah

Section III

	"J" AUTHOR	"P" AUTHOR
INTRODUCTION	**Genesis 6:5-8** 1. In this version of the introduction, God sees the wickedness of man and that man's thoughts are only of evil (Gen. 6:5). 2. God's name is Yahweh in this version. This is consistent with the "J" author. 3. Yahweh determines that he will destroy man and the beasts that he has created (Gen. 6:7). 4. Yahweh is portrayed with anthropomorphic and anthropopathic qualities: God *saw* the wickedness of man, the Lord *repents*, it *grieved at his heart*, Noah finds grace *in the eyes of the Lord.* 5. The text informs us that Noah finds grace in the eyes of the Lord. In "P" Noah is a just and perfect person, in this version we are also informed in Gen. 7:1 that he is righteous (Gen. 6:8). 6. The "J" author refers to man as הָאָדָם. This is consistent with Gen. 2, which is credited to this author.	**Genesis 6:9-13** 1. This section begins with a beginning that we often find with the Priestly author: "These are the generations of Noah, אֵלֶּה תוֹלְדֹת נֹחַ נֹחַ" (Gen. 6:9). 2. In this version, the earth was corrupt and the earth was filled with violence (Gen. 6:11). 3. This version uses אֱלֹהִים as the name for God. This is consistent with Gen. 1 which is credited to this author. 4. God does not have the anthropomorphic qualities found with "J". 5. "Noah was a just man and perfect in his generations, and Noah walked with God." He appears to have a close relationship with God that is not found in the other version (Gen. 6:9). The author is creating Noah as an exemplary character. 6. The "P" author refers to man as בָּשָׂר, flesh. We will find this wording throughout this text.

	"J" AUTHOR	"P" AUTHOR
GOD'S INSTRUCTIONS	**Genesis 7:1-5** 1. There are no instructions for an ark to be built and in fact it appears at this point that God presents Noah with the ark (Gen. 7:1). It is not until Gen. 8:6 that we learn that Noah had built the ark. 2. God instructs Noah to gather 7 pairs of clean beasts and on pair of unclean beasts. A pair consists of a אִישׁ וְאִשְׁתּוֹ (Gen. 7:2). The instructions for picking clean beasts lead one immediately to realize that this author is referring to sacrifices. This author has written about sacrifices being made outside of the Temple in other parts of the Torah. 3. God also instructs Noah to gather 7 pairs of birds of the air (Gen. 7:3). 4. God informs him that in 7 days it will rain for 40 days and 40 nights (Gen. 7:4). 5. Noah does all that he is commanded (Gen. 7:5). 6. This author seems to like the numbers 7 and 40 which we do find throughout the Torah.	**Genesis 6:14-22** 1. God instructs Noah to make an ark out of gopher wood. It should have rooms and be sealed inside and out with pitch (Gen. 6:14). 2. The actual dimensions of the ark are provided (Gen. 6:15-16). 3. God informs him that God will make a covenant with Noah (Gen. 6:18). We will learn more about this covenant in Gen. 9:9-17. 4. Noah is instructed to bring of every living flesh, 2 of every sort and they should be זָכָר וּנְקֵבָה, male and female. These included birds, cattle, and creeping things of the earth. The description of the animals is similar to that in the first creation story, Gen. 1:20-25. We are reminded of God creating man in God's image, male and female. No mention of clean is made (Gen. 6:19-20). As this was the Priestly author, he would not want sacrifices being made anywhere outside of the Temple and thus would not have written it the way the "J" author did. 5. Noah is also instructed to gather food for all (Gen. 6:21). This is not done in the other version. 6. Noah did all that God commanded him (Gen. 6:22). 7. This version provides many more details.

	"J" AUTHOR	"P" AUTHOR
FLOOD	**Genesis 7:7, 10, 16b-17, 22-23, 8:2b-3a** 1. We find that Noah and his family go into the ark and that the flood waters come in 7 days as God had informed him. (Gen. 7:7, 10). 2. God is the one who closes the ark which characterizes God as the one who is taking care of them (Gen. 16b). God is involved in the small details of the story rather than Noah. One is reminded of the Garden story, where God looks for Adam and Eve after they have eaten from the Tree of Good and Evil. 3. We are informed that every thing left on the earth died. The word used for dying is מֵתוּ (Gen. 7:22). One of the words used for the land is עַל-פְּנֵי הָאֲדָמָה face of the ground which we find throughout this narrative. 4. In this version of the story, the flood lasts 40 days and 40 nights (Gen. 7:17). 5. The rain from the heaven is restrained and the waters run off the earth (Gen.2b-3a).	**Genesis 7:6, 11, 13-16a, 18-21, 24, 8:1-2a, 3b-4** 1. We are informed that Noah was 600 years old at the time of the flood (Gen. 7:6). 2. In this version Noah and his family went into the ark on the day that the flood of waters began. We are told that it was in the seventeenth day of the second month when the water began. (Gen. 7:11,13). 3. All of the animals enter the ark, two and two of all flesh (Gen. 7:15). Once again we find the word בָּשָׂר, flesh used. 4. We are also once again reminded that they are male and female of all flesh, זָכָר וּנְקֵבָה (Gen. 16a). 5. The text goes into more detail concerning the flood, informing us that the waters covered the high hills at first and finally it went 15 cubits upward and the mountains were covered (Gen. 7:19-20). 6. The author informs us that all flesh that moved upon the earth perished, using the word וַיִּגְוַע. The word that this author uses for earth is הָאָרֶץ (Gen. 7:21). 7. In this version the waters were upon the earth for 150 days (Gen. 7:24). We are further informed that the ark rested in the 7th month on the 17th day which informs us that it was 5 months that the waters had come rather than 40 days (Gen. 8:4). 8. We are told that God remembers Noah and all the living things and thus makes a wind to pass over the earth and the waters subside (Gen. 8:1).

	"J" AUTHOR	"P" AUTHOR
EVENTS OCCURRING IMMEDIATELY AFTER FLOOD	**Genesis 8:6, 8-12, 13b, 20-22** 1. Noah opens the window of the ark which he made and sent a dove to see if the waters were abated from off the face of the ground (Gen. 8:6, 8). 2. The dove returns as the waters were still on the face of the earth (Gen. 8:9). We find that the author is now using the word הָאָרֶץ for earth but uses the expression "face of." 3. 7 days later he sends the dove once more (Gen. 8:10-11). The dove returns with the olive leaf. 4. Noah waits 7 more days and sends the dove out once again and the dove does not return (Gen. 8:12). We find that the author once again uses the number 7. 5. Noah removes the covering from the ark and finds that the face of the ground is dry (Gen. 8:13b). Once again we find the term עַל-פְּנֵי הָאֲדָמָה, face of the ground used. 6. He builds an alter to the Lord and takes one of each clean beast and bird and offers burnt offerings. (Gen. 8:20). 7. The Lord is pleased by the odor of the offerings and states that he will never again curse the ground or destroy every living thing. The earth will remain the same with each of its seasons (Gen. 8:21-22).	**Genesis 8:5, 7, 13a-19, 9:1-17** 1. We find that it is not until the 10th month on the 1st day that the tops of the mountains are seen (Gen. 8:5). This is 73 days after the rain stops. 2. Noah sends forth a raven which goes forth to and fro until the waters were dried up (Gen. 8:7). 3. We find that it exactly one year from the beginning of the flood until the water is dried up (Gen. 8:13a). 4. God informs Noah when he is to leave the ark which is 57 days after they learn from the raven that the land is dry (Gen. 8:14-15). 5. God informs Noah to bring out all of the animals from the ark and states that they should be fruitful and multiply וּרְבוּ פְּרוּ. This is an echo of Gen. 1:22 in the creation story where after creating all of the living creatures God blesses them. 6.. They all leave the ark (Gen. 8:16-19). There is much more detail in this version concerning the members of his family and the animals. 7. God blesses Noah and his sons and says to be fruitful and multiply פְּרוּ וּרְבוּ in Gen. 9:1. This is the same blessing that God gave in the Priestly account of creation in Gen 1:28. 8. In the next few verses God informs Noah that all of the beasts will fear man as they are being delivered into his hand. God is now giving man permission to eat meat but specifies that "flesh with its life, which is its blood, you shall not eat." There are also rules concerning the shedding of human life which are told to Noah by God. These are clearly written as rules like we would find in Leviticus (Gen. 9:2-6).
AFTER FLOOD		9. God establishes a covenant with Noah, his seed after him and the other living creatures. There will never again be a flood. As a sign of the covenant, God creates a rainbow which will be a reminder of the covenant (Gen. 9:9-17).

	"J" AUTHOR	"P" AUTHOR
ADDITIONAL INFORMATION CONCERNING NOAH AND FAMILY	**Genesis 9:18-27** 1. In Gen. 9:18 we are first informed of the names of Noah's sons. We a specifically informed that Ham is the father of Canaan. This is a piece of information concerning the future. 2. We are told that Noah became a farmer and planted a vineyard. He becomes drunk and lies naked in his tent. His son Ham finds him drunk and informs his brothers. The brothers walk in backwards and cover their father. Thus they never see his nakedness (Gen. 9:20-23). 3. When Noah wakes he realizes what Ham has done, he curses him and says that he will be a "slave of slaves to his brothers." He gives blessings to his other sons (Gen. 9:24-27). This author clearly does not like the Canaanite people and has thus provided us with the lineage of a future enemy.	**Genesis 9:28-29** 1. We are informed that Noah lives 350 additional years after the flood and that he died at the age of 950.

Section IIIB. Rereading of the text

1. How is God portrayed in each source.

"J" Author

1) God is given the name Yahweh. We find this is verses Gen. 6:5-8; 7:1, 5, 16b; 8:20-21; 9:26.

2) God in this version seems to be more human as God is portrayed with anthropomorphic and anthropopathic qualities. In Gen. 6:5 we find God *seeing* that the wickedness of man was great in the earth. In Gen. 6:6 the Lord *repented* that he had made man on the earth, and it *grieved him at his heart.* In Gen. 6:8 Noah finds grace *in the eyes of the Lord.*

3) The communication between God and Noah does not appear to be a distant one. An example of this is found in verse 7:16b "and the Lord closed him in." It gives one that feeling that God is standing on the ark closing the door.

4) The God in this version likes to have sacrifices made to Him. That is why Noah is instructed to take seven pairs of clean animals and birds (Gen. 7:2-3). In Gen. 8:20-21 we find Noah building and ark and making burnt offerings to God who is *pleased* by the odor and then states that He will never curse the earth again nor destroy living creatures.

"P" Author

1) This author uses Eloheim as the name for God. This is consistent with Gen. 1 which is credited to this author. We find this in verses Gen. 6:9, 11-13, 22; 7:16a; 8:1, 15; 9:1, 6, 8, 12, 16, 17.

2) God does not have any anthropomorphic or anthropopathic qualities but rather has omnipotent and omniscient qualities. This is found in Gen. 6:13 where it states that God will destroy the flesh on the earth as well as the earth. This also is found in the descriptions of the animals which are echoes of the Gen. 1 creation story (Gen. 6:19-20; 7:1--16a, 21; 8:17, 19; 9:1-7). We see this God's hand in the flood when we are informed that God stops it (Gen. 8:1). We also find in the creation of the rainbow the same feeling that we did of the creation of the world originally (Gen. 9:13-17). God has the power to create as well as destroy.

3) God is very specific in this version as to how the ark should be built and thus provides Noah with the exact specifications (Gen. 6:15-16).

4) In naming what living creatures are to be saved on the ark, we have descriptions that are quite similar to the creation story in Gen. 1. (Mentioned above)

5) This God is not interested in sacrifices and thus only requests that a male and female of each specie be chosen.

6) This God is concerned that Noah has food for himself and the animals and thus instructs him to gather it (6:21).

7) This God does not specify the length of time that the flood will last.
8) This God remembers Noah and causes a wind to pass over the earth and the waters subsided (Gen. 8:1). The reader has a real sense that God is involved with this story. In the other story God closes them in but you do not encounter God again until the offering is made to Him.
9) In this version God is interested in creating a covenant with man which is done at the end with the rainbow being a reminder that God should not destroy the world again.

2. The nature of the flood in each source.
J"Author
1) The flood in this story lasts *40 days and 40 nights* (Gen. 7:4, 8:6).
2) Noah is instructed to go onto the ark 7 days prior to the rain which he and his family do. (Gen. 7:7). On the 7th day the waters begin and God closes him in (Gen. 16b).
3) We are informed that *the waters of the flood are upon the earth* (Gen. 7:10); *the waters increased, and bore up the ark, and it was lifted up above the earth* (Gen. 7:17).
4) On the 40th day *the rain from heaven was restrained* (Gen. 8:2b) and *the waters returned from off the earth continually* (Gen. 8:3).
5) *At the end of forty days, Noah opened the window of the ark which he had made* (Gen. 8:6) and *he sent forth a dove to see if the waters were abated from off the face of the ground* (Gen. 8:8). The dove returns.
6) Noah waits 7 more days and once more sends out a dove which returns with an olive leaf and thus Noah knows *that the waters were abated from off the earth* (Gen. 8:10-11).
7) Noah waits 7 more days and sends the dove once more. It does not return (Gen. 8:12). It is at this point that Noah removes the covering of the ark and sees that the ground is dry (Gen. 8:13b).

"P"Author
1) We are informed that Noah is 600 years old when the flood occurs (Gen. 7:6). It occurs in the *second month on the seventeenth day* (Gen. 7:11).
2) *All the fountains of the fountains of the great deep broke up, and the windows of heaven were opened* (Gen. 7:11).
3) *On the same day that it began to rain, Noah, and Shem, and Ham, and Japheth, the sons of Noah, and Noah's wife, and the three wives of his sons went into the ark* (Gen. 7:13).
4) Every beast, cattle, creeping thing and bird went into the ark, two by two (Gen. 7:14-15).

5) *And the waters prevailed, and were increased greatly upon the earth; and the ark went upon the face of the waters. And the waters prevailed exceedingly upon the earth; and all the high hills, that were under the whole heaven, were covered* (Gen. 18-19).
6) We are informed that *Fifteen cubits upward did the waters prevail; and the mountains were covered* (Gen. 7:20).
7) *And all flesh died that moved upon the earth, both of bird, and of cattle, and of beast, and of every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth, and every man* (Gen. 7:21).
8) *And the waters prevailed upon the earth a hundred and fifty days* (Gen. 7:24).
9) We are informed that in this version *God remembers Noah and every living thing* and *God made a wind to pass over the earth, and the waters subsided* (Gen. 8:1).
10) The description of the ending of the rain is as follows: *The fountains also of the deep and the windows of heaven were stopped,* (Gen. 8:2) *and after the end of the hundred and fifty days the waters were abated* (Gen. 8:3a). *And the ark rested in the seventh month, on the seventeenth day of the month, upon the mountains of Ararat. And the waters decreased continually until the tenth month; in the tenth month, on the first day of the month, were the tops of the mountains seen* (Gen. 8:4-5).
11) In this version we find that Noah *sent forth a raven, which went forth to and fro, until the waters were dried up from off the earth* (Gen. 8:7).
12) This version differs from the "J" author in that God instructs them to leave the ark. *And it came to pass in the six hundredth and first year, in the first month, the first day of the month, the waters were dried up from off the earth; And in the second month, on the twenty seventh day of the month, was the earth dried. And God spoke to Noah, saying, Go out from the ark, you, and your wife, and your sons, and your sons' wives with you. Bring out with you every living thing that is with you, of all flesh, both of bird, and of cattle, and of every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth; that they may breed abundantly in the earth, and be fruitful, and multiply upon the earth* (Gen. 8:13a, 14-17).

3. The outcome of the flood in each source, especially as it affects the relationships between God and humanity.
"J" Author
1) It appears that the "J" author has Noah upon leaving the ark build an altar to God. He takes *of every clean beast and of every clean bird, and offers burnt offerings on the altar* (Gen. 8:20).
2) It is not until Noah burns the offerings that God appears in the story. We then learn that God smells the pleasing odor (anthropomorphism) and says in his heart

that he will never again curse the ground because of man since the *imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth.* God informs us that he will never again destroy every living thing (Gen. 8:21).
3) God promises that planting and harvest time, winter and summer, cold and heat, and day and night will continue (Gen. 8:22).
4) As we can see, the God in this version is one that likes to have sacrificial offerings made to him. He is pleased by them. This would lead one to assume that this God will always be pleased with sacrifices. This is how humans can please him.
5) God does not make a covenant with the people in this version, but rather a promise. The promise is to allow the world to continue in its seasons and also that he will not kill off every living thing again. Thus in this version we have a promise.
6) The God in this version does not seem to be as involved with the people as in the other version.

"P" Author
1) Noah is patient and has not made a move until God informs him to leave the ark (Gen. 8:14-19). Thus we see a relationship where God is the one who decides what the people and animals should be doing.
2) God blesses Noah and his sons and tells them to be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth (Gen. 9:1). This is an echo of Gen. 1, when God first created the world and all of the animals and humans. The relationship between God and the world is similar to the beginning of the world.
3) God informs humans that all of the animals, birds, and fish will now fear humans because they are now delivered to human's hand (Gen. 9:2). Every moving thing that lives is now available for food for the human's. In the original creation story, humans were not supposed to eat flesh, but now God has given them permission to do so. There is a caveat, they are not to eat flesh that still had its life in it, i.e. its blood (Gen. 9:3-4). God is now giving humans the power to rule over all of the life on the earth.
4) God informs them that if they are to kill another, that they are then to have their life end. We are reminded that human's are created in God's image (Gen. 9:5-6) and that they should be fruitful and multiply (Gen. 9:6-7). This is also an echo of Gen 1:27-28 when God, in the "P" version, first creates humans.
5) God then establishes a covenant with Noah and all of his seed after him as well as all of the animals, birds, and creatures of the earth (Gen. 9:8-10). The term covenant reminds one of the seen at Mt. Sinai where once again a covenant is established, this time with the Jewish people. A covenant implies something stronger than a promise.

6) The covenant is that all flesh will not be cut off any more by a flood (Gen. 9:11-12). This covenant is not only made with Noah and his family, but with all future generations.
7) As a reminder of the covenant, God places a rainbow in the sky. This rainbow is both a reminder to the animals and humans but also to God that whenever a cloud is in the sky, that there should not be a flood that will wipe all life off of the earth (Gen. 9:13-17).
8) Thus in this version, we find a contract made between God and all of the life on the earth that God will never create a flood to wipe out all life. There is a physical reminder created for both God and all life that this covenant exists.

4. The concerns of each source.
"J" Author
1) This author wanted to convey the story of the flood which was known by many of the different cultures in the region. (There is a Mesopotamian version of the flood found in the *Gilgamesh Epic* which is quite similar to the biblical version.) In addition to telling the story, he wanted to explain why the flood occurred, which was due to the *wickedness of man on the earth* (Gen. 6:5). In this version we find a God who *repents* that he created humans and the other living creatures (Gen. 6:6-7) and who decides to destroy his creation.
2) This author also seems to be focused on certain numbers, 7 and 40. There are seven clean pairs of animals and birds chosen to go onto the ark (Gen. 7:2-3); they are on the ark 7 days before the rains start (Gen. 7:4, 10); Noah waits 7 days before sending the dove out a second time (Gen. 8:10); after the dove appeared with the olive leaf, he waits 7 days before sending the dove again (Gen. 8:12). The 40 has to do with the number of days that the flood lasted. However, in other parts of the Bible we wander in the wilderness for 40 years, Moses is on the mountain with God for 40 days after the giving of the commandments at Mt. Sinai, Moses goes back up the mountain for another 40 days after the golden calf incident, Isaac is 40 years old when he takes Rebecca as a wife, Esau is 40 years old when he marries, the spies are in the land of Canaan for 40 days, etc.

"P" Author
1) The "P" author portrays a different God. This God is more involved with the flood incident. In this story the earth is corrupt and filled with violence (Gen. 6:11). God decides to destroy all the flesh on the earth.
2) The author is concerned with details and thus we are provided with specifications on the building of the ark (Gen. 6:14-16). We find a God who prescribes certain things that humans are supposed to fulfill. We are informed of

the age of Noah at the time of the flood, 600 years old (Gen. 7:6), as well as when he dies, 950 years old (Gen. 9:29). This attention to detail is very important to this author. We find this later on in the books of Exodus and Leviticus with all of the requirements which we are to fulfill.

5. The theological perspective and theological message that is conveyed by weaving them together.

"J" Author

1) This author wants to inform us that sacrifice is a very important aspect of the religion at that time. The people's relationship with their God was dependent on offering sacrifices to God. We find this with the number of animals chosen for the ark. There had to be 7 pairs of every clean animal and bird so that there would be enough animals for sacrifice after the flood (Gen. 7:2-3). We find that the God in this story does not pay much attention to the people and animals once he closes them in. It is not until after the flood, when Noah makes an offering to God, that God *smells the pleasing odor; and says in his heart, that he will not again curse the ground any more for man's sake* (Gen. 9:20-21).

2) This author portrays God as having anthropomorphic and anthropopathic qualities. These have been mentioned above.

"P" Author

1) This author does not believe in sacrificing outside of the Temple and thus we are not told to bring extra clean animals for sacrifice as in the "J" version. We are told to bring a male and female of each specie (Gen. 6:19).

2) This author also wants to convey to us that the people have a covenant with God. This is physically expressed as the rainbow in the sky. By using the term covenant, we are also reminded of the covenant with God that was established with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob as well as with the Israelites on Mt. Sinai after the Exodus from Egypt.

3) As discussed above, this God expects us to follow his guidelines and thus we are given exact descriptions on how to build the ark (Gen. 6:14-16). This is also what we are supposed to do with the mitzvot which are detailed in Exodus and Leviticus.

4) This God also remembers Noah, an echo of the Exodus story where God remembers the Israelites in Egypt (God heard their moaning, and God remembered His covenant with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob. God looked upon the Israelites, and God took notice of them (Exodus 2:24-25).

5) The God in this version is more of a transcendent controller of the universe.

Addendum
Genesis 7:8-9
I did not assign these verses to either author as I do not believe that they were written by either of them. Rather, I believe that these verses were written by the Redactor.

Unit 4 Visual Imagery

The Central Concept of the Lesson

This lesson will focus on Gerald Epstein's techniques of visualization through imagery. Participants will either collage or write about their experiences.

Goal: Participants will be able to personally experience the Biblical story with imagery and then through either collage or journaling depict the experience.

Objectives:

1. Participants will be able to summarize the story of *Lech Lecha* in Genesis.
2. Participants will be able to summarize the technique of creating visualizations through imagery.
3. Participants will be expressing themselves either through collage or journaling their personal experience of *Lech Lecha.*
4. Participants will be able to summarize some of the *midrashic* stories concerning Abraham's life prior to leaving his father Terah.

Texts:

Genesis 11:26-12:9
Healing Visualizations: Creating Health Through Imagery
Legends of the Jews

Materials

Poster board
Magazines
Scissors
Glue
Markers
Watercolors
Paper
Pencils and Pens

I. Visual Imagery

A. Mental imagery
   1. This technique involves having the mind think in pictures.
   2. It is a form of non-logical thinking.
   3. "Mental imagery is the thinking used for making contact with our inner subjective reality."[1]
   4. Daydreaming or night dreams is the language of imagery.
   5. "The ability to understand and communicate in the language of images probably precedes the ability to communicate with words."[2]

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[1]Gerald Epstein, M.D., *Healing Visualizations: Creating Health Through Imagery,* (New York: Banta Books, 1989). p. 3.

[2]Ibid., p. 4.

6. "Imagery provides a technique to generate new experiences. Instead of simply reacting to experiences, you create them -as you do in life when you intentionally set a new goal."[3]
7. "Imaging or doing imagery is a simple process. It means finding, discovering, or creating a mental picture, a mental form. This imagined but still real form has all the characteristics of any event, thing, or situation that we might see in everyday waking reality. The difference is that, unlike objects perceived when awake, they have no volume or mass. In short, they have no substance. Yet, they do have energy. We might think of these images as our mental children."[4]

B. Preparing the mind - There are 2 aspects to preparing our minds for imaginal healing. They are part of every imagery exercise. They are intention, or kavanah and quieting.[5]

1. Intention
   a. It is the active expression of our desires, channeled through our physiological systems. It often manifests itself as action, physical or mental.
   b. When we do an imaginary exercise, we always begin by defining and clarifying our intention - what we want to achieve in the exercise.
   c. When you tell yourself that you are going to accomplish a particular task, and when you are very clear about it, your success in using imagery will mount.
   d. Intention depends on will, which is simply the life force impulse that enables us to make choices.
   e. When we give our will a direction, then we have an intention. Intention is directed will, and it is essential to all self-healing work generated through imagination.
   f. By using the imagination, we direct the will inward to find new pathways for ourselves, to take us to better health and richer lives.
2. Quieting
   a. There are 2 sorts of quieting: external and internal.
   b. External quieting helps us to concentrate on the task of moving inward.
   c. The inner aspect of quieting is relaxation.
   d. Meditative or deep relaxation is not the appropriate type of inner relaxation. It fact, it might make you less alert or even sleepy.
   e. The focus of imagery is not to become relaxed but to image and remember. Attention, or heightened wakefulness, is the required state of the mind, and imagery activity itself creates heightened attention.

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[3]Ibid., p. 7.

[4]Ibid.,p. 13.

[5]Ibid., pp. 14-17.

C. Body Posture for Imaging -Pharaoh's Posture[6]

1. Sit in an upright, straight-backed chair that has armrests, with your back straight, your arms resting comfortably on the armrests and your hands open palms down or up as it suits you. Your feet should be flat on the floor. Neither your hands nor your feet should be crossed during the period of imaging, nor should they come into contact with any other part of your body. This arrangement of hands and feet is part of the technique of keeping our sensory awareness focused away from external stimuli.
2. A straight-backed chair is best because a straight spine permits a sense or awareness to infuse our attention. It also enhances your breathing; your lungs need this vertical posture in order to expand fully.

D. Breathing[7]

1. In order to enhance the presence of images, tell yourself to become quiet and relaxed (your intention). Breathe rhythmically, in through the nose and out through the mouth. The exhalations through the mouth should be longer and slower than the inhalations, which are normal, easy, without effort - that is not labored or exaggerated.
2. Breathing out longer than breathing in stimulates the major quieting nerve in the body, the vagus which originates at the base of the brain and sends branches to the lungs, heart and intestinal tract.
3. The exhalation is stressed over the inhalation because breathing to quiet the body begins with an out-breath, not an in-breath. The usual way of in-out breathing stimulates us by exciting our sympathetic or excitatory nervous system and the adrenal medulla, which secretes adrenaline. Out-breath breathing stimulates the parasympathetic nervous system and the vagus nerve which help the body quiet down and relax.
4. When you are comfortable with your breathing and feel ready to begin your imagery work, breathe out three times. Then begin your work.

E. Problems with imaging[8]

1. Not everyone images with actual pictures. Some may sense something auditory or somatic (bodily senses) or kinesthetic (body position), yet not see these images. Some people visualize in color while others in black and white.
2. Some people have the habit of verbalizing rather than visualizing, turning images quickly into words.
3. If these occur, consciously focus your mind on what you are seeing and you will be able to gently move from that mode into the connected visual image.

II. Visualization

A Explanation of process

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[6]Ibid., pp. 33-35.

[7]Ibid., pp. 35-36.

[8]Ibid., p. 37.

1. Explain that participants will first experience the visualization through the above process that was just discussed.
2. After the visualization is over they are free to choose whatever materials they are comfortable with to create a collage, painting, journal, etc. of their personal *Lech Lecha* experience. These materials will be set up all around the room for their easy access.

B Imagery experience

1. Instruct everyone to sit comfortably in ones' chair.
2. Have them close their eyes and begin with an out-breath. Instruct them on three out-breaths.
3. Read the *Lech Lecha* imagery very, slowly so that they have time to experience their own journey.
4. When you are done reading the imagery, have the participants open their eyes.

III. Art/Journal experience

A. Give the participants at least 1/2 hour to create their collage, painting, journal. etc.

B. Give each person the opportunity to discuss what their personal experience has been and to explain how they have depicted it in their artwork or their personal writing.

IV. Text

A. Read *Genesis* 11.26-12:9 together.

1. Discussion of the text.
    a. What do you think it was like for Abram to hear God speak to him?
    b. How do you think he felt about leaving his father's house?
    c. What do you think Abram, Sarai and Lot were thinking when they set out on their journey?
    d. How similar was your experience with the imagery?

B. Read Louis Ginzberg's *Legends of the Jews*

1. Have participants take turns reading some of the background material on Abraham before he left home.
2. Discussion of the text
    a. What do you think of the life that they created for him prior to leaving his home?
    b. How similar were your thoughts of his experience and what the *Legends* had to say'?

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of Canaan; but when they had come as far as Haran, they settled there. 32The days of Terah came to 205 years; and Terah died in Haran.

בֶּן־הָרָן בֶּן־בְּנוֹ וְאֵת שָׂרַי כַּלָּתוֹ אֵשֶׁת
אַבְרָם בְּנוֹ וַיֵּצְאוּ אִתָּם מֵאוּר כַּשְׂדִּים
לָלֶכֶת אַרְצָה כְּנַעַן וַיָּבֹאוּ עַד־חָרָן וַיֵּשְׁבוּ
שָׁם׃ 32 וַיִּהְיוּ יְמֵי־תֶרַח חָמֵשׁ שָׁנִים
וּמָאתַיִם שָׁנָה וַיָּמָת תֶּרַח בְּחָרָן׃ ס

12 LEKH LEKHA

The LORD said to Abram, "Go forth from your native land and from your father's house to the land that I will show you.

2I will make of you a great nation,
And I will bless you;
I will make your name great,
And you shall be a blessing.[a]
3I will bless those who bless you
And curse him that curses you;
And all the families of the earth
Shall bless themselves by you."

4Abram went forth as the LORD had commanded him, and Lot went with him. Abram was seventy-five years old when he left Haran. 5Abram took his wife Sarai and his brother's son Lot, and all the wealth that they had amassed, and the persons that they had acquired in Haran; and they set out for the land of Canaan. When they arrived in the land of Canaan, 6Abram passed through the land as far as the site of Shechem, at the terebinth of Moreh. The Canaanites were then in the land.

7The LORD appeared to Abram and said, "I will assign this land to your offspring." And he built an altar there to the LORD who had appeared to him. 8From there he moved on to the hill country east of Bethel and pitched his tent, with Bethel on the west and Ai on the east; and he built there an altar to the LORD and invoked the LORD by name. 9Then Abram journeyed by stages toward the Negeb.

יב לך לך

וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל־אַבְרָם לֶךְ־לְךָ
מֵאַרְצְךָ וּמִמּוֹלַדְתְּךָ וּמִבֵּית אָבִיךָ אֶל־
הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר אַרְאֶךָּ׃
2 וְאֶעֶשְׂךָ לְגוֹי גָּדוֹל
וַאֲבָרֶכְךָ
וַאֲגַדְּלָה שְׁמֶךָ
וֶהְיֵה בְּרָכָה׃
3 וַאֲבָרְכָה מְבָרְכֶיךָ
וּמְקַלֶּלְךָ אָאֹר
וְנִבְרְכוּ בְךָ
כֹּל מִשְׁפְּחֹת הָאֲדָמָה׃
4 וַיֵּלֶךְ אַבְרָם כַּאֲשֶׁר דִּבֶּר אֵלָיו יְהוָה וַיֵּלֶךְ
אִתּוֹ לוֹט וְאַבְרָם בֶּן־חָמֵשׁ שָׁנִים וְשִׁבְעִים
שָׁנָה בְּצֵאתוֹ מֵחָרָן׃ 5 וַיִּקַּח אַבְרָם אֶת־
שָׂרַי אִשְׁתּוֹ וְאֶת־לוֹט בֶּן־אָחִיו וְאֶת־כָּל־
רְכוּשָׁם אֲשֶׁר רָכָשׁוּ וְאֶת־הַנֶּפֶשׁ אֲשֶׁר־
עָשׂוּ בְחָרָן וַיֵּצְאוּ לָלֶכֶת אַרְצָה כְּנָעַן
וַיָּבֹאוּ אַרְצָה כְּנָעַן׃ 6 וַיַּעֲבֹר אַבְרָם בָּאָרֶץ
עַד מְקוֹם שְׁכֶם עַד אֵלוֹן מוֹרֶה וְהַכְּנַעֲנִי
אָז בָּאָרֶץ׃
7 וַיֵּרָא יְהוָה אֶל־אַבְרָם וַיֹּאמֶר לְזַרְעֲךָ
אֶתֵּן אֶת־הָאָרֶץ הַזֹּאת וַיִּבֶן שָׁם מִזְבֵּחַ
לַיהוָה הַנִּרְאֶה אֵלָיו׃ 8 וַיַּעְתֵּק מִשָּׁם
הָהָרָה מִקֶּדֶם לְבֵית־אֵל וַיֵּט אהלה אָהֳלָה
בֵּית־אֵל מִיָּם וְהָעַי מִקֶּדֶם וַיִּבֶן־שָׁם מִזְבֵּחַ
לַיהוָה וַיִּקְרָא בְּשֵׁם יְהוָה׃ 9 וַיִּסַּע אַבְרָם
הָלוֹךְ וְנָסוֹעַ הַנֶּגְבָּה׃ פ

a *I.e., a standard by which blessing is invoked; cf. v. 3 end.*

after the Flood. 11After the birth of[c] Arpachshad, Shem lived 500 years and begot sons and daughters.

12When Arpachshad had lived 35 years, he begot Shelah. 13After the birth of Shelah, Arpachshad lived 403 years and begot sons and daughters.

14When Shelah had lived 30 years, he begot Eber. 15After the birth of Eber, Shelah lived 403 years and begot sons and daughters.

16When Eber had lived 34 years, he begot Peleg. 17After the birth of Peleg, Eber lived 430 years and begot sons and daughters.

18When Peleg had lived 30 years, he begot Reu. 19After the birth of Reu, Peleg lived 209 years and begot sons and daughters.

20When Reu had lived 32 years, he begot Serug. 21After the birth of Serug, Reu lived 207 years and begot sons and daughters.

22When Serug had lived 30 years, he begot Nahor. 23After the birth of Nahor, Serug lived 200 years and begot sons and daughters.

24When Nahor had lived 29 years, he begot Terah. 25After the birth of Terah, Nahor lived 119 years and begot sons and daughters.

26When Terah had lived 70 years, he begot Abram, Nahor, and Haran. 27Now this is the line of Terah: Terah begot Abram, Nahor, and Haran; and Haran begot Lot. 28Haran died in the lifetime of his father Terah, in his native land, Ur of the Chaldeans. 29Abram and Nahor took to themselves wives, the name of Abram's wife being Sarai and that of Nahor's wife Milcah, the daughter of Haran, the father of Milcah and Iscah. 30Now Sarai was barren, she had no child.

31Terah took his son Abram, his grandson Lot the son of Haran, and his daughter-in-law Sarai, the wife of his son Abram, and they set out together from Ur of the Chaldeans for the land

וּבָנוֹת׃ ס 12 וְאַרְפַּכְשַׁד חַי חָמֵשׁ
וּשְׁלֹשִׁים שָׁנָה וַיּוֹלֶד אֶת־שָׁלַח׃ 13 וַיְחִי
אַרְפַּכְשַׁד אַחֲרֵי הוֹלִידוֹ אֶת־שֶׁלַח שָׁלֹשׁ
שָׁנִים וְאַרְבַּע מֵאוֹת שָׁנָה וַיּוֹלֶד בָּנִים
וּבָנוֹת׃ ס 14 וְשֶׁלַח חַי שְׁלֹשִׁים שָׁנָה
וַיּוֹלֶד אֶת־עֵבֶר׃ 15 וַיְחִי־שֶׁלַח אַחֲרֵי
הוֹלִידוֹ אֶת־עֵבֶר שָׁלֹשׁ שָׁנִים וְאַרְבַּע
מֵאוֹת שָׁנָה וַיּוֹלֶד בָּנִים וּבָנוֹת׃ ס
16 וַיְחִי־עֵבֶר אַרְבַּע וּשְׁלֹשִׁים שָׁנָה וַיּוֹלֶד
אֶת־פָּלֶג׃ 17 וַיְחִי־עֵבֶר אַחֲרֵי הוֹלִידוֹ אֶת־
פָּלֶג שְׁלֹשִׁים שָׁנָה וְאַרְבַּע מֵאוֹת שָׁנָה
וַיּוֹלֶד בָּנִים וּבָנוֹת׃ ס 18 וַיְחִי־פָלֶג
שְׁלֹשִׁים שָׁנָה וַיּוֹלֶד אֶת־רְעוּ׃ 19 וַיְחִי־פָלֶג
אַחֲרֵי הוֹלִידוֹ אֶת־רְעוּ תֵּשַׁע שָׁנִים
וּמָאתַיִם שָׁנָה וַיּוֹלֶד בָּנִים וּבָנוֹת׃ ס
20 וַיְחִי רְעוּ שְׁתַּיִם וּשְׁלֹשִׁים שָׁנָה וַיּוֹלֶד
אֶת־שְׂרוּג׃ 21 וַיְחִי רְעוּ אַחֲרֵי הוֹלִידוֹ
אֶת־שְׂרוּג שֶׁבַע שָׁנִים וּמָאתַיִם שָׁנָה
וַיּוֹלֶד בָּנִים וּבָנוֹת׃ ס 22 וַיְחִי שְׂרוּג
שְׁלֹשִׁים שָׁנָה וַיּוֹלֶד אֶת־נָחוֹר׃ 23 וַיְחִי
שְׂרוּג אַחֲרֵי הוֹלִידוֹ אֶת־נָחוֹר מָאתַיִם
שָׁנָה וַיּוֹלֶד בָּנִים וּבָנוֹת׃ ס 24 וַיְחִי נָחוֹר
תֵּשַׁע וְעֶשְׂרִים שָׁנָה וַיּוֹלֶד אֶת־תָּרַח׃
25 וַיְחִי נָחוֹר אַחֲרֵי הוֹלִידוֹ אֶת־תָּרַח
תְּשַׁע־עֶשְׂרֵה שָׁנָה וּמְאַת שָׁנָה וַיּוֹלֶד
בָּנִים וּבָנוֹת׃ ס 26 וַיְחִי־תֶרַח שִׁבְעִים
שָׁנָה וַיּוֹלֶד אֶת־אַבְרָם אֶת־נָחוֹר וְאֶת־
הָרָן׃ 27 וְאֵלֶּה תּוֹלְדֹת תֶּרַח תֶּרַח הוֹלִיד
אֶת־אַבְרָם אֶת־נָחוֹר וְאֶת־הָרָן וְהָרָן
הוֹלִיד אֶת־לוֹט׃ 28 וַיָּמָת הָרָן עַל־פְּנֵי
תֶּרַח אָבִיו בְּאֶרֶץ מוֹלַדְתּוֹ בְּאוּר כַּשְׂדִּים׃
29 וַיִּקַּח אַבְרָם וְנָחוֹר לָהֶם נָשִׁים שֵׁם
אֵשֶׁת־אַבְרָם שָׂרָי וְשֵׁם אֵשֶׁת־נָחוֹר מִלְכָּה
בַּת־הָרָן אֲבִי־מִלְכָּה וַאֲבִי יִסְכָּה׃ 30 וַתְּהִי
שָׂרַי עֲקָרָה אֵין לָהּ וָלָד׃
31 וַיִּקַּח תֶּרַח אֶת־אַבְרָם בְּנוֹ וְאֶת־לוֹט

c *Lit. "After he begot," and so throughout.*

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· V ·

Abraham

The Wicked Generations

TEN GENERATIONS there were from Noah to Abraham, to show how great is the clemency of God, for all the generations provoked His wrath, until Abraham our father came and received the reward of all of them. For the sake of Abraham God had shown himself long-suffering and patient during the lives of these ten generations. Yea, more, the world itself had been created for the sake of his merits. His advent had been made manifest to his ancestor Reu, who uttered the following prophecy at the birth of his son Serug: "From this child he shall be born in the fourth generation that shall set his dwelling over the highest, and he shall be called perfect and spotless, and shall be the father of nations, and his covenant shall not be dissolved, and his seed shall be multiplied forever."

It was, indeed, high time that the "friend of God" should make his appearance upon earth. The descendants of Noah were sinking from depravity to lower and lower depths of depravity. They were beginning to quarrel and slay, eat blood, build fortified cities and walls and towers, and set one man over the whole nation as king, and wage wars, people against people, and nations against nations, and cities against cities, and do all manner of evil, and acquire weapons, and teach warfare unto their children. And they began also to take captives and sell them as slaves. And they made unto themselves molten images, which they worshipped, each one the idol he had molten for himself, for the evil spirits under their leader Mastema led them astray into sin and uncleanness. For this reason Reu called his son Serug, because all mankind had turned aside unto sin and transgression. When he grew to manhood, the name was seen to have been chosen fittingly, for he, too, worshipped idols, and when he himself had a son, Nahor by name, he

taught him the arts of the Chaldees, how to be a soothsayer and practice magic according to signs in the heavens. When, in time, a son was born to Nahor, Mastema sent ravens and other birds to despoil the earth and rob them of the proceeds of their work. As soon as they had dropped the seed in the furrows, and before they could cover it over with earth, the birds picked it up from the surface of the ground, and Nahor called his son Terah, because the ravens and the other birds plagued men, devoured their seed, and reduced them to destitution.

The Birth of Abraham

TERAH married Emtelai, the daughter of Karnabo, and the offspring of their union was Abraham. His birth had been read in the stars by Nimrod, for this impious king was a cunning astrologer, and it was manifest to him that a man would be born in his day who would rise up against him and triumphantly give the lie to his religion. In his terror at the fate foretold him in the stars, he sent for his princes and governors, and asked them to advise him in the matter. They answered, and said: "Our unanimous advice is that thou shouldst build a great house, station a guard at the entrance thereof, and make known in the whole of thy realm that all pregnant women shall repair thither together with their midwives, who are to remain with them when they are delivered. When the days of a woman to be delivered are fulfilled, and the child is born, it shall be the duty of the midwife to kill it, if it be a boy. But if the child be a girl, it shall be kept alive, and the mother shall receive gifts and costly garments, and a herald shall proclaim, 'Thus is done unto the woman who bears a daughter!' "

The king was pleased with this counsel, and he had a proclamation published throughout his whole kingdom, summoning all the architects to build a great house for him, sixty ells high and eighty wide. After it was completed, he issued a second proclamation, summoning all pregnant women thither, and there they were to remain until their confinement. Officers were appointed to take the women to the house, and guards were stationed in it and about it, to prevent the women from escaping thence. He furthermore sent midwives to the house, and commanded them to slay the men children at their mothers' breasts. But if a woman bore a girl, she was to be arrayed in byssus, silk, and embroidered garments, and led forth from the house of detention amid great honors. No less than seventy thousand children were slaughtered thus. Then the angels appeared before God, and spoke, "Seest Thou not what he doth, yon sinner and blasphemer, Nimrod son of Canaan, who slays so many innocent babes that have done no harm?" God answered, and said: "Ye holy angels, I know it and I see it, for I neither slumber

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nor sleep. I behold and I know the secret things and the things that are revealed, and ye shall witness what I will do unto this sinner and blasphemer, for I will turn My hand against him to chastise him."

It was about this time that Terah espoused the mother of Abraham, and she was with child. When her body grew large at the end of three months of pregnancy, and her countenance became pale, Terah said unto her, "What ails thee, my wife, that thy countenance is so pale and thy body so swollen?" She answered, and said, "Every year I suffer with this malady." But Terah would not be put off thus. He insisted: "Show me thy body. It seems to me thou art big with child. If that be so, it behooves us not to violate the command of our god Nimrod." When he passed his hand over her body, there happened a miracle. The child rose until it lay beneath her breasts, and Terah could feel nothing with his hands. He said to his wife, "Thou didst speak truly," and naught became visible until the day of her delivery.

When her time approached, she left the city in great terror and wandered toward the desert, walking along the edge of a valley, until she happened across a cave. She entered this refuge, and on the next day she was seized with throes, and she gave birth to a son. The whole cave was filled with the light of the child's countenance as with the splendor of the sun, and the mother rejoiced exceedingly. The babe she bore was our father Abraham.

His mother lamented, and said to her son: "Alas that I bore thee at a time when Nimrod is king. For thy sake seventy thousand men children were slaughtered, and I am seized with terror on account of thee, that he hear of thy existence, and slay thee. Better thou shouldst perish here in this cave than my eye should behold thee dead at my breast." She took the garment in which she was clothed, and wrapped it about the boy. Then she abandoned him in the cave, saying, "May the Lord be with thee, may He not fail thee nor forsake thee."

The Babe Proclaims God

THUS Abraham was deserted in the cave, without a nurse, and he began to wail. God sent Gabriel down to give him milk to drink, and the angel made it to flow from the little finger of the baby's right hand, and he sucked at it until he was ten days old. Then he arose and walked about, and he left the cave, and went along the edge of the valley. When the sun sank, and the stars came forth, he said, "These are the gods!" But the dawn came, and the stars could be seen no longer, and then he said, "I will not pay worship to these, for they are no gods." Thereupon the sun came forth, and he spoke, "This is my god, him will I

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extol." But again the sun set, and he said, "He is no god," and beholding the moon, he called her his god to whom he would pay Divine homage. Then the moon was obscured, and he cried out: "This, too, is no god! There is One who sets them all in motion."

He was still communing with himself when the angel Gabriel approached him and met him with the greeting, "Peace be with thee," and Abraham returned, "With thee be peace," and asked, "Who art thou?" And Gabriel answered, and said, "I am the angel Gabriel, the messenger of God," and he led Abraham to a spring of water near by, and Abraham washed his face and his hands and feet, and he prayed to God, bowing down and prostrating himself.

Meantime the mother of Abraham thought of him in sorrow and tears, and she went forth from the city to seek him in the cave in which she had abandoned him. Not finding her son, she wept bitterly, and said, "Woe unto me that I bore thee but to become a prey of wild beasts, the bears and the lions and the wolves!" She went to the edge of the valley, and there she found her son. But she did not recognize him, for he had grown very large. She addressed the lad, "Peace be with thee!" and he returned, "With thee be peace!" and he continued, "Unto what purpose didst thou come to the desert?" She replied, "I went forth from the city to seek my son." Abraham questioned further, "Who brought thy son hither?" and the mother replied thereto: "I had become pregnant from my husband Terah, and when the days of my delivery were fulfilled, I was in anxiety about my son in my womb, lest our king come, the son of Canaan, and slay him as he had slain the seventy thousand other men children. Scarcely had I reached the cave in this valley when the throes of travailing seized me, and I bore a son, whom I left behind in the cave, and I went home again. Now I come to seek him, but I find him not."

Abraham then spoke, "As to this child thou tellest of, how old was it?"

The mother: "It was about twenty days old."

Abraham: "Is there a woman in the world who would forsake her new-born son in the desert, and come to seek him after twenty days?"

The mother: "Peradventure God will show Himself a merciful God!"

Abraham: "I am the son whom thou hast come to seek in this valley!"

The mother: "My son, how thou art grown! But twenty days old, and thou canst already walk, and talk with thy mouth!"

Abraham: "So it is, and thus, O my mother, it is made known unto thee that there is in the world a great, terrible, living, and ever-existing God, who doth see, but who cannot be seen. He is in the heavens above, and the whole earth is full of His glory."

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The mother: "My son, is there a God beside Nimrod?"

Abraham: "Yes, mother, the God of the heavens and the God of the earth, He is also the God of Nimrod son of Canaan. Go, therefore, and carry this message unto Nimrod."

The mother of Abraham returned to the city and told her husband Terah how she had found their son. Terah, who was a prince and a magnate in the house of the king, betook himself to the royal palace, and cast himself down before the king upon his face. It was the rule that one who prostrated himself before the king was not permitted to lift up his head until the king bade him lift it up. Nimrod gave permission to Terah to rise and state his request. Thereupon Terah related all that had happened with his wife and his son. When Nimrod heard his tale, abject fear seized upon him, and he asked his counsellors and princes what to do with the lad. They answered, and said: "Our king and our god! Wherefore art thou in fear by reason of a little child? There are myriads upon myriads of princes in thy realm, rulers of thousands, rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties, and rulers of tens, and overseers without number. Let the pettiest of the princes go and fetch the boy and put him in prison." But the king interposed, "Have ye ever seen a baby of twenty days walking with his feet, speaking with his mouth, and proclaiming with his tongue that there is a God in heaven, who is One, and none beside Him, who sees and is not seen?" All the assembled princes were horror-struck at these words.

At this time Satan in human form appeared, clad in black silk garb, and he cast himself down before the king. Nimrod said, "Raise thy head and state thy request." Satan asked the king: "Why art thou terrified, and why are ye all in fear on account of a little lad? I will counsel thee what thou shalt do: Open thy arsenal and give weapons unto all the princes, chiefs, and governors, and unto all the warriors, and send them to fetch him unto thy service and to be under thy dominion."

This advice given by Satan the king accepted and followed. He sent a great armed host to bring Abraham to him. When the boy saw the army approach him, he was sore afraid, and amid tears he implored God for help. In answer to his prayer, God sent the angel Gabriel to him, and he said: "Be not afraid and disquieted, for God is with thee. He will rescue thee out of the hands of all thine adversaries." God commanded Gabriel to put thick, dark clouds between Abraham and his assailants. Dismayed by the heavy clouds, they fled, returning to Nimrod, their king, and they said to him, "Let us depart and leave this realm," and the king gave money unto all his princes and his servants, and together with the king they departed and journeyed to Babylon.

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Abraham's First Appearance in Public

NOW Abraham, at the command of God, was ordered by the angel Gabriel to follow Nimrod to Babylon. He objected that he was in no wise equipped to undertake a campaign against the king, but Gabriel calmed him with the words: "Thou needest no provision for the way, no horse to ride upon, no warriors to carry on war with Nimrod, no chariots, nor riders. Do thou but sit thyself upon my shoulder, and I shall bear thee to Babylon."

Abraham did as he was bidden, and in the twinkling of an eye he found himself before the gates of the city of Babylon. At the behest of the angel, he entered the city, and he called unto the dwellers therein with a loud voice: "The Eternal, He is the One Only God, and there is none beside. He is the God of the heavens, and the God of the gods, and the God of Nimrod. Acknowledge this as the truth, all ye men, women, and children. Acknowledge also that I am Abraham His servant, the trusted steward of His house."

Abraham met his parents in Babylon, and also he saw the angel Gabriel, who bade him proclaim the true faith to his father and his mother. Therefore Abraham spake to them, and said: "Ye serve a man of your own kind, and you pay worship to an image of Nimrod. Know ye not that it has a mouth, but it speaks not; an eye, but it sees not; an ear, but it hears not; nor does it walk upon its feet, and there is no profit in it, either unto itself or unto others?"

When Terah heard these words, he persuaded Abraham to follow him into the house, where his son told him all that had happened—how in one day he had completed a forty days' journey. Terah thereupon went to Nimrod and reported to him that his son Abraham had suddenly appeared in Babylon. The king sent for Abraham, and he came before him with his father. Abraham passed the magnates and the dignitaries until he reached the royal throne, upon which he seized hold, shaking it and crying out with a loud voice: "O Nimrod, thou contemptible wretch, that deniest the essence of faith, that deniest the living and immutable God, and Abraham His servant, the trusted steward of His house. Acknowledge Him, and repeat after me the words: The Eternal is God, the Only One, and there is none beside; He is incorporeal, living, ever-existing; He slumbers not and sleeps not, who hath created the world that men might believe in Him. And confess also concerning me, and say that I am the servant of God and the trusted steward of His house."

While Abraham proclaimed this with a loud voice, the idols fell upon their faces, and with them also King Nimrod. For a space of two hours

and a half the king lay lifeless, and when his soul returned upon him, he spoke and said, "Is it thy voice, O Abraham, or the voice of thy God?" And Abraham answered, and said, "This voice is the voice of the least of all creatures called into existence by God." Thereupon Nimrod said, "Verily, the God of Abraham is a great and powerful God, the King of all kings," and he commanded Terah to take his son and remove him, and return again unto his own city, and father and son did as the king had ordered.

The Preacher of the True Faith

WHEN Abraham attained the age of twenty years, his father Terah fell ill. He spoke as follows to his sons Haran and Abraham, "I adjure you by your lives, my sons, sell these two idols for me, for I have not enough money to meet our expenses." Haran executed the wish of his father, but if any one accosted Abraham, to buy an idol from him, and asked him the price, he would answer, "Three manehs," and then question in turn, "How old art thou?" "Thirty years," the reply would be. "Thou art thirty years of age, and yet thou wouldst worship this idol which I made but to-day?" The man would depart and go his way, and another would approach Abraham, and ask, "How much is this idol?" and "Five manehs" would be the reply, and again Abraham would put the question, "How old art thou?"—"Fifty years."—"And dost thou who art fifty years of age bow down before this idol which was made but to-day?" Thereupon the man would depart and go his way. Abraham then took two idols, put a rope about their necks, and, with their faces turned downward, he dragged them along the ground, crying aloud all the time: "Who will buy an idol wherein there is no profit, either unto itself or unto him that buys it in order to worship it? It has a mouth, but it speaketh not; eyes, but it seeth not; feet, but it walketh not; ears, but it heareth not."

The people who heard Abraham were amazed exceedingly at his words. As he went through the streets, he met an old woman who approached him with the purpose of buying an idol, good and big, to be worshipped and loved. "Old woman, old woman," said Abraham, "I know no profit therein, either in the big ones or in the little ones, either unto themselves or unto others. And," he continued to speak to her, "what has become of the big image thou didst buy from my brother Haran, to worship it?" "Thieves," she replied, "came in the night and stole it, while I was still at the bath." "If it be thus," Abraham went on questioning her, "how canst thou pay homage to an idol that cannot save itself from thieves, let alone save others, like thyself, thou silly

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old woman, out of misfortune? How is it possible for thee to say that the image thou worshippest is a god? If it be a god, why did it not save itself out of the hands of those thieves? Nay, in the idol there is no profit, either unto itself or unto him that adores it."

The old woman rejoined, "If what thou sayest be true, whom shall I serve?" "Serve the God of all gods," returned Abraham, "the Lord of lords, who hath created heaven and earth, the sea and all therein—the God of Nimrod and the God of Terah, the God of the east, the west, the south, and the north. Who is Nimrod, the dog, who calleth himself a god, that worship be offered unto him?"

Abraham succeeded in opening the eyes of the old woman, and she became a zealous missionary for the true God. When she discovered the thieves who had carried off her idol, and they restored it to her, she broke it in pieces with a stone, and as she wended her way through the streets, she cried aloud, "Who would save his soul from destruction, and be prosperous in all his doings, let him serve the God of Abraham." Thus she converted many men and women to the true belief.

Rumors of the words and deeds of the old woman reached the king, and he sent for her. When she appeared before him, he rebuked her harshly, asking her how she dared serve any god but himself. The old woman replied: "Thou art a liar, thou deniest the essence of faith, the One Only God, beside whom there is no other god. Thou livest upon His bounty, but thou payest worship to another, and thou dost repudiate Him, and His teachings, and Abraham His servant."

The old woman had to pay for her zeal for the faith with her life. Nevertheless great fear and terror took possession of Nimrod, because the people became more and more attached to the teachings of Abraham, and he knew not how to deal with the man who was undermining the old faith. At the advice of his princes, he arranged a seven days' festival, at which all the people were bidden to appear in their robes of state, their gold and silver apparel. By such display of wealth and power he expected to intimidate Abraham and bring him back to the faith of the king. Through his father Terah, Nimrod invited Abraham to come before him, that he might have the opportunity of seeing his greatness and wealth, and the glory of his dominion, and the multitude of his princes and attendants. But Abraham refused to appear before the king. On the other hand, he granted his fathers request that in his absence he sit by his idols and the king's, and take care of them.

Alone with the idols, and while he repeated the words, "The Eternal He is God, the Eternal He is God!" he struck the king's idols from their thrones, and began to belabor them with an axe. With the biggest he started, and with the smallest he ended. He hacked off the feet

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of one, and the other he beheaded. This one had his eyes struck out, the other had his hands crushed. After all were mutilated, he went away, having first put the axe into the hand of the largest idol.

The feast ended, the king returned, and when he saw all his idols shivered in pieces, he inquired who had perpetrated the mischief. Abraham was named as the one who had been guilty of the outrage, and the king summoned him and questioned him as to his motive for the deed. Abraham replied: "I did not do it; it was the largest of the idols who shattered all the rest. Seest thou not that he still has the axe in his hand? And if thou wilt not believe my words, ask him and he will tell thee."

In the Fiery Furnace

NOW THE KING was exceedingly wroth at Abraham, and ordered him to be cast into prison, where he commanded the warden not to give him bread and water. But God hearkened unto the prayer of Abraham, and sent Gabriel to him in his dungeon. For a year the angel dwelt with him, and provided him with all sorts of food, and a spring of fresh water welled up before him, and he drank of it. At the end of a year, the magnates of the realm presented themselves before the king, and advised him to cast Abraham into the fire, that the people might believe in Nimrod forever. Thereupon the king issued a decree that all the subjects of the king in all his provinces, men and women, young and old, should bring wood within forty days, and he caused it to be thrown into a great furnace and set afire. The flames shot up to the skies, and the people were sore afraid of the fire. Now the warden of the prison was ordered to bring Abraham forth and cast him in the flames. The warden reminded the king that Abraham had not had food or drink a whole year, and therefore must be dead, but Nimrod nevertheless desired him to step in front of the prison and call his name. If he made reply, he was to be hauled out to the pyre. If he had perished, his remains were to receive burial, and his memory was to be wiped out henceforth.

Greatly amazed the warden was when his cry, "Abraham, art thou alive?" was answered with "I am living." He questioned further, "Who has been bringing thee food and drink all these many days?" and Abraham replied: "Food and drink have been bestowed upon me by Him who is over all things, the God of all gods and the Lord of all lords, who alone doeth wonders, He who is the God of Nimrod and the God of Terah and the God of the whole world. He dispenseth food and drink unto all beings. He sees, but He cannot be seen, He is in the heavens above, and He is present in all places, for He Himself superviseth all things and provideth for all."

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The miraculous rescue of Abraham from death by starvation and thirst convinced the prison-keeper of the truth of God and His prophet Abraham, and he acknowledged his belief in both publicly. The king's threat of death unless he recanted could not turn him away from his new and true faith. When the hangman raised his sword and set it at his throat to kill him, he exclaimed, "The Eternal He is God, the God of the whole world as well as of the blasphemer Nimrod." But the sword could not cut his flesh. The harder it was pressed against his throat, the more it broke into pieces.

Nimrod, however, was not to be turned aside from his purpose, to make Abraham suffer death by fire. One of the princes was dispatched to fetch him forth. But scarcely did the messenger set about the task of throwing him into the fire, when the flame leapt forth from the furnace and consumed him. Many more attempts were made to cast Abraham into the furnace, but always with the same success—whoever seized him to pitch him in was himself burnt, and a large number lost their lives. Satan appeared in human shape, and advised the king to place Abraham in a catapult and sling him into the fire. Thus no one would be required to come near the flame. Satan himself constructed the catapult. Having proved it fit three times by means of stones put in the machine, they bound Abraham, hand and foot, and were about to consign him to the flames. At that moment Satan, still disguised in human shape, approached Abraham, and said, "If thou desirest to deliver thyself from the fire of Nimrod, bow down before him and believe in him." But Abraham rejected the tempter with the words, "May the Eternal rebuke thee, thou vile, contemptible, accursed blasphemer!" and Satan departed from him.

Then the mother of Abraham came to him and implored him to pay homage to Nimrod and escape the impending misfortune. But he said to her: "O mother, water can extinguish Nimrod's fire, but the fire of God will not die out for evermore. Water cannot quench it." When his mother heard these words, she spake, "May the God whom thou servest rescue thee from the fire of Nimrod!"

Abraham was finally placed in the catapult, and he raised his eyes heavenward, and spoke, "O Lord my God, Thou seest what this sinner purposes to do unto me!" His confidence in God was unshakable. When the angels received the Divine permission to save him, and Gabriel approached him, and asked, "Abraham, shall I save thee from the fire?" he replied, "God in whom I trust, the God of heaven and earth, will rescue me," and God, seeing the submissive spirit of Abraham, commanded the fire, "Cool off and bring tranquillity to my servant Abraham."

No water was needed to extinguish the fire. The logs burst into buds,

and all the different kinds of wood put forth fruit, each tree bearing its own kind. The furnace was transformed into a royal pleasance, and the angels sat therein with Abraham. When the king saw the miracle, he said: "Great witchcraft! Thou makest it known that fire hath no power over thee, and at the same time thou showest thyself unto the people sitting in a pleasure garden." But the princes of Nimrod interposed all with one voice, "Nay, our lord, this is not witchcraft, it is the power of the great God, the God of Abraham, beside whom there is no other god, and we acknowledge that He is God, and Abraham is His servant." All the princes and all the people believed in God at this hour, in the Eternal, the God of Abraham, and they all cried out, "The Lord He is God in heaven above and upon the earth beneath; there is none else."

Abraham was the superior, not only of the impious king Nimrod and his attendants, but also of the pious men of his time, Noah, Shem, Eber, and Asshur. Noah gave himself no concern whatsoever in the matter of spreading the pure faith in God. He took an interest in planting his vineyard, and was immersed in material pleasures. Shem and Eber kept in hiding, and as for Asshur, he said, "How can I live among such sinners?" and departed out of the land. The only one who remained unshaken was Abraham. "I will not forsake God," he said, and therefore God did not forsake him, who had hearkened neither unto his father nor unto his mother.

The miraculous deliverance of Abraham from the fiery furnace, together with his later fortunes, was the fulfilment and explanation of what his father Terah had read in the stars. He had seen the star of Haran consumed by fire, and at the same time fill and rule the whole world. The meaning was plain now. Haran was irresolute in his faith, he could not decide whether to adhere to Abraham or the idolaters. When it befell that those who would not serve idols were cast into the fiery furnace, Haran reasoned in this manner: "Abraham, being my elder, will be called upon before me. If he comes forth out of the fiery trial triumphant, I will declare my allegiance to him; otherwise I will take sides against him." After God Himself had rescued Abraham from death, and Haran's turn came to make his confession of faith, he announced his adherence to Abraham. But scarcely had he come near the furnace, when he was seized by the flames and consumed, because he was lacking in firm faith in God. Terah had read the stars well, it now appeared: Haran was burnt, and his daughter Sarah became the wife of Abraham, whose descendants fill the earth. In another way the death of Haran was noteworthy. It was the first instance, since the creation of the world, of a son's dying while his father was still alive.

The king, the princes, and all the people, who had been witnesses

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of the wonders done for Abraham, came to him, and prostrated themselves before him. But Abraham said: "Do not bow down before me, but before God, the Master of the universe, who hath created you. Serve Him and walk in His ways, for He it was who delivered me from the flames, and He it is who hath created the soul and the spirit of every human being, who formeth man in the womb of his mother, and bringeth him into the world. He saveth from all sickness those who put their trust in Him."

The king then dismissed Abraham, after loading him down with an abundance of precious gifts, among them two slaves who had been raised in the royal palace. 'Ogi was the name of the one, Eliezer the name of the other. The princes followed the example of the king, and they gave him. silver, and gold, and gems. But all these gifts did not rejoice the heart of Abraham so much as the three hundred followers that joined him and became adherents of his religion.

Abraham Emigrates to Haran

FOR A PERIOD of two years Abraham could devote himself undisturbed to his chosen task of turning the hearts of men to God and His teachings. In his pious undertaking he was aided by his wife Sarah, whom he had married in the meantime. While he exhorted the men and sought to convert them, Sarah addressed herself to the women. She was a helpmeet worthy of Abraham. Indeed, in prophetical powers she ranked higher than her husband. She was sometimes called Iscah, "the seer," on that account.

At the expiration of two years it happened that Nimrod dreamed a dream. In his dream he found himself with his army near the fiery furnace in the valley into which Abraham had been cast. A man resembling Abraham stepped out of the furnace, and he ran after the king with drawn sword, the king fleeing before him in terror. While running, the pursuer threw an egg at Nimrod's head, and a mighty stream issued therefrom, wherein the king's whole host was drowned. The king alone survived, with three men. When Nimrod examined his companions, he observed that they wore royal attire, and in form and stature they resembled himself. The stream changed back into an egg again, and a little chick broke forth from it, and it flew up, settled upon the head of the king, and put out one of his eyes.

The king was confounded in his sleep, and when he awoke, his heart beat like a trip-hammer, and his fear was exceeding great. In the morning, when he arose, he sent and called for his wise men and his magicians, and told them his dream. One of his wise men, Anoko by name, stood up, and said: "Know, O king, this dream points to the misfor-

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tune which Abraham and his descendants will bring upon thee. A time will come when he and his followers will make war upon thy army, and they will annihilate it. Thou and the three kings, thy allies, will be the only ones to escape death. But later thou wilt lose thy life at the hands of one of the descendants of Abraham. Consider, O king, that thy wise men read this fate of thine in the stars, fifty-two years ago, at the birth of Abraham. As long as Abraham liveth upon the ground, thou shalt not be established, nor thy kingdom." Nimrod took Anoko's words to heart, and dispatched some of his servants to seize Abraham and kill him. It happened that Eliezer, the slave whom Abraham had received as a present from Nimrod, was at that time at the royal court. With great haste he sped to Abraham to induce him to flee before the king's bailiffs. His master accepted his advice, and took refuge in the house of Noah and Shem, where he lay in hiding a whole month. The king's officers reported that despite zealous efforts Abraham was nowhere to be found. Thenceforth the king did not concern himself about Abraham.

When Terah visited his son in his hiding-place, Abraham proposed that they leave the land and take up their abode in Canaan, in order to escape the pursuit of Nimrod. He said: "Consider that it was not for thy sake that Nimrod overloaded thee with honors, but for his own profit. Though he continue to confer the greatest of benefactions upon thee, what are they but earthly vanity? for riches and possessions profit not in the day of wrath and fury. Hearken unto my voice, O my father, let us depart for the land of Canaan, and serve the God that hath created thee, that it may be well with thee."

Noah and Shem aided and abetted the efforts of Abraham to persuade Terah, whereupon Terah consented to leave his country, and he, and Abraham, and Lot, the son of Haran, departed for Haran with their households. They found the land pleasant, and also the inhabitants thereof, who readily yielded to the influence of Abraham's humane spirit and his piety. Many of them obeyed his precepts and became Godfearing and good.

Terah's resolve to quit his native land for the sake of Abraham and take up his abode in strange parts, and his impulse to do it before even the Divine call visited Abraham himself—this the Lord accounted a great merit unto Terah, and he was permitted to see his son Abraham rule as king over the whole world. For when the miracle happened, and Isaac was born unto his aged parents, the whole world repaired to Abraham and Sarah, and demanded to know what they had done that so great a thing should be accomplished for them. Abraham told them all that had happened between Nimrod and himself, how he had been ready to be burnt for the glory of God, and how the Lord had rescued

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him from the flames. In token of their admiration for Abraham and his teachings, they appointed him to be their king, and in commemoration of Isaac's wondrous birth, the money coined by Abraham bore the figures of an aged husband and wife on the obverse side, and of a young man and his wife on the reverse side, for Abraham and Sarah both were rejuvenated at the birth of Isaac, Abraham's white hair turned black, and the lines in Sarah's face were smoothed out.

For many years Terah continued to live a witness of his son's glory, for his death did not occur until Isaac was a youth of thirty-five. And a still greater reward waited upon his good deed. God accepted his repentance, and when he departed this life, he entered into Paradise, and not into hell, though he had passed the larger number of his days in sin.

His Sojourn in Egypt

SCARCELY had Abraham established himself in Canaan, when a devastating famine broke out—one of the ten God-appointed famines for the chastisement of men. The first of them came in the time of Adam, when God cursed the ground for his sake; the second was this one in the time of Abraham; the third compelled Isaac to take up his abode among the Philistines; the ravages of the fourth drove the sons of Jacob into Egypt to buy grain for food; the fifth came in the time of the Judges, when Elimelech and his family had to seek refuge in the land of Moab; the sixth occurred during the reign of David, and it lasted three years; the seventh happened in the day of Elijah, who had sworn that neither rain nor dew should fall upon the earth; the eighth was the one in the time of Elisha, when an ass's head was sold for fourscore pieces of silver; the ninth is the famine that comes upon men piecemeal, from time to time; and the tenth will scourge men before the advent of Messiah, and this last will be "not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the Lord."

The famine in the time of Abraham prevailed only in Canaan, and it had been inflicted upon the land in order to test his faith. He stood this second temptation as he had the first. He murmured not, and he showed no sign of impatience toward God, who had bidden him shortly before to abandon his native land for a land of starvation. The famine compelled him to leave Canaan for a time, and he repaired to Egypt, to become acquainted there with the wisdom of the priests and, if necessary, give them instruction in the truth.

On this journey from Canaan to Egypt, Abraham first observed the beauty of Sarah. Chaste as he was, he had never before looked at her, but now, when they were wading through a stream, he saw the reflec-

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Unit 5 Form Criticism

The Central Concept of the Lesson

This lesson will focus on the concept of genre in Biblical analysis. We will utilize Herman Gunkel's theory of Form Criticism as we explore this methodology.

Goal: Participants will be able to describe the three "wife-as-sister" stories and to analyze the Biblical text with Form Criticism as the methodology.

Objectives:
1. Participants will be able to define Hermann Gunkel's theory of Form Criticism.
2. Participants will be able to summarize the three "wife-as-sister"" stories found in the Book of Genesis.
3. Participants will be able to demonstrate how the second Abraham/Sarah "wife-as-sister" story is an interpretative explanation of the missing information contained in the first story.
4. Participants will be able to summarize the three "wife-as-sister" stories and list the authors as identified by the scholars of the Documentary Hypothesis.
5. Participants will learn that our patriarchs did not always exhibit traits which would be tolerated in today's world and they will be able to list some of the things that Abraham and Isaac did to their wives which one would find intolerable in today's society.
6. Participants will be able to summarize some of the ways that the "wife-as-sister" stories represent the trickster genre.

Texts:
Genesis 12
Genesis 20
Genesis 26:1-16
Casey Jones song sheets
Genesis: Translated and Interpreted by Herman Gunkel
An Introduction to Old Testament Study by John H. Hayes
Underdogs and Tricksters by Susan Niditch
The Genesis of Ethics by Burton L. Visotzky

I. Introduction to Form Criticism

A. Hermann Gunkel *(1862-1932)*

1. He felt that the Documentary Hypothesis needed some finer tuning which lead to his theory of looking at different genres.
2. He called his methodology literary history and genre research.
    a. His overall goal "was the desire to understand and appreciate the literature of ancient Israel in its totality, in its functional relationship to the whole of the people's life and history."[1]

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[1] John H. Hayes, *An Introduction to Old Testament Study*, (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1979), p. 127.

3. He believed that one needed to determine the literary types of literature in the Old Testament.
4. He defined these literary types as genre. Their characteristics are:[2]
    a. A common store of thoughts and moods, which is carefully transmitted from generation to generation, despite the sundry changes in the customary spiritual quality that can be carried out at the hands of outstanding individual authors.
    b. A traditional linguistic form, i.e., definite phrases, sentence structures, images, and so forth; that is the customary form which usually preserves the thoughts and can endure sometimes for many centuries; on this linguistic form we lay a special value because it is just this which is the easiest to recognize.
    c. A third characteristic of genre is a definite *Sitz im Leben* [social context within which literary genres originated and were employed] of the people in which it originally had its special place, out of which just these thoughts and their forms of expression have arisen and in which they are therefore also to be understood
5. Gunkel believed that it was "only when we have all three criteria preserved together, only where we can ascertain that definite thoughts in a definite form on a definite occasion were expressed have we the right to speak of a genre."
6. He set up criteria to distinguish the difference between legend and history.[3]
    a. Mode of transmission: legends were originally transmitted in oral tradition, history in writing.
    b. Subject matter: legends deal with things that interest common people and with private and family relations while history deals with public occurrences and matters of political importance.
        1) "History would be expected to tell how and for what reasons David succeeded in delivering Israel from the Philistines; legend prefers to tell how the boy David once slew a Philistine giant."
    c. Sources: legend depends upon tradition and imagination while history relies upon eyewitnesses and records.
    d. Type of action narrated: legends frequently report things that are incredible "violations of probability and even of possibility," and involve the direct action of God or gods whereas history deals with the credible.
    e. Style and intent: history is prosaic and seeks to inform while legend is poetic and aims to please, to elevate to inspire.
7. The most important of Gunkel's genre characteristics are:[4]

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[2] Ibid., pp. 127-128.
[3] Ibid., pp. 130-131.
[4] Ibid., pp. 132-133.

a. Law of opening and closing - The legend does not begin or end abruptly. It moves from calm to excitement and returns to calm.
b. Law of repetition - Repetition provides emphasis, builds tension, and fills out the narrative.
c. Law of three - Storytellers generally work with three as the maximum number of characters and delight in a threefold repetition of events.
d. Law of two to a scene - Legends are always polarized and this is reflected in the characterizations and descriptions. Generally there are no more than two characters, often in contrast, in a single scene.
e. Law of the twin and contrasts - Narrators sometimes use twins or two persons, frequently depicting the characters in sharp contrast.
f. Law of schematization - Characters appear in a certain order and the legend follows certain formulas and structures: attributes expressed in action, only essentials are narrated, and the narrative is single-stranded, refusing to go back in order to fill in missing details.
g. Law of one or more major scenes - In the main scene(s), the actors confront one another in sculptured situations.
h. Law of logic - Themes presented must exert an influence on the plot. There is a balance of the parts, the absence of superfluous detail, the succession of scenes, and that the remarks which the narrator does introduce are an essential part of the narrative.
i. Law of unity of plot - Loose organization and uncertain action are anathema to the legend and are signs of literary works. The legend relies upon clearness in which the elements are easily grasped and the relation of which to one another is perfectly plain.
j. Law of concentration on a leading character - In a legend, generally one character occupies the central interest of the story.

8. Gunkel divided legends into 2 groups: mythical legends about the origin of the world and its beginnings and legends about the patriarchs of Israel.[5]
a. He divided the patriarchal legends into historical, ethnographic, and etiological legends.
b. Historical legends reflect some historical occurrence like Abraham's treaty with Abimelech (Gen. 2 1:22-34).
c. Etiological legends tell a fictitious story in order to answer the questions of "why" and "how". They seek to explain certain circumstances in the life of people. Example: Why the children of Lot dwell in the east.
d. Etymological etiologies explain the name of something: why Jacob is called "heel holder" (Gen. 25:26).

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[5] Ibid., pp. 134-135.

e. Ceremonial or cultic legends tell of the origin of cult places and practices: Why does one sacrifice a ram instead of a child? (Gen. 22).

f. Geological etiologies explain the uniqueness of a locality: why is the Dead Sea region so desolate? (Gen. 19).

B. Susan Niditch

1. In her book *Underdogs and Tricksters: A Prelude to Biblical Folklore* she describes the underdog tales.[6]
2. The underdog is the poor relative, the youngest son, the exile, the ex-prince, the soldier of a defeated army – the person, in short, who is least likely to succeed and yet does. The underdog evokes our sympathies; we root for underdogs because of the underdog aspect of our lives, our insecurities real or imagined, and when they succeed we succeed. Underdogs make their way through native wisdom or physical prowess, often with the help of an agent, human or divine.
3. The trickster is a subtype of the underdog who brings about change in a situation via trickery. They never gain full control of the situation around them and often escape difficulties in a less than noble way. Their tale does not end with unequivocal success, but they survive to trick again.
4. Trickster narratives help us to cope with insurmountable and uncontrollable forces in our own lives, personifying and in a sense containing the chaos that always threatens.
5. The underdog and trickster held a special appeal for the Israelite composers who shaped the tales of their ancestral heroes; for throughout its history Israel has held a peculiar self-image as the underdog and the trickster. Examples of this are: Jacob/Rebecca and Esau, Judah and Tamar, Rachel/Leah and Laban.

II. Casey Jones Exercise

A. Have students break up into groups of two or three.

B. Give each group the Casey Jones songs and see if they can put them in the proper order of when the first song was written.

C. This exercise will help participants understand that a tale may change over time.

III. Texts – Genesis 12, 20, 26:1-16

A. Read *Genesis* 12 together

1. Discussion of the text.
   a. Why did they leave the land for Egypt?
   b. Why did Abraham ask Sarah to state that she was his sister?
   c. A discussion of how people feel Sarah must have felt.

B. Read *Genesis* 20 together.

1. Discussion of the text.

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[6] Susan Niditch, *Underdogs and Tricksters,* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1987), p. xi.

a. Why did Abraham feel he had to have Sarah say she was his sister.
b. Discuss the similarities and differences between the two stories.
c. Explain how some scholars believe that this version of the story is a way for the author to explain Abraham's actions in the previous version of this story.

C. Read *Genesis* 26:1-16 together.
   1. Discussion of the text.
      a. Why did Isaac and Rebecca leave the land?
      b. Discuss the similarities and differences with Abraham and Sarah's version of this story.
         1) Same ruler in both stories.
         2) Rebecca is never taken into Abimelech's home.
         3) They are not asked to leave the land at this point.

D. Discuss how Form Critics such as Gunkel view these texts.
   1. Discuss the use of genre and the idea that these may have been different versions of the same story that evolved over time.
   2. Use Gunkel's commentary to discuss each text.
   3. Have the participants identify the multiple authors (if there are multiple authors) in these three different texts.

E. Discuss the similarity in the promise given by God to each of the patriarchs prior to their leaving.

F. Discuss their reasons for leaving and their faith in God's promise.

G. Discuss the issue of deception in these texts.
   1. Discuss Susan Niditch's concept of the trickster and how she sees these stories as a way for the patriarch to earn some extra money from these rulers by saying that his wife was his sister.
   2. Provide the participants with Burton Visotzky's discussion of these texts in his book *The Genesis of Ethics*. Discuss how it relates to deception today.

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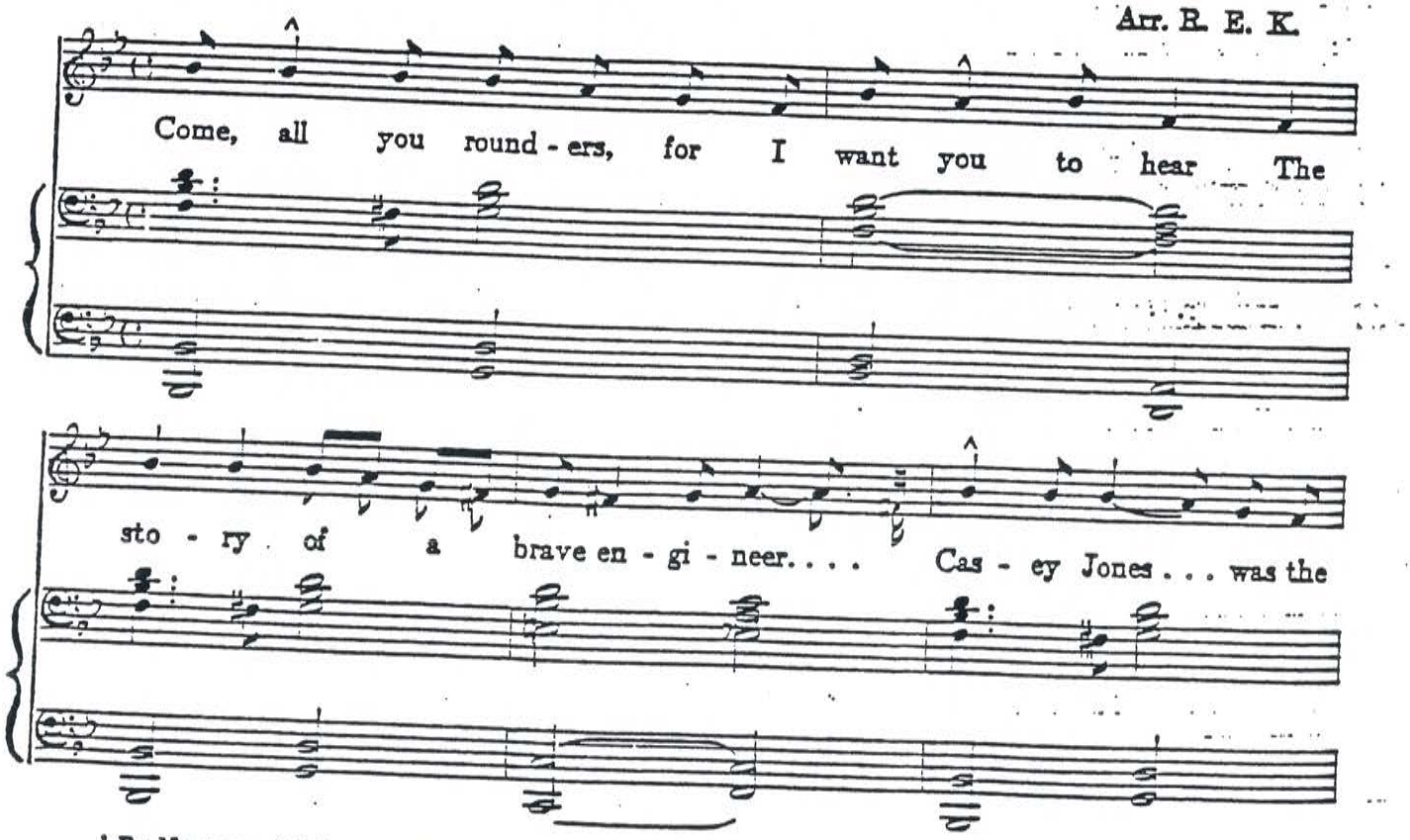
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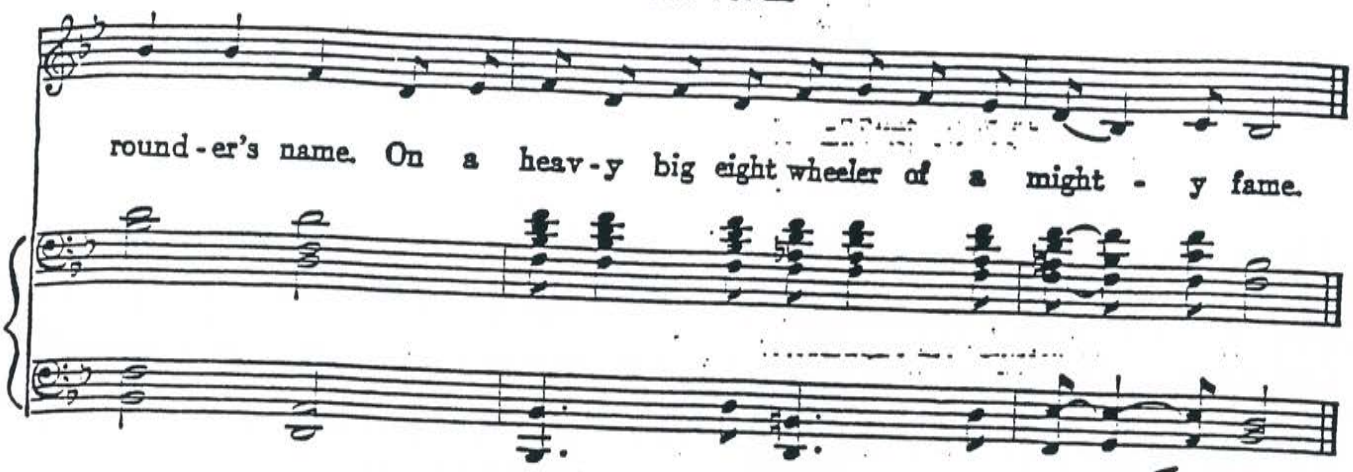
CASEY JONES[1]

At Dodge City, Kansas, in the Santa Fe railway station grass and flower plot, stands a plain memorial, a wooden post painted white with the reminder in black letters: Lest We Forget. Fastened to the post is an old time, cast-iron Link-and-Pin, the slaughterer, the crepe hanger, the maker of one-armed men peddling lead pencils on payday night, the predecessor of the beneficent Safety Coupler. . . . The laughter of the railroad man at death and mutilation runs through many of his songs. The promise of a wooden kimono, a six foot bungalow, is with him on every trip whether he's on a regular run or the extra list, and no matter what his seniority. . . . Verses sung by railroad men were printed in that remarkably American periodical, The Railroad Man's Magazine, under the editorship of Robert Davis. . . . Then came the sheet music version, widely popular. Lumberjacks, college girls, aviators, and doughboys, have made versions of their own. . . . Songs are like people, animals, plants. They have genealogies, pedigrees, thoroughbreds, cross-breeds, mongrels, strays, and often a strange love-child. . . . The Casey Jones song may stem from several earlier pieces that have the same gait, freckles, disposition, color of hair and eyes. Among such earlier pieces are Brady Why Didn't You Run?, Jay Gould's Daughter, On The Charlie So Long, Vanderbilt's Daughter, Mama Have You Heard the News? and all the earlier known songs in which figure Casey Jones, K. C. Jones, David Jones, and still other Joneses. . . . Two melodies are presented here. One is the traditional Casey Jones, the other (B) is the lesser known Mama Have You Heard the News? Some verses of the two songs are as interchangeable as standard box cars; others are narrow gauge and dinky. The second tune (B) is one notated in Ohio by Josephine Winston of the University of North Carolina.

Arr. R. E. K.



[1] By Newton and Seibert, copyright renewed 1938—Shapiro, Bernstein & Co. Inc. proprietors.



1 Come all you rounders, for I want you to hear,
The story of a brave engineer.
Casey Jones was the rounder's name.
On a big eight wheeler of a mighty fame.

2 Caller called Casey 'bout half-past four,
He kissed his wife at the station door,
Climbed to the cab with the orders in his hand,
He says, "This is my trip to the holy land."

3 Out of South Memphis yard on the fly,
Heard the fireman say, "You got a white eye."
Well, the switchmen knew by the engine moan
That the man at the throttle was Casey Jones.

4 The rain was comin' down five or six weeks.
The railroad track was like the bed of a creek.
They slowed her down to a thirty mile gait
And the south-bound mail was eight hours late.

5 Fireman says, "Casey, you're runnin' too fast,
You run that block board the last station you passed."
Casey says, "I believe we'll make it though,
For she steams a lot better than I ever know."

6 Casey says, "Fireman, don't you fret,
Keep knockin' at the fire door, don't give up yet,
I'm going to run her till she leaves the rail,
Or make it on time with the south-bound mail."

7 Around the curve and down the dump,
Two locomotives was a bound to jump,
Fireman hollered, "Casey, it's just ahead,
We might jump and make it but we'll all be dead."

[3]

8 Around the curve comes a passenger train,
Casey blows the whistle, tells the fireman, "Ring the bell,"
Fireman jumps and says "Good-by,
Casey Jones, You're bound to die."

9 Well Casey Jones was all right.
He stuck to his duty day and night.
They loved his whistle and his ring number three,
And he came into Memphis on the old I. C.

10 Fireman goes down the depot track,
Begging his honey to take him back,
She says, "Oranges on the table, peaches on the shelf,
You're a goin' to get tired sleepin' by yourself."
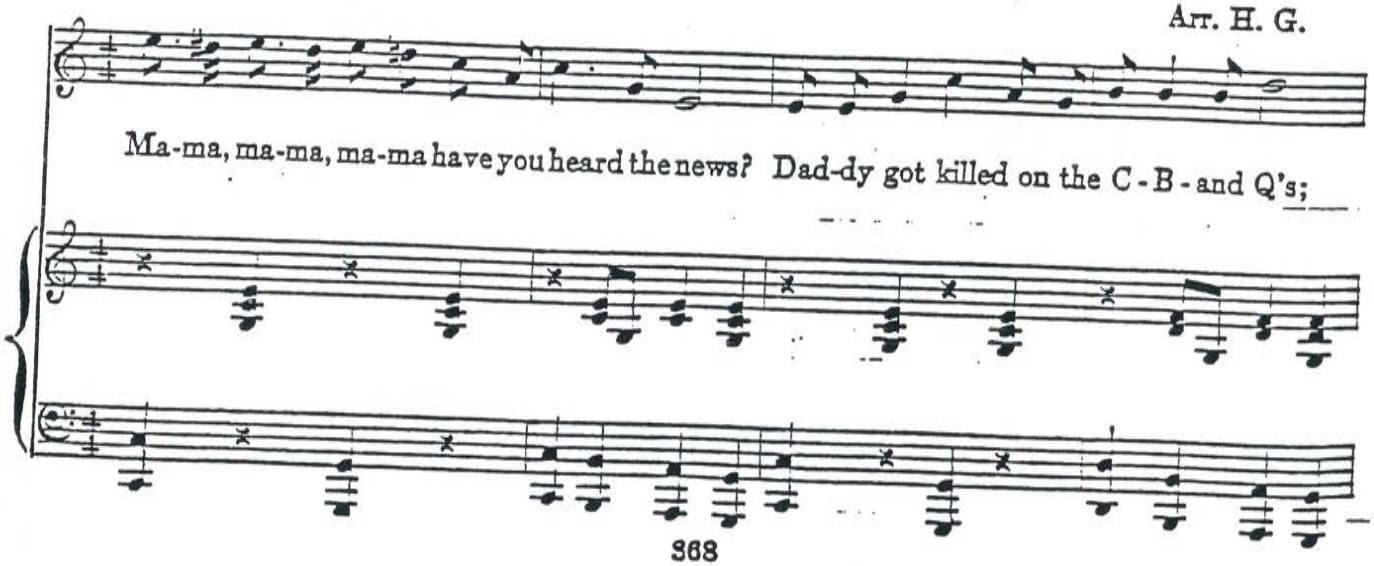
11 Mrs. Casey Jones was a sittin' on the bed.
Telegram comes that Casey is dead.
She says, "Children, go to bed, and hush your cryin',
'Cause you got another papa on the Frisco line."

12 Headaches and heartaches and all kinds of pain.
They ain't apart from a railroad train.
Stories of brave men, noble and grand,
Belong to the life of a railroad man.

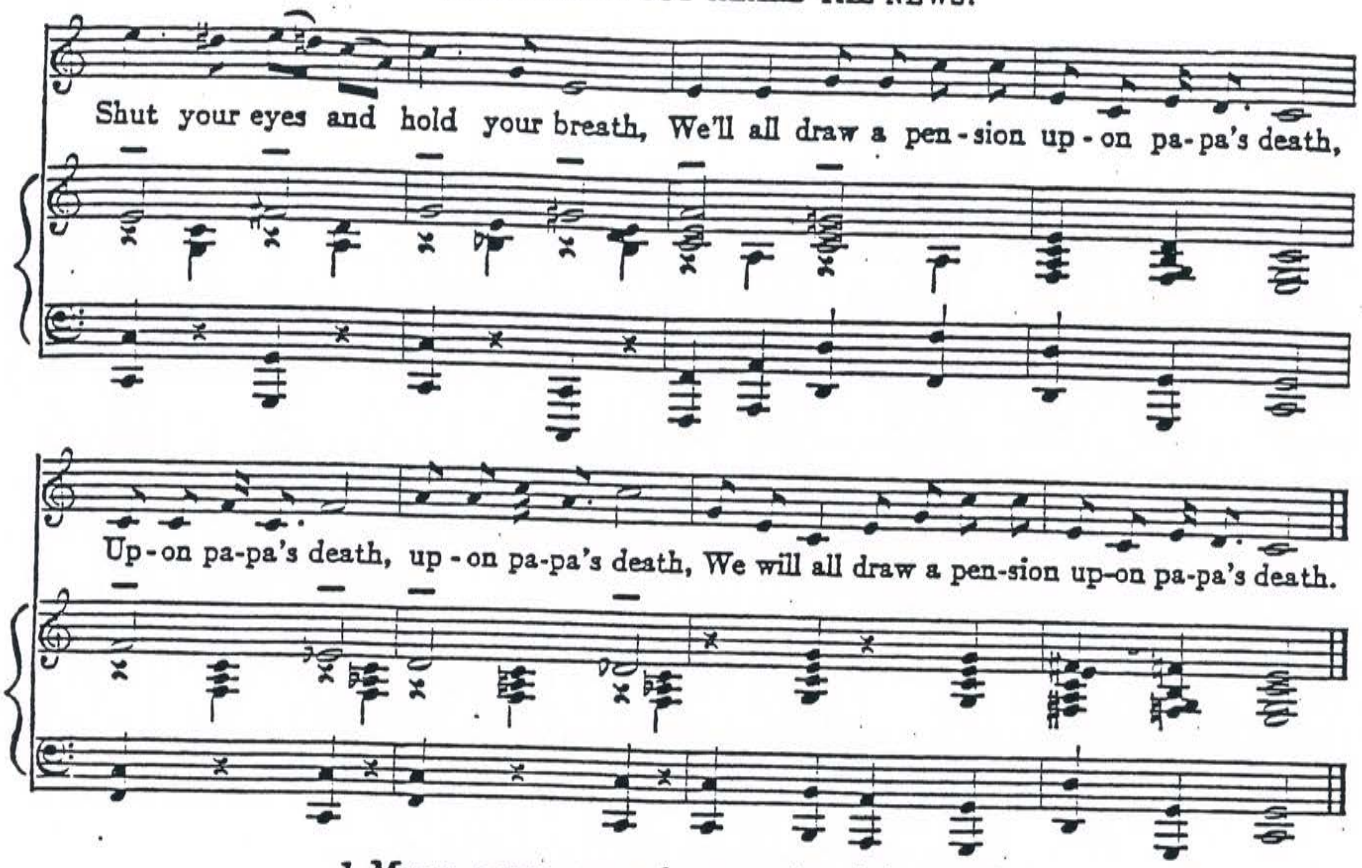
B

MAMA HAVE YOU HEARD THE NEWS?

Arr. H. G.



MAMA HAVE YOU HEARD THE NEWS?



1 Mama, mama, mama have you heard the news?
Daddy got killed on the C-B-and Q's.
Shut your eyes and hold your breath,
We'll all draw a pension upon papa's death.
Upon papa's death, upon papa's death,
We will all draw a pension upon papa's death.

[4]

2 Early in the morning when it looked like rain
Around the curve came a gravel train;
On the train was Casey Jones,
He's a good old rounder but he's dead and gone,
But he's dead and gone, he's dead and gone,
He's a good old rounder but he's dead and gone.

3 All the way by the last board he passed,
Thirty-five minutes late with the U. S. mail,
Casey Jones to his fireman said,
"We'll make it into Canton or leave the rail,
Or leave the rail, or leave the rail,
We'll make it into Canton or leave the rail."

4 When Casey's family heard of his death
Casey's daughter fell on her knees,
"Mama, mama, how can it be
Papa got killed on the old I. C.?"
"O hush your mouth and hold your breath,
"We'll all draw a pension from Casey's death."

But little did they think of death would gloom their vale
Before they would return again from the mines of Avondale.

3 The women, and the children, too, their hearts were filled with joy
To see their men go work again, and likewise every boy;
But a dismal sight, in broad daylight, which made them soon turn pale,
When they saw the breakers burning in the mines of Avondale.

4 From here and there and everywhere they gathered in a crowd,
Some tearing off their clothes and hair, and crying out aloud;
"Get out our husbands and our sons, for death is going to steal
Their lives away, without delay, in the mines of Avondale!"

5 But all in vain! there was no hope one single soul to save;
There was no second outlet to this ignominious cave.
No pen can write the awful fright, and horror did prevail
Among those dying victims in the mines of Avondale.

6 A consultation then took place; some were asked to volunteer
For to go down in this dismal shaft to seek their comrades dear.
Two Welshmen brave, without dismay and courage without fail,
Went down the shafts without delay, in the mines of Avondale.

7 When at the bottom they arrived, and thought to make their way,
One of them died for the want of air, while the other in great dismay—
He gave a sign to lift him up, to tell the fearful tale,
That all were lost forever in the mines of Avondale.

8 A second effort then took place, to send down some fresh air.
The next men that went down again, they took of them great care.

They traversed then the chambers, and this time did not fail
In finding their dead bodies in the mines of Avondale.

9 Sixty-seven was the number that in one heap were found.
They seemed to be awaiting their sad fate underground.
They found a father with his son clasped in his arms so frail;
There were heart-rending scenes in the mines of Avondale.

10 Now to conclude and make an end, the number to pen down,
One hundred and ten of brave, stout men were smothered underground.
There in their grave 'till their last day; their widows weep and wail,
And oft-rent cries may rend the skies all around through Avondale.

Casey Jones

John Luther Jones, nicknamed "Casey" because he was brought up in Cayce, Kentucky, was killed early in the morning of April 30, 190[illegible], just north of Vaughan, Mississippi, when the Illinois Central "Cannonball," which he was driving, plowed into the caboose and rear cars of a freight train. The cars were protruding onto the main line from a siding. Casey ordered his fireman to jump a few minutes before the collision; he himself remained at the throttle, or brakes, of his famous Engine 382.

The thirty-six-year-old engineer would have been forgotten if it had not been for the hero-worship of a Negro engine wiper in the roundhouse at Canton, Mississippi, the southern terminus of Casey's run. Wallis or Wallace or "Wash" Saunders or Sanders—the name of Casey's admirer is variously recorded—made up a song about the wreck which, according to the recollection of other workmen in the Canton railroad shops, was fashioned from stanzas in current Negro railroad songs. Two vaudeville performers, T. L. Seibert and E. W. Newton, heard Saunders' ballad and revamped it into a song in a somewhat lighter vein. This version, copyrighted in 1909, is the "Casey Jones" most generally sung today. Another vaudeville team, Bert and Frank Leighton, are probably responsible for the next most popular version of the

ballad, our text B, a ballad distinguished by its praise of railroading and its authentic railroad lingo. The Leightons had a brother who was an engineer on Casey's road.

Though Saunders' original "Casey Jones" is now beyond recovery, its contents can be deduced from Negro versions recorded 1908-30 and from fragments of related railroad songs. A group of such fragments has been assembled here as texts C to G and are separately accredited. The Negro ballad of "Joseph Mica" is also involved in the "Casey Jones" complex. The Negro conception of Casey Jones makes him out to be a ladies' man of notorious sexual powers. Probably it was a racy suggestion in Saunders' piece that inspired Siebert to add the lines, ascribed in the song to Mrs. Casey, "Go to bed, children, and hush your cryin', / 'Cause you got another papa on the Salt Lake Line."

For further details about Casey Jones, his wreck, and his ballad, see *Railroad Man's Magazine*, November 1910, May 1918; *Erie Railroad Magazine*, April 1932; F. H. Hubbard, *Railroad Avenue*, 1945. pp. 5-23.

Texts: A, sheet-music version, copyright 1909; B, Hubbard, p. 18; C to G, credits with texts.

Siebert

A 1909

1 Come, all you rounders, if you want to hear
A story 'bout a brave engineer.
Casey Jones was the rounder's name
On a six-eight wheeler, boys, he won his fame.
The caller called Casey at a half past four,
Kissed his wife at the station door,
Mounted to the cabin with his orders in his hand
And he took his farewell trip to the promised land:
Casey Jones, mounted to the cabin,
Casey Jones, with his orders in his hand,
Casey Jones, mounted to the cabin,
And he took his farewell trip to the promised land.

2 "Put in your water and shovel in your coal,
Put your head out the window, watch them drivers roll,
I'll run her till she leaves the rail

six-eight wheeler, six truck and eight drive wheels; actually Casey's engine was a ten-wheeler.

'Cause I'm eight hours late with the western mail."
He looked at his watch and his watch was slow,
He looked at the water and the water was low,
He turned to the fireman and then he said,
"We're goin' to reach Frisco but we'll all be dead:"
Casey Jones, goin' to reach Frisco,
Casey Jones, but we'll all be dead,
Casey Jones, goin' to reach Frisco,
"We're goin' to reach Frisco, but we'll all be dead."

3 Casey pulled up that Reno Hill,
He tooted for the crossing with an awful shrill,
The switchman knew by the engine's moan
That the man at the throttle was Casey Jones.
He pulled up within two miles of the place
Number Four stared him right in the face,
He turned to the fireman, said, "Boy, you better jump,
'Cause there's two locomotives that's a-goin' to bump:"
Casey Jones, two locomotives,
Casey Jones, that's a-goin' to bump,
Casey Jones, two locomotives,
"There's two locomotives that's a-goin' to bump."

4 Casey said just before he died,
"There's two more roads that I'd like to ride."
The fireman said what could they be?
"The Southern Pacific and the Santa Fe."
Mrs. Casey sat on her bed a-sighin',
Just received a message that Casey was dyin'.
Said, "Go to bed, children, and hush your cryin',
'Cause you got another papa on the Salt Lake Line:"
Mrs. Casey Jones, got another papa,
Mrs. Casey Jones, on that Salt Lake Line,
Mrs. Casey Jones, got another papa,
"And you've got another papa on the Salt Lake Line."

8 B. Hubbard 1945 Leightons

B

1 Come all you rounders, I want you to hear
The story told of a brave engineer,
Old Casey Jones was the rounder's name;

On a six-eight wheeler he won his fame.
Caller called Casey at half-past four;
He kissed his wife at the station door,
Climbed into the cab with his order in his hand,
Says, "This is my trip to the Promised Land."

2 Through the South Memphis yards on the fly,
He heard his fireboy say, "You got a white eye."
And all the switchmen knew by the engine's moans
That the man at the throttle was Casey Jones.
It had been raining some five or six weeks;
The railroad track looked like the bed of a creek.
They loaded him down to a thirty-mile gait
And threw the southbound mail about eight hours late.

3 Fireman hollered: "Casey, you're going too fast.
You run the block-board the last station we passed."
Casey says: "Yes, but I think we'll make it through,
For she's steaming better than ever I knew."
Says Casey: "Fireman, don't you fret.
Keep knocking at that firebox; don't you give up yet,
For I'm going to run her till she leaves the rail
Or make it on time with the southbound mail."

4 Around the curve and over the hump,
Two locomotives were bound to bump.
Fireman hollered: "Casey, she's just ahead!
We might jump and make it, but we'll be dead!"
Around the curve he spied a train,
Reversing his engine caused bells to ring.
Fireman jumped off, but Casey stayed on.
He's a good engineer, but he's dead and gone.

5 Poor Casey Jones, he was all right.
He stuck to his duty both day and night.
They loved to hear the whistle and the ring of Number 3,
And he came into Memphis on the old I. C.
Headaches and backaches and all kinds of pain
Are not apart from a railroad train.

six-eight wheeler, six truck and eight drive wheels; actually Casey's engine was a ten-wheeler. *white eye*, clear signal.

Tales that are earnest, noble and grand
Are all in the life of a railroad man.

C

[Stanzas said to have been sung by Wallis Sanders. From *American Ballads and Songs*, John A. and Alan Lomax, 1934, p. 38.]

1 On a Sunday mornin' it begins to rain,
'Round the curve spied a passenger train,
Under de cab lay po' Casey Jones,
He's a good engineer, but he's dead an' gone,
Dead an' gone, dead an' gone,
Kase he's been on de cholly so long.

2 Casey Jones was a good engineer,
Tol' his fireman not to have no fear,
All I want's a lil water an' coal,
Peep out de cab an' see de drivers roll,
Oh, see de drivers roll, see de drivers roll,
Peep out de cab an' see de drivers roll.

3 On a Sunday mornin' it begins to rain,
'Round de curve come a passenger train,
Tol' his fireman he'd better jump,
Kase dose two locomotives is boun' to bump,
[Boun' to bump, boun' to bump,
Kase dose two locomotives is boun' to bump.

D

[From Mississippi, 1908—*JAF*, 26:165.]

1 Casey Jones was a brave engineer;
Casey looked at the fireman, and the fireman said,
"What do you care?
If I keep your boilers red and hot,
We'll make it to Canton by four o'clock."
Casey Jones was a brave engineer,
He died with the throttle in his right hand.

on de cholly, on the bum.

2 All the way by the last board he passed,
Thirty-five minutes late with the [U.] S. mail.
Casey Jones said to his fireman,
"We'll make it to Canton, or leave the rail:
We are thirty-five minutes late with the [U.] S. mail."

3 Just as he got in a mile of the place,
He spied number Thirty-five right in his face.
Said to the fireman, "You'd better jump!
For these locomotives are bound to bump."

4 When Casey's family heard of his death,
Casey's daughter fell on her knees,
"Mammal mammal how can it be,
Papa got killed on the old I. C?"

5 "Hush your mouth, don't draw a breath;
We'll draw a pension from Casey's death!"

E

[From Mississippi, 1909—*JAF*, 26:167.]

Casey Jones was long and tall;
He pulled the throttle on the cannon-ball;
Pulled the whistle and gave a squall;
Said, "I'm going to ride the scoundrel to Niagra Fall."

F

[From Mississippi, before 1910—*JAF*, 24:352.]

1 Casey Jones was engineer,
Told his fireman not to fear.
All he wanted was a boiler hot,
Run in Canton 'bout four o'clock.

5 One Sunday mornin' it was drizzlin' rain,
Looked down road an' saw a train.
Fireman says: "Let's make a jump;
Two locomotives an' dey bound to bump."

6 Casey Jones, I know him well,
Told de fireman to ring de bell.
Fireman jump an' say "Good-bye,
Casey Jones, you're bound to die."

4 Went on down to de depot track,
Beggin' my honey to take me back,
She turn 'roun' some two or three times:
"Take you back when you learn to grind."

5 Womens in Kansas, all dressed in red,
Got de news dat Casey was dead.
De womens in Jackson, all dressed in black,
Said, in fact, he was a cracker-jack.

["The verse about 'begging his honey' is intended to give the scene after the wreck, when the fireman, who did not stay on the engine with Casey, was out of a job."]

G

["Kassie Jones," as sung by Furry Lewis on Victor 21664 (1928). Many lines are unintelligible, others are clichés from songs about "natu'al-bohn eas'men"—pimps. Stanza 7 has a double meaning. Bessie Smith, the famous blues singer, elaborated stanza 8 into a sensuous song entitled "J. C. Holmes Blues."]

1 I woke up this mornin' 'bout four o'clock.
Mr. Kassie tol' the fireman get his boiler hot.
Put on your water, put on your coal,
Put your head out de window, see my drivers roll.
See my drivers roll.
Put your head out de window, see my drivers roll.

2 Lord, some people said Mr. Kassie couldn't run;
Let me tell you what Mr. Kassie done:
He left Memphis was a quarter to nine,
Got into Newport News it was dinnah time,
It was dinnah time.
Got into Newport News it was dinnah time.

4 Lord, people said to Kassie, "You runnin' over time.
You got another loser with the 109."
Kassie said, "It ain't in mind
I run any closer 'less I make my time."

5 Said to all the passengers, "Better keep yourself hid;
I'm not going to shake you like Cheney did."

6 Mr. Kassie run his engine into a mile of the place.
No. 4 stabbed him in the face.
The sheriff told Kassie, "Well, you must leave town."
Free to my soul, I'm Alabama bound.

7 Mrs. Kassie said she dreamt a dream
The night she borrowed the sewin' machine.
The needle got broke, she could not sew.
She loved Mr. Kassie 'cause she tol' me so.

8 There was a woman named Miss Alice Fry
Says, "I'm going to ride with Mr. Kassie 'fore I die.
I ain't good-lookin', but I takes my time.
I'm a ramblin' woman with a ramblin' mind . . ."

9 Kassie looked at his water, water was low.
Looked at his watch, watch was slow.
On the road again.
Natu'al-bohn eas'man on the road again.

11 Mr. Kassie said before he died,
One more road that he wanted to ride.
People tell Kassie, "Which road?" Said he:
"Southern Pacific and Sankta Fe."

12 This mornin' I heard someone was dyin'.
Mrs. Kassie's children on the doorstep cryin'.
"Mama, mama, I can't keep from cryin'
Papa got killed on the Southern Line.
On the Southern Line.
Papa got killed on the Southern Line."

13 "Mama, mama, how can it be?
Killed my father in the first degree."
"Children, children, won't you hold your breath,
You'll draw another pension from your father's death."
On the road again.
I'm a natu'al-bohn eas'man on the road again.

14 Tuesday mornin' it looked like rain;
Aroun' the curve came a passenger train.
Under the bar lay Kassie Jones,
Good engineer but he's dead and gone.
Dead and gone.
On the road again . . .

Joseph Mica

No engineer of this name is known.

All three stanzas of this ballad are found in the songs about Casey Jones. The mention of Jim Jones in stanza 2 is arresting, for a lost ballad about a certain Jimmie Jones seems to have been the core of Saunders' "Casey Jones." Casey left Memphis an hour and a half behind time on his fatal run; he told his fireman he would make up the time if the boiler was kept hot; he was due at Canton at four o'clock. The correspondences with stanza 3, however, may be coincidental.

Text: *JAF*, 24:352.

1 Joseph Mica was good engineer,
Tole his fireman not to fear.
All he want is water'n coal,
Poke his head out, see drivers roll.

2 Early one mornin' look like rain,
'Round de curve come passenger train.
On powers lie ole Jim Jones,
Good ole engineer, but daid an' gone.

3 Left Atlanta hour behin',
Tole his fireman to make up the time.
All he want is boiler hot,
Run in there 'bout four o'clock.

of Canaan; but when they had come as far as Haran, they settled there. 32The days of Terah came to 205 years; and Terah died in Haran.

בֶּן־הָרָן בֶּן־בְּנוֹ וְאֵת שָׂרַי כַּלָּתוֹ אֵשֶׁת
אַבְרָם בְּנוֹ וַיֵּצְאוּ אִתָּם מֵאוּר כַּשְׂדִּים
לָלֶכֶת אַרְצָה כְּנַעַן וַיָּבֹאוּ עַד־חָרָן וַיֵּשְׁבוּ
שָׁם׃ 32 וַיִּהְיוּ יְמֵי־תֶרַח חָמֵשׁ שָׁנִים
וּמָאתַיִם שָׁנָה וַיָּמָת תֶּרַח בְּחָרָן׃ ס

12 LEKH LEKHA

The LORD said to Abram, "Go forth from your native land and from your father's house to the land that I will show you.

2I will make of you a great nation,
And I will bless you;
I will make your name great,
And you shall be a blessing.[a]
3I will bless those who bless you
And curse him that curses you;
And all the families of the earth
Shall bless themselves by you."

4Abram went forth as the LORD had commanded him, and Lot went with him. Abram was seventy-five years old when he left Haran. 5Abram took his wife Sarai and his brother's son Lot, and all the wealth that they had amassed, and the persons that they had acquired in Haran; and they set out for the land of Canaan. When they arrived in the land of Canaan, 6Abram passed through the land as far as the site of Shechem, at the terebinth of Moreh. The Canaanites were then in the land.

7The LORD appeared to Abram and said, "I will assign this land to your offspring." And he built an altar there to the LORD who had appeared to him. 8From there he moved on to the hill country east of Bethel and pitched his tent, with Bethel on the west and Ai on the east; and he built there an altar to the LORD and invoked the LORD by name. 9Then Abram journeyed by stages toward the Negeb.

יב לך לך

וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל־אַבְרָם לֶךְ־לְךָ
מֵאַרְצְךָ וּמִמּוֹלַדְתְּךָ וּמִבֵּית אָבִיךָ אֶל־
הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר אַרְאֶךָּ׃
2 וְאֶעֶשְׂךָ לְגוֹי גָּדוֹל
וַאֲבָרֶכְךָ
וַאֲגַדְּלָה שְׁמֶךָ
וֶהְיֵה בְּרָכָה׃
3 וַאֲבָרְכָה מְבָרֲכֶיךָ
וּמְקַלֶּלְךָ אָאֹר
וְנִבְרְכוּ בְךָ
כֹּל מִשְׁפְּחֹת הָאֲדָמָה׃
4 וַיֵּלֶךְ אַבְרָם כַּאֲשֶׁר דִּבֶּר אֵלָיו יְהוָה וַיֵּלֶךְ
אִתּוֹ לוֹט וְאַבְרָם בֶּן־חָמֵשׁ שָׁנִים וְשִׁבְעִים
שָׁנָה בְּצֵאתוֹ מֵחָרָן׃ 5 וַיִּקַּח אַבְרָם אֶת־
שָׂרַי אִשְׁתּוֹ וְאֶת־לוֹט בֶּן־אָחִיו וְאֶת־כָּל־
רְכוּשָׁם אֲשֶׁר רָכָשׁוּ וְאֶת־הַנֶּפֶשׁ אֲשֶׁר־
עָשׂוּ בְחָרָן וַיֵּצְאוּ לָלֶכֶת אַרְצָה כְּנָעַן
וַיָּבֹאוּ אַרְצָה כְּנָעַן׃ 6 וַיַּעֲבֹר אַבְרָם בָּאָרֶץ
עַד מְקוֹם שְׁכֶם עַד אֵלוֹן מוֹרֶה וְהַכְּנַעֲנִי
אָז בָּאָרֶץ׃
7 וַיֵּרָא יְהוָה אֶל־אַבְרָם וַיֹּאמֶר לְזַרְעֲךָ
אֶתֵּן אֶת־הָאָרֶץ הַזֹּאת וַיִּבֶן שָׁם מִזְבֵּחַ
לַיהוָה הַנִּרְאֶה אֵלָיו׃ 8 וַיַּעְתֵּק מִשָּׁם
הָהָרָה מִקֶּדֶם לְבֵית־אֵל וַיֵּט אהלה אָהֳלוֹ
בֵּית־אֵל מִיָּם וְהָעַי מִקֶּדֶם וַיִּבֶן־שָׁם מִזְבֵּחַ
לַיהוָה וַיִּקְרָא בְּשֵׁם יְהוָה׃ 9 וַיִּסַּע אַבְרָם
הָלוֹךְ וְנָסוֹעַ הַנֶּגְבָּה׃ פ

a *I.e., a standard by which blessing is invoked; cf. v. 3 end.*

10 There was a famine in the land, and Abram went down to Egypt to sojourn there, for the famine was severe in the land. 11 As he was about to enter Egypt, he said to his wife Sarai, "I know[b] what a beautiful woman you are. 12 If the Egyptians see you, and think, 'She is his wife,' they will kill me and let you live. 13 Please say that you are my sister, that it may go well with me because of you, and that I may remain alive thanks to you."

14 When Abram entered Egypt, the Egyptians saw how very beautiful the woman was. 15 Pharaoh's courtiers saw her and praised her to Pharaoh, and the woman was taken into Pharaoh's palace. 16 And because of her, it went well with Abram; he acquired sheep, oxen, asses, male and female slaves, she-asses, and camels.

17 But the LORD afflicted Pharaoh and his household with mighty plagues on account of Sarai, the wife of Abram. 18 Pharaoh sent for Abram and said, "What is this you have done to me! Why did you not tell me that she was your wife? 19 Why did you say, 'She is my sister,' so that I took her as my wife? Now, here is your wife; take her and begone!" 20 And Pharaoh put men in charge of him, and they sent him off with his wife and all that he possessed.

10 וַיְהִי רָעָב בָּאָרֶץ וַיֵּרֶד אַבְרָם מִצְרַיְמָה
לָגוּר שָׁם כִּי־כָבֵד הָרָעָב בָּאָרֶץ׃ 11 וַיְהִי
כַּאֲשֶׁר הִקְרִיב לָבוֹא מִצְרָיְמָה וַיֹּאמֶר
אֶל־שָׂרַי אִשְׁתּוֹ הִנֵּה־נָא יָדַעְתִּי כִּי אִשָּׁה
יְפַת־מַרְאֶה אָתְּ׃ 12 וְהָיָה כִּי־יִרְאוּ אֹתָךְ
הַמִּצְרִים וְאָמְרוּ אִשְׁתּוֹ זֹאת וְהָרְגוּ אֹתִי
וְאֹתָךְ יְחַיּוּ׃ 13 אִמְרִי־נָא אֲחֹתִי אָתְּ לְמַעַן
יִיטַב־לִי בַעֲבוּרֵךְ וְחָיְתָה נַפְשִׁי בִּגְלָלֵךְ׃
14 וַיְהִי כְּבוֹא אַבְרָם מִצְרַיְמָה וַיִּרְאוּ
הַמִּצְרִים אֶת־הָאִשָּׁה כִּי־יָפָה הִוא מְאֹד׃
15 וַיִּרְאוּ אֹתָהּ שָׂרֵי פַּרְעֹה וַיְהַלְלוּ אֹתָהּ
אֶל־פַּרְעֹה וַתֻּקַּח הָאִשָּׁה בֵּית פַּרְעֹה׃
16 וּלְאַבְרָם הֵיטִיב בַּעֲבוּרָהּ וַיְהִי־לוֹ צֹאן־
וּבָקָר וַחֲמֹרִים וַעֲבָדִים וּשְׁפָחֹת וַאֲתֹנֹת
וּגְמַלִּים׃
17 וַיְנַגַּע יְהוָה | אֶת־פַּרְעֹה נְגָעִים גְּדֹלִים
וְאֶת־בֵּיתוֹ עַל־דְּבַר שָׂרַי אֵשֶׁת אַבְרָם׃
18 וַיִּקְרָא פַרְעֹה לְאַבְרָם וַיֹּאמֶר מַה־זֹּאת
עָשִׂיתָ לִּי לָמָּה לֹא־הִגַּדְתָּ לִּי כִּי אִשְׁתְּךָ
הִוא׃ 19 לָמָּה אָמַרְתָּ אֲחֹתִי הִוא וָאֶקַּח
אֹתָהּ לִי לְאִשָּׁה וְעַתָּה הִנֵּה אִשְׁתְּךָ קַח
וָלֵךְ׃ 20 וַיְצַו עָלָיו פַּרְעֹה אֲנָשִׁים וַיְשַׁלְּחוּ
אֹתוֹ וְאֶת־אִשְׁתּוֹ וְאֶת־כָּל־אֲשֶׁר־לוֹ׃

13 From Egypt, Abram went up into the Negeb, with his wife and all that he possessed, together with Lot. 2 Now Abram was very rich in cattle, silver, and gold. 3 And he proceeded by stages from the Negeb as far as Bethel, to the place where his tent had been formerly, between Bethel and Ai, 4 the site of the altar that he had built there at first; and there Abram invoked the LORD by name.

5 Lot, who went with Abram, also had flocks and herds and tents, 6 so that the land could not

יג וַיַּעַל אַבְרָם מִמִּצְרַיִם הוּא וְאִשְׁתּוֹ
וְכָל־אֲשֶׁר־לוֹ וְלוֹט עִמּוֹ הַנֶּגְבָּה׃ 2 וְאַבְרָם
כָּבֵד מְאֹד בַּמִּקְנֶה בַּכֶּסֶף וּבַזָּהָב׃ 3 וַיֵּלֶךְ
לְמַסָּעָיו מִנֶּגֶב וְעַד־בֵּית־אֵל עַד־הַמָּקוֹם
אֲשֶׁר־הָיָה שָׁם אהלה אָהֳלֹה בַּתְּחִלָּה בֵּין
בֵּית־אֵל וּבֵין הָעָי׃ 4 אֶל־מְקוֹם הַמִּזְבֵּחַ
אֲשֶׁר־עָשָׂה שָׁם בָּרִאשֹׁנָה וַיִּקְרָא שָׁם
אַבְרָם בְּשֵׁם יְהוָה׃
5 וְגַם־לְלוֹט הַהֹלֵךְ אֶת־אַבְרָם הָיָה צֹאן־
וּבָקָר וְאֹהָלִים׃ 6 וְלֹא־נָשָׂא אֹתָם הָאָרֶץ

b *Or "You"; cf. the second person feminine form* -ti *in Judg. 5.7; Jer. 2.20; Mic. 4.13, etc.*

where Lot dwelt, God was mindful of Abraham and removed Lot from the midst of the upheaval.

30Lot went up from Zoar and settled in the hill country with his two daughters, for he was afraid to dwell in Zoar; and he and his two daughters lived in a cave. 31And the older one said to the younger, "Our father is old, and there is not a man on earth to consort with us in the way of all the world. 32Come, let us make our father drink wine, and let us lie with him, that we may maintain life through our father." 33That night they made their father drink wine, and the older one went in and lay with her father; he did not know when she lay down or when she rose. 34The next day the older one said to the younger, "See, I lay with Father last night; let us make him drink wine tonight also, and you go and lie with him, that we may maintain life through our father." 35That night also they made their father drink wine, and the younger one went and lay with him; he did not know when she lay down or when she rose.

36Thus the two daughters of Lot came to be with child by their father. 37The older one bore a son and named him Moab;[d] he is the father of the Moabites of today. 38And the younger also bore a son, and she called him Ben-ammi;[e] he is the father of the Ammonites of today.

וַיִּזְכֹּר אֱלֹהִים אֶת־אַבְרָהָם וַיְשַׁלַּח אֶת־
לוֹט מִתּוֹךְ הַהֲפֵכָה בַּהֲפֹךְ אֶת־הֶעָרִים
אֲשֶׁר־יָשַׁב בָּהֶן לוֹט׃
30 וַיַּעַל לוֹט מִצֹּעַר וַיֵּשֶׁב בָּהָר וּשְׁתֵּי
בְנֹתָיו עִמּוֹ כִּי יָרֵא לָשֶׁבֶת בְּצֹעַר וַיֵּשֶׁב
בַּמְּעָרָה הוּא וּשְׁתֵּי בְנֹתָיו׃ 31 וַתֹּאמֶר
הַבְּכִירָה אֶל־הַצְּעִירָה אָבִינוּ זָקֵן וְאִישׁ
אֵין בָּאָרֶץ לָבוֹא עָלֵינוּ כְּדֶרֶךְ כָּל־הָאָרֶץ׃
32 לְכָה נַשְׁקֶה אֶת־אָבִינוּ יַיִן וְנִשְׁכְּבָה עִמּוֹ
וּנְחַיֶּה מֵאָבִינוּ זָרַע׃ 33 וַתַּשְׁקֶיןָ אֶת־
אֲבִיהֶן יַיִן בַּלַּיְלָה הוּא וַתָּבֹא הַבְּכִירָה
וַתִּשְׁכַּב אֶת־אָבִיהָ וְלֹא־יָדַע בְּשִׁכְבָהּ
וּבְקוּמָהּ*׃ 34 וַיְהִי מִמָּחֳרָת וַתֹּאמֶר
הַבְּכִירָה אֶל־הַצְּעִירָה הֵן־שָׁכַבְתִּי אֶמֶשׁ
אֶת־אָבִי נַשְׁקֶנּוּ יַיִן גַּם־הַלַּיְלָה וּבֹאִי
שִׁכְבִי עִמּוֹ וּנְחַיֶּה מֵאָבִינוּ זָרַע׃ 35 וַתַּשְׁקֶיןָ
גַּם בַּלַּיְלָה הַהוּא אֶת־אֲבִיהֶן יָיִן וַתָּקָם
הַצְּעִירָה וַתִּשְׁכַּב עִמּוֹ וְלֹא־יָדַע בְּשִׁכְבָהּ
וּבְקוּמָהּ׃
36 וַתַּהֲרֶיןָ שְׁתֵּי בְנוֹת־לוֹט מֵאֲבִיהֶן׃
37 וַתֵּלֶד הַבְּכִירָה בֵּן וַתִּקְרָא שְׁמוֹ מוֹאָב
הוּא אֲבִי־מוֹאָב עַד־הַיּוֹם׃ 38 וְהַצְּעִירָה
גַּם־הִוא יָלְדָה בֵּן וַתִּקְרָא שְׁמוֹ בֶּן־עַמִּי
הוּא אֲבִי בְנֵי־עַמּוֹן עַד־הַיּוֹם׃ ס

20 Abraham journeyed from there to the region of the Negeb and settled between Kadesh and Shur. While he was sojourning in Gerar, 2Abraham said of Sarah his wife, "She is my sister." So King Abimelech of Gerar had Sarah brought to him. 3But God came to Abimelech in a dream by night and said to him, "You are to die because of the woman that you have taken, for she is a married woman." 4Now

ב וַיִּסַּע מִשָּׁם אַבְרָהָם אַרְצָה הַנֶּגֶב
וַיֵּשֶׁב בֵּין־קָדֵשׁ וּבֵין שׁוּר וַיָּגָר בִּגְרָר׃
2 וַיֹּאמֶר אַבְרָהָם אֶל־שָׂרָה אִשְׁתּוֹ אֲחֹתִי
הִוא וַיִּשְׁלַח אֲבִימֶלֶךְ מֶלֶךְ גְּרָר וַיִּקַּח
אֶת־שָׂרָה׃ 3 וַיָּבֹא אֱלֹהִים אֶל־אֲבִימֶלֶךְ
בַּחֲלוֹם הַלָּיְלָה וַיֹּאמֶר לוֹ הִנְּךָ מֵת עַל־
הָאִשָּׁה אֲשֶׁר־לָקַחְתָּ וְהִוא בְּעֻלַת בָּעַל׃
4 וַאֲבִימֶלֶךְ לֹא קָרַב אֵלֶיהָ וַיֹּאמַר אֲדֹנָי

d *As though* me-'ab *"from (my) father."*
e *As though "son of my (paternal) kindred."*

v. 33. נקוד על ו׳

Abimelech had not approached her. He said, "O Lord, will You slay people even though innocent? 5He himself said to me, 'She is my sister!' And she also said, 'He is my brother.' When I did this, my heart was blameless and my hands were clean." 6And God said to him in the dream, "I knew that you did this with a blameless heart, and so I kept you from sinning against Me. That was why I did not let you touch her. 7Therefore, restore the man's wife—since he is a prophet, he will intercede for you—to save your life. If you fail to restore her, know that you shall die, you and all that are yours."

8Early next morning, Abimelech called his servants and told them all that had happened; and the men were greatly frightened. 9Then Abimelech summoned Abraham and said to him, "What have you done to us? What wrong have I done that you should bring so great a guilt upon me and my kingdom? You have done to me things that ought not to be done. 10What, then," Abimelech demanded of Abraham, "was your purpose in doing this thing?" 11"I thought," said Abraham, "surely there is no fear of God in this place, and they will kill me because of my wife. 12And besides, she is in truth my sister, my father's daughter though not my mother's; and she became my wife. 13So when God made me wander from my father's house, I said to her, 'Let this be the kindness that you shall do me: whatever place we come to, say there of me: He is my brother.'"

14Abimelech took sheep and oxen, and male and female slaves, and gave them to Abraham; and he restored his wife Sarah to him. 15And Abimelech said, "Here, my land is before you; settle wherever you please." 16And to Sarah he said, "I herewith give your brother a thousand pieces of silver; this will serve you as vindication[a] before all who are with you, and

הֲגוֹי גַּם־צַדִּיק תַּהֲרֹג׃ 5 הֲלֹא הוּא אָמַר־
לִי אֲחֹתִי הִוא וְהִיא־גַם־הֵוא אָמְרָה אָחִי
הוּא בְּתֹם־לְבָבִי וּבְנִקְיֹן כַּפַּי עָשִׂיתִי זֹאת׃
6 וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלָיו הָאֱלֹהִים בַּחֲלֹם גַּם אָנֹכִי
יָדַעְתִּי כִּי בְתֹם־לְבָבְךָ עָשִׂיתָ זֹּאת
וָאֶחְשָׂךְ גַּם־אָנֹכִי אוֹתְךָ מֵחֲטוֹ־לִי עַל־כֵּן
לֹא־נְתַתִּיךָ לִנְגֹּעַ אֵלֶיהָ׃ 7 וְעַתָּה הָשֵׁב
אֵשֶׁת־הָאִישׁ כִּי־נָבִיא הוּא וְיִתְפַּלֵּל בַּעַדְךָ
וֶחְיֵה וְאִם־אֵינְךָ מֵשִׁיב דַּע כִּי־מוֹת תָּמוּת
אַתָּה וְכָל־אֲשֶׁר־לָךְ׃
8 וַיַּשְׁכֵּם אֲבִימֶלֶךְ בַּבֹּקֶר וַיִּקְרָא לְכָל־
עֲבָדָיו וַיְדַבֵּר אֶת־כָּל־הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה
בְּאָזְנֵיהֶם וַיִּירְאוּ הָאֲנָשִׁים מְאֹד׃ 9 וַיִּקְרָא
אֲבִימֶלֶךְ לְאַבְרָהָם וַיֹּאמֶר לוֹ מֶה־עָשִׂיתָ
לָּנוּ וּמֶה־חָטָאתִי לָךְ כִּי־הֵבֵאתָ עָלַי וְעַל־
מַמְלַכְתִּי חֲטָאָה גְדֹלָה מַעֲשִׂים אֲשֶׁר
לֹא־יֵעָשׂוּ עָשִׂיתָ עִמָּדִי׃ 10 וַיֹּאמֶר
אֲבִימֶלֶךְ אֶל־אַבְרָהָם מָה רָאִיתָ כִּי עָשִׂיתָ
אֶת־הַדָּבָר הַזֶּה׃ 11 וַיֹּאמֶר אַבְרָהָם כִּי
אָמַרְתִּי רַק אֵין־יִרְאַת אֱלֹהִים בַּמָּקוֹם
הַזֶּה וַהֲרָגוּנִי עַל־דְּבַר אִשְׁתִּי׃ 12 וְגַם־
אָמְנָה אֲחֹתִי בַת־אָבִי הִוא אַךְ לֹא
בַת־אִמִּי וַתְּהִי־לִי לְאִשָּׁה׃ 13 וַיְהִי כַּאֲשֶׁר
הִתְעוּ אֹתִי אֱלֹהִים מִבֵּית אָבִי וָאֹמַר לָהּ
זֶה חַסְדֵּךְ אֲשֶׁר תַּעֲשִׂי עִמָּדִי אֶל כָּל־
הַמָּקוֹם אֲשֶׁר נָבוֹא שָׁמָּה אִמְרִי־לִי אָחִי
הוּא׃
14 וַיִּקַּח אֲבִימֶלֶךְ צֹאן וּבָקָר וַעֲבָדִים
וּשְׁפָחוֹת וַיִּתֵּן לְאַבְרָהָם וַיָּשֶׁב לוֹ אֵת שָׂרָה
אִשְׁתּוֹ׃ 15 וַיֹּאמֶר אֲבִימֶלֶךְ הִנֵּה אַרְצִי
לְפָנֶיךָ בַּטּוֹב בְּעֵינֶיךָ שֵׁב׃ 16 וּלְשָׂרָה אָמַר
הִנֵּה נָתַתִּי אֶלֶף כֶּסֶף לְאָחִיךְ הִנֵּה הוּא־
לָךְ כְּסוּת עֵינַיִם לְכֹל אֲשֶׁר אִתָּךְ וְאֵת כֹּל
וְנֹכָחַת׃ 17 וַיִּתְפַּלֵּל אַבְרָהָם אֶל־הָאֱלֹהִים
וַיִּרְפָּא אֱלֹהִים אֶת־אֲבִימֶלֶךְ וְאֶת־אִשְׁתּוֹ

v. 6. חסר א'

a Lit. "a covering of the eyes"; meaning of latter half of verse uncertain.

you are cleared before everyone." 17Abraham then prayed to God, and God healed Abimelech and his wife and his slave girls, so that they bore children; 18for the LORD had closed fast every womb of the household of Abimelech because of Sarah, the wife of Abraham.

וְאַמְהֹתֶיו וַיֵּלֵדוּ׃ 18 כִּי־עָצֹר עָצַר יְהוָה
בְּעַד כָּל־רֶחֶם לְבֵית אֲבִימֶלֶךְ עַל־דְּבַר
שָׂרָה אֵשֶׁת אַבְרָהָם׃ ס

21 The LORD took note of Sarah as He had promised, and the LORD did for Sarah as He had spoken. 2Sarah conceived and bore a son to Abraham in his old age, at the set time of which God had spoken. 3Abraham gave his newborn son, whom Sarah had borne him, the name of Isaac. 4And when his son Isaac was eight days old, Abraham circumcised him, as God had commanded him. 5Now Abraham was a hundred years old when his son Isaac was born to him. 6Sarah said, "God has brought me laughter; everyone who hears will laugh with[a] me." 7And she added,

"Who would have said to Abraham
That Sarah would suckle children!
Yet I have borne a son in his old age."

8The child grew up and was weaned, and Abraham held a great feast on the day that Isaac was weaned.

9Sarah saw the son whom Hagar the Egyptian had borne to Abraham playing. 10She said to Abraham, "Cast out that slave-woman and her son, for the son of that slave shall not share in the inheritance with my son Isaac." 11The matter distressed Abraham greatly, for it concerned a son of his. 12But God said to Abraham, "Do not be distressed over the boy or your slave; whatever Sarah tells you, do as she says, for it is through Isaac that offspring shall be continued[b] for you. 13As for the son of the slave-woman, I will make a nation of him, too, for he is your seed."

כא וַיהוָה פָּקַד אֶת־שָׂרָה כַּאֲשֶׁר
אָמָר וַיַּעַשׂ יְהוָה לְשָׂרָה כַּאֲשֶׁר דִּבֵּר׃
2 וַתַּהַר וַתֵּלֶד שָׂרָה לְאַבְרָהָם בֵּן לִזְקֻנָיו
לַמּוֹעֵד אֲשֶׁר־דִּבֶּר אֹתוֹ אֱלֹהִים׃ 3 וַיִּקְרָא
אַבְרָהָם אֶת־שֵׁם־בְּנוֹ הַנּוֹלַד־לוֹ אֲשֶׁר־
יָלְדָה־לּוֹ שָׂרָה יִצְחָק׃ 4 וַיָּמָל אַבְרָהָם
אֶת־יִצְחָק בְּנוֹ בֶּן־שְׁמֹנַת יָמִים כַּאֲשֶׁר
צִוָּה אֹתוֹ אֱלֹהִים׃ 5 וְאַבְרָהָם בֶּן־מְאַת
שָׁנָה בְּהִוָּלֶד לוֹ אֶת יִצְחָק בְּנוֹ׃ 6 וַתֹּאמֶר
שָׂרָה צְחֹק עָשָׂה לִי אֱלֹהִים כָּל־הַשֹּׁמֵעַ
יִצְחַק־לִי׃ 7 וַתֹּאמֶר
מִי מִלֵּל לְאַבְרָהָם
הֵינִיקָה בָנִים שָׂרָה
כִּי־יָלַדְתִּי בֵן לִזְקֻנָיו׃
8 וַיִּגְדַּל הַיֶּלֶד וַיִּגָּמַל וַיַּעַשׂ אַבְרָהָם
מִשְׁתֶּה גָּדוֹל בְּיוֹם הִגָּמֵל אֶת־יִצְחָק׃
9 וַתֵּרֶא שָׂרָה אֶת־בֶּן־הָגָר הַמִּצְרִית אֲשֶׁר־
יָלְדָה לְאַבְרָהָם מְצַחֵק׃ 10 וַתֹּאמֶר
לְאַבְרָהָם גָּרֵשׁ הָאָמָה הַזֹּאת וְאֶת־בְּנָהּ
כִּי לֹא יִירַשׁ בֶּן־הָאָמָה הַזֹּאת עִם־בְּנִי
עִם־יִצְחָק׃ 11 וַיֵּרַע הַדָּבָר מְאֹד בְּעֵינֵי
אַבְרָהָם עַל אוֹדֹת בְּנוֹ׃ 12 וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים
אֶל־אַבְרָהָם אַל־יֵרַע בְּעֵינֶיךָ עַל־הַנַּעַר
וְעַל־אֲמָתֶךָ כֹּל אֲשֶׁר תֹּאמַר אֵלֶיךָ שָׂרָה
שְׁמַע בְּקֹלָהּ כִּי בְיִצְחָק יִקָּרֵא לְךָ זָרַע׃
13 וְגַם אֶת־בֶּן־הָאָמָה לְגוֹי אֲשִׂימֶנּוּ כִּי
זַרְעֲךָ הוּא׃

a *Lit. "for."*
b *Lit. "called."*

were twins in her womb. 25The first one emerged red, like a hairy mantle all over; so they named him Esau.[c] 26Then his brother emerged, holding on to the heel of Esau; so they named him Jacob.[d] Isaac was sixty years old when they were born.

27When the boys grew up, Esau became a skillful hunter, a man of the outdoors; but Jacob was a mild man who stayed in camp. 28Isaac favored Esau because [e]he had a taste for game;[-e] but Rebekah favored Jacob. 29Once when Jacob was cooking a stew, Esau came in from the open, famished. 30And Esau said to Jacob, "Give me some of that red stuff to gulp down, for I am famished"—which is why he was named Edom.[f] 31Jacob said, "First sell me your birthright." 32And Esau said, "I am at the point of death, so of what use is my birthright to me?" 33But Jacob said, "Swear to me first." So he swore to him, and sold his birthright to Jacob. 34Jacob then gave Esau bread and lentil stew; he ate and drank, and he rose and went away. Thus did Esau spurn the birthright.

בִּבְטְנָהּ׃ 25 וַיֵּצֵא הָרִאשׁוֹן אַדְמוֹנִי כֻּלּוֹ
כְּאַדֶּרֶת שֵׂעָר וַיִּקְרְאוּ שְׁמוֹ עֵשָׂו׃
26 וְאַחֲרֵי־כֵן יָצָא אָחִיו וְיָדוֹ אֹחֶזֶת בַּעֲקֵב
עֵשָׂו וַיִּקְרָא שְׁמוֹ יַעֲקֹב וְיִצְחָק בֶּן־שִׁשִּׁים
שָׁנָה בְּלֶדֶת אֹתָם׃
27 וַיִּגְדְּלוּ הַנְּעָרִים וַיְהִי עֵשָׂו אִישׁ יֹדֵעַ
צַיִד אִישׁ שָׂדֶה וְיַעֲקֹב אִישׁ תָּם יֹשֵׁב
אֹהָלִים׃ 28 וַיֶּאֱהַב יִצְחָק אֶת־עֵשָׂו כִּי־צַיִד
בְּפִיו וְרִבְקָה אֹהֶבֶת אֶת־יַעֲקֹב׃ 29 וַיָּזֶד
יַעֲקֹב נָזִיד וַיָּבֵא עֵשָׂו מִן־הַשָּׂדֶה וְהוּא
עָיֵף׃ 30 וַיֹּאמֶר עֵשָׂו אֶל־יַעֲקֹב הַלְעִיטֵנִי
נָא מִן־הָאָדֹם הָאָדֹם הַזֶּה כִּי עָיֵף אָנֹכִי
עַל־כֵּן קָרָא־שְׁמוֹ אֱדוֹם׃ 31 וַיֹּאמֶר יַעֲקֹב
מִכְרָה כַיּוֹם אֶת־בְּכֹרָתְךָ לִי׃ 32 וַיֹּאמֶר
עֵשָׂו הִנֵּה אָנֹכִי הוֹלֵךְ לָמוּת וְלָמָּה־זֶּה לִי
בְּכֹרָה׃ 33 וַיֹּאמֶר יַעֲקֹב הִשָּׁבְעָה לִּי כַּיּוֹם
וַיִּשָּׁבַע לוֹ וַיִּמְכֹּר אֶת־בְּכֹרָתוֹ לְיַעֲקֹב׃
34 וְיַעֲקֹב נָתַן לְעֵשָׂו לֶחֶם וּנְזִיד עֲדָשִׁים
וַיֹּאכַל וַיֵּשְׁתְּ וַיָּקָם וַיֵּלַךְ וַיִּבֶז עֵשָׂו אֶת־
הַבְּכֹרָה׃ ס

26 There was a famine in the land—aside from the previous famine that had occurred in the days of Abraham—and Isaac went to Abimelech, king of the Philistines, in Gerar. 2The LORD had appeared to him and said, "Do not go down to Egypt; stay in the land which I point out to you. 3Reside in this land, and I will be with you and bless you; I will assign all these lands to you and to your heirs, fulfilling the oath that I swore to your father Abraham. 4I will make your heirs as numerous as the stars of heaven, and assign to your heirs all these lands, so that all the nations of the earth shall bless themselves by your heirs—5inasmuch as Abra-

כו וַיְהִי רָעָב בָּאָרֶץ מִלְּבַד הָרָעָב
הָרִאשׁוֹן אֲשֶׁר הָיָה בִּימֵי אַבְרָהָם וַיֵּלֶךְ
יִצְחָק אֶל־אֲבִימֶלֶךְ מֶלֶךְ־פְּלִשְׁתִּים גְּרָרָה׃
2 וַיֵּרָא אֵלָיו יְהוָה וַיֹּאמֶר אַל־תֵּרֵד
מִצְרַיְמָה שְׁכֹן בָּאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר אֹמַר אֵלֶיךָ׃
3 גּוּר בָּאָרֶץ הַזֹּאת וְאֶהְיֶה עִמְּךָ וַאֲבָרְכֶךָּ
כִּי־לְךָ וּלְזַרְעֲךָ אֶתֵּן אֶת־כָּל־הָאֲרָצֹת
הָאֵל וַהֲקִמֹתִי אֶת־הַשְּׁבֻעָה אֲשֶׁר
נִשְׁבַּעְתִּי לְאַבְרָהָם אָבִיךָ׃ 4 וְהִרְבֵּיתִי
אֶת־זַרְעֲךָ כְּכוֹכְבֵי הַשָּׁמָיִם וְנָתַתִּי לְזַרְעֲךָ
אֵת כָּל־הָאֲרָצֹת הָאֵל וְהִתְבָּרְכוּ בְזַרְעֲךָ
כֹּל גּוֹיֵי הָאָרֶץ׃ 5 עֵקֶב אֲשֶׁר־שָׁמַע

c *Synonym of "Seir," play on Heb.* se'ar *"hair."*
d *Play on Heb.* 'aqeb *"heel."*
e-e *Lit. "game was in his mouth."*
f *Play on Heb.* 'adom *"red."*

ham obeyed Me and kept My charge: My commandments, My laws, and My teachings."

6So Isaac stayed in Gerar. 7When the men of the place asked him about his wife, he said, "She is my sister," for he was afraid to say "my wife," thinking, "The men of the place might kill me on account of Rebekah, for she is beautiful." 8When some time had passed, Abimelech king of the Philistines, looking out of the window, saw Isaac fondling his wife Rebekah. 9Abimelech sent for Isaac and said, "So she is your wife! Why then did you say: 'She is my sister?'" Isaac said to him, "Because I thought I might lose my life on account of her." 10Abimelech said, "What have you done to us! One of the people might have lain with your wife, and you would have brought guilt upon us." 11Abimelech then charged all the people, saying, "Anyone who molests this man or his wife shall be put to death."

12Isaac sowed in that land and reaped a hundredfold the same year. The LORD blessed him, 13and the man grew richer and richer until he was very wealthy: 14he acquired flocks and herds, and a large household, so that the Philistines envied him. 15And the Philistines stopped up all the wells which his father's servants had dug in the days of his father Abraham, filling them with earth. 16And Abimelech said to Isaac, "Go away from us, for you have become far too big for us."

17So Isaac departed from there and encamped in the wadi of Gerar, where he settled. 18Isaac dug anew the wells which had been dug in the days of his father Abraham and which the Philistines had stopped up after Abraham's death; and he gave them the same names that his father had given them. 19But when Isaac's servants, digging in the wadi, found there a well of spring water, 20the herdsmen of Gerar quarreled with Isaac's herdsmen, saying, "The water is ours."

אַבְרָהָם בְּקֹלִי וַיִּשְׁמֹר מִשְׁמַרְתִּי מִצְוֹתַי חֻקּוֹתַי וְתוֹרֹתָי׃

6 וַיֵּשֶׁב יִצְחָק בִּגְרָר׃ 7 וַיִּשְׁאֲלוּ אַנְשֵׁי הַמָּקוֹם לְאִשְׁתּוֹ וַיֹּאמֶר אֲחֹתִי הִוא כִּי יָרֵא לֵאמֹר אִשְׁתִּי פֶּן־יַהַרְגֻנִי אַנְשֵׁי הַמָּקוֹם עַל־רִבְקָה כִּי־טוֹבַת מַרְאֶה הִיא׃ 8 וַיְהִי כִּי אָרְכוּ־לוֹ שָׁם הַיָּמִים וַיַּשְׁקֵף אֲבִימֶלֶךְ מֶלֶךְ פְּלִשְׁתִּים בְּעַד הַחַלּוֹן וַיַּרְא וְהִנֵּה יִצְחָק מְצַחֵק אֵת רִבְקָה אִשְׁתּוֹ׃ 9 וַיִּקְרָא אֲבִימֶלֶךְ לְיִצְחָק וַיֹּאמֶר אַךְ הִנֵּה אִשְׁתְּךָ הִוא וְאֵיךְ אָמַרְתָּ אֲחֹתִי הִוא וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלָיו יִצְחָק כִּי אָמַרְתִּי פֶּן־אָמוּת עָלֶיהָ׃ 10 וַיֹּאמֶר אֲבִימֶלֶךְ מַה־זֹּאת עָשִׂיתָ לָּנוּ כִּמְעַט שָׁכַב אַחַד הָעָם אֶת־אִשְׁתֶּךָ וְהֵבֵאתָ עָלֵינוּ אָשָׁם׃ 11 וַיְצַו אֲבִימֶלֶךְ אֶת־כָּל־הָעָם לֵאמֹר הַנֹּגֵעַ בָּאִישׁ הַזֶּה וּבְאִשְׁתּוֹ מוֹת יוּמָת׃

12 וַיִּזְרַע יִצְחָק בָּאָרֶץ הַהִוא וַיִּמְצָא בַּשָּׁנָה הַהִוא מֵאָה שְׁעָרִים וַיְבָרְכֵהוּ יְהוָה׃ 13 וַיִּגְדַּל הָאִישׁ וַיֵּלֶךְ הָלוֹךְ וְגָדֵל עַד כִּי־גָדַל מְאֹד׃ 14 וַיְהִי־לוֹ מִקְנֵה־צֹאן וּמִקְנֵה בָקָר וַעֲבֻדָּה רַבָּה וַיְקַנְאוּ אֹתוֹ פְּלִשְׁתִּים׃ 15 וְכָל־הַבְּאֵרֹת אֲשֶׁר חָפְרוּ עַבְדֵי אָבִיו בִּימֵי אַבְרָהָם אָבִיו סִתְּמוּם פְּלִשְׁתִּים וַיְמַלְאוּם עָפָר׃ 16 וַיֹּאמֶר אֲבִימֶלֶךְ אֶל־יִצְחָק לֵךְ מֵעִמָּנוּ כִּי־עָצַמְתָּ מִמֶּנּוּ מְאֹד׃

17 וַיֵּלֶךְ מִשָּׁם יִצְחָק וַיִּחַן בְּנַחַל־גְּרָר וַיֵּשֶׁב שָׁם׃ 18 וַיָּשָׁב יִצְחָק וַיַּחְפֹּר | אֶת־בְּאֵרֹת הַמַּיִם אֲשֶׁר חָפְרוּ בִּימֵי אַבְרָהָם אָבִיו וַיְסַתְּמוּם פְּלִשְׁתִּים אַחֲרֵי מוֹת אַבְרָהָם וַיִּקְרָא לָהֶן שֵׁמוֹת כַּשֵּׁמוֹת אֲשֶׁר־קָרָא לָהֶן אָבִיו׃ 19 וַיַּחְפְּרוּ עַבְדֵי־יִצְחָק בַּנָּחַל וַיִּמְצְאוּ־שָׁם בְּאֵר מַיִם חַיִּים׃ 20 וַיָּרִיבוּ רֹעֵי גְרָר עִם־רֹעֵי יִצְחָק לֵאמֹר לָנוּ הַמָּיִם

GENESIS

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question, the woman is more passionate and reckless than the man. This element of prefatory intoxication is rather repugnant to us. For the earliest Hebrew sensibility, it is only a particularly successful stratagem. **33** The narrator emphasizes that Lot noticed nothing. He wants to exonerate Lot (cf. the similar exoneration of Judah in 38:16ff.). It seems very unlikely to us that he would not notice anything. The ancients were naive, gullible. Other incredible elements occur in 19:26; 25:26; 38:28ff.; etc. For [illegible] (regarding the construction, cf. 24:8; Mesha 3) Sam and Kittel have הַהוּא as does v 35. One of the passages is to be emended. **35** For וְתֵקֶם LXX, Pesh, and Vulg have [illegible], a harmonization with v 33.

37 The attentive hearer has noticed that the word אָב (eight times) and especially the phrases מֵאֲבִיהֶן מֵאֲבִינוּ (three times) have occurred frequently in the foregoing. This prepares a point. Now in v 27 the elucidation follows. The goal was the word מֹאָב. This is ingenious by the narrator's tastes. We should be pleased. One must remember the main issue when considering this etymology. The other etymologies in Genesis are not much better, however (4:24; 29:32, 34; 30:23, 24). It would be a basic error to attempt to bring scientific sobreity to this naive name interpretation. **38** The author did not take בֶּן-עַמִּי as "son of my people" which would not express the characteristic aspect of this child. Instead, in order to be able to derive Bene-Ammon <219> in a manner similar to the derivation of Moab, he understood עַם "relative" in the sense of "father" ("father's brother") which also occurs in Arabic (Krenkel, ZAW 8:283-84; Wellhausen, GdI [1893], 480n.2; Nestle, ZAW 16: 322-23). LXX (followed by Ball) adds λέγουσα τοῦ πατρός μου after v 37a. But this motivation is entirely superfluous after the many preceding allusions. In v 38, LXX reads καὶ ἐκάλεσεν τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ Αμμων ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ γένους μου. Ball emends accordingly, but destroys thereby a subtlety of the original text which refers to Moab, the father of the people of Moab and Ben-Ammi, the father of the people Bene-Ammon (so the customary usage). Thus the Lot narrative is concluded. In the legend cycle the birth of Isaac and the second visit of the men with Abraham originally follow now.

26. Abraham with Abimelech in Gerar 20 E

Source. The passage uses אֱלֹהִים. P does not contain such colorful and for him highly objectionable narratives. Also, Abraham dwells only in Mamre according to P, not in Beersheba or Gerar. Consequently, the passage is from E. Other indications of E include revelation in a dream (vv 3, 6) and the diction—אָמָה, maiden (v 17; J uses שִׁפְחָה), לֵבָב (v 5; J uses לֵב), and the rarer expressions נְקִיּוֹן (v 5), אָמַר אֶל, "to say something about someone" (v 2), נָתַן with accusative and infinitive with לְ, "to permit someone to do something" (v 6), etc. (cf. Dillmann and Holzinger).

Originally, the legend followed closely upon the legend of Abraham's immigration to Canaan. His wife is still young and desirable and he does not yet have a child (cf. Meyer, *Israeliten*, 237n.3). R^{JE} could find no better position for the account than this. Yet it does not fit well after 18:11-12 according to which Sarah is already an old woman. There is also no room for the event of chap. 20 between the promise in 18:10 that she will become pregnant and the arrival of the pregnancy in 21:1-2.

1 According to the following legends Gerar lies in the vicinity of Rehoboth (*Rehôbôt*, 26:22, and Beersheba (*Bîr es-Seba'*), 21:22ff.; 26:23ff. Chap. 26 presumes, more precisely

that it lies closer to Rehoboth than to Beersheba. In order to avoid conflicts with the Gerarites, Isaac moves from Rehoboth to Beersheba. Now since Beersheba is situated farther to the north than Rehoboth, we will seek Gerar in the South where the name *Wâdi Ĝerûr* is preserved west of Kadesh. The information in 2 Chron 14:12-13 (Gerar on the highway from Canaan to Egypt) and in Gen 20:1ab ("between" Kadesh, 14:7; 16:14, and Shur, 16:7) agrees with this identification. The contrasting statements in 21:32, 34; 26:1, 8, 14, 15, 18 (but not in chap. 20) that Gerar was in the possession of the Philistines at that time result from a later confusion with another Gerar, the current *Umm Ĝarrâr* SSE of Gaza. Accordingly, v 1aβ belongs to the older tradition of our legend. In contrast, the Negeb (v 1aα; 12:9) lies much farther to the north than the Gerar of the old legend. Yet, this phrase could belong to E. One would have to assume a lacuna which, as in the parallel recensions, would narrate that Abraham, driven by famine (12:10; 26:1ff.) moved from the Negeb (12:9-10) to Gerar (26:1; Holzinger). This comment could have been omitted in order to avoid excessive repetitions of chaps. 12 and 26. וַיָּגָר בִּגְרָר is a play on words (Holzinger). The old legends are strewn with such allusions to names.

2 "Abraham pretends that his wife is his sister and Abimelech takes her from him. Both of these are stated very briefly" (Dillmann). Accordingly, as in v 1, a redactional abbreviation seems to have <220> been introduced (Holzinger). One may note, however, the following. The fact that the king has not approached Sarah too closely is apparently stated for the first time in v 4 and cannot have been narrated yet in the preceding. V 6 then adds that God hindered him from approaching her. How this took place, however, we learn only from the final word of the legend, וַיִּלְדוּ (v 17). It was a sexual illness. Similarly, the motives of Abraham and Abimelech, passed over in v 2, are laid out in detail in the subsequent speeches. Here we apparently do not have "clumsy" presentation (Dillmann) but, rather, a narration which differs radically from the usual style. Whereas the usual style recounts things in their natural sequence, this more refined narrative intentionally leaves a lacuna at the beginning in order to fill it in gradually in the course of the account. One may compare the book of Jonah where several such "supplements" occur. We do not learn the content of the message the prophet is supposed to deliver in 1:2 or 3:2, but first in 3:4. We do not hear the reason for his flight in 1:3 but only in 4:2 (a similar case involves 1:1). This narrative style is chosen by authors who wish to narrate somewhat more artfully and, at the same time, to heighten the tension through such lacunae. This "supplementary" style may be compared, for example, with the exposition of modern dramas which allow the background to be deduced gradually through allusions. It is probably not accidental that Sarah's experiences in Abimelech's harem are semi-concealed, semirevealed in this fashion. The sensitivity of the narrator will also have caused him to choose this style here. Accordingly, nothing essential need have been omitted in v 2. LXX sought to fill in the apparent lacuna from 26:7: εφοβήθη γὰρ εἰπεῖν ὅτι γυνή μού ἐστιν, μήποτε ἀποκτείνωσιν αὐτὸν οἱ ἄνδρες τῆς πόλεως δι αὐτήν. וַיִּקַּח. With or without לְאִשָּׁה, לקח means "to take to wife, to marry" like the Bab *aḫâzu* (Winckler, *Forschungen* 3:414). The continuation proceeds in two discussions: (1) God's with Abimelech, vv 3-7 (v 8 is an appendix) and (2) Abimelech's with Abraham, vv 9-13. Then follows (3) the result, the king's appeasement of Abraham and Sarah, vv 14-16 (v 17, conclusion). The narrator apparently

prefers to transmit extended speeches. Indeed, in their favor, he abbreviated the account proper (v 2). A similar phenomenon occurs in E in chap. 31 (cf. comments on 31:2).

3-7 *God's conversation with Abimelech.* **3** Belief in the revelatory power of dreams belongs to the earliest stage of religion and continues, too, in the historical religions (Tylor, *Anfänge der Kultur* 1:44), a more developed epoch adapts this ancient, popular belief in order to be able to express a more spiritualized concept of God. The dream is the form of revelation which least involves the deity with the earthly. This manner of revelation characterizes E (cf. the introduction ¶4:6). The value the narrator places on this can be seen from the repetition of the word בַּחֲלוֹם (v 6). Regarding הִנְּךָ מֵת, "now you must die," see §116p. Abimelech will have understood the statement to mean that God intends to kill him immediately, right there in bed. Appearances of God, a spirit, or the devil who threaten people with immediate death are common in the legends (cf. Exod 4:24; Gen 32:25ff., and perhaps also "The Story of the Fisher with the Spirit," in *1,001 Nights*; trans. Weil[2] 1:30-31). Afterward, God "regrets" the death threat, very much as in 2:17. The legend presumes that the nations, too, know or at least could know that the adulterer deserved death and that it is a sin against God himself. There is, even in the early period, a certain international morality protected by religion (cf. also v 9 <221> and 39:9). Ball and Kittel prefer Sam's reading על + אודת (cf. 21:11, 15).

V **4a** is "supplementary" in order to explain Abimelech's clear conscience. The narrator hesitates to say more about this. **4b, 5** Abimelech, in great distress, fearing his immediate death, protests his innocence: "גַּם, ὅμως: a nation equally just" (Franz Delitzsch). גּוֹי has given commentators difficulty. It is translated "people" (2 Kgs 6:18; etc.) or even by a few "pagans" (Eerdmans, 41). According to Geiger (Urschrift, 365) it is an addition, according to Ball and Kittel, dittography of גַּם. The interpretation that Abimelech considers it obvious that the God's wrath will come upon, not only the person of the king, but the whole people is much simpler (cf. vv 7, 8, 9). The clause in v 4b assumes that God does not kill righteous people but evildoers. V **5** is "supplementary": Sarah, too, had said that she was his sister. "Heart" and "hand" refers to thought and deed. כַּף is the palm made impure by sin. **6-7** Now God relents. He "regrets" his threat. But Abimelech should undo the injustice he has inadvertently done. Now the narrator raises the veil far enough to say that God, himself, restrained Abimelech. We still do not learn how, however. חָמְנוֹ is an unusual orthography for חָמְנָא. Abraham is, God says, a נָבִיא. In this passage the word designates a "man of God" whose property is under God's protection, whom God represents, whose word God hears (cf. Psa 105:15). The Elijah and Elisha narratives (2 Kgs 1:9ff; 2:23f; 6:15ff.) portray the divine protection the נָבִיא enjoys. Originally, as the earliest descriptions clearly show (1 Sam 10:5-6; 19:18ff.), the Israelite נָבִיא was an ecstatic who felt the effect of the Spirit of God in mighty convulsions of body and soul. The use of the word in this passage in such a depleted sense is only conceivable in a period when the characteristic, extraordinary aspects of prophecy have already diminished considerably and when one was accustomed to referring to every man of God with the term. הִתְפַּלֵּל was (originally) the technical term for the intercession of the man of God (Deut 9:20; 1 Sam 7:5; 12:19, 23; Jer 7:16, etc.). Concerning the intercession of the men of God see Stade, *Bibl. Theol.*, 203. The command to procure intercession for oneself also occurs in Job 42:8. The moral viewpoints prominent in the chap. are unusual. Although God knows Abimelech's innocence, he

anted to kill him at first because he regards the deed and not primarily the attitude. While this is intended in ancient fashion, a modern perspective is also apparent here: God finally takes Abimelech's innocence into consideration. In an entirely ancient manner, however, Abraham must make intercession for the innocent Abimelech. **8** The point of the verse is the statement "they became very afraid," an element the narrator values a great deal because through it he can portray God's protection for Abraham. The structure of the account strongly accentuate this element. It stands between the two discussions. Abimelech's fear is the consequence of all that precedes and the precondition of all that follows. <222>

9-16 *Abimelech's discussion with Abraham.* Vv **9-13** serve the purpose of providing the basis for an evaluation of the extremely complicated (in the narrator's opinion) transaction. On the one hand, he firmly maintains that Abimelech is actually in the right. Abraham is unable to respond to his harsh reproaches (v 9). The narrator thinks nothing can be said in response (similarly in the variants 12:18-19; 26:9-10). To this point, then, he follows the old tradition. On the other hand, however, he also wants to avoid charging Abraham with injustice and presents the matter once again from Abraham's perspective (vv 10-13). This paragraph has been added by the narrator (thus the new beginning, "Abimelech said to Abraham"; a similar case in 27:36). Winckler's explanation (*Forschungen* 3:414) that v 10 is a secondary reading for v 9 is more superficial. The narrator believes that he has vindicated Abraham to a degree. It really is true that pagans are usually godless (v 11). And the lie was not even a real lie (v 12). The narrator waivers in his assessment. The major point for him, however, is that Abimelech, whether or not in the right, must finally come to understand that he must give Abraham significant gifts. God stands on the side of his darling even if he does not seem to be in the right. The narrator seems to have been a man whose morality did not keep step with his religion. His religion does not obligate one to unconditional truthfulness. Yet one may not forget that he did not freely devise this narrative, but only purified it leaving many objectionable elements.

9 Pesh reads מָה עָשִׂיתִי לָךְ which seems better to suit what follows (Ball, Kittel). **10** ראה means "to see, experience, learn" (cf. Gesenius14 s.v. ראה 3b; and esp. Bacher, ZAW 19:345ff., according to whom ראה was employed in this sense in interrogatory clauses by the jargon of biblical exegesis in the old Palestinian school). Vv **11-13** is once again "supplementary." **11** כִּי אָמַרְתִּי means "(I did this) because I said. . . ." רַק means "at any rate, surely." At any rate, such an idea, stated blatantly as self-evident to the foreigner, is going a bit far! Israel's disdain for pagans becomes crudely evident here. The statement presumes that the law knows no obligation to the foreigner, but surely religion does. **12** The narrator took offense at Abraham's simple lie, narrated in the variants in chaps. 12 and 26, and attempted to clear Abraham. His substitute at this point, a mental reservation, demonstrates that his sense of the truth still leaves something to be desired. The narrator apparently devised the comment that Sarah was Abraham's half-sister ad hoc. The earliest tradition (11:29) knows nothing of this. Nevertheless, this excuse does not stem from very recent times because marriage between half-siblings, although not unheard of in ancient Israel (as in other nations; cf. Spurrell; 2 Sam 13:13), was prohibited in later times (Deut 27:22; Ezek 22:11; Lev 18:9,11; 20:17). V **13** is also supposed to be an excuse. Abraham did not behave this way on this occasion only; it was

his standard practice. This, too, the narrator, who here seeks as many excuses <223> as possible, has invented. Accordingly, E also told of Abraham's emigration—as is self-evident. The plural construction of אלהים (הִתְעוּ) occurs elsewhere in E, so it is said (cf. 35:7; §145i). It is entirely impossible that the plural is intended polytheistically here (contra Eerdmans, 41). The same plural understood as a singular also occurs in the Amarna correspondence (Knudtzon, nos. 192, 198, 213, etc.): *ilaniya* = "my gods," in the sense of "my god" in reference to the Egyptian king. But is it possible that התעו here, גלו in 35:7, as well as ישתחוו in Isa 2:8 are not plurals at all, but archaic singular forms of ל"ו verbs? The expression shows that E must have recounted that Abraham crisscrossed Palestine (as did J^b, in contrast to J^a and P).

14-16 *Abimelech appeases Abraham and Sarah.* **14** The gifts are supposed to make restitution for the injustice and to obtain Abraham's friendship so that he will pray for him. וַעֲבָדִים וּשְׁפָחֹת is a gloss as in 12:16. E normally uses אמהות (Dillmann). V **15** is the opposite of 12:19-20. **16** "Eye-covering" is a naive legal term. It refers to appeasement which hinders one from seeing the harm done one (Job 9:24). Instead of "to all those who are with you," it may be better to read, "in regard (לְ) to everything which has befallen you" (אֻתָּךְ from אָתָה, "to come upon" with accusative, Job 3:25; a solemn expression the sense of which is equivalent to the more prosaic בוא). Eerdmans (40-41) translates "for everything with you" and interprets it in relation to the possible pregnancy of Sarah. This interpretation is, however, completely excluded by the current recension of the narrative. This would also be a peculiar expression for pregnancy. The final clause should probably be read וְאַתְּ כֻּלֹּ נֹכָחַת, "but you are vindicated in its totality (that is, in all this)" (נֹכָחַת is a part.; on the construction, cf. §§116k, 118mff.). Other translations and attempts can be found in Dillmann and Holzinger. The 1,000 (shekels) of silver (the obvious unit of measure "shekel" is omitted; §134n)—a very considerable sum (according to the Phoenician value, 291 marks, according to Babylonian, 281.20 marks)—are not, of course, the monetary value of the fourteen animals given, but a separate gift. The herdsman Abimelech reckons in animals and money, like the farmer Hosea reckons in grain and money (Hosea 3:2). This mixture of barter and monetary economies is important data for the history of economic conditions. At the same time, the verse is interesting for the legal status of woman. One can harm her and reestablish her honor. The husband, however, receives the propitiation because the woman cannot acquire property. The narrator emphasizes this explicit declaration of Sarah's honor in order to remove the last objectionable element from the situation. Abimelech expressly says "your brother." He acknowledges, then, that Abraham has stated the truth (contrast "your wife" in 12:19).

17 *Conclusion.* Through the statement "he healed" we finally learn what the narrator has already insinuated in v 6-7, namely, that Abimelech was ill. But only the final statement, "they begot children," suggests that the illness inhibited sexual intercourse. The narrator employed the "supplementary" style throughout, then. Concerning Yahweh as a god of plagues see Greßmann, *Israeltisch-jüdische Eschatologie*, 85ff. V **18** is the addition of a later hand for whom this last insinuation was too subtle and who, in addition, misunderstood the text. The reason no children were born lay, according to the <224> preceding, not only in the woman. Linguistically, the addition can be recognized by the יהוה (Sam אלהים).

Comparison of the Variants 12:9ff.; 20; 26:6ff.

These three narratives are closely related in content and also share much vocabulary: אָחֹתִי הִוא (12:19; 20:5; 26:7), מַה־זֹּאת עָשִׂיתָ לִּי (12:18; 20:9; 26:10), גּוּר (12:10; 20:1; 26:3), etc. (cf. Kuenen, *Einleitung* ¶13 n. 11). Scholars are of various opinions concerning the age of the variants. Wellhausen (*Prolegomena*[6], 317n.1), Keunen (loc. cit.), Holzinger (176), Frankenberg (CGA [1901], 692), and Proksch (297-98) consider chap. 26 older than chaps. 20 and 12. Conversely, Dillmann (324) considers chap. 20 older than chap. 26. The true art of such a comparison consists in beginning, not with arbitrary individual points, but with those points which characterize the total structure of the narrative.

1. The chief difference between the three accounts consists in the fact that chap. 12 naively recounts things that must have seemed extremely objectionable to later sensibilities, while chap. 20 and especially chap. 26 take pains to mitigate these dubious elements. All the essential diferrences in content of the legends are to be understood from this perspective.

a. According to chap. 12 Pharaoh took Sarah to wife. What he did with her is not explicitly stated, however. But we may imagine. In contrast, chap. 20 certifies several times that nothing offensive took place. God himself hindered it. Chap. 20 attempts, therefore, to remove the objectionable elements from the account. Chap. 26 proceeds even more energetically. It omits the entire ticklish situation and only envisions the possibility that someone might have desired the ancestress. According to chap. 12, then, adultery was committed, according to chap. 20 it was averted at the last moment by God, and according to chap. 26 it theoretically could have taken place.

b. Similarly, the plagues are discussed in various manners. In chap. 12 they are intended to make Pharaoh aware of the sin which has taken place. In chap. 20, they are supposed to protect Abimelech from committing the sin. In chap. 26 they are not necessary because nothing evil has taken place yet. On the other hand, the narrator of chap. 26 did not want to omit the chief objective of the account, the portrayal of the protection under which the patriarch stands. Thus, he reports the king's command, "Whoever touches this man shall die." But why is the statement so forceful? After all, no one had considered harming Isaac. The narrator had other recensions in view where such harm has, indeed, taken place.

c. Similarly, the information concerning the ancestor's wealth differs. According to chap. 12, he receives gifts for his alleged sister. Contrariwise, according to chap. 20 he acquires them only subsequently as propitiation and to declare Sarah's honor. According to chap. 26, too, Isaac becomes very rich, but because Yahweh blessed his fields. The somewhat disgraceful gifts of chap. 12 become extremely honorable in chap. 20 and, finally, in chap. 26, in order to mitigate them completely, gifts from Yahweh.

d. The treatment of the patriarch also varies. According to chap. 12, he was escorted to the border. This element, too, was later perceived as compromising and was consequently altered in the other recensions. According to chap. 20, in contrast, he was even permitted to remain in the land "wherever you please." Now, since the preceding does not discuss the fact that he could be expelled, this element can only be understood as a tacit contrast to the older recensions. Chap. 26 addresses the problem differently. Here Isaac

is finally "sent away" (26:27), but because of jealousy since he has become too rich for his hosts.

e. Abraham's lie in chap. 12 mutates into a mental reservation in chap. 20. Chap. 26 agrees with chap. 12 on this point.

All of this suggests the character of the accounts. In ancient naiveté, chap. 12 recounts things that must have seemed extremely objectionable to later sensibilities. Chap 20 preserves the facts in general and goes to extremes to remove the objectionable elements and to vindicate Abraham. These concerns account for the peculiarly <225> confused attitude of vv 9ff. Chap 26 energetically intercedes and excises the offensive material. The fact that later times were more refined in such moral matters is also evident in other legends (cf. the introduction ¶4:4).

2. The character of the narratives agrees with this assessment in other areas as well, beginning with their religious character. Chap. 12 offers a peculiar mixture of worldly and religious motifs. The legend celebrates the clever ancestor, the beautiful ancestress, and the ever-faithful God. In addition, it feels a certain malicious glee over the misfortune of the mighty Pharaoh. Later periods could no longer tolerate this mixture of worldly and spiritual. They made the account into either a worldly or a spiritual narrative. Thus, chap. 20 is a "legend." It glorifies only God and his assistance. Profane attitudes are entirely eliminated. Nothing is said concerning Abraham's cleverness or Sarah's beauty. Chap. 26 differs. Here, God's intervention in the encounter between Abimelech and Rebekah is omitted. Abimelech learns that she is Isaac's wife by accident. Thus, the account has become a profane adventure in which the idea of God's protection only stands in the background (cf. 26:3a). The aesthetic attitudes of the narratives also vary widely. Gen 12 is an old legend in brief, beautiful style of the ancient period. Gen 20 exhibits the later style which prefers extensive speeches and even narrates in a refined "supplementary" style. Gen 26 is esthetically insignificant. The shift of motifs and situations has resulted in the disintegration of the legend into two narratives. It has lost its "complication," since the danger to the ancestress is only hypothetical, and has ceased to be a true "story."

Consequently, the chronological sequence of the variants is Gen 12, 20, 26.

This does not suggest, however, that every individual element in chap. 20 is younger than those in chap. 12 or that those in chap. 26 are younger than those in chap. 20. Instead, one sees that the lie of necessity, already eliminated in chap. 20, resurfaces in chap. 26. Chaps. 20 and 26 both narrate the account concerning Abimelech of Gerar. This man is an old legend figure concerning whom our legend books preserve another account (21:22ff.; 26:19ff.). His memory was lost, it seems, to the later period. One can assume, therefore, that the legend originally dealt with Abimelech but that later, when Abimelech's identity was no longer known, it was transferred to Pharaoh. This exchange, however, is not "the chief issue" in the total structure of the account, but only a secondary issue, and is no reason to seek the "original form" of the account in chap. 26 (contra Proksch, 297n.1). According to Winckler (*Forschungen* 1:32-33, and KAT^3, 141ff.), as in the Hagar account, there is a confusion here of northern Arabic מצר, *Muṣr* with מצרים, Egypt. This suggestion, however, has received harsh criticism (cf. above p. 190). If, as is likely, a certain memory of historical situations stands in the background here, one will have to assume an old, temporary migration to Gerar. Abimelech is attested as a Philistine name, and in the cuneiform inscriptions in the form Abi-milki, as a Phoenician name (cf.

Zimmern, KAT[3], 482). Whether the legend originally associated the migration to Gerar with the name Isaac or the name Abraham will be difficult to ascertain. Since, however, Isaac is less known in later times than Abraham, one may, nevertheless, consider Isaac the more original here.

27. Isaac's Birth and Ishmael's Rejection 21:1-21 EJ[b]

Source criticism. The account of Ishmael's rejection (vv 8-21) belongs to E (evidence: אֱלֹהִים, vv 12, 17[x4], 19, 20; אָמָה, vv 10bis, 12, 13; שִׂים לְגוֹי, vv 13, 18 [J עָשָׂה, 12:2], and rare expressions such as חֵמָת, "bottle skin," vv 14, 15, 19; etc.). In terms of content, characteristic E elements are God's revelation by night (vv 12f.), the voice of the angel from heaven (v 17), etc. J has a variant of this narrative in chap. 16. <226> According to P Ishmael remained in his father's household (25:9). Similarly, Ishmael's age speaks against P (cf. comments on v 14a). E prefaced this account with a brief "note" concerning Isaac's birth and naming. While this Ishmael account is an old legend, the note only represents a transition. V 6a stems from E (אלהים). These two passages currently disrupt the Abimelech accounts which originally belonged together in E (20; 21:22ff.). R[JE] recognized the opportunity to insert a few remarks concerning Isaac's birth and naming from J. They followed 19:38 in J. Vv 1aä, 2a, 6b, and 7 belong to J (evidence: יהוה, v 1a; v 6b offers a different interpretation of the name Isaac than v 6a and seems to belong together with v 7). This brief J passage does not belong to the Abraham-Lot legend cycle, however (cf. above, pp. 161, 198), and will, therefore, stem from J[b]. Sievers (2:294-95) dissects the account of Ishmael's rejection into two sources (vv 8-11, 14b-16, 19ba, 21a—Eα and vv 12-14a, 17-19a, bβ, 20, 21b—Eδ) but destroys the context unified very tightly by the delivery (v 14a), emptying (v 15), and refilling (v 19b) of the bottle skin, by the carrying (v 14a), casting down (v 15), and taking up, once again (v 18) of the child, by the sitting (v 16, twice) and standing of the mother (v 18), as well as by the crying of the boy (v 16) which God hears (v 17, twice). Similarly, v 11 (וַיֵּרַע בְּעֵינָי) is not to be separated from v 12 (אַל־יֵרַע בְּעֵינֶיךָ).

1a, 2a, 7, 6b J; 6a E *Isaac's birth.* **1a** Is this section from J[1]? **2a** The phrase "in his old age" (as in v 7) emphasizes the divine miracle that happened to Abraham and Sarah. Therefore, it is not a superfluous addition. V 7 is, in its current wording, still pointless. Originally, v **6b**, which contains a point suitable for v 7, may have stood after v 7 (Budde, *Urgeschichte*, 224n.1) or even better after v 7a (Sievers 2:295). The difference in the two recension's explanation of the name Isaac is unusual. In J (vv 6b, 7) it is entirely profane. The old woman is ashamed to have become a mother at her age. In E it is pious. The late mother thanks God for this joy (=laughter, Psa 126:2). Sarah's profane attitude in J agrees entirely in tone with 18:12 and is a sign of the advanced age of this passage. The motivation of the name, itself, is different from the one intended in 18:12, however. In form, vv 6b, 7 are poetry, two double trimeters. מִלֵּל is an Aramaic word. It occurs in Hebr only in poetry. Regarding the construction see §106p. The message, your wife nurses a child (בָּנִים, plural of the category, §124o) is brought to the husband from the delivery room—as we would put it (cf. Jer 20:15). Concerning יִצְחָק (v 6b) see §10g.

8-21 E *Ishmael's rejection.* **8-13** *Part I. The events in Abraham's tent.* The introduction of the legend, vv 8-10, is especially exciting. The legend explains how Ishmael's rejection came about in elements that are exquisitely true to nature. Sarah's love for her

assumed that the ancestors came to Canaan from the land where the majority of the Aramaean people were at his time, that is, from Aram-Naharaim. Thereby he "simultaneously gained the bridge to Babylonia he required for the total outline of his work" (249). By recounting that the ancestors came to Canaan from Babylonia via Haran he connected the primeval history which ends in Babylonia with the patriarchal legends (234) and, at the same time, gave his people greater distinction through association with the ancient cultural center Babylonia (211). According to this analysis, then, Abraham's origin in Babylonia would not be based on historical tradition at all. Now, the Jacob-Laban legends (which see) seem to have originally taken place, not in Haran, but in the eastern steppe. Yet, on the other hand, the association of names from Abraham's circle with Haranite divine names (cf. above p. 162), although disputed by Meyer, point to Haran. Perhaps, one should assume a dual tradition. The whole question is not yet ripe for discussion.

18. Abraham in Egypt in 12:9-13:4 J^b

Literary criticism. The passage is J because of יהוה (v 17), כָּבֵד (of plagues, v 10), נָא (vv 11, 13), and מְזֻמָּזֹאת (v 18). The account falls clearly into two portions: (1) the central passage, Abraham's experiences in Egypt (12:10-20; 13:1), and (2) the introduction and the conclusion (12:9; 13:2-4), according to which Abraham moved from Bethel to the Negeb and from the Negeb back to Bethel. The central passage is an old, very colorful legend. The framework, in contrast, is by nature of later origins. It offers (with the exception of 13:2, see below) no positive information whatsoever and has only the purpose of incorporating the account of Abraham in Egypt at this point. The fact that the account did not originally belong in this context in J (Wellhausen, *Composition*[3], 23) is demonstrated by the following. (1) J intends to narrate Abraham's journey from Haran to his home in Hebron. The way stations Shechem and Bethel are well chosen. They lie on the direct route. The journey to Egypt is, therefore, a disruptive excursus. If the original narrator had known it and wished to incorporate it, he would have placed it after the move to Hebron. (2) The following narrative recounts that in Bethel Abraham and Lot separated to the right and the left. Lot moved then to the Jordan valley, to the southeast (left), Abraham to Hebron in the northwest (right). The narrative presupposes, then, that their general route of march went from north to south. Accordingly, they could <168> not have been in Egypt immediately prior to this separation. (3) The core of the legend of Abraham in Egypt does not mention Lot (וְלוֹט עִמּוֹ in 13:1 is an addition), who moved with Abraham according to the preceding and the following J material. Accordingly, the account does not stem from the main strand of J (J^a), but from a related source (J^b) and was incorporated here by an RJ. The paragraph is, therefore, neither a later "excrescence" (Wellhausen)—instead it bears (cf. below) all the signs of a very ancient legend—nor is it "dislocated" in J (Dillmann, Holzinger)—nothing indicates that it once stood in another position in J. R^J inserted the account in this position, before the Bethel legend, because through it he can explain Abraham's wealth presupposed by the Bethel legend. R^J is responsible for 12:9; 13:3, 4. In contrast, judging from the variants set in the Negeb, 13:1 belongs to the old legend (Holzinger). Gen 13:2 is taken from the introduction to the following Bethel account.

The same legend is recounted once more of Abraham in Gerar (chap. 20 E) and of Isaac in Gerar (chap. 26 J^r), and must, therefore, have been very popular.

V 9 is the redactor's transition. Regarding the construction, see §113u. The Negeb is the southernmost part of Canaan, south of the Judean mountains, a waterless high plain, mostly pasture land. **10-20** *The legend of Abraham in Egypt.* **10** The occasion of the move to Egypt is a famine. Narratives and legends tell of famines in Canaan, especially as the reason for emigration (26:1; 43:1; 47:4; Ruth 1:1; 2 Sam 21:1; 2 Kgs 4:38; 8:1). Egypt, the rich grain land, the land of pleasure and culture, is the desire of its barbarian neighbors. Thus, the Hyksos came to Egypt. Since their time, Egypt was flooded with Canaanite elements. Especially in times of famine, people sought grain or even refuge in Egypt whose fertility was dependent, not on rain as in Canaan, but solely on the Nile so that it can also have wealth in years when all Canaan groans under poor harvests. One may compare the migration of Jacob's sons to Egypt and the famous image of Benihassan (e.g., Riehm, HW 288/9) where thirty-seven Amu (Canaanites) seek refuge in Egypt (cf. Meyer, ¶¶43, 98, 109; Spiegelberg, *Aufenthalt Israels in Ägypten*, 24ff.; Heyes, *Bibel und Ägypten*, 1ff.). From Canaan's mountains one goes down (יָרַד) to Egypt, in the opposite direction one goes up (עָלָה). The narrators know precisely what they are doing in such matters in contrast to moderns who no longer travel on foot.

11-13 The following conversation takes place at the border, an interesting situation (cf. 31:52; Ruth 1:7ff.). Abraham is in a difficult position. Hunger forces him to go to Egypt. But here he is a גֵּר (alien) without protection and right. He must fear being killed for his beautiful wife. In this dilemma he finds an extremely simple and effective way out. His thought process is as follows. It is dangerous to have a beautiful wife in Egypt. Whoever wants her will have to kill her husband. But one can acquire a beautiful sister from her brother with goods. Then it may still "go well" for her brother. He can obtain abundant gifts for her. Therefore, he pretends that his wife is his sister. The legend glorifies the beauty of the matriarch in this way. The Israelite is convinced that Hebrew women are more beautiful than other women. The narrator presupposes that at the time Sarah was still a young woman whom the Egyptians would desire. According to P, Sarah was at least 65 years old. Simultaneously, the legend praises Sarah as a faithful woman who—as a good wife should—surrenders her own honor in order to protect the life of her lord. "Who may despise the people that has such women?" (Judith 10:19). But the legend particularly praises the cleverness of Abraham who foresaw the danger and who knew the proper means <169> to counter it. The old legends narrate such accounts of the fathers' ingenuity rather frequently (e.g., of the cleverness of Noah, 8:6ff.; of Jacob, who deceived Esau and Laban; of Joseph, 47:13ff.; 46:31ff.). Among the narratives of the later period, one may compare the cunning of David (1 Sam 21:3ff., 13ff.), Michal (1 Sam 19:13ff.), Absalom (2 Sam 13:23ff.), Amnon (2 Sam 13:1ff.), Job (2 Sam 14), etc. "It is not good to allow one man of them to survive, for if one allows them to survive they could deceive the whole world" (Judith 10:19). Ancient Israel regarded the lie much more mildly than we. If no particularly foul intention is associated with it, it was not considered dishonorable. Indeed, a prophet such as Jeremiah (38:24ff.) resorted to lying in times of distress and one can even say the Yahweh himself sends lying spirits (1 Kgs 22:19ff.). The fact that earliest Israel did not think badly of Abraham's lie of necessity is shown in the fact that Yahweh himself assists him in what follows. How should a poor גֵּר in a strange land get by without lies? Yet a later refinement of moral judgment may be detected (cf. the comments on 20:2). Besides, one may remember the demeanor of modern

travelers in barbarian lands. The narrator rejoices quietly over the fact that Abraham lied so extraordinarily well and made a virtue of necessity. He recognizes himself with great joy in the clever tricks of his ancestor. It displeases us more than the lie of necessity that Abraham sacrifices his wife's honor. The ancient Israelite, who did not know the chivalrous duty to protect his wife or daughter to the death, perceived it differently (cf. Gen 19:8; Judg 19:25). This—in our view—lack of a sense of honor can be explained in terms of Israel's low estimation of woman. Woman is inferior to man. The life of a man is worth more than the honor of a woman. Finally, we are most displeased that Abraham even accepted gifts for his wife. Even ancient Israel later had greater sensitivity on this point (cf. comments on 20:26 and Abraham's high-mindedness according to Jewish legend, 14:22ff.). The customary exegesis imports the fundamentals of Christian morality into the interpretation of this naive legend.

12 The word order in v 12b is gracefully chiastic. Regarding אֲחֹתִי אָתְּ without conjunction see §157a. "For your sake," "on account of you"—Abraham explains to Sarah that she could do something for him for which he would be grateful to her. These are notions that the good wife cannot resist. **14-16** It takes place now entirely as Abraham had imagined. Therefore the statements are repeated. Indeed Pharaoh himself even sends for her. This element is meant to laud the beauty of the matriarch. Sarah, admired by the Egyptians, is not envisioned as being veiled (so also in 24:15ff. and often; Benzinger[2], 78). The description of Pharaoh's behavior is very true to nature. Oriental kings behaved in this way. The beautiful women of their land whom they could possess enter their harems. The courtiers play the role of procurers. The well-known Egyptian fairy tale of the two brothers recounts a similar story (cf. comments on 39:1ff.; Ebers, *Ägypten und die Bücher Mosis*, 262-63; Heyes, *Bibel und Ägypten*, 18-19). Pharaoh's gifts are intended in lieu of Sarah—a remnant of earlier wife purchase. Yet the word "to buy" in reference to the acquisition of a wife is avoided here as usual. Among the gifts are <170> no horses. This is not because the legend knows that the Egypt of the time did not possess horses (Ebers, 265-66; Heyes, 30-31), for in this case horses would never be mentioned among Pharaoh's property (24:35; 32:15-16; cf. Job 1:3; 42:12). The nomads of the time have no horses (G. Jacob, *Beduinenleben*[2], 73). The legend's limited knowledge of Egypt is clear from the fact that it assumes camels in Egypt (as in Exod 9:3)—which were indeed there in prehistoric times (cf. G. Möller, MDOg [1906] no. 30, 16-17)—but which no longer existed in the historical period until they were reintroduced by the Persians (contra Heyes, 26ff.). This legend then has only hazy ideas about Egypt. It knows neither the name of the Pharaoh nor that of his capital city. The list of slaves in the midst of the animals (also in 24:35; 30:43) would not be objectionable in itself, but would only demonstrate the ancient estimation of slaves as property, wherein Israel does not differ from other ancient peoples. But the words "menservants and maidservants" disrupt the related "asses and she-asses" and are, therefore, probably an addition (Olshausen; Sievers II, 265). The Sam reading עבדים ושפחות והמרום ואתנות (Ball) is probably a secondary improvement. פַּרְעֹה is an Egyptian royal title (= Eg. *per'o* = "great house," like "the Sublime Porte"; cf., e.g., Steindorff, *Beiträge zur Assyriologie* 1:343). Meyer (*Israeliten*, 10, 20, 24-25) hypothesizes that the word originally characterized E and was inserted only secondarily in "J[1]." This hypothesis, if true, would also suggest that our section does not belong to the main strand of J (Meyer, *Israeliten*, 260n.3).

17-20 So far it has gone well for Abraham, but all the worse for Sarah. She is in the greatest danger of disappearing into Pharaoh's harem. This would be, however, a great disgrace for a "manned" Israelite woman (not for a virgin) who is to belong to no other man. The notion that the promise would thereby be placed in danger of remaining unfulfilled usually found here (so Franz Delitzsch) is not derived from the legend itself, but from the entire context of the Abraham narratives. It was, therefore, probably not the original intention. Yahweh then intervenes and assists Abraham in regaining his wife. The legend does not conceal Pharaoh's reproach of Abraham (vv 18-19). It naively presents Pharaoh's relative innocence (similarly in 26:10, even more distinctly in 20:9ff.). The naive portrayal of foreigners and enemies of the patriarchs, especially of Esau, is one of the patriarchal legends' great distinctions. On the other hand, it recounts that Pharaoh, actually innocent of adultery, is smitten by God and finally draws the shorter straw with Abraham. The variant in 20:7 tells the story in an even more offensive manner for our sensibilities. A popular religious attitude is expressed unabashedly here: Israel's opponents may be in the right or the wrong, it will go poorly for them in any case. For Yahweh is Israel's God. If they protest, the Israelite hearer takes up their words with scorn and derision (cf. 31:43; Haller, 114). Such legends show us how to understand the people's religious attitude so stringently combated by the prophets. Regarding Yahweh as the God who sends pestilence, see Greßmann, 85ff. וְאֶת־בֵּיתוֹ (v 17) is awkward and seems to be imported here from the variant in 20:17 (Kautzsch-Socin^{2} n. 55; Kittel). Of course, Pharaoh discerns from the plagues that he has committed a sin. This is the standard conclusion in antiquity. But how did he learn that he committed this sin against Sarah and that Sarah is the wife, not the sister of Abraham? <171> The variants respond to this question: through a divine revelation (20:3ff.), by chance (26:8). Our variant must also have originally answered this question. Good, old narratives do not leave such important ons open. We have identified a lacuna here, therefore. Originally—or so we may s...se—Pharaoh will have asked his wise men and magicians (cf. the very similar cases in 1 Sam 6; Jon 1:7ff.; further, Gen 41:8; Exod 7:11, etc.). Earliest Israel naturally believed that the nations also have their gods and oracles. Later times, however, took offense at this. In the Pentateuch, the "scribes and wise men" of Egypt remained only in passages in which they know nothing (Gen 41:8) or could not compete with Yahweh's mouthpieces (as in the Exodus narrative). In contrast, they have been expurgated here where they proclaim the truth. Or has the lacuna arisen because it was explicitly stated in this passage that Sarah was not Abraham's sister, which would collide then with 20:12? LXX adds ἐναντίον σου (= לְפָנֶיךָ) after אִשְׁתֶּךָ in v 19. The precondition for Pharaoh's statement is that the Egyptians also know that adultery is a sin. It is the universal conviction of all peoples who know patriarchal marriage. For the Egyptians, see the witnesses in Heyes, 38-39. "Take her, go," in v 19 is very brief. Pharaoh becomes gruff. Abraham rejoins not a word to Pharaoh's reproaches. The narrator states thereby that Pharaoh is actually in the right. At any rate, it is completely insignificant for the course of the narrative what Abraham may have said. The narrator does not present Abraham's thoughts on his "dismissal." This is the style of the ancient legend (cf. the introduction ¶3:12). The narrator, however, gives away what these thoughts were. That Pharaoh has Abraham taken across the border is by no means disgraceful in the legends' view but rather praises Abraham. Pharaoh learned how dangerous he is. Therefore he

takes care that no further injustice occur to him (עָלָיו v 20, to protect him) and brings him with sack and pack across the border (cf. the request of the Gadareneans, Mark 5:17). Concerning safe conduct in the ancient and modern Orient cf. Heyes, 39-40. Pharaoh does not dare to take the gifts from Abraham. With the last words—"and all his belongings"—intentionally placed at the end and repeated in 13:1, the narrator has a grin all over his face.

13:1 The conclusion of the legend, as often, after all danger, reestablishes the original circumstance. Abraham returns to the Negeb. The legend presupposes that he came from there and that his permanent residence was there. Here one would actually expect a comment that the famine (12:10) also passed now. The legend, however, is not concerned with this. It employed the famine as the motive for the journey to Egypt; it has the motive explaining the return (12:19b). It leaves the matter at that. וְלוֹט עִמּוֹ is a gloss. Here the redactor remembers Lot whom he had forgotten in the preceding.

2-4 *Transition to the following account.* Abraham's return to Bethel. The author (R^J) knows nothing more to report than what he took from 12:8. Only v 2 differs. It is the beginning of the account of the separation of Abraham and Lot. **2** Concerning the article in בַּמִּקְנֶה, etc., see §126m.

General Remarks Concerning the Legend of Abraham in Egypt

The legend does not respond to a definite question, and is, therefore, not etiological <172> in nature, nor does it seem to mirror historical events, although, of course, the colors are borrowed from the situation at the Egyptian-Canaanite border. In a few broader elements, the legend agrees with the Exodus narrative: the move to Egypt because of a famine, distress in Egypt, fortunate deliverance wherein the Egyptians suffer "plagues" and Israel becomes wealthy (cf. Reuss, AT 3:236n.5 and Steuernagel, *Israelitische Stämme* [1901], 100). Yet it should not be assumed that the Abraham legend has the same historical events in view, for similar immigrations and emigrations will have taken place frequently in Egypt, nor that J fashioned the pertinent elements of the Exodus account after our legend (contra Luther in Meyer, *Israeliten*, 122ff.). For more concerning the historical background, see the comments on chap. 20. On the whole, the legend will be of "novelistic" origins in Hebrew tradition and will have been applied secondarily to the patriarchs.

The narrative glorifies the cleverness of the father, the beauty and self-sacrifice of the mother, and, especially, the faithful assistance of Yahweh. The narrator enjoyed recounting the matriarch's encounter with serious danger. But after he had properly frightened his hearers, he recounted joyfully further how Yahweh intervened at the right time and Abraham finally left Egypt, feared as a man of God, together with his wife and rich possessions.

The legend is characterized by the clear arrangement of events, each of which always follows from the preceding (cf. the introduction ¶3:15). At the same time, it is characterized by its brevity. It is not stated, but presumed as self-evident, that Sarah acted according to Abraham's wish and pretended to be his sister. There is no word at all about Sarah's feelings, nor about what Abraham thought upon his dismissal, etc.

Characteristically for the religious spirit of the account, the ancestors' merits and God's faithfulness are praised alongside each other. The two do not interfere with one another at all in the ancient view. The same phenomenon occurs in the Noah account

) and especially in the Jacob legend. Indicative of the account's moral attitude, Abraham's lie is not perceived as unjust in any way. The old legend is not exactly sensi-ive in sexual matters either. To be sure it does not explicitly state what took place with Sarah in Pharaoh's harem—it would have seemed altogether too crude to state this in clear anguage—but we know what usually took place in the harem. In all of this, the narrative s the example of an ancient Hebrew legend. For more, see the comments on chap. 20.

The cheerful, even joking attitude that appears at the end of the legend is now everely dampened by association with the serious accounts, and especially with the pious eparture legend.

19. The Separation of Abraham and Lot in 13:2, 5-18 J^{a}

Source criticism. The narrative continues the legend of the migration of Abraham and ot from Haran to Bethel (12:1-8) and, simultaneously, introduces the visit of the three Abraham (18) and to Lot (19; cf. the "Composition of the Abraham Narratives," p. 59) and stems, therefore, from the Abraham-Lot legend cycle in J^{a}. The characteristic dication of J is יהוה (vv 10, 13, 18). The LXX readings ὡς ὁ παράδεισος τοῦ θεοῦ 10) and ἐναντίον τοῦ θεοῦ do not alter the identification of the chap. as J assured the context, especially not since both times the name of God appears in additions to e text. Concerning vv 14-17 see below.

Vv 2, 5, 7a constitute a unit. As long as Abraham and Lot were not too <173> rich, eir shepherds were able to get along easily. But when their wealth grew, there were con-cts between the shepherds over wells and pastures. In that hot land these are very ecious things on which the life of human and livestock depends. The Hebrew legend es to tell that the fathers were this rich (similarly elsewhere of Abraham, chap. 24; ar- hap. 26; and Jacob, 32:11). At the same time, relationships between peoples shine although in the form of family history. Multiplication of herds (and population) ces nomadic peoples to divide. "If Abraham and Lot had been only individuals with nilies and servants, there would have been room enough for both" (Reuß). Disputes, as visioned in v 7a, play a great role in the lives of nomads. The same motif occurs in the ry of Gerar (26:20ff; 21:25). Regarding the form אֹהָלִים see §93r. אֹהֶל means the t together with its occupants just as בַּיִת means the house together with the inhabi-ts. Vv 3, 4 belong to J^{r} (see the previous narrative).

V 6 is superfluous in the context of the narrative. The fact that the lack of room is cause of the bickering can already be understood from vv 2, 5, 7 and is made entirely r by vv 8, 9. Good narrative says nothing explicitly (contra Eerdmans, 11). Conse-ntly, v 6 is to be attributed to P (cf. below on the passage). V 6bβ, "so they could not ain together," cannot belong to J either (with Kautzsch[3] against Kautzsch-Socin) since ticipates v 7. The ancient narrator does not obviate his own point in this manner. V like 12:6b, is probably a gloss and stands at the wrong place. One would expect it v 5. "The Perizites," also mentioned with the Canaanites in 34:30 and Judg 1:4, seem the population of פְּרָזוֹת, open villages, in contrast to the citizens of the fortified s. According to Budde on Judg 1:5 and Meyer (*Israeliten*, 331n.1) it should be ounced פְּרִזִּי here, too.

8, 9 *Abraham's suggestion.* The German legend would recount here that the ancestors d the matter with weapons in a duel. The legends of Genesis, however, portray the

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that, although Esau-Edom is the older people, it is now far inferior to its brother Jacob-Israel in might and wealth. In this case, however, the narrators count Jacob as one of themselves and joyously report their own prominence. This situation is the source of the earthy, powerful humor which sounds through these narratives. The legend ridicules the stupid Esau who sold his entire future for a lintel dish and rejoices over the clever Jacob in whom the narrators recognize their own image. The legends belong, then, to the earliest, "earthy" type (cf. introduction ¶4:7). It is no wonder the concepts of right and wrong in these most ancient narratives differ from ours. One should simply accept this and not transform the cunning Jacob into a Christian. Nor should one measure and judge him by Christian standards or take offense at the fact that these narratives are full of humor.

Interpreters have often failed to understand the old legend by introducing spiritual ideas into it. The "birthright" for which Jacob outwitted Esau was the blessing of Abraham understood as the right to the promised salvation (Dillmann, Franz Delitzsch). But the old legend knows nothing of this. Only the latest redaction equates the blessing of Isaac and the blessing of Abraham (28:4 P), while these two blessings had nothing to do with one another in the old legends. The mixture of a later insertion which speaks of spiritual benefits and the ancient narrative which very naively speaks of wit and deceit creates a shrill dissonance. But the old legend is not guilty. For more concerning the humor in the Jacob narratives see the commentary on chap. 27.

41. Isaac and the People of Gerar 26:1-33 J^{r}

Source and composition. The source says יהוה (vv 2, 12, 22, 28, 29) and is, therefore, J. Additional linguistic evidences for J are מֹוֹבַת מַרְאֶה (v 7; cf. 24:16), הִשְׁקִיף (v 8), הֶעְתִּיק (v 22; cf. 12:8), קָרָא בְּשֵׁם יהוה (v 25), נָא (v 28), and בְּרוּךְ יהוה (v 29; cf. 24:31). E has the same account in reference to Abraham in 21:22ff. J recounts the same event once more in 12:10ff. and in 21:25ff. Since 12:10ff. and probably also 21:25ff. stem from J^{b}, the source of 26 could be J^{a}. Consideration of the context in which the account in 26 now stands in J, however, shows that it cannot belong to the dominant strand of J. It disrupts the Jacob-Esau narrative. In 26 Rebekah is still a young woman and Jacob and Esau have not yet been born, let alone grown up. In order to eliminate these difficulties, it has been assumed that the account in 26 was originally before 25:22-23 in J and was only secondarily displaced here by a redactor (cf. Wellhausen, *Composition*^{3}, 28). It is more likely that 26 was inserted here from another, related, book of legends. The passage is printed above in the font employed for J^{a}.

In its current state, the chapter makes the impression of a mosaic (Franz Delitzsch). This character results not only from a few additions (cf. below) because even after their removal the chapter remains rather motley. It contains five parts: (1) Isaac's move to Gerar because of a divine revelation (vv 1-6); (2) Rebekah's adventure in Gerar (vv 7-11); (3) Isaac's wealth and his move from Gerar (vv 12-17a); (4) well disputes (vv 17b-22); (5) the treaty in Beersheba (vv 23-33). The variants (mentioned above), which form a tighter unity, demonstrate that originally nos. 2 and 3, the events in <299> Gerar, and likewise nos. 4 and 5, narratives concerning wells in the vicinity of Gerar, belong together. Our narrator separated nos. 2 and 3, originally a coherent narrative, for reasons presented in the discussion of Gen 20 (pp. 223-25). Nos. 4 and 5 are still interrelated. No. 4 speaks of strife with Gerar, no. 5 of the treaty which brought the strife to an end. The

narrator felt that the various narratives did not form a proper unit and, therefore, provided a binding thread. Consequently, he prefixed a divine revelation (lacking in the variants) in no. 1. God appears to Isaac, asks him to remain in Gerar, and promises to protect and bless him. The subsequent material then shows how this promise was fulfilled. The endangered honor of the wife is preserved. Yahweh blesses his field so that he becomes wealthy. He allows him to find wells everywhere so that the people of Gerar must finally enter into a treaty with him. This strand is, admittedly, rather thin. In the account of the danger of the ancestress, the notion of Yahweh's protection is not explicitly apparent. The passage has not, therefore, become a completely cohesive composition.

Sievers (2:308ff.), who attributes the chap. from v 23 on to other sources, has, however, overlooked the relationship at hand. The covenant follows the dispute; the wells which belong undoubtedly to Isaac came after those in dispute. In addition, Abimelech's speech (vv 28-29) makes explicit reference to the preceding. Isaac is and remains Yahweh's blessed (vv 3, 12, 29; יהוה עִמּוֹ v 23 ‖ וְאֶהְיֶה עִמְּךָ v 3). Isaac accuses (v 27) the Gerarites of driving away his servants (vv 16, 19-21) and they attempt to gloss over the events (v 29).

I. **1-6** *Isaac moves to Gerar.* V **1aα** belongs, as the variant in 12:10 demonstrates, to the following legend as its introduction (contra Dillmann, who attributes to clause to E). V 1aβ,γ refers back to 12:10 J^b, and stems, therefore, from R^J. **1b** Isaac will have previously resided in southern Canaan, perhaps in Beerlahairoi (25:11). Vv **2-5** have been extensively expanded by a later hand (Dillmann, etc.). Evidence for this conclusion includes the following: "All of these lands" (vv 3b, 4) in reference to the regions of Canaan is later (hyperbolic) diction (1 Chron 13:2; 2 Chron 11:23). Furthermore, according to the context, God promises the possession of Gerar, specifically, with the statement, "I will give you all of these lands." The old legend, however, is not at all of the opinion in the subsequent material that Gerar later belonged to Israel. Instead, Gerar is an allied, but independent city. The addition is further discernible in that it refers back to the Abraham narrative (vv 3, 5). הִתְבָּרֵךְ in v 4 (22:18, J נִבָרְכוּ) is characteristic. In v 5 the expression שָׁמַר מִשְׁמֶרֶת, originally a technical term for the service of the priests in the sanctuary, further points to a later period. The list "commandments, statutes, and laws" is deuteronomistic. The idea that Abraham fulfilled so many commandments does not suit the spirit of the old legend, but manifests later (legal) piety. The final indication of the late origin of this addition is עֵקֶב אֲשֶׁר (as in 22:18). Only vv 2aα, 3a are the property of the original narrator. Yahweh appears to Isaac and commands him to remain in Gerar. Then Yahweh will be with him and <300> bless him. The continuation in vv 12, 28, 29 indicates that this promise (vv 3ab) also belongs to J.

2b "Take up residence in the land of which I will tell you," presumes Isaac has not yet arrived in his new homeland and is, therefore "incompatible with vv 3a and 1b" (Dillmann) The statement recalls in form 22:2b E. It could be, then, a fragment from J. In this case, it would probably have been spoken in Beersheba where, according to 46:1-4, E recounted an appearance of God to Isaac. V 2aβ, "do not go to Egypt," may also belong to E (Dillmann). A later editor could not let pass God's promise to Isaac to bless him—a promise which in the original context refered only to the blessing in farming and discovering water sources—without inserting the much more precious blessing he knew from the Abraham narratives (15:5; 22:16ff.; 12:3). For הָאֵל in vv 3, 4, Sam reads הָאֱלֹה.

II. **7-11** *Rebekah's adventure.* The account is compared with its variants, 12:10ff. J^{b} and 20 E, above (pp. 223-24). There, too, the character of the version at hand is established. It attempts to eliminate the objectionable features of the original account and to turn everything to the glory of the ancestor. Remarkably, the narrator regarded adultery as objectionable, but not Isaac's lie (Haller, 113). **7** שָׁאַל לְ means "to ask about something" (32:20). Sam, LXX, and Pesh add הִיא after אִשְׁתּוֹ (Ball, Kittel). Characteristically for this recension, too, only "the men of the city" ask about the patriarch's wife, while in the other recension the king himself desires her. This element is a little more respectable and surely secondary.

8 The—very idyllic—scene is probably to be envisioned as follows. Isaac and Abimelech live across from each other on a narrow alley where one can see from the window of one house into the other (cf. the similar scene in 2 Sam 11:2). This motif is the only concrete element in the otherwise very bland recension and is not a bad device. וַיַּרְא portrays the surprise. The element מְצַחֵק is derived from the name Isaac. One is to imagine that they caressed in such a way that the marital relationship of the two was unmistakable. Regarding the expression צָחַק see 39:14, 17. Modesty accounts for the fact that the couple are said to have caressed inside the house (cf. comments on 9:21, following Haller, 100). **10** The statement assumes that touching a married woman is a serious crime. Contact with a virgin is not so bad. If necessary, one can work it out later with her relatives. Concerning כִּמְעָט שָׁכַב see §106p. Concerning וְהֵבֵאתָ see §112h.

III. **12-17a** *Isaac's wealth and departure from Gerar.* **12-14a** This narrator explains Isaac's wealth, a feature necessary to the legend, differently than the variants. It is acquired by farming and Yahweh's blessing. Farming, <301> rarely explicitly attributed to the patriarchs in Genesis (30:14; 37:7), appears here as a particular exception, but is also casionally undertaken by nomads (analogies in Dillmann). Therefore, it does not exactly -epart from the image of the patriarchs, especially since the "city" Gerar would not have been possible if fields had not been in the vicinity. Here the element, however, is only a means for the narrator to avoid a dilemma: he must explain Isaac's wealth somehow. Concerning Bedouin life and the patriarchs' farming compare the introduction ¶4:2, 5. "Hundredfold" harvest is an immense exaggeration. Today, on the fertile Plain of Sharon, wheat produces eightfold on average and barley fifteenfold (Benzinger^{2}, 142). Regarding the participle in הָלוֹךְ וְגָדֵל see §113u. Yet one could also read וְגָדַל with Ball. **14b-17a** Isaac's departure from Gerar is motivated here by the envy of the Philistines. Vv 15 and 18 stem from R^{J}. The verses are intended to harmonize the Abraham narrative, according to which Abraham dug these wells, and the subsequent Isaac narrative, which attributes them to Isaac. The editor must, therefore, have read in his text about the same wells in the Abraham narrative (cf. comments on 21:25). The insertion has a similar purpose, then, to that of vv 1aβ,γ and probably stems from the same hand, R^{J}. The means he devised is not unskillful since the context already reported the envy of the Philistines. The insertion betrays itself through (1) its reference to an earlier narrative and (2) the fact that in the subsequent account that wells are not redug, but simply newly dug (cf. Wellhausen, *Composition*^{3}, 20-21). **18** Hebr reads בימי while Sam, LXX, and Vulg read עבדי (Ball, Kittel).

IV. **17b-22** *Disputes over wells.* The narrator takes the names of the disputed wells, Esek, Sitnah, Rehoboth, from the old legend. **17b** The valley of Gerar in the old legend

is the *Wâdi Ĝerûr*. Esek (not yet rediscovered) lies in this *wâdi*. Thence, Isaac moves farther away from Gerar northward to Sitnah (according to Palmer, *Wüstenwanderung Israels*, 297, the *wâdi esh-Schutein*, northeast of *er-Ruḥêbe*, but better sought south of *er-Ruḥêbe*), then to Rehoboth (equated with *er-Ruḥêbe*). An etymological legend has been developed from the names of the wells: "quarrel," "enmity," "open spaces." A dispute over a well is easily comprehensible given the circumstances of the steppe. Water is very precious, for on it depends the life of the plants, animals, and people. Especially when "the spring pasture withers and the pools of rainwater have dried up, the tribe must stop in the vicinity of a well from which it watered its flocks" (Jacob, 41). Consequently, disputes about wells will have been very common in the accounts of the nomads. Such an account of a dispute over water can be found in Stumme, *Märchen der Berbern*, 62. <302> Whoever finds a well, and especially a well with living (i.e., spring) water, perceives it as a special divine mercy. Characteristically, Isaac acquiesces every time. He is as accommodating as Abraham (13:8ff.) and avoids a struggle like Jacob (27:43; 31:20ff.; 33:1-2) **21** LXX reads וַיִּחְפֹּר יִצְחָק מִשָּׁם וַיַּעְתֵּק (cf. Ball). **22** Regarding the accentuation of רְחֹבוֹת see §72l.

V. **23-33** *Treaty of Beersheba.* **23** Now Isaac moves, once again in a northerly direction, to Beersheba. *Bîr es-Seba'* (equated with Beersheba) lies at an altitude 85m lower than *er-Ruḥêbe* (=Rehoboth; cf. the map by Fischer and Guthe). The narrator assumes that Beersheba lies at a higher altitude (עֲלֵה). But since he also confuses Gerar with the Philistine city of Gerar (cf. above pp. 218-19), an error can be attributed to him here, too. **24, 25a** In Beersheba Yahweh appears to him, promises to bless him, and Isaac builds him an altar there. This passage is an insertion: the altar cannot be set up before the tent; the natural sequence is, rather, the reverse. The legend of Beersheba in its original form bases the sacredness of the site on the fact that the ancestor took an oath there. The appearance of Yahweh (vv 24, 25a) has the same purpose and, therefore, disrupts what follows. The editor betrays his later time by recalling the Abraham narrative (as in the insertion in vv 3b-5) and understanding the blessing, not like the old legend in reference to the discovery of water, but in reference to something broader, higher. The editor, probably the same as the editor of vv 3b-5, imitates especially 26:3a in the blessing (v 24) and 12:8 in the account (v 25a). The removal of the insertion greatly improves the coherence of the passage. V **25b** prepares for v 32. According to the context, Abimelech and Isaac did not know about this new well.

26-31 The covenant with Abimelech. To this point, Abimelech has not permitted Isaac very many priveleges and has driven him from his legal property. But this did not harm Isaac. Yahweh let him find new wells again and again. Thus Abimelech recognizes that Isaac is "blessed by Yahweh." This notion that Yahweh's blessing can be shown especially in finding wells bears the color of the place (the steppe) and the time (antiquity). Thus Abimelech takes pains to establish a good relationship with such a blessed one. Here, too, as in E (21:23), the notion that Isaac's descendants will one day be much mightier and will then be bound by this oath can be heard. **26** אֲחֻזַּת is a form like גְּלֻלַּת (Dillmann). מֵרֵעֵהוּ "friend" (for the etymology, cf. Gesenius-Buhl[14]) is the title of the trusted counselor of the kings (2 Sam 15:37; 16:16; 1 Kgs 4:5; 1 Chron 27:33), as also later among the Persians, under <303> Alexander the Great, among the Seleucids and Lagides (cf. W. Grimm in *Kurzgef. exeget. Handbuch zu den Apokryphen* [1853] on 1 Macc 2:18), and

perhaps already among the Egyptians (where *rḥ śtn* seems to mean "acquaintance of the king"), and in the Amarna correspondence (Winckler 181:11; Knidtzon 288:11, where *ruḫi šarri* has this sense and could be formed on the analogy of the Egyptian title), and is thus a title attested throughout Near Eastern high civilization. **28** LXX, Pesh, and Vulg have only one of the words בֵּינֵינוּ and בֵּינוֹתֵינוּ (Ball, Kittel). According to Sievers (2:311) בֵּינַי is used of entities understood collectively, בֵּינוֹת of two parties considered separately and, therefore, בֵּינֵינוּ וּבֵינֶךָ is a gloss on בֵּינוֹתֵינוּ. **29** Concerning חַסֶּשׂה with *sere* see §75hh. According to **30, 31** the covenant ceremony consisted of two parts: (1) a common meal in the evening and (2) the oath on the following morning. These two elements occur in the reverse order in 31:53-54. Unfortunately we hear nothing of the rituals executed. They are assumed to be known. Vv **32, 33** are intended to explain the name Beer-sheba as "oath well" and, at the same time, to show why this well remained to Isaac. Now, when there exists a treaty with Gerar, the people of Gerar do not dare to touch Isaac's property. If the text is correct, it should certainly be pronounced שְׁבָעָה. The narrator thinks that *šebu'a* later became *šeba'* (Reuß). But it may be that one should read שֶׁבַע and understand it in the same sense. The rabbis, with no sense for the context of the legend, read *šib'a* "seven" following 21:28ff.

General Remarks concerning the Account of the Treat at Beersheba

1. *Variants.* The account is preserved in three variants: in E 21:22-24, 27, 31; in J^{b} 21:25, 26, 28, 29, 30, 32, 33; and as a supplement in J ("J^{r}") 26:17b, 19-23, 25b-33. A fourth variant is presumed by E (46:1ff.; cf. comments on the passage). The variants agree on the major point that a treaty was made between the ancestor and Gerar at Beersheba and in many details. There is also agreement in diction: אֱלֹהִים עִמְּךָ (21:22 E) and יהוה עִמָּךְ (26:28 J^{r}); the clauses in 21:23 E and in 26:29 J^{r}; עַל־אֹדוֹת הַבְּאֵר אֲשֶׁר (26:32 J^{r}) and עַל־אֹדוֹת בְּאֵר[וֹת] אֲשֶׁר הָפִים (21:25 J^{b}). The variants have a complicated interrelationship. Now they differ from one another; now they agree; each of the variants has its peculiarities. E offers (as far as we can see) only a poor conclusion to the narrative. He omitted the other wells which may have lost interest for the later period. In contrast, he preserved an old element by not calling Abimelech a Philistine (Wellhausen, *Composition*^{3}, 18). On the other hand, he agrees with J^{r} in explaining Beersheba as "oath well" and in linking this account with the other concerning the ancestor's stay in Gerar. Finally, he also has an element in common with J^{b}: Both call the ancestor Abraham, not Isaac. In contrast, the second variant of E, presumed in 46:1ff., derived the site from Isaac, as does J^{r}. J^{r} and J^{b} were very similar in overall structure: after several wells continue to be disputed, they finally made the treaty in Beersheba; according to both, Gerar is a Philistine city; both emphasize that Beersheba belongs to the ancestor, not to Gerar. On the other hand, they differ in details: J^{r} oath well, <304> J^{b} seven well; J^{r} Isaac, J^{b} Abraham; J^{r} associates both narratives with Gerar, J^{b} separates them and recounts the first in relation to Pharaoh. We may see this transfer to Pharaoh as a young element in J^{b} (cf. above p. 224). On the other hand, the fact the he still clearly knows that Beersheba is a sacred site is an old element in J^{b}. He even knows the tamarisk and the name of the local numen *'el 'olam*. But J^{r}, too, has preserved a characteristic element in the name of the "friend" Ahuzzath. It can be inferred from this state of affairs that the E variant is generally younger than those of J^{r} and J^{b}. At the same time, this passage also makes it

Notes from *Underdogs and Tricksters*

By Susan Niditch

p. 24 Gunkel finds the wife-sister tale in Gen. 12 to be earliest.

Samuel Sandmel suggests that the tales exemplify inner-biblical aggadah. One version corrects and explains another.

p. 25 Robert Polzin finds recurring messages in the three versions concerning adultery, wealth, progeny, and God's blessing

Are the wife-sister tales oral variants, written ones, or something between the two?

Gen. 12:10-20

p. 31 The essence of the story is thus reiterated in essentially similar language three times at key junctures in the narrative. These repetitions underline important motifs in the story, the setting in a strange land, the beauty of the wife, the wife-as-sister deception, a stranger's taking her to wife, and the success of the true husband. Such repetitions unify the narrative simply by reminding the reader of the heart of the matter, combining and recombining to create major stages in the plot. More subtly, they emphasize important directions and nuances in the tale. The very plan to save the hero's life and better his situation.

The language that doubly emphasizes Abram's hoped for and realized success for himself and his family - "that it may go well with me because of you" (12:13), "and he made it go well with Abram because of her" (12:16) - first ironically contrasts with the singly mentioned plagues suffered by Pharaoh's household and then even more ironically with Abram's own ignominious departure from Pharaoh.

Economical style is, of course, one of the marks of oral composition, but one cannot leap to an assertion that Gen. 12:10-20 was orally composed. The presence of repetition is not proof enough. It is, however, traditional in style, exhibiting a use of language common to skilled narrators of folktale.

Gen. 20:1-18

p. 34-35 Thus language is used in a rhetorically clever and skillful way in Gen. 20, but the rhetorical techniques are different from those of chapter 12. They employ a selective repetition that really is a form of variation in language rather than traditional economy or thrift.

Another important feature in Gen. 20 is the length of speeches by Abimelech and Abraham, this in contrast to the terse communications of hero and adversary in the account in Gen. 12.

One is justified in speaking of a baroque style in Gen. 20, a fancier or more flowery style. this, combined with the composer's varied use of language and rather skilled rhetorical techniques, leads comfortably to suggestions of courtly composition.

Gen. 26:1-17

p. 36 Whether or not the author employs a traditional mode of interaction between the deity and the patriarch or quotes a now fixed Abraham tradition, the effect is to place the son in the light of the father and to create parallels between the experience of the father and the son.

p. 36-37 The covenantal promise scene of chapter 12 precedes a wife-sister tale as in Gen. 26, but that in the latter the promise is an integrated part of the tale, the reason for staying in Gerar, where the experience with Abimelech takes place. "I will make your descendants as numerous as the stars of heaven" (26:4) is a clear echo of 22:17. "In your descendants will be blessed all the peoples of the earth".

p. 37 The covenantal scene and the following tale are linked by language of land-dwelling, abiding, and sowing.

p. 38 The author of Gen. 26:1-17 employs language to emphasize the distinction between the voice of God and the human voice. Gen. 26:1-17 exhibits neither the economy of language of Gen. 12:10-20 nor the elegance of Gen. 20. Certain repeated terms serve to echo key themes. Possibly exhibiting a preference for Deuteronomic and exilic usage, the author's style is anthological.

An economical traditional style in chapter 12 contrasts with a baroque style in chapter 20 and an anthological style in chapter 26. One cannot leap to the

conclusion that the account in chapter 12 is orally composed; one should not leap to the conclusion that this account is necessarily earlier than the others. It is certain, however, that the authors of these variations on the wife-sister theme cannot be the same.

p. 44 The narrative pattern of Gen 26, described in generic terms, reveals a tale that never develops; problems and threats are counteracted before leading to complications. The plot is so tightly controlled that the tale as tale is not, in fact, very exciting.

SPECIFIC ELEMENTS - MORPHOLOGICAL

Gen. 12:10-20

p. 44 Genesis 12:10-20 is an underdog tale, one that marks a progression from lower to higher status. Cinderella. The tales of Joseph in Egypt, of Jacob at his father-in-law's, of Esther at the court of Ahasuerus.

The tale is rendered into a variety of the "underdog" morphology called "the trickster." The raise in status for the heroes is followed by an unmasking of the plot, the deception, that helped them to achieve initial success. The plot revealed, the heroes' status is again reduced. The jig is up, but the protagonists survive to be involved in another plot, in the sense of both narrative and deception.

p. 45 MacLinscott Ricketts suggests that "the trickster is man...struggling by himself to become what he feels he must become - master of his universe."

Deceiver, creator, acculturator, unmasked liar, survivor - these qualities of the trickster do apply to the deceiving, ethically ambiguous survivor Abram of Gen. 12:10-20.

p. 47 It is often asked how the patriarch Abram can be involved in a lie. The writer of Gen 20, as noted by Samuel Sandmel, was himself not comfortable in telling the story this way. The problem should, however, be posed differently. Abram of Genesis 12 succeeds via tricks because he is a trickster, but why does such a morphology appeal to an Israelite writer?

p. 48 It is tempting to suggest that Israelites saw themselves as perpetual underdogs, because of the historical circumstances of their origins, because of the ups and downs of their subsequent history.

In identifying with the trickster one is enabled better to accept one's fortunes as a given and to be assured that if one does not succeed one at least survives.

Gen. 20

p. 50 The morphological structure of Gen. 20 is designed to create surprises. A slow and ordinary beginning leads to unexpected reversals and twists but ultimately to a return to the opening situation and to a revelation that the actor and the reactor in the narrative, on some level, were both "right," both violators and violated.

This tale evokes the trickster. There is no doubt that the essence of Gen 20, like that of Gen. 12, evokes the trickster, with its "wrong" configurations of relationships based on misinformation.

There are important differences, however. First, characters of the tale do not undergo an improvement and/or subsequent reduction in social status, such alterations in status being important fixtures of the trickster morphology found in Gen. 12. Gen. 20 emphasizes the maintenance of proper order in the social relationships between characters of the tale, the violation of this order, and its restoration. The tale's interest ultimately is in the status quo; it ends in resolution, harmony, and restoration; all is as it was. The disruption of a state of equilibrium is, in fact, the central problem of the tale.

p. 51 The further effect of this narrative arrangement is to make the hero's status - lowly or princely or lowly again - much less an issue. The central problem of the tale is not that of the initial actor but that of the person who reacts to him, who unwittingly creates a state of disequilibrium.

Though the deception/nondeception contributes to the tale's dramatic style, it also contributes to the central themes of order/disorder. A nagging source of imbalance - the discontinuity between the hero's statement and the facts - is avoided.

The complex and sophisticated morphological design of Gen. 20 and the emphasis on status quo, combined with the baroque style of the narrative,

contrast sharply with the trickster tale of Gen. 12. Gen. 20 is not as "traditional" a tale as Gen. 12:10-20 and seems less an underdog tale than the other versions; it is the least morphologically assignable to the category. Such a tale is more imaginable in a court setting, produced for members of the establishment.

Gen. 26:1-17
Gen. 26, like Gen. 12, traces a pattern from marginal status to improvement indicative of the underdog tale. Also found is the deception and the deception uncovered, often the mark of the trickster.

p. 52 In contrast to Gen. 12, where the deception leads to the heroes' improvement and the uncovering to their reduction in status, the uncovering of the deception in Gen. 26 precedes the improvement in the heroes' status. The arrangement of specific elements in Gen. 26 thus presents an underdog tale but not necessarily a trickster tale.

TYPOLOGICAL LEVEL

Gen. 12:10-20
p. 54 Having he protagonists be husband and wife and the antagonist a threat to the life of the male partner sets up an especially effective us-them dichotomy. The little family is a whole, some source of security in an insecure situation. The transformation of the wife into a temporary sister via deception appears to be an attempt to maintain family cohesion while obtaining the means of overcoming the family's difficulties. In fact, however, the heroes end up exchanging one sort of marginality for another. Abram remains a marginal person, whether a wanderer facing starvation or a brother-in-law to the king, for his status rests upon the unsolid ground of deception. This deception is guaranteed to continue his ambiguous status, to keep things out of joint.

Scholars have long noted certain ethical inconsistencies in the tale and wondered about God's role. First, the hero is pictured assuming that the foreigners would not take a married stranger's wife, but would prefer murder to adultery. Even more interesting is the antagonist's scolding of the hero, "Why did you not tell me that she is your wife?" (12:18) There is a clear attitude of opposition to adultery here, but also an assumption that all people are subject to this antiadultery command, even kings-perhaps especially

kings. Recall Samuel's warning about the women-stealing tendencies of kings in 1 Samuel 8 and, more specifically, the case of David and Bathsheba. In Gen. 12, a foreign monarch is shown to be more fastidious than the Judaean king.

p. 55 Secondly, the one who is punished is not the trickster but the monarch who commits adultery. In some sense, marriage to the foreigner does not count as the real thing; it is an acceptable means to an end, and one is lead to believe that the hero would have remained in this situation of newly acquired status, content forever, had his scheme not been uncovered. The would-be helper, in fact, becomes the spoiler. The was the plan is uncovered and by whose intervention turns this tale into religious literature.

Gen. 20

p. 55 It might be suggested that the author of Gen. 20 portrays Abraham as an even more subtle con man than does the author of Gen. 12; he deceives by telling the truth or half-truth. However, the declaration that Sarah is his half sister comes at a point of genuine heart-baring by Abraham, a prelude to resolution in the tale. This declaration, along with the hero's description of his inner fears and motivations, is designed to create sympathy for the hero, a hero so scrupulous that even a deception planned in self-defense is a partial truth.

p. 56 The portrayal of the monarch in this tale is as interesting as the portrayal of husband and wife. He is scrupulously honest. The divine being directly reveals the truth to this person. The effect, as in Gen. 12, is to show the foreigner's implicit fear of God. The character who should be playing the role of adversary plays a veritable patriarchal role in his close and positive relationship with the divine. Implicit here is a certain respect for people such as Abimelech who are in positions of power, a respect that is not grudging or implicitly mocking but genuine. It is also significant that he is a non-Israelite. Such people are capable of deserving respect, human and divine. As noted in the morphological analysis, the should-be "adversary" in Gen. 20 is the victim, his problem and its rectification a focus of the tale equally important to the focus on the hero and his wife. This is a tale without a villain.

The woman-taking motif is also of special note. The "taking" is to be understood as a literal transporting of her person, not a euphemism for consummation of the marriage. As in character portrayals of the hero and his

adversary, a "squeaky cleanness" is attached to the "wife stealing" itself. Nothing happens conjugally, according to the narrator, Abimelech, and God (Gen. 20:4-6). The author here contrasts with the earthier composer of the trickster tale in Gen. 12.

p. 57 The hero's gain is genuine compensation and not ill-begotten goods from a successful trickster's ploy.

The heroes of Gen. 20 remain in a position of strength and confidence.

An examination of typological motifs further strengthens the impression of a courtly writer of the kind imagined in a J or E. The heroes are portrayed as royalty; respect for authority is strong; morality is conventional; the ethics of hero and foreign counterpart above reproach; the tale itself neat as a pin.

Gen. 26:1-17

p. 58 Note that the heroine is never taken in any sense by a foreigner. When contrasted with the other accounts, Gen. 26:1-17 exemplifies the way in which motifs that are thematically central in one tale may provide entertaining, supportive, but noncentral material in another. Whereas the story line of Gen. 12 is husband and wife trick Pharaoh out of wealth by convincing him that the wife is an eligible sister, the story line of Gen. 26 is husband and wife succeed by protection and blessing of a divine donor.

INDIVIDUAL LEVEL

Gen. 12:10-20

p. 59 The tale becomes especially significant when attached to these first ancestral heroes. Though modern readers might be tempted to suggest that Sarai is treated life a mere possession - more old-fashioned ones, that Sarai is willing to sacrifice herself for her husband - the language of the account suggests that Abram relates to Sarai lovingly and implies that they undertake the trick together. Abram praises his wife, "You are a beautiful woman" (12:11). He asks for cooperation and does not demand. "Please say you are my sister" (12:13). One has to assume that Sarai is his tacit accomplice.

Though Egypt is a traditional place for refuge during famines, its association in this tale with the heroes' acquired riches and their hasty departure

surrounded by hostility surely evokes the exodus. The evocation of exodus is further conveyed by the plagues that lead to the heroes' being sent forth.

p. 60 God's role as helper/rescuer can be viewed as that of a spoiler. God waits until the hero becomes rich before interrupting the plot. God is the power behind the tale, the tricksters' controller. He neatens and organizes; his preferences define protagonists and antagonists and are to be identified with those of the writer.

How does Pharaoh know that the plagues have to do with Sarai's unacceptability as a wife? Pharaoh actually states that he has come to realize that Sarai is Abram's wife and that adultery is the cause of his problems.

Gen. 26:1-17
p. 61 Another detail that sets this account apart from the others is the ordinary way in which the deception is uncovered, through the ruler's observation of a romantic interlude between Rebecca and Isaac.

CONCLUSIONS
p. 62 The constellation of individual elements (Pharaoh/Egypt, plagues, hasty departure) leads one to conclude that it was composed after the formation of the Exodus tradition, providing an allusion in a trickster tale to the weightier epic. Its lack of bitterness toward foreign monarchs and particularly toward Egypt itself may imply this piece comes from a period of relative security, certainly from a period in which exodus and conquest a part of the past integrated into a literary topos.

p. 63 The underdog-trickster tale in Gen. 12 and its not-quite-underdog relative in Gen. 20 point to two different sorts of authors. The latter has a marked interest in the high status and fine moral qualities of the heroes and ultimately tells a tale about the threat to the status quo and its restoration.

Theologically, there are subtle differences among the tales. The deity of Gen. 20 speaks to the human king in a dream, omniscient, omnipotent, but understanding. In Gen. 12, God, though powerful, appears only in the wings, as plague sender. He is the trickster's helper and the barely mentioned controller of the plot. In Gen. 20 God becomes the spokesman for restoration.

Gen. 26:1-17, an underdog tale, concentrates more on the divine helper and the reliability of his promise than upon wife-sister motifs. With an even greater covenantal emphasis than Gen. 20, reflected not only in the structure of motifs at all levels but also in the very language of the piece, Gen. 26 is the most heavily theological of the three.

p. 64 Except for 26:1 Isaac has no adequate scene of covenant making with God. In fact, this tale is his Gen. 12 and Gen. 22 in one, with its promises of land and progeny and threat of possible removal of a family member important for the continuation of blessing. No wonder its language evokes these two scenes. The author of Gen. 26 is strongly interested in echoing traditions and in making a place for Isaac in the tradition, a theologically motivated writer interested first and foremost in issues of covenant.

As in Gen 20, the ruler is respectful of proper sexual ethics and conscious of the sin of adultery, but it is noteworthy that Abimelech's character is far less developed than is his scrupulous alter ego in Gen. 20 or even the brusque Pharaoh painted in quick strokes in Gen 12. No character is developed in Gen 26 - all is subordinated to the covenantal frame that is the author's main interest.

Three tales present themselves, one popular, one courtly-baroque, one anthological-theological, distinct compositions that share motifs at various levels of narration but exhibit great variation at each level.

p. 65 There existed in Israel throughout the centuries different sorts of tale-tellers, popular ones adhering to one style of presentation, courtly ones fulfilling another set of expectations in content and taste, and those whose purpose was homiletical, more thoroughly religious, who tell stories in terms of God's covenant with Israel.
p. 66 The image of a wife declared to be a sister and actual or feared marital relations with foreigners are, however, found all three. These motifs express deep concerns about Israelite identity and have to do ultimately with exogamy and endogamy, with steering the proper course between marriage inside the group and marriage outside the group, with the fear of incest and the fear of foreigners. At issue are maintenance of the group and its culture and the group's relations with the outside world, its horizons, cultural, social, and economic. All three tales raise "us-them" problems, resolving them in different ways.

The wife-sister tales ultimately provide modes for the ways in which the "us" and the "them," as variously defined, relate to one another in realms of social reality.

title

THE GENESIS OF ETHICS

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First Edition

For Sandy,
Gen. 2:23

2

Abraham and Sarah—On the Road

Jews do not believe in astrology, or so my colleague and teacher Joe Lukinsky reminds me. This is not to say that there aren't plenty of Jews who read their horoscopes daily. What Rabbi Lukinsky is thinking of is a Talmudic adage that says "There is no *mazal* for the Jews." Now, while some folks might translate from the Yiddish and think this means that Jews just don't have any luck, in fifth-century Babylonia it meant something different. In a land ruled by Magi and under the influence of the stars, as it were, the rabbis insisted: Jews don't have *mazal,* they have no constellation, no sign.

Now, lest we all fret over vanished opening lines for the singles' scene, Lukinsky is quick to point out that while rabbinic Jews do not have astrology, they do have the weekly Torah reading cycle. This is particularly true of all the Jews who have been Bar or Bat Mitzvah. At the tender age of twelve or thirteen, kids are called upon to read in public from an unpunctuated, unvoweled Hebrew scroll, written on parchment with a quill. It's quite a rite of passage, and those who have done it, even those who have done it and never again stepped foot in a synagogue, are likely to remember their *parashah,* the Torah reading for their Bar or Bat Mitzvah week. Years later they can still say, My *parashah* was *Vaera* or *Pinhas,* or any of the other fifty-four weekly Torah readings in the annual cycle. I imagine them at cocktail parties, at bars in Soho, at the local Barnes and Noble, sidling up to an attractive single and asking, "Hey, cutie, what's your *parashah?*"

I am acutely aware of this, not only because I am single, but because I have been singularly shaped by my *parashah.* Of course, I had no idea as a kid of thirteen that the choice of my Bar Mitzvah reading would shape my life in the way it did—to be honest, I don't know whether it's karma or coincidence that has led me to a career based on my Torah reading. My Bar Mitzvah *parashah* is (not "was," but "is," as it remains so in a very active sense) *Lekh Lekha,* that section beginning at Genesis 12:1, the so-called Call of Abraham and the subsequent events that unfold. It is here that I begin discussion of the "moral dilemmas" in Genesis.

I've used this portion of Genesis over the past decade in at least seven previous study groups. It works well, it's a good jumping-off point. No complex creation stories or messy floods to muddy the waters of our discussion, just good old family conflict, the kind all of us are experts in. And what a family conflict this narrative begins with; it's the stuff of *Geraldo* and *Oprah,* or maybe a good soap opera. I know, we could call it *Dynasty:* a rich family, four generations, interactions with world leaders, beautiful women. Instead of Alexis and Krystle, we'll have Sarah and Hagar. . . .

Before my fantasies grow too baroque (although I quite like the soap opera idea, Genesis having a much longer run than most—in fact, it's in its zillionth rerun), maybe we should turn to the text of my *parashah* and follow the basic plot. Some text "facts" to inform our discussion, if you please. To be completely honest, the Scripture I will quote starts a few verses earlier, back in Genesis 11 (the Torah reading there is named after Noah). That way, we'll have a running start to Abraham's journey, and the introductions and background necessary to follow the characters through the plot.

When I read these words at age thirteen, I thought I knew what the story was all about. Thirty years later, the words are the same, but the story seems radically different. It's no surprise that I've changed in thirty years—Kohlberg's developmental theory assures us that that should happen. High school, college, graduate school, marriage, two kids, a divorce, and sixty pounds later, the narrative isn't as innocent as it was when I was a Bar Mitzvah boy. Not Abraham, nor Sarah, nor I seem to be saints anymore. To be honest, it's hard to listen to the Torah reading in the synagogue these days, it just cuts too close to

the bone. I suppose that's why Jews read it every year, year in, year out. Same words, different story. Here we go.

This is the history of Terah: Terah fathered Abraham, Nahor, and Haran, and Haran fathered Lot. Haran died before his father, Terah, in his birthplace, Ur Khasdim. Abraham and Nahor took wives. Abraham's wife was Sarah . . . Sarah was barren, she had no child. Terah took his son, Abraham, his grandson, Lot, and his daughter-in-law, Sarah, and went with them from Ur Khasdim to go to the land of Canaan. But when they got to Kharan, they settled there. Terah lived two hundred and five years and he died in Kharan.

God said to Abraham, "Go from your land, your birthplace, your father's house, to the land I will show you. I will make you a great nation. I will bless you and make you famous. You will be a blessing. Those who bless you, I will bless. Those who curse you, I will curse. Through you all of the families of the earth will be blessed." So Abraham went, as God had told him to, and Lot went with him. Abraham was seventy-five when he left Kharan.

Abraham took his wife, Sarah, and his nephew, Lot, and all they had amassed, and the people they had acquired in Kharan, and they left for Canaan. When they arrived in the land of Canaan, God appeared to Abraham and said, I give this land to your offspring. So Abraham built an altar to God, who had appeared to him . . .

There was a famine in the land, so Abraham descended to Egypt, to stay there a while, for the famine was bad. When they were nearing Egypt, he said to his wife, Sarah, "Now, I know you are a beautiful woman. When the Egyptians see you and ask whose wife you are, they will kill me and keep you alive. Tell them you're my sister, so I'll turn a profit on it and they will keep me alive on your behalf."

So it happened when Abraham arrived in Egypt that the Egyptians noticed how beautiful the woman was. Pharaoh's courtiers noticed her and praised her to Pharaoh, so the woman

was acquired for Pharaoh's household. Abraham profited from her: He got sheep, oxen, and donkeys, slaves and maidservants, mules and camels.

God plagued Pharaoh, mighty plagues on him and his household, because of Abraham's wife, Sarah. Pharaoh summoned Abraham and said, "What have you done to me?! Why didn't you tell me she was your wife? Why did you say she was your sister so that I took her as my wife? Now, here's your wife, take her and go!" Pharaoh set a guard upon him and exiled him and his wife and all that was his. So Abraham ascended to the Negev from Egypt—he, his wife, and all he had, and Lot with him. Abraham was now very wealthy in livestock, silver, and gold.

What a happy little tale. As a kid I marveled at the music of the Torah reading of the last two lines, full of trills and flourishes. A triumph for Abraham, now rich, rewarded by God, marching with an honor guard, victorious, back to the promised land. Having survived the rigors of famine and the harrowing of Pharaoh, Abraham inherits his just deserts—the Negev and parts north. Gold and silver are his, sheep, oxen, and donkeys, slaves and maidservants, mules and camels. He began as a poor shepherd, but now father Abraham is a very wealthy man. God sure provides for His chosen.

How differently I read this text today. There's so much going on in this narrative, it's hard to know where to begin unpacking it. In not very many lines of sacred text, the Bible has drawn an extraordinary moral dilemma. How shall we characterize it? "What price success?" Or shall we opt for the Geraldo/Oprah title "Husbands Who Pimp Their Wives!"? But I'm getting ahead of myself, rushing to conclusions about the narrative that may not be there, one possible reading of many, and one not generally preferred by traditional interpreters of this passage.

So let's go back a bit and comment point by point. We'll do some exegesis, assuming for the moment that a line-by-line reading might help us get a handle on the action here. Before we do that, though, let me explain the word I used in the last sentence: *exegesis*. The roots of the word are Greek and it means "coming or going out." Exegesis is

the art of drawing meaning out of a verse or text. Exegesis implies that the interpretation or reading we offer is somehow implicit inside of the text—we merely draw it out. Presumably we have some tools of reading and those tools help us first supply the context, then read between the lines, understanding first the *peshat* and then the *derash*.

All of this comes under the rubric of exegesis. But like *peshat* and *derash,* not everything I see in the text will be perceived there by the next reader. Therefore, sometimes what I assume is in the text, you may assume is a forced reading, an overreading, nonsense. I suppose it all depends on whether or not you agree with my understanding of the text. If you do, then you'll tend to say I'm doing exegesis—that is, correctly reading out what the text means. If, however, you disagree with my reading, then you won't credit me with being an exegete, just a fool. Actually, I would hope for better, especially since I will offer a wide variety of readings for every passage in this book. I'd like to think we'll learn to listen to a broad array of exegeses and recognize that each of them may have some validity as a reading of the text. If we can do that, we not only will broaden our understanding of the text, we will develop our moral reasoning faculties as well. While we're at it, we will also develop our listening skills—a good attribute for the building of community.

Let us begin exegesis of the story. It will be clear that our bias going into the narrative will profoundly affect what we draw from it. If we presume, along with much of Judeo-Christian tradition, that Abraham is a "saint," then we shall require a different set of lenses through which to interpret the action. If, on the other hand, we allow for the possibility that father Abraham was a scoundrel, our interpretation will differ yet again. These poles of interpretation, antinomies on the continuum of exegesis, have informed almost every discussion I have participated in regarding this passage of Scripture.

Traditional readers, rabbis of old, and their contemporaries, the church fathers—along with most moralists of our own era—all start with the assumption that father Abraham is in a pickle. Faced with the option of sure death at the hands of the Egyptians, he takes a risk that allows him to remain alive and perhaps rescue his wife from her role as "sister." When I read this story with my writers' group, we

spent a full session agonizing over Abraham's moral dilemma. How can Abraham stay alive? Must he put Sarah at risk? Will their faith in God bring them rescue? Will their faith in each other allow their marriage to continue after such an episode?

There's more than a little of modern terrorism and hostage taking in this reading of the story. In essence, from the minute they enter Egypt, due to the life-and-death choice they have made, Sarah is taken hostage and runs the risk of abuse at the hands of the Egyptians. By faith, Abraham survives the ordeal, and with the help of God rescues her and is rewarded—not unlike the Israeli rescue of hostages at Entebbe during the July 4, 1976, weekend, two decades ago. One assumes, given this view of Abraham and Sarah, that their marriage is stronger than ever after their ordeal and that thanks to their faith, the once-childless couple will soon bear a son and live happily ever after.

When I read this passage some years later with my study group of CEOs, I was on guard lest too pious a reading might preclude the less trained readers from seeing subtleties in Abraham's dilemma. I gently raised the moral issue that might be considered when one focused on Abraham's short speech to Sarah as they entered Egypt. Had he said, "When the Egyptians see you and ask whose wife you are, they will kill me and keep you alive. Tell them you're my sister and they will keep me alive on your behalf," I would have had complete sympathy. But Abraham unfortunately added a clause, right there in the Bible. What he said to Sarah was, "Tell them you're my sister, so I'll turn a profit on it," which certainly adds an unsightly nuance to the narrative.

"Whoa, whoa, whoa!" one of the attorneys in the group jumps in. The speaker is, in fact, one of the most successful criminal attorneys on Wall Street. His reputation is that he never plea-bargains and also never loses. This makes his services highly desirable in the white-collar crime sector. He once said, I think in jest, but I confess I'm not at all sure, "There's no such thing as a guilty client."

"Let's look at this chapter," the lawyer instructs us, his jury. "At the beginning of the chapter, God takes a poor shepherd, a nothing, and tells him to become the head of a great and mighty nation. Now, that's quite a challenge. Yet look," our counselor points out, "*morality aside*—" (It was when I heard these two words that I knew I

would be hearing something memorable, a novel interpretation of Genesis 12. I also realized that I wanted this man's phone number in my wallet just in case I was ever in the situation of having only one phone call to make.) "Morality aside," he repeats, "by the end of the chapter he's talking one-on-one with a head of state. And let's face it," he adds triumphantly, "he's earned start-up costs."

When we finished laughing, I filed "morality aside . . . start-up costs" in my memory, although I abashedly admit that I filed it with my repertoire of lawyer jokes. As the weeks passed between one study group meeting and the next, his words began to gnaw at me. What if he was correct? What did it mean if this seemingly cynical attorney had a *peshat?* What if the whole point of Genesis 12 was precisely that, "Morality aside . . . he earned start-up costs"? If that was the lesson, if we were meant to learn about survival at any cost, advancement without thought for morality, that it was okay to pimp your wife if the profit was sufficient, if, if, if . . . then I had to rethink the lessons of Genesis entirely.

I was reminded of the story about George Bernard Shaw and the duchess whom he propositioned, asking whether she might consider consenting to have sexual relations with him for five million pounds. When she replied that for that much money she surely would give the matter consideration, Shaw asked whether she would have sex for a few farthings. The duchess haughtily demanded of Mr. Shaw whether he thought her a prostitute! Shaw replied, "We've already established that, madam. We're now haggling over the price." What price did morality cost? Was life a matter of simply avoiding situations where the currency of morality was tested too severely? Were there hard-and-fast rules, or did situations change the ethics we held dear?

Growing up in Illinois, I had heard another story that reinforced my doubts. Again, it was an attorney at the center of the story, but this one even more famous than my study partner. They say that a criminal came to Abraham Lincoln in the days before he was president but already a lawyer of some repute.

"I'd like you to represent me, Mr. Lincoln," the fellow asked.

Lincoln, who had some inkling of the man and his activities, asked, "Are you guilty, sir?"

"Of course I'm guilty," the criminal replied. "That's why I want to hire you to get me off."

"If you admit your guilt to me," Lincoln explained, "then I cannot represent you."

"But you don't understand," the man replied. "I'm offering one thousand dollars for your services."

Even though one thousand dollars was a lot of money back then, Lincoln declined.

The man said, "Mr. Lincoln, I'll offer you two thousand dollars to represent me."

Again, Lincoln demurred.

"Mr. Lincoln, I came up to your office to hire your services, for it is said you are the best attorney in Illinois. I will give you four thousand dollars as a retainer."

At that, Lincoln unfolded himself from his chair, grabbed the criminal by his jacket, marched him to the door, and threw him out of the office. As the man rose and brushed himself off, he asked Lincoln, "Sir, why did you throw me out when I said four thousand dollars? Why not one thousand, or two thousand, or why not when I first came into your office and admitted my guilt?"

Lincoln replied, "You were getting close to my price."

Does everyone have a price? Is it acceptable to sell Sarah to save a life? Is it less acceptable if a profit is turned on the transaction even as a life is saved? If such barter is tenable, might we actually imagine that Abraham is to be admired for his wiles? That as a trickster he is to be praised and not condemned? That his ability to turn a profit in a rough situation makes him worthy of fathering a nation and being God's chosen?

Could we imagine that this is a scam? That Abraham knows only too well the horror Pharaoh and the Egyptians have of taking another man's wife, and that they would pay a high price for an attractive woman, but an even larger sum of hush money to quiet the scandal of adultery? That Pharaoh's pretensions to divinity forced him to hew to a high moral standard and that, once entrapped, he would quickly pony up to prevent any breath of scandal?

Imagine the cleverness of Abraham pimping his wife. A quick profit

is turned, and then a second windfall as God enters the scene as enforcer. In fact, is Abraham emboldened to this scheme precisely because he knows that God will provide the muscle to preclude Pharaoh from keeping his wife and killing him?

Before you protest that the notion of "scam" is too radical a reading, remember that once successful at this type of extortion, Abraham pulls it off again in Genesis 20 with a local king named Avimelekh. He, too, pays off big, "sheep and oxen, slaves and maidservants," when he returns Sarah to Abraham. But Avimelekh goes even further. He says to Abraham, "Behold, my land is before you. Dwell where you see fit." And then, in case the fact of the scam were not clear, he says to Sarah, "I have given one thousand pieces of silver to 'your brother.' It is meant to serve as a covering of the eyes for all who are with you."

From this second scam it is all too clear that the cash is for the cover-up; everyone is bribed to look the other way. The scam is eminently successful. In fact, it's so successful that six chapters later in Genesis, Abraham and Sarah's son, Isaac, imitates the lessons he has learned from Mom and Dad and repeats the scam with his wife, Rebecca. Now, Isaac only knows about the previous episodes through hearsay—he wasn't alive when Sarah and Abraham took this particular show on the road—but Isaac's cousin, Lot, was with Abraham and Sarah in Egypt. We'll see in Chapter 6 what lessons he learned about sex bait from his saintly uncle.

While we're brooding about this ugly little episode, it's worth taking a breather, a step back to see where we are in our reading. I've suggested that Abraham is a fellow who, given the right opportunity, might sell his wife. Of course, this reading goes against the grain of everything we've ever been taught about reading the Bible. I know this interpretation of Genesis is upsetting and draws immediate resistance from readers. I know because I am so resistant to the iconoclasm myself. I hate the idea of smashing the idol I have in Saint Abraham.

Alas, it is Abraham's role, his lot in tradition, to be associated with iconoclasm. One of the most beloved stories of rabbinic, extrabiblical tradition shows us young Abe, in his father's idol factory, smashing the statues to bits. It should serve as a warning that when

we read the story of Abraham there might be some sweeping up to do at the end. The questions Abraham asks his father in that legend ("Don't your ears hear what your mouth speaks?") may be appropriate at this juncture. The anger Abraham's father, Terah, feels when his idols are smashed may be an anger that longtime Bible readers are feeling at the reading I've just offered. What have we gained in raising the possibility that father Abraham is a scoundrel, a trickster, an amoral profiteer? Why must we be forced to rethink our accepted Judeo-Christian morality?

Why, indeed. Accepted morality may be nice, but it need not be our own until we rethink it. By now you should have pulled your Bible from the shelf to reread your version of the story. If these questions were provocative enough, you may have engaged a spouse, a friend, a parent, or a pastor about the implications of this reading of Genesis 12. The study and discussion of the moral dilemma *is* the process that we are after here. Do not reject the possibility of this interpretation out of hand. For a moment consider it, weigh its implications, follow the logic of the morality (or lack of morality) implied in this version of Genesis 12. Test whether this radical pole of interpretation can be sustained in the words of the text, and examine what hermeneutics, what biases, what assumptions you have brought to the opening story of Abraham and Sarah.

In one study group I taught, a literary agent, Jewish only in name, with very little formal Jewish education, passionately defended Abraham and Sarah against this cruel portrayal of them as scam artists. Since he was a professional reader, I insisted on pressing him: Wasn't this reading at least a possible interpretation of the text? He reluctantly admitted that yes, it certainly was. Maybe it was even an appropriately fair reading of the words. Why, then, I asked, had he so passionately defended the traditional Saint Abraham reading, especially if he had no apparent vested interest in it? His answer, which came a full month later, at the next scheduled study group, was no surprise: He defended Abraham because that was his notion of Judaism. He still held precious a naive view of religion and was not quick to abandon it. His simple reading of a nice Abraham offered him solace in what he knew to be an otherwise cruel world.

Is there benefit to a more nuanced reading? Can we profit from consideration that Abraham is deeply flawed yet nevertheless chosen? Can we learn something from a failure of morality against which we set our own? Is there solace to be gained from the fact that Abraham, despite his flaws and dubious decisions, remains on a pedestal in Western consciousness three thousand years after his death? Why do we need saints and heroes so badly that we choose a very human Abraham as our model? Or is his flawed humanity precisely the point?

While we achingly ponder this series of questions, let's return to the story with yet another point of view. In the world of the rabbis, where the method of multiple readings is highly valued, there is a term for this technique: *dvar aher,* "another interpretation."

Up till now we've focused primarily on Abraham and left Sarah in silent acquiescence. Might we give her some voice? She is utterly silent in this chapter, even though it is she who is put at risk. Later on in Genesis Sarah has a lucid, articulate, even ferocious voice. What could she have been thinking during the events depicted above? Can we offer a variety of thoughts that flit through her mind, across her lips, and into the conversation—even if between the lines—of Genesis 12? This, too, is a classical rabbinic method of interpretation. The rabbis were not in the least bit shy about putting words into the mouths of biblical characters. It was their way of drawing out the implications of Scripture, of earning the fullest profit of God's revelation. The rabbis surely knew that when they offered dialogue on behalf of silent characters in the Bible, they were offering readings from their own century, anachronising their thoughts into the mouth of a biblical character.

We, too, know only too well that the readings we offer here are late-twentieth-century readings. We do not pretend to biblical scholarship, rather midrash. That is to say, I am not primarily interested in understanding the contextual meaning of the narrative. Quite the contrary, I am interested in the biblical narrative helping us understand ourselves. So, with that in mind, what *was* Sarah thinking?

Let's begin with piety. Sarah is identified, the very first time we meet her, as a barren woman, she has no child. As if this weren't bad enough—and here I mean not only the barrenness, but the totality of

identification with that state, as though children were the only thing by which a human being's life could be judged a success or failure—it is in her barren state that God promises Abraham offspring as plentiful as the stars, as numerous as the sands on the shore of the sea. How dismal for Sarah. Poor Sarah becomes practically obsessive about offspring, even as she is unsure whether it is she or Abraham, in reality, who is the problem. We will explore her doubts about her husband's potency further in the next chapter, but for now it is sufficient to note that Sarah will not shoulder all the blame herself. As she laughingly tells the angels who announce her imminent pregnancy in Genesis 18:12, "My husband's just too old."

How, then, might she react when that old husband, at the border to a strange and fearsome land, proposes to her, "Tell them you are my sister"? The famine in the land might well be sated by entrance into Egypt. Perhaps someone would get her with child, and this at Abraham's suggestion! Her sacrifice would save her husband's life and bring the child of promise, the offspring to fulfill God's covenant with Abraham and her.

Another interpretation: Sarah didn't give a fig for children, but she loved and cherished Abraham. Faced with a Sophie's Choice, she did what she had to. Like many women during the holocaust (and virtually every other war), she submitted, resigned to saving as much of her family as she could. If sleeping with the enemy would save Abraham and get them through the famine, so be it. Sarah, full of faith in herself, in her husband's judgment, in God Almighty, goes modestly into Pharaoh's house, prepared to endure whatever indignities are laid upon her, if only Abraham might live.

Another interpretation: Sarah is very tired of taking the heat for Abraham's impotence. She is ready and willing to call his bluff. It is bad enough that the old man can't get an erection any longer, has no more interest in her, and then blames her for being barren, to boot. It is bad enough that he makes her wander from place to place, brings her to a promised land wracked with famine, and then proposes that they enter Egypt as "brother and sister." It is bad enough that he smarmily tells her, "Now I know that you are a beautiful woman," as though it made a shred of difference to him, covered in sheep dung at

the end of a day of shepherding. Married to a nomad, an uncivilized boor who talked to voices in the night, Sarah was not going to pass up a chance to enjoy the urbane pleasures of Egypt. Indeed, she was beautiful. Properly washed and oiled, she had a crack at Pharaoh's bed. Who wouldn't jump at the opportunity? He was so cultured (and bore an uncanny resemblance to Yul Brynner). Why *not* sleep with Pharaoh, and if she got pregnant, well, it served Abraham right. Sister, indeed!

I wish that I could tell you that these last few readings were the stuff of ancient midrash. Unfortunately, the rabbis of blessed memory were too constrained to imagine that their women might have such shocking thoughts. They preferred their women demure, at home, submissive. In *Genesis Rabbah,* a sixth-century Palestinian commentary on this passage, the rabbis suggest that Abraham's solution was to put Sarah in a box and nail it shut, lest the Egyptians lay eyes on her. The readings I offer above came from a women's class that I taught for a number of years, and here I had thought these club ladies would be as demure as their tailored suits and blue-tint hair led one to imagine (although I once stupidly gave voice to the opinion that given their average age somewhere in the sixties, they were middle-aged—a big mistake, which should have tipped me off to the radical readings they would offer).

This women's class ventured all of the above and more. "Why shouldn't Sarah be interested in a bit of adventure? After all," they asked, "hasn't she put up with all the crap of his career long enough?" "Don't you think it's time she has a chance?" "Wouldn't you jump at the opportunity of sleeping with a Pharaoh?" "How could Sarah resist such an adventure, especially once Abraham gave her that wife-sister line?" I confess, happy feminist that I think myself, I was taken aback by the radical nature of the readings and the vehemence with which they were offered. Once the door to this possibility was open, it seemed a wonder that Sarah might ever return to Abraham when the ordeal was over. In fact, as these women reminded me when we got there, Sarah never quite forgets the position Abraham has placed her in. The marriage is effectively destroyed, if intimacy may be any measure of marriage.

Now I hesitated, wisely on two counts, to ask whether there wasn't a certain amount of projection of their own suburban lives onto Sarah's. On the one hand, it wouldn't do to undermine such a strong and authentic feminist reading of the episode. On the other hand, if they were projecting their own fantasies, frustrations, and sexual realities onto Sarah, I wasn't at all sure I wanted to hear about it in detail. I have had enough experience watching my friend Peter Pitzele use biblical narratives as the texts for psychodrama to know that given the thin patina of Genesis narrative, everyone's neuroses just come pouring out. While the study of the Bible may be revelatory and even therapeutic, it is wise for me to remember that I am a rabbi and not a therapist. I am concerned with moral development, but I must also know the limits of my competence.

So we will leave Sarah to her still-unvoiced thoughts, satisfied that we have opened the door to possibilities of her motivation. In doing so we have not only offered women an entrée to the text, but have exposed a method of interpretation which gives rise to a great deal of dialogue for development. It is clear that Genesis, like any other narrative, has a point of view. I suppose that, even with its implicit critique, the point of view of Genesis is Abraham's, or at least one that is ultimately sympathetic to him and his offspring. And, if I may take a term from feminist film criticism, the "gaze" is decidedly male. When we ask a woman's questions, when we take a point of view other than that of the protagonist, we gain new perspectives into the narrative. It helps to see other people's outlooks when reading a dilemma. Arguing someone else's position helps us appreciate it and rethink our own.

This leads us to wonder about poor Pharaoh. It's hard to be sympathetic to a biblical character with the name Pharaoh, but there are certain few pharaohs who have done okay by the Jews—Joseph's patron or Solomon's father-in-law, to name two. In any case, our Pharaoh is the victim of circumstance, and a circumstance of Abraham's making. Pharaoh protests, "What have you done to me?! Why didn't you tell me she was your wife? Why did you say she was your sister so that I took her as my wife?" He is clearly upset, affronted. He cannot imagine the type of person who might put another man at risk of

committing adultery, to say the least of someone pimping his own wife. Pharaoh is outraged, upset, he doesn't know what to do first, he's so befuddled. He certainly pays Abraham off, loads of silver and gold as hush money. But unlike the triumphal march I imagined as a child, Pharaoh sets armed guards on Abraham, declares him persona non grata, and boots him out of the country: " 'Now, here's your wife. Take her and go!' Pharaoh set a guard upon him and exiled him and his wife and all that was his."

It will be curious to note as we get to our next chapter that Pharaoh, here, is in much the same position as Abraham in Genesis 16. He listened to what was told to him, took what was apparently offered, and then found himself damned if he did and damned if he didn't. To make matters worse, God enters this already difficult scene and plagues Pharaoh and all his household. It is difficult to imagine what manner of plague God brings upon Pharaoh, and again it is difficult to think of Pharaoh and plagues without thinking of the story of Exodus. In any case, it is enough, more than enough, for Pharaoh, especially when added to the moral outrage. I can't resist adding, though, that when the rabbis of old imagine Pharaoh's plague at this critical juncture, they imagine a sexual disease that causes impotence. Sarah's virtue thus protected, the rabbis can rest at ease, perhaps unaware that they have imaginatively afflicted Pharaoh with the same disease that Abraham may suffer. Alas, poor Sarah.

This reading presumes that Abraham has been egregious in his mistreatment of Pharaoh. Either Abraham has been the deceiver suggested above, or, minimally, Abraham has imputed a baseness to Pharaoh that Pharaoh does not have. Is Abraham, then, projecting his own worst side? In the face of fear and uncertainty, does Abraham presume that Pharaoh must, of necessity, be as unsavory as possible? Is this, then, the only way to enter a foreign land? Are we fated to always treat the other as morally inferior, even if they are not? Must we reduce them to "the Other"? And what does that reduction of our fellow human beings say about our own moral development? Is not Pharaoh justified at his moral outrage?

But is it necessary to think of Pharaoh as more ethical than Abraham? Might one not equally well make the case that all of Pharaoh's

bluster comes after the abduction of Sarah? Only when God has plagued him does Pharaoh suddenly become righteous. Is he saving face? Is Abraham not correct that the niceties of adultery were observed by the expedient of killing the husband and then magnanimously marrying the widow (just like King David and BathSheba)?

It is disturbing that given the bias of the account (the Jewish Bible) there is any room whatsoever to give Pharaoh the benefit of the doubt. Traditional interpretations, from rabbis and church fathers, presume Abraham to be righteous and Pharaoh a liar. But we are conditioned by our communities of reading, our biases, our knowledge of other Pharaohs. The words of the narrative leave us with a morally ambiguous situation. Consideration of all the sides of the story gives us pause, causes us to reflect, rethink our moral positions, and justify our responses.

Abraham and Sarah are father and mother of faith. How, then, in the very chapter where they are "called" to faith do they come to behave in such a morally ambiguous way? What is the nature of this call, this so-called chosenness? What moral responsibilities does it place on Abraham, Sarah, and their descendants? Or, we may ask, does the very fact that they have been chosen release them from the obligation of moral behavior? Will God always protect him, so long as Abraham is loyal to God? What cost does this loyalty carry? When there is a "teleological suspension of the ethical," as philosopher Søren Kierkegaard called it, can God demand anything as a test of loyalty, and must Abraham pay it? Is that, then, the price of a suspension of morality?

What is the nature of this faith and loyalty that Abraham and Sarah show to God? (To say the least of faith in and to each other.) It is true that when God bade them, they left their homeland and moved to the promised land without demurral, but once they got there, then what? Famine moved them into hostile territory quickly. The rabbis count the famine as a test of Abraham. Perhaps he was meant to stay firm. Had he said, "Here God wants me. I have faith God will provide, even in the famine," well, Genesis would have been a very different book. Had Sarah made stone soup, perhaps she would have been rewarded with a child, or at least with a husband who made love to her. Instead they embark on a journey that ends in a disgraceful deception,

the only faith displayed, perhaps, that God will play the heavy and act as enforcer for their schemes.

In the end, they grow rich. We do not know, nor does the Bible give us any clue, whether Pharaoh had his way with Sarah before the plague. We do not know, although we will see many clues, what effect this misadventure has on Abraham and Sarah's marriage. We do not know yet, although we will be shown with stunning brutality, what nephew Lot might have learned by observing this bizarre behavior. And since the Bible delights in a fearful symmetry, we will see how this episode echoes through subsequent chapters of Genesis, all the way to Exodus and beyond.

As we read of Sarah and Abraham's interaction with another Egyptian, Hagar, we must recall that action breeds consequences that cannot be measured at the moment. When God delivers a son to Sarah after her own abortive attempts to become pregnant, we will see that this miracle, too, carries a fearsome price.

The rabbis count the famine as a trial by which God tested Abraham. In fact, by the rabbis' count, there are three trials in this narrative. First, there is the uprooting from home and hearth to a promised but nonetheless distant and alien land. Second, there is the famine, which leads to the third trial, the abduction of Sarah by Pharaoh. We have discussed how Abraham and Sarah endure these trials, for better or for worse. Perhaps it is apposite to inquire at this juncture who is this God who tests them so severely. As the rabbis put it, "Abraham was tried by ten trials to make known how great was the love of father Abraham." The rabbis do not explain whether these trials show Abraham's love for God, or God's love for Abraham.

Once, my old Talmud teacher Professor Saul Lieberman regaled us with a story of a quiz he had given one of the Bible professors at my seminary. He had asked the professor, "Who is the most tragic character in the Bible?"

After some thought, Professor Muffs replied, "Jeremiah."

"No, Muffs, not Jeremiah," Lieberman cackled. "Try again."

So Professor Muffs thought some more and then replied, "Ezekiel."

"Wrong again, Muffs," said Lieberman, "so I'll tell you. The most tragic character in the Bible is God!"

This story bears remembering as we read on through the Genesis narratives. God *is* a tragic character. Although I did not open our study with the story of creation, it is good to recall here that in that *parashah,* when the Bible opens, God creates a universe in seven days. Indeed, God sees what has been made and pronounces, "Behold, it is very good." For all of that optimism, though, it is worth remembering that in the rabbinic division of the Torah into weekly readings, by the time that *parashah* has ended, God regrets that humanity has been created and has decided to flood the world in order to destroy the very creatures that were made in God's image and likeness.

As we turn to the next chapters, we may ask what role God plays in these narratives. I remember one January, upon returning from a series of synagogue lectures on Florida's east coast, I found a student waiting to ask me an urgent question. "Professor," she earnestly began, "is it true that from a synagogue pulpit last Shabbat you called God a son of a bitch?" Apparently her colleagues in Florida had been on the phone.

"No," I replied reassuringly, "what I actually said is that God is a *mean* son of a bitch."

I then carefully explained to her that I was distinguishing for my Florida audience between biblical theology and rabbinic theology. In the latter, with its Hellenistic worldview, God was depicted as Nice or Good. The Bible had no such pretense. In Genesis 12, for example, God puts Abraham and Sarah to severe tests of loyalty and then beats Pharaoh as God acts the role of enforcer in Abraham's wife-sister scandal. It was the point of my synagogue lecture that an adequate theology for the twentieth century required a mixture of biblical and rabbinic views of God. But it is important to recognize that God is a difficult character, one whom we cannot afford to overlook if we are to understand the dynamics of the narratives we confront.

In studying the moral dilemmas of Abraham and Sarah, we may already begin to recognize issues that beset us in our own lives. We ask ourselves, Does this story from three thousand years ago teach us anything about ourselves or about the world in which we live? Or are famines and Pharaohs simply too remote to make the jump to our own, more comfortable existences? Although I believe that the Bible

does speak directly to our own day, it is not the answers to the questions but rather the process of study that is essential. Whatever the answer to the specifics of the narrative, we are learning to analyze an issue, listen to other points of view, consider that there is more than one reading of every story, and articulate the reasoning behind our own opinions. The very act of study, the engagement it demands, teaches us to be part of a community that values moral reasoning. If Professor Kohlberg is correct, it is just this kind of study that leads, in fact, to moral development.

Let's turn now to the next episode in Sarah and Abraham's marriage. Sarah despairs of ever having children, and in desperation takes matters into her own hands. That appears to be the surface narrative of another challenge to Abraham and Sarah's marriage. Again, the outsider who completes the triangle is an Egyptian, only this time, the moral dilemma is made even more complex by the arrival of offspring for Abraham and his wife.

3

The Other Woman

During my divorce I learned an important lesson about other people's marriages: No one ever really knows what's going on. I learned this, of course, when friend after friend, confronted with my news, responded with shock. "But I had no idea. You seemed so happy." And how could they have had an idea? People can only see what they are shown. To make it worse, once they are shown, they only see what they wish to see. This is particularly true with the breakup of a marriage; if it seems too familiar, then it's already too threatening to look at very carefully. It's much easier to assume, with a nod to Tolstoy, that all unhappy marriages are the same.

Of course, Tolstoy's point was that each marriage is different, whether in literature or in reality. Whether it was Anna Karenina or me, the forms unhappiness takes are unique to each couple and the situation they have created for themselves. Sometimes otherwise happily married couples founder on the shoals of another love interest. Sometimes couples fall apart over arguments about their children. Sometimes couples cannot have children and rather than seek solace in each other, turn to subtle forms of torture to act out their anguish. The list of permutations here is endless, as many unhappy endings as there are marriages.

This is not to say that there are no happy marriages, for surely there are. Further, there are couples who have negotiated pitfalls like those above and grown stronger and more loving. These rare couplings are a blessing from God and should be celebrated. Often as not, in fact, couples stay together as break apart. Sadly, of those who

Unit 6 Feminist Criticism

The Central Concept for the Lesson

This lesson will focus on the concept of feminist criticism in Biblical analysis. We will review a number of feminist's commentaries as we explore this methodology.

Goal: Participants will be able to analyze the Biblical text with feminist methodology.

Objectives: 1. Participants will be able to describe the methodology of the feminist critics.
2. Participants will compare and contrast various feminist critics and describe both their similarities and differences.
3. Participants will be able to identify reasons why the Biblical text set the stage for the secondary status of women in society.

Texts:

Biblical Women in the Midrash

Feminist Perspectives on Jewish Studies

Genesis 16

Genesis 21:9-21

Hagar, My Other, My Self

In the Image of God

ReVisions: Seeing Torah Through a Feminist Lens

Texts of Terror

The Five Books of Miriam

The Women's Torah Commentary

Women's Bible Commentary

I. Introduction to Feminist Criticism

A. Description by different feminist critics.

1. Phyllis Trible

a. "Feminism is not a narrow focus upon women, but rather a critique of culture in light of misogyny. This critique affects the issues of race and class, psychology, ecology, and human sexuality."[1]

b. "As a critique of culture and faith in light of misogyny, feminism is a prophetic movement, examining the status quo, pronouncing judgment, and in calling for repentance. This hermeneutic engages Scripture in various ways.

1). It documents the case against women. It cites and evaluates long neglected data that show the inferiority, subordination, and abuse of the female in ancient Israel and the early church.

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[1] Phyllis Trible, *God and the Rhetoric of Sexuality*, (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1978), p. 7.

2). It discerns within the Bible critiques of patriarchy. It upholds forgotten texts and reinterprets familiar ones to share a remnant theology that challenges the sexism of Scripture. 3). It recounts tales of terror *in memoriam* to offer sympathetic readings of abused women. . . It interprets stories of outrage on behalf of their female victims in order to recover a neglected history, to remember a past that the present embodies, and to pray that these terrors shall not come to pass again. In telling sad stories, a feminist hermeneutic seeks to redeem the time."[2]

2. Elyse Goldstein
   a. "Is it good for women? is the question that defines a feminist vision of the world. How does this institution, that class, this film, that person's views affect women? How are women treated, portrayed, dealt with in a particular situation? A Jewish Feminist will ask those questions of every Jewish organization, institution and synagogue that she or he encounters. . . What does this mean for women? And why?"[3]
   b. "Today's feminism – and Jewish feminism along with it – has entered a second phase. We question if it is possible to both equalize as women and specialize as women. We are no longer completely convinced that women and men are essentially the same. Do we see the world differently because we are women? I believe we do. Many feminists now think that being female so deeply influences our perceptions of ourselves that it colors the way we perceive the rest of life and everything around us."[4]
   c. "In a sense all feminist commentaries are deeply radical, because they go to the root. They are radical because in employing Biblical scholarship, in utilizing traditional commentary, in 'playing by the rules,' we use the system to critique the system. . . We want to bring down the fortress of patriarchal ownership of the Torah with the tools of the Torah itself."[5]
3. Tikva Frymer-Kensky
   a. "The first impact of women's studies on Biblical studies has been the recognition that the Bible is a patriarchal document from a patriarchal society."[6]
   b. "We make a profound statement when we acknowledge that the Bible is patriarchal. We are brought to the realization that the Bible contains a fundamental moral flaw: it does not treat all humans as equals."[7]

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[2] Phyllis Trible, *Texts of Terror*, (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1984), p. 3.
[3] Elyse Goldstein, *Revisions: Seeing Torah Through a Feminist Lens*, (Vermont: Jewish Lights, 1998), p. 22.
[4] Ibid., pp. 22-23.
[5] Ibid., pp. 31-32.
[6] Tikva Frymer-Kensky, "The Bible and Women's Studies," in *Feminist Perspectives on Jewish Studies*, edited by Lynn Davidman and Shelly Tenebaum, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994), p. 17.
[7] Ibid., p. 18.

c. "Because of their implications for our own time, feminist studies of the Bible (and I would argue, all Biblical studies) cannot remain isolated from the political implications of their research, nor from their impact on the lives of people. There is no value-neutrality with regard to oppression: if one does not consciously address a problem, one becomes part of the problem. Therefore, there is no absolute cleavage between feminism, feminist theology, feminist hermeneutics, and the study of women in the Bible or in the Biblical world."[8]

d. "Much of the patriarchy that we associate with the Bible and all of its misogyny has been introduced into the Bible by later generations of readers. One of the impacts of women's studies has been to focus attention on this phenomenon and on the question, 'How did we get from there to here?' Once we divorce the text from its patriarchal message we must attempt to delineate some of the influences that began to transform, or rather deform the Bible into a more patriarchal text."[9]

B. Feminist Methodologies

1. Rejectionist[10]

a. It repudiates the Torah outright.

b. The Torah offers no hope for women. It cannot be salvaged.

c. Such women have either abandoned organized religion, remaining only culturally connected to their tradition; they have chosen goddess, neo-pagan and witch religions; or devoted themselves to scholarship wholly critical of the Torah.

2. Inventive[11]

a. These writers reappropriate the rabbinic use of parable, story and metaphor, creating *midrash.*

b. They look into the Biblical text and failing to find women's voices and experiences, they invent them.

3. Revisionists[12]

a. The word "revise" means "to look over and correct; to review, alter or amend; a re-examination."[13] They believe that with all of the problems that are contained in the Torah, it is still a powerful and liberating document.

b. They find that within the text women are valued for their personhood, they are spiritual individuals and they are central players in Jewish history.

c. They view the text head-on and place women squarely inside it, even if the traditional commentators have placed them outside.

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[8] Ibid., p. 19.
[9] Ibid., p. 26.
[10] Goldstein, p. 28.
[11] Ibid., p. 29.
[12] Ibid., pp. 30-31.
[13] Ibid., p. 20.

d. They recognize patriarchy in the Torah, but invite us to read the Torah with nonpatriarchal eyes.
e. They reject the layers of later sexism and male commentary that have covered over and, in some ways, negated the original text.
f. By reading the stories of individual women characters, one will discover that women were portrayed in much the same way as men: with the same kinds of strengths and weaknesses, loves and loyalties, fears and foibles. The difference between the sexes is explained as part of an inherited social order.
g. It examines themes that weave in and out of the text, fills in the silent gaps, and searches for paradigms.[14]

4. Reinterpreting[15]

a. Reinterpretation recognizes the polyvalency of the text: that any text is open to multiple interpretations, that between those who adamantly hold fast to only one meaning and those who breezily claim that the text can be manipulated to say anything is a wide spectrum of legitimate meanings.
b. It recognizes the diversity of Scripture. The Bible is not a single-minded document: rather it teems with diverse voices and points of view. Despite attempts to harmonize it, by ancient redactors working within it for canonization or by modern commentators working from the outside to establish and reestablish its authority, the Bible itself comes to us full of struggles, battles, contradictions and problems. It refuses to be the captive of any one group or perspective.
c. It emphasizes the pilgrim wandering through history, engaging in new settings, and ever-refusing to be locked in the box of the past. Every generation or group that engages the text comes to it from certain perspectives not adopted by others, with certain questions not asked by others and with certain issues not raised by others. One group sees what another does not, at the same time acknowledging that we all see in part, not in whole.

II. Text – *Genesis* 16 and 21:9-21

A. Read together *Genesis* 16 and 21:9-21. Participants will take turns reading.
B. Discussion of the texts.
   1. Discuss the *peshat* of the story.
   2. Discussion of what the text means to the participants.
   3. Are these two versions of the same story?

III. Feminist Methodology

A. Phyllis Trible - *Hagar: The Desolation of Rejection*
   1. Read the article.
   2. Discuss Phyllis Trible's methodology and how she analyzes the text.

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[14] Ibid., p. 27.
[15] Phyllis Trible, "Eve and Miriam: From the Margins to the Center" in *Feminist Approaches to the Bible*, (Washington, D.C.: Biblical Archeology Society, 1994), pp. 8-9.

3. Discuss how she views Sarai's relationship to Hagar.
4. Discuss Hagar's role of the suffering servant which is the precursor of Israel's plight under Pharaoh.
5. Discuss how does her story of oppression depicts the following three familiar forms of oppression: nationality, class, and sexism.

B. Tikva Frymer-Kensky – *Hagar, My Other, My Self*
1. Read the article.
2. Discuss Tikva Frymer-Kensky's methodology and how she analyzes the text.
3. How do you think Hagar felt to be the surrogate mother? Was she asked?
4. Discuss the similarity of Abram in the *Lech Lecha* story and Hagar in *Genesis* 16.
5. Discuss Frymer-Kensky's observation that "the story of Sarai and Hagar is not a story of the conflict between 'us' and 'other,' but between 'us' and 'another us.'

C. Karen Prager– *God's Covenant with Sarah*
1. Read the *midrash.*
2. Discuss the similarity of this feminist *midrash* with other *midrashim* that we have studied.
3. How does she rewrite the story?

D. Athalya Brenner – *Female Social Behaviour: Two Descriptive Patterns Within the "Birth of the Hero Paradigm"*
1. Read the commentary.
2. Discuss the birth of the hero paradigm.
3. Discuss how the two paired-off women are always defined as rivals.
4. Discuss the power politics of producing an heir.

IV. Feminist Commentaries

A. Contemporary commentaries.
1. In recent years a number of feminist commentaries have been published.
2. These are to be used just as one would use the weekly commentaries found in *Chumashim* such as *Etz Chaim* and Plout's commentary on the Torah.

B. Read the four commentaries to get an additional understanding of the text and also of how each of these commentaries approaches the text.
1. Ellen Frankel, Ph.D. – *Five Books of Miriam*
2. Rabbi Elyse Goldstein – *The Women's Torah Commentary*
3. Carol A. Newsom & Sharon H. Ringe – *Women's Bible Commentary*
4. Judith S. Antonelli – *In the Image of God*

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Kadmonites, 20the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Rephaim, 21the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Girgashites, and the Jebusites."

וְאֶת־הַפְּרִזִּי וְאֶת־הָרְפָאִים׃ 21 וְאֶת־
הָאֱמֹרִי וְאֶת־הַכְּנַעֲנִי וְאֶת־הַגִּרְגָּשִׁי וְאֶת־
הַיְבוּסִי׃ ס

טז

16 Sarai, Abram's wife, had borne him no children. She had an Egyptian maidservant whose name was Hagar. 2And Sarai said to Abram, "Look, the LORD has kept me from bearing. Consort with my maid; perhaps I shall have a son[a] through her." And Abram heeded Sarai's request. 3So Sarai, Abram's wife, took her maid, Hagar the Egyptian—after Abram had dwelt in the land of Canaan ten years—and gave her to her husband Abram as concubine. 4He cohabited with Hagar and she conceived; and when she saw that she had conceived, her mistress was lowered in her esteem. 5And Sarai said to Abram, "The wrong done me is your fault! I myself put my maid in your bosom; now that she sees that she is pregnant, I am lowered in her esteem. The LORD decide between you and me!" 6Abram said to Sarai, "Your maid is in your hands. Deal with her as you think right." Then Sarai treated her harshly, and she ran away from her.

7An angel of the LORD found her by a spring of water in the wilderness, the spring on the road to Shur, 8and said, "Hagar, slave of Sarai, where have you come from, and where are you going?" And she said, "I am running away from my mistress Sarai."

9And the angel of the LORD said to her, "Go back to your mistress, and submit to her harsh treatment." 10And the angel of the LORD said to her,

"I will greatly increase your offspring,
And they shall be too many to count."

11The angel of the LORD said to her further,

"Behold, you are with child

וְשָׂרַי אֵשֶׁת אַבְרָם לֹא יָלְדָה לוֹ
וְלָהּ שִׁפְחָה מִצְרִית וּשְׁמָהּ הָגָר׃ 2 וַתֹּאמֶר
שָׂרַי אֶל־אַבְרָם הִנֵּה־נָא עֲצָרַנִי יְהוָה
מִלֶּדֶת בֹּא־נָא אֶל־שִׁפְחָתִי אוּלַי אִבָּנֶה
מִמֶּנָּה וַיִּשְׁמַע אַבְרָם לְקוֹל שָׂרָי׃ 3 וַתִּקַּח
שָׂרַי אֵשֶׁת־אַבְרָם אֶת־הָגָר הַמִּצְרִית
שִׁפְחָתָהּ מִקֵּץ עֶשֶׂר שָׁנִים לְשֶׁבֶת אַבְרָם
בְּאֶרֶץ כְּנָעַן וַתִּתֵּן אֹתָהּ לְאַבְרָם אִישָׁהּ
לוֹ לְאִשָּׁה׃ 4 וַיָּבֹא אֶל־הָגָר וַתַּהַר וַתֵּרֶא
כִּי הָרָתָה וַתֵּקַל גְּבִרְתָּהּ בְּעֵינֶיהָ׃
5 וַתֹּאמֶר שָׂרַי אֶל־אַבְרָם חֲמָסִי עָלֶיךָ
אָנֹכִי נָתַתִּי שִׁפְחָתִי בְּחֵיקֶךָ וַתֵּרֶא כִּי
הָרָתָה וָאֵקַל בְּעֵינֶיהָ יִשְׁפֹּט יְהוָה בֵּינִי
וּבֵינֶיךָ*׃ 6 וַיֹּאמֶר אַבְרָם אֶל־שָׂרַי הִנֵּה
שִׁפְחָתֵךְ בְּיָדֵךְ עֲשִׂי־לָהּ הַטּוֹב בְּעֵינָיִךְ
וַתְּעַנֶּהָ שָׂרַי וַתִּבְרַח מִפָּנֶיהָ׃
7 וַיִּמְצָאָהּ מַלְאַךְ יְהוָה עַל־עֵין הַמַּיִם
בַּמִּדְבָּר עַל־הָעַיִן בְּדֶרֶךְ שׁוּר׃ 8 וַיֹּאמַר
הָגָר שִׁפְחַת שָׂרַי אֵי־מִזֶּה בָּאת וְאָנָה
תֵלֵכִי וַתֹּאמֶר מִפְּנֵי שָׂרַי גְּבִרְתִּי אָנֹכִי
בֹּרַחַת׃
9 וַיֹּאמֶר לָהּ מַלְאַךְ יְהוָה שׁוּבִי אֶל־גְּבִרְתֵּךְ
וְהִתְעַנִּי תַּחַת יָדֶיהָ׃ 10 וַיֹּאמֶר לָהּ מַלְאַךְ
יְהוָה

הַרְבָּה אַרְבֶּה אֶת־זַרְעֵךְ
וְלֹא יִסָּפֵר מֵרֹב׃

11 וַיֹּאמֶר לָהּ מַלְאַךְ יְהוָה

הִנָּךְ הָרָה

v. 5. נקוד על י׳ בתראה

a *Lit. "be built up," play on* ben *"son" and* banah *"build up."*

And shall bear a son;
You shall call him Ishmael,[b]
For the LORD has paid heed to your suffering.
12He shall be a wild ass of a man;
His hand against everyone,
And everyone's hand against him;
He shall dwell alongside of all his kinsmen."
13And she called the LORD who spoke to her, "You Are El-roi,"[c] by which she meant, [d]-"Have I not gone on seeing after He saw me!"-[d] 14Therefore the well was called Beer-lahai-roi;[e] it is between Kadesh and Bered.—15Hagar bore a son to Abram, and Abram gave the son that Hagar bore him the name Ishmael. 16Abram was eighty-six years old when Hagar bore Ishmael to Abram.

וְיֹלַדְתְּ בֵּן
וְקָרָאת שְׁמוֹ יִשְׁמָעֵאל
כִּי־שָׁמַע יְהוָה אֶל־עָנְיֵךְ׃
12 וְהוּא יִהְיֶה פֶּרֶא אָדָם
יָדוֹ בַכֹּל
וְיַד כֹּל בּוֹ
וְעַל־פְּנֵי כָל־אֶחָיו יִשְׁכֹּן׃
13 וַתִּקְרָא שֵׁם־יְהוָה הַדֹּבֵר אֵלֶיהָ אַתָּה
אֵל רֳאִי כִּי אָמְרָה הֲגַם הֲלֹם רָאִיתִי אַחֲרֵי
רֹאִי׃ 14 עַל־כֵּן קָרָא לַבְּאֵר בְּאֵר לַחַי רֹאִי
הִנֵּה בֵין־קָדֵשׁ וּבֵין בָּרֶד׃ 15 וַתֵּלֶד הָגָר
לְאַבְרָם בֵּן וַיִּקְרָא אַבְרָם שֵׁם־בְּנוֹ אֲשֶׁר־
יָלְדָה הָגָר יִשְׁמָעֵאל׃ 16 וְאַבְרָם בֶּן־
שְׁמֹנִים שָׁנָה וְשֵׁשׁ שָׁנִים בְּלֶדֶת־הָגָר
אֶת־יִשְׁמָעֵאל לְאַבְרָם׃ ס

17

When Abram was ninety-nine years old, the LORD appeared to Abram and said to him, "I am El Shaddai.[a] Walk in My ways and be blameless. 2I will establish My covenant between Me and you, and I will make you exceedingly numerous."

3Abram threw himself on his face; and God spoke to him further, 4"As for Me, this is My covenant with you: You shall be the father of a multitude of nations. 5And you shall no longer be called Abram, but your name shall be Abraham,[b] for I make you the father of a multitude of nations. 6I will make you exceedingly fertile, and make nations of you; and kings shall come forth from you. 7I will maintain My covenant between Me and you, and your offspring to come, as an everlasting covenant throughout the ages, to be God to you and to your offspring to come. 8I assign the land you sojourn in to

יז

וַיְהִי אַבְרָם בֶּן־תִּשְׁעִים שָׁנָה וְתֵשַׁע
שָׁנִים וַיֵּרָא יְהוָה אֶל־אַבְרָם וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלָיו
אֲנִי־אֵל שַׁדַּי הִתְהַלֵּךְ לְפָנַי וֶהְיֵה תָמִים׃
2 וְאֶתְּנָה בְרִיתִי בֵּינִי וּבֵינֶךָּ וְאַרְבֶּה אוֹתְךָ
בִּמְאֹד מְאֹד׃
3 וַיִּפֹּל אַבְרָם עַל־פָּנָיו וַיְדַבֵּר אִתּוֹ אֱלֹהִים
לֵאמֹר׃ 4 אֲנִי הִנֵּה בְרִיתִי אִתָּךְ וְהָיִיתָ
לְאַב הֲמוֹן גּוֹיִם׃ 5 וְלֹא־יִקָּרֵא עוֹד אֶת־
שִׁמְךָ אַבְרָם וְהָיָה שִׁמְךָ אַבְרָהָם כִּי
אַב־הֲמוֹן גּוֹיִם נְתַתִּיךָ׃ 6 וְהִפְרֵתִי אֹתְךָ
בִּמְאֹד מְאֹד וּנְתַתִּיךָ לְגוֹיִם וּמְלָכִים מִמְּךָ
יֵצֵאוּ׃ 7 וַהֲקִמֹתִי אֶת־בְּרִיתִי בֵּינִי וּבֵינֶךָ
וּבֵין זַרְעֲךָ אַחֲרֶיךָ לְדֹרֹתָם לִבְרִית עוֹלָם
לִהְיוֹת לְךָ לֵאלֹהִים וּלְזַרְעֲךָ אַחֲרֶיךָ׃
8 וְנָתַתִּי לְךָ וּלְזַרְעֲךָ אַחֲרֶיךָ אֵת | אֶרֶץ
מְגֻרֶיךָ אֵת כָּל־אֶרֶץ כְּנַעַן לַאֲחֻזַּת עוֹלָם
וְהָיִיתִי לָהֶם לֵאלֹהִים׃

b *I.e., "God heeds."*
c *Apparently "God of Seeing."*
d-d *Meaning of Heb. uncertain.*
e *Apparently "the Well of the Living One Who sees me."*

a *Traditionally rendered "God Almighty."*
b *Understood as "father of a multitude."*

you are cleared before everyone." 17Abraham then prayed to God, and God healed Abimelech and his wife and his slave girls, so that they bore children; 18for the LORD had closed fast every womb of the household of Abimelech because of Sarah, the wife of Abraham.

וְאַמְהֹתָיו וַיֵּלֵדוּ׃ 18 כִּי־עָצֹר עָצַר יְהוָה
בְּעַד כָּל־רֶחֶם לְבֵית אֲבִימֶלֶךְ עַל־דְּבַר
שָׂרָה אֵשֶׁת אַבְרָהָם׃ ס

21 The LORD took note of Sarah as He had promised, and the LORD did for Sarah as He had spoken. 2Sarah conceived and bore a son to Abraham in his old age, at the set time of which God had spoken. 3Abraham gave his newborn son, whom Sarah had borne him, the name of Isaac. 4And when his son Isaac was eight days old, Abraham circumcised him, as God had commanded him. 5Now Abraham was a hundred years old when his son Isaac was born to him. 6Sarah said, "God has brought me laughter; everyone who hears will laugh with[a] me." 7And she added,

"Who would have said to Abraham
That Sarah would suckle children!
Yet I have borne a son in his old age."

8The child grew up and was weaned, and Abraham held a great feast on the day that Isaac was weaned.

9Sarah saw the son whom Hagar the Egyptian had borne to Abraham playing. 10She said to Abraham, "Cast out that slave-woman and her son, for the son of that slave shall not share in the inheritance with my son Isaac." 11The matter distressed Abraham greatly, for it concerned a son of his. 12But God said to Abraham, "Do not be distressed over the boy or your slave; whatever Sarah tells you, do as she says, for it is through Isaac that offspring shall be continued[b] for you. 13As for the son of the slave-woman, I will make a nation of him, too, for he is your seed."

כא וַיהוָה פָּקַד אֶת־שָׂרָה כַּאֲשֶׁר
אָמָר וַיַּעַשׂ יְהוָה לְשָׂרָה כַּאֲשֶׁר דִּבֵּר׃
2 וַתַּהַר וַתֵּלֶד שָׂרָה לְאַבְרָהָם בֵּן לִזְקֻנָיו
לַמּוֹעֵד אֲשֶׁר־דִּבֶּר אֹתוֹ אֱלֹהִים׃ 3 וַיִּקְרָא
אַבְרָהָם אֶת־שֵׁם־בְּנוֹ הַנּוֹלַד־לוֹ אֲשֶׁר־
יָלְדָה־לּוֹ שָׂרָה יִצְחָק׃ 4 וַיָּמָל אַבְרָהָם
אֶת־יִצְחָק בְּנוֹ בֶּן־שְׁמֹנַת יָמִים כַּאֲשֶׁר
צִוָּה אֹתוֹ אֱלֹהִים׃ 5 וְאַבְרָהָם בֶּן־מְאַת
שָׁנָה בְּהִוָּלֶד לוֹ אֶת יִצְחָק בְּנוֹ׃ 6 וַתֹּאמֶר
שָׂרָה צְחֹק עָשָׂה לִי אֱלֹהִים כָּל־הַשֹּׁמֵעַ
יִצְחַק־לִי׃ 7 וַתֹּאמֶר
מִי מִלֵּל לְאַבְרָהָם
הֵינִיקָה בָנִים שָׂרָה
כִּי־יָלַדְתִּי בֵן לִזְקֻנָיו׃
8 וַיִּגְדַּל הַיֶּלֶד וַיִּגָּמַל וַיַּעַשׂ אַבְרָהָם
מִשְׁתֶּה גָּדוֹל בְּיוֹם הִגָּמֵל אֶת־יִצְחָק׃
9 וַתֵּרֶא שָׂרָה אֶת־בֶּן־הָגָר הַמִּצְרִית אֲשֶׁר־
יָלְדָה לְאַבְרָהָם מְצַחֵק׃ 10 וַתֹּאמֶר
לְאַבְרָהָם גָּרֵשׁ הָאָמָה הַזֹּאת וְאֶת־בְּנָהּ
כִּי לֹא יִירַשׁ בֶּן־הָאָמָה הַזֹּאת עִם־בְּנִי
עִם־יִצְחָק׃ 11 וַיֵּרַע הַדָּבָר מְאֹד בְּעֵינֵי
אַבְרָהָם עַל אוֹדֹת בְּנוֹ׃ 12 וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים
אֶל־אַבְרָהָם אַל־יֵרַע בְּעֵינֶיךָ עַל־הַנַּעַר
וְעַל־אֲמָתֶךָ כֹּל אֲשֶׁר תֹּאמַר אֵלֶיךָ שָׂרָה
שְׁמַע בְּקֹלָהּ כִּי בְיִצְחָק יִקָּרֵא לְךָ זָרַע׃
13 וְגַם אֶת־בֶּן־הָאָמָה לְגוֹי אֲשִׂימֶנּוּ כִּי
זַרְעֲךָ הוּא׃

a *Lit. "for."*
b *Lit. "called."*

14 וַיַּשְׁכֵּם אַבְרָהָם | בַּבֹּקֶר וַיִּקַּח־לֶחֶם
וְחֵמַת מַיִם וַיִּתֵּן אֶל־הָגָר שָׂם עַל־שִׁכְמָהּ
וְאֶת־הַיֶּלֶד וַיְשַׁלְּחֶהָ וַתֵּלֶךְ וַתֵּתַע בְּמִדְבַּר
בְּאֵר שָׁבַע׃ 15 וַיִּכְלוּ הַמַּיִם מִן־הַחֵמֶת
וַתַּשְׁלֵךְ אֶת־הַיֶּלֶד תַּחַת אַחַד הַשִּׂיחִם׃
16 וַתֵּלֶךְ וַתֵּשֶׁב לָהּ מִנֶּגֶד הַרְחֵק כִּמְטַחֲוֵי
קֶשֶׁת כִּי אָמְרָה אַל־אֶרְאֶה בְּמוֹת הַיֶּלֶד
וַתֵּשֶׁב מִנֶּגֶד וַתִּשָּׂא אֶת־קֹלָהּ וַתֵּבְךְּ׃
17 וַיִּשְׁמַע אֱלֹהִים אֶת־קוֹל הַנַּעַר וַיִּקְרָא
מַלְאַךְ אֱלֹהִים | אֶל־הָגָר מִן־הַשָּׁמַיִם
וַיֹּאמֶר לָהּ מַה־לָּךְ הָגָר אַל־תִּירְאִי כִּי־
שָׁמַע אֱלֹהִים אֶל־קוֹל הַנַּעַר בַּאֲשֶׁר הוּא־
שָׁם׃ 18 קוּמִי שְׂאִי אֶת־הַנַּעַר וְהַחֲזִיקִי
אֶת־יָדֵךְ בּוֹ כִּי־לְגוֹי גָּדוֹל אֲשִׂימֶנּוּ׃
19 וַיִּפְקַח אֱלֹהִים אֶת־עֵינֶיהָ וַתֵּרֶא בְּאֵר
מָיִם וַתֵּלֶךְ וַתְּמַלֵּא אֶת־הַחֵמֶת מַיִם
וַתַּשְׁקְ אֶת־הַנָּעַר׃ 20 וַיְהִי אֱלֹהִים אֶת־
הַנַּעַר וַיִּגְדָּל וַיֵּשֶׁב בַּמִּדְבָּר וַיְהִי רֹבֶה
קַשָּׁת׃ 21 וַיֵּשֶׁב בְּמִדְבַּר פָּארָן וַתִּקַּח־לוֹ
אִמּוֹ אִשָּׁה מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרָיִם׃ פ

14Early next morning Abraham took some bread and a skin of water, and gave them to Hagar. He placed them over her shoulder, together with the child, and sent her away. And she wandered about in the wilderness of Beer-sheba. 15When the water was gone from the skin, she left the child under one of the bushes, 16and went and sat down at a distance, a bowshot away; for she thought, "Let me not look on as the child dies." And sitting thus afar, she burst into tears.

17God heard the cry of the boy, and an angel of God called to Hagar from heaven and said to her, "What troubles you, Hagar? Fear not, for God has heeded the cry of the boy where he is. 18Come, lift up the boy and hold him by the hand, for I will make a great nation of him." 19Then God opened her eyes and she saw a well of water. She went and filled the skin with water, and let the boy drink. 20God was with the boy and he grew up; he dwelt in the wilderness and became a bowman. 21He lived in the wilderness of Paran; and his mother got a wife for him from the land of Egypt.

22 וַיְהִי בָּעֵת הַהִוא וַיֹּאמֶר אֲבִימֶלֶךְ וּפִיכֹל
שַׂר־צְבָאוֹ אֶל־אַבְרָהָם לֵאמֹר אֱלֹהִים
עִמְּךָ בְּכֹל אֲשֶׁר־אַתָּה עֹשֶׂה׃ 23 וְעַתָּה
הִשָּׁבְעָה לִּי בֵאלֹהִים הֵנָּה אִם־תִּשְׁקֹר לִי
וּלְנִינִי וּלְנֶכְדִּי כַּחֶסֶד אֲשֶׁר־עָשִׂיתִי עִמָּךְ
תַּעֲשֶׂה עִמָּדִי וְעִם־הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר־גַּרְתָּה
בָּהּ׃ 24 וַיֹּאמֶר אַבְרָהָם אָנֹכִי אִשָּׁבֵעַ׃
25 וְהוֹכַח אַבְרָהָם אֶת־אֲבִימֶלֶךְ עַל־
אֹדוֹת בְּאֵר הַמַּיִם אֲשֶׁר גָּזְלוּ עַבְדֵי
אֲבִימֶלֶךְ׃ 26 וַיֹּאמֶר אֲבִימֶלֶךְ לֹא יָדַעְתִּי
מִי עָשָׂה אֶת־הַדָּבָר הַזֶּה וְגַם־אַתָּה לֹא־
הִגַּדְתָּ לִּי וְגַם אָנֹכִי לֹא שָׁמַעְתִּי בִלְתִּי
הַיּוֹם׃ 27 וַיִּקַּח אַבְרָהָם צֹאן וּבָקָר וַיִּתֵּן
לַאֲבִימֶלֶךְ וַיִּכְרְתוּ שְׁנֵיהֶם בְּרִית׃ 28 וַיַּצֵּב
אַבְרָהָם אֶת־שֶׁבַע כִּבְשֹׂת הַצֹּאן לְבַדְּהֶן׃

22At that time Abimelech and Phicol, chief of his troops, said to Abraham, "God is with you in everything that you do. 23Therefore swear to me here by God that you will not deal falsely with me or with my kith and kin, but will deal with me and with the land in which you have sojourned as loyally as I have dealt with you." 24And Abraham said, "I swear it."

25Then Abraham reproached Abimelech for the well of water which the servants of Abimelech had seized. 26But Abimelech said, "I do not know who did this; you did not tell me, nor have I heard of it until today." 27Abraham took sheep and oxen and gave them to Abimelech, and the two of them made a pact. 28Abraham then set seven ewes of the flock by themselves,

Preface

In an earlier version these essays were the Lyman Beecher Lectures delivered at Yale Divinity School, February 1982. Their title was "Texts of Terror: Unpreached Stories of Faith." Selections from them became parts of the 1982 Mackinnon Lectures at the Atlantic School of Theology, Halifax, Nova Scotia; the 1983 Francis B. Denio Lectures at Bangor Theological Seminary, Bangor, Maine; and the 1983 Jackson Lectures at Perkins School of Theology, Dallas, Texas.

I have conceived this book as a companion to *God and the Rhetoric of Sexuality* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1978). The two volumes share a feminist perspective, a literary critical methodology, and the subject matter of female and male in the Hebrew scriptures. Yet the studies differ in emphasis and spirit. The first is a time to laugh and dance; the second, a time to weep and mourn. Reversal of the order of Qoheleth's rhythms (Eccl. 3:4) has proven crucial. Without the joy of the first book, I should have found unbearable the sorrow of the second. Ancient tales of terror speak all too frighteningly of the present.

If terror dominates the study, theory does not. Only a brief introduction stands between the reader and the stories, and no conclusion discusses what is narrated. Scholarly debate, methodological defense, and theological disputation seldom appear in the text; such burdens the footnotes bear. The resultant message is clear. Storytelling is sufficient unto itself.

Throughout I have employed different translations of the Bible. Often I have quoted the Revised Standard Version, but more often I have changed this text. Quotations thus altered are marked with an asterisk after the abbreviation RSV (RSV*). Other published translations are designated by their appropriate sigla. My own trans-

lations are left unmarked. I have designed them to convey Hebrew vocabulary and syntax, rather than felicitous English, and to use, where valid, nonsexist language.

A second type of markings also requires explanation. They pertain to the phenomenon of repetition as it is important for understanding the form, content, and meaning of the narratives. Repetition often signals the boundaries of literary units as well as the connection between units. It is an aid to memory and shows where emphasis lies. To indicate the presence of repetition in the relationships of words, phrases, clauses, or sentences, I have devised a series of indicators. Within a given section, a first group of repetitions is designated by an unbroken line under the language; a second group by a broken line; and a third by a set of dots. These indicators are arbitrarily chosen, but their use is purposeful and consistent.

In this pilgrimage of storytelling, many people have given me encouragement and expertise. I am particularly grateful to Ruthann Dwyer and Sarah Ryan for meticulous work and abiding interest. Each of them read the entire manuscript more than once, corrected mistakes, and suggested improvements. Special thanks also go to Toni Craven, Mary Ann Tolbert, and Julie Galas. Ms. Galas, secretary of the Biblical Field at Union Theological Seminary, typed innumerable drafts with patience, skill, and cheerfulness.

The two women to whom I dedicate the book manifested compassion for the sufferings of human beings. Helen Price was Professor of Ancient Languages at Meredith College, Raleigh, North Carolina, and Mary A. Tully, Associate Professor of Religious Education and Psychology at Union Theological Seminary, New York. In listing their academic titles, I render to Caesar. They themselves rendered to God, even the God of terror.

PHYLLIS TRIBLE

Texts of Terror

Introduction
On Telling Sad Stories

Stories are the style and substance of life. They fashion and fill existence. From primeval to eschatological vistas, from youthful dreams to seasoned experiences, from resounding disclosures to whispered intimacies, the narrative mode of speech prevails. Myth, parable, folk tale, epic, romance, novella, history, confession, biography—these and other genres proclaim the presence and power of the story.

If without stories we live not, stories live not without us. Alone a text is mute and ineffectual.[1] In the speaking and the hearing new things appear in the land. The word goes forth from the mouth; even the tongue of the stammerer speaks readily and distinctly. The ears of those who hear hearken; even the ears of the deaf unstop. Thus the word does not return empty but accomplishes that which it purposes.[2] Storytelling is a trinitarian act that unites writer, text, and reader in a collage of understanding.[3] Though distinguishable and unequal, the three participants are inseparable and interdependent. Truly, "in the tale, in the telling, we are all one blood."[4]

In this book my task is to tell sad stories as I hear them. Indeed, they are tales of terror with women as victims. Belonging to the sacred scriptures of synagogue and church, these narratives yield four portraits of suffering in ancient Israel: Hagar, the slave used, abused, and rejected; Tamar, the princess raped and discarded; an unnamed woman, the concubine raped, murdered, and dismembered; and the daughter of Jephthah, a virgin slain and sacrificed.

Choice and chance inspire my telling these particular tales: hearing a black woman describe herself as a daughter of Hagar outside the covenant; seeing an abused woman on the streets of New York

with a sign, "My name is Tamar"; reading news reports of the dismembered body of a woman found in a trash can; attending worship services in memory of nameless women; and wrestling with the silence, absence, and opposition of God. All these experiences and others have led me to a land of terror from whose bourn no traveler returns unscarred. The journey is solitary and intense. In joining this venture, the reader assumes its risks.

PITFALLS AND GUIDES

Yet the reader need not enter unawares. Having already made the journey, the writer knows the terrain. From the start, certain theological positions constitute pitfalls. They center in Christian chauvinism. First, to account for these stories as relics of a distant, primitive, and inferior past is invalid. Resoundingly, the evidence of history refutes all claims to the superiority of a Christian era.[5] Second, to contrast an Old Testament God of wrath with a New Testament God of love is fallacious. The God of Israel is the God of Jesus, and in both testaments resides tension between divine wrath and divine love. Third, to subordinate the suffering of the four women to the suffering of the cross is spurious. Their passion has its own integrity; no comparisons diminish the terror they knew. Fourth, to seek the redemption of these stories in the resurrection is perverse. Sad stories do not have happy endings.

Offsetting these pitfalls are guides for telling and hearing the tales. To perceive the Bible as a mirror is one such sign. If art imitates life, scripture likewise reflects it in both holiness and horror. Reflections themselves neither mandate nor manufacture change; yet by enabling insight, they may inspire repentance. In other words, sad stories may yield new beginnings.

To use scripture in interpreting scripture is a second guide for the journey.[6] Pondering an individual narrative evokes associations with other texts; studying other texts illuminates a single story. This kind of dialectic informs my telling sad tales. Among the many scriptural allusions I employ throughout the essays, three sets of passages constitute leitmotifs: the suffering servant songs of Second Isaiah, the passion narratives of the Gospels, and the eucharistic sections of the Pauline Epistles. These familiar passages receive, however, unfamiliar applications.[7] Women, not men, are suffering servants

and Christ figures. Their stories govern the use of the lei ifs. Scripture thus interpreting scripture undercuts triumphalism and raises disturbing questions for faith.

PROVISIONS FOR THE JOURNEY

In addition to the guides for telling and hearing these texts, certain provisions sustain the journey. They are few but ample: a perspective, a methodology, and a story. Jacob's wrestling at the Jabbok is the story; literary criticism, the methodology; and feminism, the perspective.

As a critique of culture and faith in light of misogyny, feminism is a prophetic movement, examining the status quo, pronouncing judgment, and calling for repentance. This hermeneutic engages scripture in various ways.[8] One approach documents the case against women. It cites and evaluates long neglected data that show the inferiority, subordination, and abuse of the female in ancient Israel and the early church. By contrast, a second approach discerns within the Bible critiques of patriarchy. It upholds forgotten texts and reinterprets familiar ones to shape a remnant theology that challenges the sexism of scripture.[9] Yet a third approach incorporates the other two. It recounts tales of terror *in memoriam* to offer sympathetic readings of abused women. If the first perspective documents misogyny historically and sociologically, this one appropriates the data poetically and theologically. At the same time, it continues to search for the remnant in unlikely places. Such an approach characterizes these essays. It interprets stories of outrage on behalf of their female victims in order to recover a neglected history, to remember a past that the present embodies, and to pray that these terrors shall not come to pass again. In telling sad stories, a feminist hermeneutic seeks to redeem the time.

Joining this perspective is the methodology of literary criticism.[10] As practiced here, it involves an intrinsic reading of the text in its final form.[11] The phrase "intrinsic reading" means wholly upon the text rather than wholly within the text.[12] To elicit understanding, analysis brings conventions to literature. These learned procedures, tools, and controls vary from critic to critic and from age to age.[13] For this study, accent is upon the inseparability of form, content, and meaning; the rhetorical formation of sentences, episodes, and

scenes as well as overall design and plot structure;[14] and the portrayal of characters, most especially the violated women.

Each essay stands on its own; conversely, each belongs to the other three as variations upon the theme of terror. Independence and interdependence thus order the chapters. On the one hand, no particular arrangement is mandatory. On the other hand, dramatic effect has shaped the sequence. From rejection to rape to dismemberment to sacrifice, literary judgments supersede historical claims.

If literary criticism is the methodology and feminism the perspective, Jacob's wrestling at the Jabbok provides the story for our journey (Gen. 32:22–32).[15] On his way home after years of sojourn, Jacob spends a night alone in combat against an inscrutable opponent.[16] The story suggests that this "man" (*'îš*) is deity, and yet a precise identity remains uncertain.[17] Darkness by the river Jabbok conceals meaning while revealing the perplexity and terror of the event.

The fight is close to an even match. As Jacob prevails, the man puts out of joint the hollow of Jacob's thigh. Their physical struggle yields to a verbal contest, with Jacob refusing to let the man go unless he blesses him. The night visitor deflects this demand by eliciting a confession of the name Jacob as trickster, cheater, or supplanter.[18] To reorient the identity of the patriarch, he changes that name to Israel ("God rules"). But again, Jacob wants to trick the assailant. "Tell me, I pray, your name," he asks. Although the request demonstrates a continuing desire for power, it is defeated by an all-knowing question, "Why is it that you ask my name?" Only then does the powerful opponent bless the mighty striver. What Jacob wants, he does not get on his own terms. The outcome acknowledges both the crippling victory and the magnificent defeat of that night.[19] Jacob's life is preserved, but he limps as he leaves the Jabbok.

As a paradigm for encountering terror, this story offers sustenance for the present journey. To tell and hear tales of terror is to wrestle demons in the night, without a compassionate God to save us. In combat we wonder about the names of the demons. Our own names, however, we all too frightfully recognize. The fight itself is solitary and intense. We struggle mightily, only to be wounded. But yet we hold on, seeking a blessing: the healing of wounds and the restoration

of health. If the blessing comes—and we dare not claim assurance—it does not come on our terms. Indeed, as we leave the land of terror, we limp.

With pitfalls to shun, guides to follow, and provisions to use, the trinitarian act of storytelling engages four texts of terror.

NOTES

1. See Paul Ricoeur, *Interpretation Theory* (Fort Worth: Texas Christian University Press, 1976), p. 75.

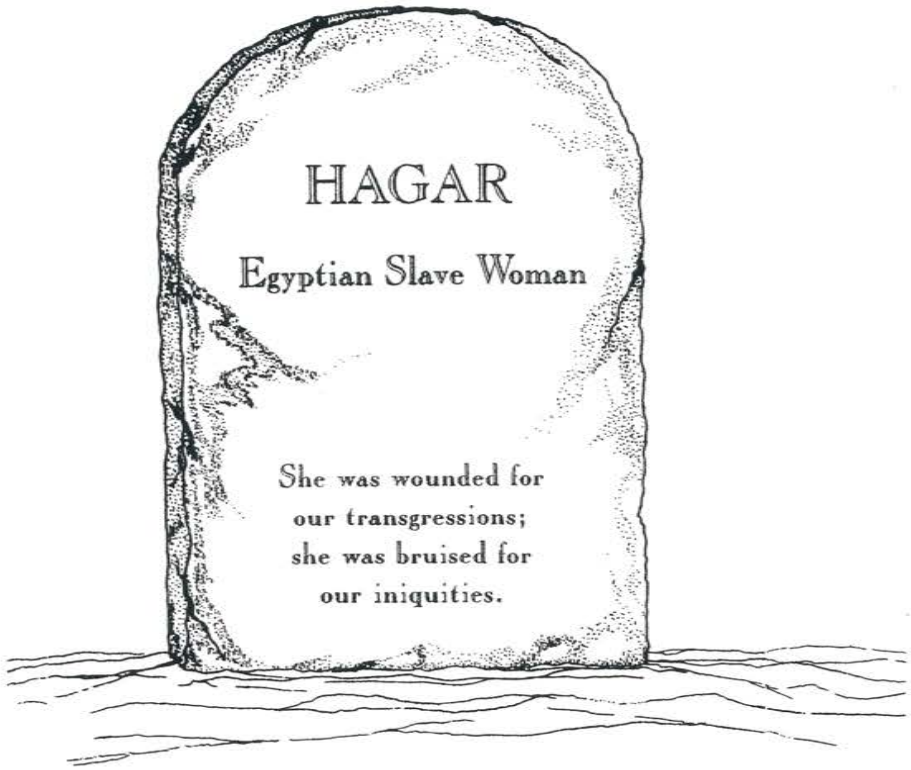
2. For the scriptural allusions in the preceding sentences, see Jer. 31:22b; Isa. 32:3–4; 35:5; 55:10–11.

3. On the teller and the tale, see Robert Scholes and Robert Kellogg, *The Nature of Narrative* (New York and London: Oxford University Press, 1966); Mary McCarthy, "Novel, Tale, Romance," *The New York Review of Books*, 12 May 1983, pp. 49–56; on the reader, see Wolfgang Iser, *The Act of Reading* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1980). Though I concentrate on these three participants, other critics may also take into account, e.g., the implied author and the implied reader. See Wayne C. Booth, *The Rhetoric of Fiction* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961); Wolfgang Iser, *The Implied Reader* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978); Susan R. Suleiman and Inge Crossman, eds., *The Reader in the Text* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1980). For helpful discussions of all these and related issues, see Shlomith Rimmon-Kenan, *Narrative Fiction: Contemporary Poetics* (London: Methuen & Co., 1983) and Terry Eagleton, *Literary Theory: An Introduction* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1983).

4. Ursula K. LeGuin, "It Was a Dark and Stormy Night; or, Why Are We Huddling about the Campfire?" in *On Narrative*, ed. W. J. T. Mitchell (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981), p. 195. LeGuin continues, "Take the tale in your teeth, then, and bite till the blood runs, hoping it's not poison; and we will all come to the end together, and even to the beginning: living, as we do, in the middle."

5. Examples are superfluous, though in our own time one thinks of the nuclear attacks on Hiroshima and Nagasaki; Nazi death camps; the slaughter in Vietnam; atrocities in El Salvador, including the murders of four religious women; and the massacre of the Palestinians in Beirut. For individual stories of terror, one need only read the newspaper, talk to friends and strangers, or look within.

6. For discussions and examples of this principle in all its diversity, see, *inter alia*, G. W. H. Lampe and K. J. Woolcombe, *Essays on Typology* (Naperville, Ill.: Alec R. Allenson, 1957); Brevard S. Childs, *Biblical Theology in Crisis* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1960), pp. 139–219; James D. Smart, *The Interpretation of Scripture* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1961); Beryl Smalley, *The Study of the Bible in the Middle Ages* (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 1978); Claus Westermann,



CHAPTER 1

Hagar
The Desolation of Rejection

Genesis 16:1–16; 21: 9–21

Though Abraham prevails in scripture as the symbol of faith, his story pivots on two women, Sarah and Hagar, who shape and challenge faith. Their own stories diverge to give Sarah the better portion. Wife of a wealthy herdsman (Gen. 13:2), she holds privilege and power within the confines of patriarchal structures.[1] To be sure, on two occasions Abraham betrays her, passing her off as his sister to protect himself (12:10–20; 20:1–19),[2] but each time God comes to her rescue. Without effort, this woman along with her husband enjoys divine favor. Yet her exaltation poses major tension in Abram's story because "Sarai is barren; she has no child" (11:30, RSV*).[3] Moreover, "it has ceased to be with Sarah after the manner of women" (18:11, RSV*; cf. 17:17). Her situation would seem to thwart the divine promise of an heir for Abram.[4] Hence, Sarai plans to secure a child through her maid Hagar, who becomes the other woman in Abram's life.

As one of the first females in scripture to experience use, abuse, and rejection, Hagar the Egyptian slave claims our attention. Knowledge of her has survived in bits and pieces only, from the oppressor's perspective at that, and so our task is precarious: to tell Hagar's story from the fragments that remain.

These fragments come from separate scenes in the Abrahamic saga.[5] The first (16:1–16) precedes by several chapters and the second (21:9–21) just follows the birth of the child God eventually gives to Sarah herself.[6] Similar structures and subjects order the scenes. In both, narrative introductions and conclusions surround two episodes. The opening episodes, located in Canaan, highlight Sarah as

she deals with Hagar and Abraham; the closing ones, located in the wilderness, feature Hagar encountering the deity. Besides providing continuity, these structural and content parallels between the scenes highlight their differences. For Hagar, the plot of the first story is circular, moving from bondage to flight to bondage, while the action of the second is linear, proceeding from bondage to expulsion to homelessness.[7]

A CIRCLE OF BONDAGE

Scene One: Genesis 16:1–16

A. *Introduction, 16:1.* The opening sentence of scene one emphasizes Sarai. Reversing the usual Hebrew word order, it places before the verb her name as subject. "Now Sarai, wife of Abram, did not bear a child to him" (16:1). The statement of the problem leads in the second half of the sentence to an answer. "But to her [was] an Egyptian maid whose name was Hagar."[8] Beginning with Sarai and ending with Hagar, the narrated introduction opposes two women around the man Abram. Sarai the Hebrew is married, rich, and free; she is also old and barren. Hagar the Egyptian is single, poor, and bonded;[9] she is also young and fertile. Power belongs to Sarai, the subject of action; powerlessness marks Hagar, the object.

B. *Episode One, 16:2–6.* From the introduction the story moves to its first episode. At the beginning, Sarai speaks in the imperative mood.[10] Dialogic order and verb construction match content to present this woman as the commanding figure. While confirming the problem and solution that the storyteller has reported, she makes subtle changes:

> And Sarai said to Abram,
> "Because Yahweh has prevented me
> from bearing children,
> go to my maid.
> Perhaps I shall be built up from her."
> (16:2a)

Unlike the narrator, Sarai speaks of building up herself through Hagar rather than of bearing a child to Abram (cf. 16:1, 15). In a man's world, the woman's voice sounds a different emphasis.[11] Further, unlike the narrator, she attributes her barren plight to Yahweh and thus seeks to counter divine action with human initiative. What the deity has prevented, Sarai can accomplish through the maid whose name she never utters and to whom she never speaks.[12] For Sarai, Hagar is an instrument, not a person. The maid enhances the mistress.

Sarai's words effect obedience. Abram makes no attempt to halt the plan; instead, he yields so passively that the storyteller must answer for him. "And Abram heard [obeyed] the voice of Sarai" (16:2b). Continuing to underline *his* acquiescence, the narrated discourse reports *her* action:*

> Sarai, wife of Abram, took Hagar the Egyptian, her maid,
> after Abram had dwelt ten years in the land of Canaan,
> and gave her to Abram her husband, to him for a wife.
> (16:3)

Again in the structure of a sentence, two females encircle Abram (cf. 16:1). And they are unequally matched. As subject of the verbs *take* and *give*, Sarai exercises power over Hagar, the object. Though her actions relate the two women, the absence of dialogue maintains distance between them. Repeated use of the relational language wife, maid, husband, and wife accents the growing opposition. In making Hagar Abram's wife, not his concubine,[13] Sarai has diminished her own status in relationship to this servant. But she still retains full control over Abram. As he first obeyed her voice in a narrated sentence of few words, so now he fulfills her command, "Go (*bō'*), then, into (*'el*) my maid" (16:2). "And he went (*bō'*) into (*'el*) Hagar" (16:4a, RSV).[14] No mighty patriarch is Abram, but rather the silent, acquiescent, and minor figure in a drama between two women.

Sarai has spoken; Abram has agreed. Sarai has acted; Abram has obeyed. Next the plot shifts to Hagar, the one through whom Sarai wishes to be built up. Making the maid subject, not object, the narrator reports, "She conceived" (16:4b). Although this result is what Sarai wants, it prompts an insight on Hagar's part that her mistress

* For an explanation of the underlinings in this and subsequent units, see the Preface, p. xiv.

has not anticipated. "When she [Hagar] saw that she had conceived, her mistress was slight in her eyes" (16:4c). Hagar is other than a tool; for that difference Sarai has failed to allow.

The Hebrew expression "her mistress was slight (or trifling) in her eyes" inspires various interpretations. Many translators alter the syntax to make Hagar the subject of the verb. They also attribute to the verb (*qll*) the legitimate, though not necessary, meaning of contempt or disdain. Accordingly, one reads, "When she knew she was with child, she despised her mistress" (NEB); or "when she saw that she had conceived, she looked with contempt on her mistress" (RSV).[15] Yet the verb with its correct subject also offers the less harsh reading that is present in the translation, "Her mistress was lowered in her esteem" (NJV).

Although strife between barren and fertile wives is a typical motif in scripture,[16] in this study the typical yields to the particular. Seeing, that is, perceiving her conception of a child, Hagar acquires a new vision of Sarai. Hierarchical blinders disappear. The exalted mistress decreases while the lowly maid increases. Not hatred but a reordering of the relationship is the point. Unwittingly, Sarai has contributed to Hagar's insight. By giving Hagar to Abram for a wife, Sarai hoped to be built up. In fact, however, she has enhanced the status of the servant to become herself correspondingly lowered in the eyes of Hagar.

This unexpected twist provides an occasion for mutuality and equality between two females, but it is not to be. If Hagar has experienced new vision, Sarai remains within the old structures.[17] Still in charge, she speaks to Abram, faulting him for the outcome of her plan and appealing to Yahweh for judgment. While she uses the same vocabulary as the narrator to describe Hagar's response, the words on her lips have a pejorative meaning:[18]

> And Sarai said to Abram,
> "May the wrong done to me be upon you!
> *I* (*'ānōkî*) gave my maid to your embrace
> but when she saw that she had conceived,
> then I was slight in her eyes.
> May Yahweh judge between you and me!"
> (16:5, RSV*)

The mistress wants returned the superior status that she unintentionally relinquished in using Hagar. Further, she demands that her husband rectify the wrong because he holds authority over Hagar too. But Abram, speaking for the first time in this scene, chooses not to exercise power and thus remains passive:[19]

> But Abram said to Sarai,
> "Since your maid is in your hand,
> do to her the good in your eyes."
> (16:6a)

The idiom, "the good in your eyes," plays upon the reference to Hagar's eyes: "Her mistress was slight in her eyes." The vision of the mistress opposes the insight of the maid. What is good for the one is suffering for the other.

If Sarai's opening speech to Abram ordered the use of Hagar (16:2), her words to him now, with his reply, lead to the abuse of the maid. Succinctly, the narrator declares, "And Sarai afflicted her" (16:6b). Once again the two women meet unequally as subject and object, vanquisher and victim, and this time Hagar has lost her name (cf. 16:3). Moreover, the absence of dialogue continues to separate the females. Inequality, opposition, and distance breed violence. "Sarai afflicted her." The verb *afflict* (*'nh*) is a strong one, connoting harsh treatment. It characterizes, for example, the sufferings of the entire Hebrew population in Egypt, the land of their bondage.[20] Ironically, here it depicts the torture of a lone Egyptian woman in Canaan, the land of her bondage to the Hebrews. Sarai afflicted Hagar.

In conceiving a child for her mistress, Hagar has seen a new reality that challenges the power structure. Her vision leads not to a softening but to an intensification of the system. In the hand of Sarai, with the consent of Abram, Hagar becomes the suffering servant, the precursor of Israel's plight under Pharaoh. Yet no deity comes to deliver her from bondage and oppression; nor does she beseech one. Instead, this tortured female claims her own exodus. "Sarai afflicted her, and so she fled (*brḥ*) from her"—even as Israel will later flee (*brḥ*) from Pharaoh (Exod. 14:5a). Thus, episode one closes with Hagar taking command of her own life under the threat of Sarai.

C. *Episode Two, 16:7–14.* The opening of episode two plays upon this ending:

> And Sarai afflicted her.
> So she fled from her.
>
> But the messenger of the Lord found her.
> (16:6b–7a)

In the first and third sentences, Hagar is the direct object of verbs with different subjects. While the afflicting of her by Sarai is hostile treatment, the finding of her by the deity holds uncertain meaning. The divine action may either counter or confirm Sarai's action. If the finding counters the afflicting, then the flight of Hagar in the middle of the sequence signals a new direction that the diety enhances, encourages, and, in fact, empowers. But if the finding confirms the afflicting, then the flight of Hagar is a futile activity that the deity circumscribes, controls, and, in fact, cancels. The juxtaposition of the three sentences poses ambiguity in the development of the narrative. Resolution awaits further action by the messenger of the Lord.

Before continuing with the divine action, the storyteller provides a brief note about Hagar's location. Like Israel in years to come, this runaway pregnant maid has fled from the house of bondage to the wilderness. For her it is a hospitable place, symbolized by a spring on the way to Shur, a region at the Egyptian border.[21] There, with water to nourish life, Hagar is almost home. How different are her circumstances from Israel's exodus! When "Moses led Israel onward from the Red Sea, and they went into the wilderness of Shur, they went three days in the wilderness and found no water" (Exod. 15:22, RSV). Indeed, Moses had to ask the Lord for water. But Hagar does not cry out to any god, most especially not to Yahweh whose action in closing Sarai's womb has brought affliction to the maidservant. Nevertheless, like Moses, Hagar encounters deity after she has fled from her oppressor (cf. Exod. 2:15b–16; 3:1–2).[22] The messenger of Yahweh finds her by the spring of water in the wilderness. This Egyptian maid is the first person in scripture whom such a messenger visits.[23]

Speech alone reveals the divine presence. "Hagar, maid of Sarai,

from where have you come and where are you going?" (16:8a, RSV). For the first time a character speaks to Hagar and uses her name. The deity acknowledges what Sarai and Abram have not: the personhood of this woman. Yet the appositive, "maid of Sarai," tempers the recognition, for Hagar remains a servant in the vocabulary of the divine. Rather than freeing her from a human bond of servitude, "the messenger of the Lord" (16:7) addresses "the maid of Sarai" (16:8). These relational identifications pose a striking contrast even as they harbor a parallel meaning. To be "of Sarai" is to be "of the Lord."

"From where have you come and where are you going?" The questions embody origin and destiny. In answering, Hagar speaks for the first time. Exodus from oppression liberates her voice, though full personhood continues to elude her. Subtly, the narrator suggests this limitation by omitting her name throughout the entire episode, most particularly in the introductions to her speeches.[24] Only feminine verb forms or pronouns identify Hagar. She herself acknowledges this incompleteness of personhood in replying to the divine question, "From where have you come?" While she answers in the same syntactical order that the question was posed, she transforms the content of both the prepositional phrase and the verb. "And she said, 'From the face of Sarai, my mistress, I (*'ānōkî*) am fleeing'" (16:8b). "From where have you come?" From a place she has not come; rather, from a person she is fleeing. Matching the messenger's designation, "maid of Sarai," the phrase, "Sarai my mistress," indicates the continuing power of the social structure. Exodus from oppression has not secured freedom for Hagar. She continues, however, to resist. "I (*'ānōkî*)," she says emphatically, "am fleeing." This *I* stands over against the *I* (*'ānōkî*) of Sarai (16:5). Powerlessness defies power.

"Where are you going?" is the second question. Hagar seems not to answer. Or is departure her destiny? After all, the wilderness signifies escape from oppression, nourishment of life, and revelation of the divine. But if for her departure is destiny, for the messenger of the Lord a different answer prevails. The appositives, "maid of Sarai," and "Sarai my mistress," indicate that the past invades the present to shape the future. Hence, wilderness is not destination but

point of return. "The messenger of the Lord" has found "the maid of Sarai" in order to tell her where she is going. And the divine command merges origin and destiny: "Return to your mistress, and suffer affliction under her hand" (16:9). Truly, to be "of Sarai" is to be "of the Lord."

Double imperatives underscore the severity. By itself the order "Return to your mistress" might mean reversion to the beginning when servitude existed apart from harsh treatment. But the second command negates such an interpretation: "Suffer affliction under her hand." The verb (*ʿnh*) is the same word used for Sarai's earlier abuse of Hagar (16:6b). Further, the phrase, *under her hand*, echoes Abram's reply to Sarai, "Look, your maid is *in your hand*; do to her the good in your eyes" (16:6a).

Without doubt, these two imperatives, return and submit to suffering, bring a divine word of terror to an abused, yet courageous, woman. They also strike at the heart of Exodus faith. Inexplicably, the God who later, seeing (*r'h*) the suffering (*ʿŏnî*) of a slave people, comes down to deliver them *out of the hand* of the Egyptians (Exod. 3:7–8) here identifies with the oppressor and orders a servant to return not only to bondage but also to affliction.[25] Thus, the ambiguity present at the beginning of this episode finds its resolution in the approval of affliction. "Sarai afflicted her" (16:6b) and "the messenger of the Lord found her" (16:7a) are parallel in form and meaning. Surrounded by these sentences, Hagar's flight is futile.

To be sure, two promises attend the divine command to return and suffer affliction, but each is fraught with ambivalence.[26] The first assures Hagar of innumerable descendants. "I will so greatly multiply your descendants that they cannot be numbered for multitude" (16:10, RSV). While all the patriarchs of Israel hear such words,[27] Hagar is the only woman ever to receive them. And yet this promise to her lacks the covenant context that is so crucial to the founding fathers.

From this assurance of innumerable descendants the focus narrows, in the second promise, to the birth announcement of a child.[28] Although Hagar knows that she is pregnant, the divine messenger sanctions what has come through human machinations. The annunciation has three basic elements: the prediction of the birth of a male child, the naming of the child, and the future life of the child.[29]

Truly you are pregnant
and will bear a son.

You will call his name Ishmael,
for Yahweh has paid heed to your affliction.

He will be a wild ass of a man,
his hand against everyone and everyone's
hand against him.
And against the face of all his brothers
he will dwell.

(16:11–12, RSV*)

As the first to receive an annunciation, Hagar the Egyptian is the prototype of special mothers in Israel.[30] For her the unborn child signifies not just comfort but also suffering. The name Ishmael ("God hears") affirms the two meanings.[31] While Hagar has never cried out to God, the deity pays heed to her past affliction (*ʿnh*; 16:6) by assuring her a future through the son.[32] The promise would seem to negate Sarai's plan to be built up through Hagar.[33] Thus hope prevails. On the other hand, the deity has already paid heed to Hagar's affliction by ordering her to submit further (*ʿnh*; 16:9) to Sarai in the present. Suffering undercuts hope. A sword pierces Hagar's own soul. The divine promise of Ishmael means life at the boundary of consolation and desolation.

The ending of this birth announcement turns from mother to son. Concern for the male deflects interest from the female. Ishmael is to be a wanderer and loner, in strife even with his own people. Two words in the description, however, reflect Hagar's story: *hand* and *face*. "His *hand* [will be] against everyone and everyone's *hand* against him" (16:12b). Such language recalls Abram's words to Sarai, "Look now, your maid is in your *hand*" (16:6), as well as Yahweh's orders to Hagar, "Return to your mistress and suffer affliction under her *hand*" (16:9). If Hagar lives under the hand of Sarai, the hand of Ishmael will engage in ceaseless strife against such power. Indeed, "against the *face* of all his brothers he will dwell" (16:12c). The word *face* builds upon his mother's action when she said, "From the *face* of Sarai my mistress I am fleeing" (16:8). In Ishmael, Hagar's story continues.

Responding to these ambivalent promises from the heavenly messenger, Hagar "calls the name of Yahweh who has spoken to her"

(16:13a). The expression is striking because it connotes naming rather than invocation. In other words, Hagar does not call *upon* the name of the deity (*qr' bšm yhwh*; cf. Gen. 12:8; 13:4). Instead, she calls the name (*qr' šm-yhwh*), a power attributed to no one else in all the Bible. "She calls the name of Yahweh who has spoken to her, 'You are a God of seeing'" (16:13b).[34] The maid who, after seeing (*r'h*) her conception of a child, had a new vision of her mistress Sarai (16:4), now, after receiving a divine announcement of the forthcoming birth, sees (*r'h*) God with new vision.[35] Hagar is a theologian. Her naming unites the divine and human encounter: the God who sees and the God who is seen.[36]

To this name she attaches an explanation. It yields confusion because the Hebrew is obscure. "For she said, 'Have I even here seen (*r'h*) after the one who sees (*r'h*) me?'" (16:13c).[37] Perhaps Hagar is questioning her own understanding of the revelation she has just received. The God who sees her remains unclear to her. Following this elusive comment, the narrator adds an aetiological note identifying her location as "the well of the living one who sees (*r'h*) me" (16:14a). But the connection between her words and her locale is also nebulous.[38] In the end, then, the meaning of Hagar's question remains uncertain. We know only that the maid who names the deity "God of seeing" must return to the suffering that Yahweh imposes upon her, specifically to the mistress who is slight in her eyes. A circle of bondage encloses Hagar.

D. *Conclusion, 16:15–16*. Of her return and affliction under Sarai the storyteller says nothing. Instead, scene one concludes with a formulaic report of the birth of Ishmael that exalts Abram:[39]

> And Hagar bore to Abram a son,
> and Abram called the name of his son,
> whom Hagar bore, Ishmael.
> Now Abram was eighty-six years old
> when Hagar bore Ishmael to Abram.
>
> (16:15–16, RSV*)

The very first word of the story was Sarai (16:1); the last is Abram. The introduction sounded the negative note, "did not bear a child to him." The conclusion responds with the positive word, "bore

Ishmael to Abram." Moving the story from a sad beginning to a happy ending is Hagar. Yet throughout, her own story runs counter to this movement.

Not surprisingly, the narrated ending continues to undermine Hagar. First, though it restores her name, it silences her voice. Second, it stresses not her motherhood but the fatherhood of Abram,[40] whom the messenger of Yahweh never mentioned. Third, in reporting that Abram named the son Ishmael, it strips Hagar of the power that God gave her. Moreover, the ending undercuts Sarai. The one who spoke of building up herself, not Abram, through Hagar's child receives no mention at all. Neither Hagar nor Sarai but Abram has a son whom he names Ishmael. Patriarchy is well in control. This conclusion to a scene otherwise focused on women resumes Abram's story.

THE WAY OF TRANSITION

Genesis 17:1—21:8. The resumption of Abram's story brings changes to all the characters. No longer Abram and Sarai, the patriarch and his wife become Abraham and Sarah (17:5, 15). Hagar disappears, but her story remains. Ishmael becomes the object of divine rejection precisely because Hagar, not Sarah, is his mother (17:15–21). Thus Abraham's story continues to pivot on these two women, and again Sarah receives the better portion: the divine promise of her very own son (18:1–15).[41] Yet the matriarch laughs to herself about the possibility of bearing a child in her old age (18:12). Unlike Hagar, Sarah is never the recipient of a birth announcement. In fact, Yahweh speaks to her just once, and then with a curt reprimand for disbelieving laughter (18:15).

Promise and delay, doubt and deception move to the advent of Isaac whom Sarah bears to Abraham through the grace of God (21:1–8).[42] Her response to this miraculous birth suggests that she is built up, not in herself, however, but in giving Abraham a son:

> Who would have said to Abraham,
> "Children Sarah will nurse"?
> Yet (*kî*) I have borne him a son
> in his old age.[43]
>
> (21:7, RSV*)

What the culture expects of Sarah, what she has tried to accomplish

through her maid, God has at last given her. Yet, rather than alleviating her trouble with Hagar, the presence of Isaac intensifies it. Hence, additional fragments of Hagar's story emerge in a second scene.

A LINE TO EXILE

Scene Two: Genesis 21:9–21

Though similar in design to scene one, scene two has a more complicated plot. Ishmael and Isaac enlarge the cast of characters to bring other changes. In contrast to its parallel (16:2–6), the first episode (21:9–14abc) portrays Sarah speaking less while accomplishing more, Abraham not speaking but resisting, God intervening directly, and Hagar suffering increasingly.

A. *Introduction and Episode One, 21:9–14abc.* The narrator introduces the story by hinting at further tension between the two women. Sarah provokes it.

> Now Sarah saw the son of Hagar the Egyptian,
> whom she had borne to Abraham, playing.[44]
> (21:9, RSV*)

The description "the son of Hagar the Egyptian" highlights mother, not child. The phrase "whom she had borne to Abraham" recalls Sarai's role in making Hagar Abram's wife. And the verb *see* (*r'h*), which describes Sarah's activity, earlier reported Hagar's response to pregnancy: "When she saw (*r'h*) that she had conceived, her mistress was slight in her eyes" (16:4c). Now Sarah sees the fruit of this conception. Thus, enmity persists between the Hebrew mistress and her Egyptian maid.

What the narrator suggests, Sarah's words confirm, indeed exacerbate. Constructing opposition on inequality, she commands Abraham:

> Cast out (*grš*) this slave woman and her son,
> for the son of this slave woman will not inherit
> with my son, with Isaac.
> (21:10, RSV*)

The presence of Ishmael in Canaan plagues the future of Isaac,

whose inheritance is threatened.[45] In her move to eliminate the danger, Sarah debases Hagar and Ishmael while exalting herself and Isaac. The phrase "her son," without the name Ishmael,[46] counters "my son . . . Isaac." The description "this slave woman," rather than "my maid" (cf. 16:2), increases distance between Hagar and Sarah.[47] Not only is the possessive adjective *my* missing, but also a change in nouns connotes a change in status. From being a maid (*šipḥâ*) to Sarai in scene one, Hagar has become a slave (*'āmâ*), serving the master of the house as his second wife.[48] By contrast, Sarah, the first wife, enjoys power greater than ever because she has born a son. As the life of the mistress has prospered, the lot of the servant woman has worsened.[49]

With a disturbing twist, the words of Sarah anticipate vocabulary and themes from the Exodus narrative. When plagues threatened the life of his firstborn son, Pharaoh cast out (*grš*) the Hebrew slaves.[50] Like that monarch, Sarah the matriarch wants to protect the life of her own son by casting out (*grš*) Hagar the slave. Having once fled from affliction (16:6b), Hagar continues to prefigure Israel's story even as Sarah foreshadows Egypt's role. Irony abounds.

According to the storyteller, Abraham disapproves of Sarah's order and so departs from his usual acquiescent role. His vision, however, encompasses only his son Ishmael. Hagar his wife he neglects altogether.

> The matter was very distressing (*r*^{cc})
> in the eyes of Abraham
> on account of (*'al 'ôdōt*) his son.
> (21:11)

Yet his resistance simply strengthens Sarah's power, for God sides with her. Consequently, the deity alters Abraham's vision.[51]

> Do not be distressed (*r*^{cc}) in your eyes
> on account of (*'al*) the lad
> and on account of (*'al*) your slave woman.
> (21:12a)

Although most of this command repeats the narrated language, the changes merit attention. To minimize Abraham's relationship to Ishmael, God calls him "the lad" rather than "your son." Moreover, the deity describes Hagar not as "your wife" but as "your slave

woman," a description that tellingly emulates the vocabulary of Sarah (21:10). If Abraham neglected Hagar, God belittles her.

In a second imperative, the deity explicitly confirms Sarah's order: "Everything that Sarah says to you, heed her voice" (21:12b; cf. 16:2).[52] A reason follows: "For in Isaac will be named to you descendants" (21:12c). In the midst of Sarah's triumph, the word *descendants* (*zrᶜ*) recalls Hagar's story. Long ago in the wilderness, the messenger of Yahweh said to her, "I will greatly multiply your descendants" (*zrᶜ*). That promise was made to Hagar alone, without reference to the father of her child (16:10). Juxtaposed, these two promises of progeny, first to Hagar through Ishmael and now to Abraham through Isaac, seem to allow Hagar the singular honor of being the female ancestor of a nation.[53] This interpretation falters, however, in light of God's closing words to Abraham:

> Also (*gam*) the son of the slave woman
> a nation I will make,
> for your descendant (*zrᶜ*) he is.
> (21:13)

The syntax of the sentence places object before verb, thereby highlighting the child of the slave woman. For Hagar, the apparent afterthought is devastating because it shifts descendants from her to Abraham. In various ways, then, Sarah, Abraham, God, and even Ishmael all diminish Hagar.

To protect the life of her own child, Sarah commands Abraham, "Cast out this slave woman and her son . . ." (21:10a). Supporting Sarah, God orders Abraham to obey. Though these instructions foreshadow themes and vocabulary of the Exodus story, the difference is again terrifying. When Pharaoh cast out (*grš*) the Hebrew slaves to save the life of his firstborn,[54] God was on their side to bring salvation from expulsion. By contrast, the deity identifies here not with the suffering slave but with her oppressors. Hagar knows banishment rather than liberation.

Abraham obeys Sarah and God to become the active agent in the suffering of Hagar (cf. 16:3, 6). The husband expells his slave wife and the father his son, although, in reporting these events, the narrator omits the relational ties. Abraham himself does not speak, but he does give bread and water to the outcasts. Such provisions suggest a precarious future for mother and child.

> So Abraham rose early in the morning,[55]
> and took bread and a skin of water
> and gave it to Hagar, putting it on her
> shoulder, along with the child.[56]
> (21:14abc, RSV)

By using the name Hagar at the end of this episode, the storyteller matches the emphasis of the beginning (21:9). Abraham's last deed maintains this focus: "He sent her [not them] away" (21:14d, RSV). Like the verb *cast out*, this one (*send*) also anticipates vocabulary from the Exodus story, with a disturbing twist. As the act of Pharaoh, the verb *send away* (*šlḥ*) connotes freedom for the Hebrew slaves; as the act of Abraham, it means banishment for an Egyptian slave.[57] All the talk about Hagar has resulted in action against her. On this negative note, episode one concludes.

B. *Episode Two, 21:14e–19.* Though in scene one Hagar fled from Sarai, this time she has no escape. She must do what Sarah, God, and Abraham impose upon her. Their command determines her exit. "She departed" (21:14e) responds to the statement, "he sent her away" (21:14d).[58] Whereas in the Exodus traditions the verb *depart* (*hlk*), as the response to *send away* (*šlḥ*), describes what the Hebrews want to do,[59] in Hagar's story this corresponding action is what the slave woman must do. Identical words and similar themes tell opposing stories. Departing her land of bondage, Hagar knows not exodus but exile.

A second verb gives her destination: "She wandered in the wilderness of Beersheba" (21:14f, RSV*). In reference to physical movement, the verb *wander* (*tᶜh*) connotes uncertainty, lack or loss of direction, and even destitution.[60] Since this word never describes the action of the Hebrews after the departure from Egypt, its use for Hagar indicates a wilderness experience different from theirs. Sent away from the land of bondage, "she departed and wandered in the wilderness. . . ." Through the pronoun *she*, Hagar becomes the subject of active verbs for the first time in this scene. If banishment is not liberation, nevertheless, it moves her toward personhood. The movement begins episode two.

In contrast to its parallel in scene one, this wilderness episode comprises two sections. The first (21:14e–16) depicts Hagar alone with her child; no divine messenger finds her by a spring of water.

In fact, unlike the region of Shur, the territory of Beersheba provides no water at all.[61] Furthermore, it does not border Egypt. Receiving Hagar in forced exile rather than voluntary flight, this wilderness is an arid and alien place. It offers a deathbed for the child.

> When the water in the skin was gone,
> she left[62] the child under one of the bushes.
> (21:15, RSV*)

Using "the child" (*yld*) rather than "her child" or "her son," the storyteller suggests emotional distance that becomes physical distance.

> Then she went and sat down over against him
> a good way off, about the distance of a bowshot.[63]
> (21:16a, RSV)

Unlike the bush (*sĕneh*) in the wilderness of Horeb (Exod. 3:2), the shrub (*śîaḥ*) under which the boy lies reveals no messenger of the Lord in a flame of fire.[64] In despair, Hagar contemplates the imminent death of the child. It is more than she can manage. For the only time in this entire scene, she speaks,[65] though her utterance is perhaps interior thought.[66] Deepening the portrait of this woman, the words suggest suffering and isolation in the wilderness of exile. "For she said, 'Let me not see (*r'h*) the death of the child'" (21:16b, RSV*). Having once seen (*r'h*) her conception of the child and also having seen (*r'h*) the God who sanctioned that new life (16:4, 13), the mother now seeks to block her vision of its demise. Like the narrator (21:15), she uses a vocabulary of distance. She speaks of "the child" rather than of "my child" or "my son." Directed to no one, these last words of Hagar surrender to death.

Hagar wept. Pointedly, the Hebrew text says, "She lifted up her voice and she wept" (21:16c). From ancient times, however, translators have robbed this woman of her grief by changing the unambiguous feminine verb forms to masculine constructions.[67] Such alterations make the child lift up his voice and weep. But masculine emendations cannot silence Hagar. A host of feminine verb forms throughout this section witness unmistakably to her tears: she departed and she wandered in the wilderness; she found a place for the child to die; she kept a vigil; and she uttered the dread phrase, "the death of the child." Now, as she sits at a

distance from death, *she* lifts up her voice and *she* weeps. Her grief, like her speech, is sufficient unto itself. She does not cry out to another; she does not beseech God. A madonna alone with her dying child, Hagar weeps.

Of the few fragments that disclose Hagar's story, this section alone (21:14e–16) depicts her apart from all other major characters. Though the child is dying, the narrated focus remains steadily upon the mother: her actions, her thoughts, her words, her emotions. With one minor exception (21:15a), she is the subject of every verb. But her powerlessness is present in the absence of her name. Moreover, as subject she is also object, having been cast out into the wilderness. While the wilderness she chose in scene one was hospitable, yet fleeting, the wilderness imposed upon her in scene two is hostile, yet enduring. Thus this one symbol embodies for Hagar the polarities of life and death.

In time to come Israel will experience these polarities as its triumphal flight to freedom becomes forty years of life in the wilderness. Unlike Hagar, Israel will complain; it will murmur and rebel; it will demand food and water.[68] Yet throughout, God will be on Israel's side. With Hagar, the reverse happens. God supports, even orders, her departure to the wilderness, not to free her from bondage but to protect the inheritance of her oppressors.

If in the first section of this episode (21:14e–16) Hagar receives major attention, in the second (21:17–19) she begins to recede as the child comes to the forefront. God makes the difference. Narrated phrases at the ending and the beginning of the two sections signal the change. Hagar "lifted up her voice and wept" (21:16c) yields to "God heard the voice of the lad" (21:17a). A change in vocabulary from "the child" (*yld*) to "the lad" (*nʿr*) also indicates this transition.

Although the mother's weeping elicits divine silence, the lad's voice evokes divine speech. But instead of finding Hagar in the wilderness (16:7), the messenger of God calls to her remotely "from heaven." As on the first occasion, the deity asks a question, addressing her by name: "What troubles you, Hagar?" (21:17c, RSV). Unlike the parallel occurrence (16:8), Hagar, the outcast rather than the fugitive, has no opportunity to reply. God continues to speak. Whereas in her exodus she answered the Lord, in her exile she

listens to a deity who is concerned primarily with her son: "Fear not, for God has heard the voice of the lad where he is" (21:17d, RSV).[69] When speaking to Hagar about her child, God never uses the noun *son* or the adjective *your*. The deity follows the lead of the narrator by referring to Ishmael as "the lad." Subtly, the motherhood of Hagar is undercut.

"Fear not, for God has heard the voice of the lad where he is." This divine word of assurance confirms the shift from madonna to child that the storyteller has introduced. In continuing, God exalts "the lad" while making Hagar his support:

> Arise, lift up the lad
> and hold him by your hand,
> for I shall make him a great nation.
> (21:18, RSV*)

Unlike the revelation in scene one, the utterance contains no promises to Hagar (cf. 16:10). After all, the promise that *her* descendants would be innumerable has already passed to Abraham (21:12–13), and through him it comes to rest on the son. Hagar decreases as Ishmael increases. Having lived under the hand of her mistress Sarai (16:6, 9), this woman must now lift up the hand of "the lad."

Theophanic speech resolves the plight of the outcasts. In reporting the aftermath, the narrator depicts the woman serving the child, as God has decreed.

> Then God opened her eyes,
> and she saw a well of water;
> and she went and filled the skin with water,
> and she gave the lad a drink.
> (21:19, RSV)

Once more visual language attends Hagar. At the beginning of this episode, when the water in the skin was gone, she said, "Let me not see (*r'h*) the death of the child" (21:16b, RSV*). Now, as God opens her eyes, she sees (*r'h*) a well of water,[70] fills the skin, and gives the lad a drink. Life overcomes death. Yet this language of sight contrasts with the conclusion of Hagar's earlier sojourn in the wilderness. On that occasion she was the theologian who named Yahweh God of seeing (16:13). This time her voice ceases and her vision changes. She sees not God but material resources to nourish

her child in the wilderness of exile.[71] From bondage to exp...ion to homelessness, scene two brings Hagar's story to its close.

C. *Conclusion, 21:20–21.* Years pass with Hagar serving Ishmael. At first, the narrator credits only the deity.

> And God was with the lad;
> and he grew up and lived in the wilderness,
> and he became an expert with the bow.
> (21:20, RSV*)

Ishmael prospers. For him the wilderness becomes home and provides work. To complete the picture, the storyteller turns from the providence of God to the activity of Hagar. For the last time she appears as a character in the Hebrew Bible,[72] and for the first time she is called mother. Yet Ishmael is still "the lad," not her son. Continuing to serve, the mother finds him a wife.

> He lived in the wilderness of Paran;[73]
> and his mother took for him a wife
> from the land of Egypt.
> (21:21, RSV*)

The choice of a wife for Ishmael highlights tension in Hagar's story. Having at first promised her innumerable descendants (16:10), God later transferred that promise to Abraham (21:13). In her last act, Hagar guarantees that these descendants will be Egyptians.[74] Thus the mother suggests for herself a future that God has diminished. On this poignant note Hagar's story ends, but the reader's response does not.

REFLECTIONS ON HAGAR'S STORY

Belonging to a narrative that rejects her, Hagar is a fleeting yet haunting figure in scripture. To recover her story from the fragments that remain is a precarious task; nevertheless, it yields an abundance of hermeneutical reflections. In many and varied ways, Hagar shapes and challenges faith.

Read in light of contemporary issues and images, her story depicts oppression in three familiar forms: nationality, class, and sex.[75] Hagar the Egyptian is a maid; Sarah the Hebrew is her mistress. Conflicts between these two women revolve around three males. At

the center is Abraham, their common husband. To him belong Ishmael, child of Hagar, and Isaac, child of Sarah. Through their husband and his two sons these females clash. From the beginning, however, Hagar is powerless because God supports Sarah. Kept in her place, the slave woman is the innocent victim of use, abuse, and rejection.[76]

As a symbol of the oppressed, Hagar becomes many things to many people. Most especially, all sorts of rejected women find their stories in her.[77] She is the faithful maid exploited, the black woman used by the male and abused by the female of the ruling class,[78] the surrogate mother, the resident alien without legal recourse, the other woman, the runaway youth, the religious fleeing from affliction, the pregnant young woman alone, the expelled wife, the divorced mother with child, the shopping bag lady carrying bread and water, the homeless woman, the indigent relying upon handouts from the power structures, the welfare mother, and the self-effacing female whose own identity shrinks in service to others.

Besides symbolizing various kinds and conditions of people in contemporary society, Hagar is a pivotal figure in biblical theology. She is the first person in scripture whom a divine messenger visits and the only person who dares to name the deity. Within the historical memories of Israel,[79] she is the first woman to bear a child. This conception and birth make her an extraordinary figure in the story of faith: the first woman to hear an annunciation, the only one to receive a divine promise of descendants, and the first to weep for her dying child. Truly, Hagar the Egyptian is the prototype of not only special but all mothers in Israel.[80]

Beyond these many distinctions, Hagar foreshadows Israel's pilgrimage of faith through contrast. As a maid in bondage, she flees from suffering. Yet she experiences exodus without liberation, revelation without salvation, wilderness without covenant, wanderings without land, promise without fulfillment, and unmerited exile without return.[81] This Egyptian slave woman is stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted for the transgressions of Israel. She is bruised for the iniquities of Sarah and Abraham; upon her is the chastisement that makes them whole.

Hagar is Israel, from exodus to exile, yet with differences. And these differences yield terror. All we who are heirs of Sarah and

Abraham, by flesh and spirit, must answer for the terror in ..agar's story. To neglect the theological challenge she presents is to falsify faith.[82]

NOTES

1. A correct understanding of this sentence depends upon its context. The phrase "within the confines of patriarchal structures" sharply curtails the privilege and power of Sarah. Further, such a description is contingent upon the contrast with Hagar and tempered by the fact of Sarai's barrenness. See note 17 below.

2. Wherever they are not identified in this essay, chapter and verse citations come from the book of Genesis.

3. I follow the biblical text in using two spellings for the names Sarai and Sarah; Abram and Abraham. On these variants, see the commentaries: e.g., Bruce Vawter, *On Genesis: A New Reading* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday & Co., 1977), pp. 220, 223; E. A. Speiser, *Genesis*, Anchor Bible (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday & Co., 1964), p. 127; Gerhard von Rad, *Genesis*, OTL (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1972), pp. 199–200, 202. On the stigma of barrenness, see Phyllis Bird, "Images of Women in the Old Testament," in *Religion and Sexism*, ed. Rosemary Radford Ruether (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1974), pp. 62–63.

4. See Gen. 13:16; 15:4, 5.

5. Throughout this chapter the word *saga* means story.

6. Scholarly disciplines offer different readings of these stories. (a) Historical criticism attends to source analysis. Genesis 16:1–16 is J, with the exception of a few verses from P (16:1, 3, 15, 16), while Gen. 21:9–21 is E. See, e.g., S. R. Driver, *The Book of Genesis* (New York: Edwin S. Gorham, 1904), pp. 180–84, 209–13; Sean E. McEvenue, "A Comparison of Narrative Styles in the Hagar Stories," *Semeia* 3 (Missoula, Mont.: Scholars Press, 1975), pp. 64–80. For a revision of such analyses, see John Van Seters, *Abraham in History and Tradition* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1975), pp. 192–202; cf. also Alan W. Jenks, *The Elohist and North Israelite Traditions*, SBL Monograph Series 22 (Missoula, Mont.: Scholars Press, 1977), pp. 22, 67. (b) Form criticism attends to genre, oral traditions, settings in life, and literary parallels. See, e.g., Hermann Gunkel, *The Legends of Genesis* (New York: Schocken Books, 1964), *passim*; idem, *Genesis*, Handkommentar zum Alten Testament (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1964 reprint), pp. 184–93, 226–33; Robert C. Culley, *Studies in the Structure of Hebrew Narrative* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1976), pp. 43–46; Hugh C. White, "The Initiation Legend of Ishmael," *ZAW* 87 (1975): 267–305. White also comments on the tradition history of the passage. Cf. Claus Westermann, *Genesis*, 2 Teilband, Biblischer Kommentar (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1981), pp. 281–82, 412–14. (c) As a development of form criticism, motif criticism attends to the identification and classification of plot-motifs and traditional episodes within the messenger stories. See Dorothy Irvin, *Mytharion* (Kevelaer: Butzon und

and Aaron as a great model of one who "stood in the breach," and his zeal for God caused him to be identified with Elijah in some rabbinic midrash. During the Maccabean period, he was the model for Mattathias, who also acted with zeal for God when he killed a Jew breaking the commandment and thus sparked the revolt (1 Macc. 2:26, 50–64). But Phineas's act of murder did not always meet with approval. As attitudes toward zealotry and vigilantism changed, later texts stressed the uniqueness of Phineas's deed and the many miracles God performed around the event. These texts did not want people to act like Phineas. But Phineas himself was never in disrepute; his motive for the killing, the protection of Israel, was never questioned. He stood in the breach, as it were, preventing foreign elements from coming into Israel, and preventing the anger of God from breaking out over it.

Hagar, My Other, My Self

THE STORIES of Israel at Baʿal-Peʿor and of Cozbi and Phineas bear the same message about foreign women: Danger! Keep away! The story of Hagar, Sarai, and Abram is far more benevolent. It deals with a different kind of ethnic arithmetic. Rather than the addition of foreign women or their radical subtraction, this story concerns the multiplication of Abraham and the divisions this requires. But it too urges separation.

The Abraham–Sarah cycle is all about multiplication, and the story of Hagar and Sarai that dramatizes it is at the exact center of the sequence. The structure of the cycle emphasizes its importance, for it moves in concentric rings from the *lekh lekha* ("Go!") of the call to Abraham to leave home (Gen. 12) to the *lekh lekha* ("Go!") of the call to Abraham to sacrifice Isaac (Gen. 22). The beginning of Genesis, chapter 12, is about letting go of the past by cutting ties to Abram's father; chapters 22 and 21 are about letting the future go, cutting ties to the sons, and their near death. Moving inward toward the center we find the two disposable-wife stories, chapters 12, Sarai in Egypt, and 20, Sarah in Gerar, in which Abraham cuts his ties to his wife but gets her back. The next ring concerns Lot and Sodom; in Genesis, chapters 13 and 14, Abram separates from Lot, who goes to Sodom; in chapters 18 and 19 Abraham intervenes on Lot's behalf to save Lot and Sodom, and Abraham's son Isaac and Lot's sons Moab and Ben-Ammi are born, separate branches of Terah's family. The innermost ring is about covenants: chapter 15, the covenant among the carcasses, and chapter 17, the covenant of circumcision. And in the middle, between the two covenants, is the story of Sarai and Hagar.

The content of the story has a similar ring structure: two women who revolve around a man, head of the household, who has all the authority. As always in these biblical stories, names count. The man is *ʾabram*, "exalted father," the wife is *sarai*, "the princess," and the other

woman is *hagar,* which sounds like *haggēr,* "the outsider." The two women are dependent on the man's will, but their shared situation does not bind them together. On the contrary, far from uniting them, oppression turns them against each other. Hagar and Sarai are not allies; they vie for status in the household. Biblical co-wives, even blood sisters like Rachel and Leah, are such rivals that the Hebrew word for "co-wife," *ṣarah,* is also the word for "trouble." The rivalry between Sarai and Hagar is particularly acute and dramatic because all the advantage seems to be Sarai's. Sarai is the full, free wife; Hagar is a slave.

In Islamic tradition, Hagar was not a slave but a princess wed to Abram in a dynastic marriage. So too a Jewish midrash relates that Hagar was a princess in the house of Pharaoh. When Pharaoh saw the wonders that God had performed for Sarai and Abram, he said, "Better for my daughter to be a servant in this house than a princess in any other," and sent her off. But even if she was born a princess, Hagar is a slave in Sarai's household. Justice would demand that Sarai treat Hagar well. When she does not, we are bothered. Several midrashim try to resolve this ethical issue by finding fault with Hagar, by assuming that she must have done something wrong. They explain that Hagar let everybody see the contempt in which she held her mistress, saying, "You think my mistress is righteous? She puts on a righteous face, but clearly God knows that she is not righteous: she has been barren all these years and I got pregnant the first night!" In contrast, readers today tend to be angry at Sarai, to castigate her for being insensitive to the plight of someone for whom she should have felt both compassion and solidarity.

◈ *Act I. The Coming of Ishmael*

Scene 1. A problem and a plan (Gen. 16:1–3)

> Sarai, Abram's wife, had not borne him a child.
> She had an Egyptian slave-woman named Hagar.
> Sarai said to Abram, "Look, please: God has stopped me from giving birth. Come, please, into my slave-woman; perhaps I will be built up through her."
> Abram listened to the voice of Sarai.

Sarai conceives a plan to use her slave as her surrogate. These opening lines emphasize Sarai's initiative. She, the active agent, thinks up the plan, proposes Hagar, and gives her to Abram. Not long ago, readers of this story were shocked and astonished by her plan; now, in an age of

sion of surrogacy. Evidence from ancient texts show tha[illegible]s arrangement, although not common, was once a regular feature of family relations. Three ancient Near Eastern marriage contracts stipulate that should the bride be barren after a specified number of years, she will give her husband her slave. How she acquired the slave doesn't matter: the slave could be part of the wife's dowry or purchased for this purpose; as long as she is the owner of the slave at the time she gives him to her husband, the slave could be her surrogate. These contracts show that this arrangement was not confined to one place or time within the Mesopotamian legal tradition: one is from 1900 B.C.E. and the Assyrian mining and merchant colonies in central Anatolia (now Turkey), one from Nuzi (in Syria) around 1600 B.C.E., and one from southern Babylonia about 500 B.C.

The best-known example of surrogacy is in the laws of Hammurabi. Paragraph 146 concerns the *nāditu,* a priestess belonging to an order of women who lived together and generally pooled their economic resources. They did not take vows of chastity, and could leave the group life and get married, but they were not supposed to have children. So, say the laws of Hammurabi, if a man marries a *nāditu,* she will give her husband a slave girl to have his child; if she does not, he can take a second wife. Since any second wife would quite likely be a rival to the first wife and even displace her, a woman would prefer to give her husband her own slave as a concubine to forestall such a marriage.

Neither Sarai, who proposes Hagar, nor Abram, who agrees, mentions obtaining the consent of the slave girl. To contemporary readers, such consent seems necessary for the arrangement to be moral. But none of the ancient texts sees any ethical problem with this arrangement. Ancient societies accepted slavery as a regular part of social life. Using another person's body as a surrogate for one's own is part of the fabric of slavery. Just as a slave's muscles can be utilized for the good of the master, so can a slave woman's womb. Sarai plans that Hagar's womb will be the way that Sarai herself will be **built up.** Abram agrees, and Hagar must comply.

So far, everything is according to plan.

Scene 2. The plot thickens (Gen. 15:3–6)

> Sarai the wife of Abram took Hagar the Egyptian, her slave-woman, at the end of ten years that Abram had lived in the land of Canaan.
> She gave her to Abram her husband for him as a wife.

He came into Hagar and she conceived.
She saw that she had become pregnant, and her mistress was diminished in her eyes.
Sarai said to Abram, "My wrong is on account of you. I gave my slave-woman into your lap. She sees that she is pregnant and I am diminished in her eyes. Let YHWH judge between me and you."
Abram said to Sarai, "Here: your slave-woman is in your hands. Do to her what is good in your eyes."
Sarai abused her.
She fled from her presence.

Something unanticipated happens. Hagar, who was supposed to be a neutral body being passed from Sarai to Abram, reacts. This "womb with legs" is a person with her own viewpoint, and her mistress is **diminished in her eyes.** Hagar knows that she has something Sarai doesn't have, a child in her womb, and this knowledge makes her cease to consider Sarai's status high above her own. Ancient documents anticipate such a development. The laws of Hammurabi and the contracts know that once a slave becomes a slave wife, she may not keep acting like a slave. They differ about what the mistress should do if that happens, and the laws provide that if the slave wife has not yet borne children, her mistress can sell her; if she has, her mistress can demote her to an ordinary slave (¶147).

Sarai's reaction to her loss of authority is sharp. She indicts Abram, **"My wrong is on account of you. . . . May YHWH judge between me and you."** Sarai has a version of what feminists call a "click moment." She realizes that her own hands are tied. She is wife no. 1, but the pregnant wife no. 2 is gaining on her and there is nothing she can do about it: when she gave the slave girl to her husband, she relinquished her authority over her. She has lost all leverage. Sarai sees herself at risk, and attacks Abram because he holds all authority in the household.

Sarai's attack has a purpose. She wants something from Abram: the restoration of her authority over Hagar. Abram understands this, understands that power is the issue, and he restores it to Sarai by giving control of Hagar back to her, in effect turning Hagar back into a simple slave, **"your slave-woman is in your hands."** Hagar is once again passed from person to person. Neither Abram nor Sarai ever calls her by her name. They treat her as a slave, not a person, and to recognize that [illegible] in the way of their plans. So Abram de-

clares, **"your slave-woman is in your hands."** He [illegible]er adds, with perhaps unconscious irony, **"do to her what is good in your eyes."** The phrase is the verbal equivalent of washing one's hands. The Ephraimite in Gibeah said, "Do to them whatever is good in your eyes" as he offered his daughter and the Levite's concubine to the threatening mob ("The Bad Old Days," page 123). In the face of their certain evil, the phrase sounds evil and immoral. Here too, Abram knows Sarai does not intend kindness to Hagar. She will certainly assert her regained power by dominating Hagar in some way. But Abram indicates that he will not oversee Sarai's actions, will not control them, will not judge them or react to them. She is free to **do to her what is good in your eyes.**

And so it happens. Sarai does what is good for her. Rescued from her own personal abyss, she is going to make sure that Hagar doesn't threaten her again. And so, in her last act in the story, she abuses her, *watte'annehā*. As we have seen, *'innah* is a key word in biblical language, fraught with allusions we will consider in a moment. But first, we ask: since a slave is oppressed by definition, how do you abuse a slave? What did Sarai do? The story never says. We could spin midrashim of Sarai's beating Hagar or sending her out in freezing rain. But perhaps she simply starts treating her like an ordinary slave. Commanding her to draw water from the well, for example (as suggested by a classic rabbinic midrash), would be a denial of the status that Hagar had achieved by being pregnant, and thus would be considered abuse, oppression, or degradation. Hagar knows that dominance is the issue. She does not want to be under Sarai's authority, and as Sarai acts to protect her turf, Hagar once again reacts. She flees. She leaves Sarai and Abram behind, and the story goes with her to the wilderness.

Scene 3. Angel in the desert (Gen. 16:7–14)

An angel of YHWH found her by the water spring in the wilderness, by the spring on the way to Shur.
It said, "Hagar, slave-woman of Sarai, where are you coming from and to where are you going?"
She said, "From the presence of Sarai my mistress I am fleeing."
The angel of YHWH said to her, "Return to your mistress and be oppressed under her hand."
The angel of YHWH said to her, "Greatly will I multiply your seed so that it cannot be counted in its multitude."
The angel of YHWH said to her, "Look, you are pregnant, you are going to give birth to a son and you will call his nam

Ishmael, for YHWH has seen your oppression. He will be a wild onager of a man, his hand against all, and all hands against him, and he will live in the face of his brothers."

She called the name of YHWH who spoke to her, "You are El Roi (the God of my seeing)," for she said, "have I also come here looking after the one who sees me.

"Therefore one calls the well, 'well of the living one who sees me.' Look! It is between Kadesh and Barad."

The wilderness in the south of Israel is a place fraught with angels: here Elijah meets an angel as he goes to Horeb, and Hagar meets one, too. Their dialogue begins with an almost ritual question: **"Hagar, slave-woman of Sarai, where are you coming from and to where are you going?"** The angel addresses her by name, for he knows who she is. She answers simply, **"From the presence of Sarai my mistress I am fleeing."** It doesn't matter where she is going: the essential fact is that she is fleeing Sarai. The reader feels the pathos of the oppressed slave, but the angel says, **"Return to your mistress and be oppressed under her hand."** Is this the proper way to treat a runaway slave? The angel is acting in accord with ancient Near Eastern laws that, like the laws in this country before the Civil War, respected the slaveowner's property rights and required the person who found a runaway slave to return the slave to his or her owner. But biblical law is different: biblical law requires one to help a runaway slave escape and not give him or her back to the owner (Deut. 23:16–17). True, the events took place long before Deuteronomy, but the angel's actions must have shocked an Israelite reader: why should an angel place the laws of property over the freedom of persons?

Hagar's angel is not finished. Angels usually have threefold messages, and this one does, too. The first part, **Return . . . and be oppressed;** the second part, **"Greatly will I multiply your seed so that it cannot be counted";** the third, **"you are pregnant, and you are going to give birth to a son and you will call his name Ishmael ('God hears'), for God has heard your oppression. He will be a wild onager of a man."** The second address makes Hagar the only woman to receive a divine promise of seed, not through a man but as her own destiny. And the third statement puts Hagar in the company of those few women—Samson's mother, Hannah, and Mary in the New Testament, who receive a divine annunciation of the coming birth. And what a birth! Hagar will have a glorious progeny who can never be exploited or subjected—if she voluntarily goes back to be exploited. And so Hagar goes back. Recognizing the divine power, she neither argues nor avoids the request. But before she gives up her autonomy, she exercises it by naming God according to her own experience. God called Hagar by name, the only character in the story to do so, and Hagar responds, naming God **El Roi, "God of my seeing,"** which can mean both "the God I have seen" and "the God who sees me." Seeing is important to Hagar and to the narrator. When she saw that she was pregnant, her mistress was diminished in her eyes, but Abram told Sarai, **"Do to her what is good in your eyes."** Hagar's vision and Sarai's vision have brought her to this spring, itself a play on the word for "eye." Now the mutual "seeing" between God and Hagar points to a solution. Her own explanation is enigmatic and difficult to understand, but it seems to mean **"Have I also to this place (come) looking after (or seeing the traces) of the one who sees me?"** The name itself is clear: El Roi, "the God of my seeing." The once and future slave leaves her mark upon how people remember God.

Scene 4. The birth (Gen. 16:15–16)

She gave birth for Abram to a son.

Abram called the name of his son, whom Hagar had borne, Ishmael.

Abram was eighty-six years old when Hagar gave birth to Ishmael for Abram.

When Hagar gives birth to Ishmael, Abram names him, giving him the name that the divine messenger has already pronounced: "God listens." El Roi, the God who sees, also listens. Listening, like seeing, is very important in this story: Abram listened to Sarai's voice (Gen. 16:2), the angel told Sarai that God listened to her affliction (16:11), God will tell Abraham (as renamed by God in 17:4), "I have listened to you about Ishmael" (17:20), God tells Abraham to listen to Sarah (21:12), and finally, God will listen to Ishmael's cry (21:17). Ishmael's name emphasizes the God who listens even when we are not aware of God's activity.

Sarai is not involved in Ishmael's birth. Three times the text mentions that Hagar bore the child. Sarai has been displaced, and the son never becomes hers. This is very different from what will happen when Bilhah acts as a surrogate for the barren Rachel. There the surrogacy plan works, the child is considered Rachel's, and Rachel names him Dan, saying "God has vindicated me (*dananni*) and listened to my voice" (Gen. 30:6). But Sarai's treatment of Hagar broke the connection; God listened

to Hagar, and promised Hagar that her child would be hers. Ishmael belongs to Abram and Hagar, promised to each of them in separate annunciations.

This story resonates with other ancestral stories. The narrative gives one detail in a story generally lacking in specifics: Hagar is an Egyptian slave. Mention of Egypt takes the reader back to Genesis 12, in which Sarai is brought into the house of Pharaoh to be a slave concubine and has to be rescued by God. The reader realizes that Sarai herself is a just-freed slave. Sarai in Egypt and Hagar in the house of Sarai have similar histories, and Sarai's oppression of Hagar highlights a disturbing aspect of human behavior. We like to believe that the experience of suffering makes us more sympathetic to the suffering of others. It does not. Sarai's own experience as a slave does not make her more empathic to the slave in her own home. On the contrary, it makes her want to assert her dominance and authority so she won't lose it again. As usual, the biblical narrator does not comment on the actions. It is left to the reader to note how easily the oppressed can become oppressors. When God raises high the lowly, how will the newly empowered behave toward those who lack power and autonomy?

The mention of Egypt also harkens to the future, to the Exodus story that lies at the basis of Israel's self-understanding. The two words "slave" and "Egypt" together form the mantra of ancient Israel: "We were slaves in Egypt and God took us out from there." It is reinforced today by its recitation at the Passover celebration; it was reinforced in biblical times at the Feast of the First Fruits described in Deuteronomy 26. At that time, everybody appeared before God to recite the credo "A starving Aramean was my father and he went down to Egypt just to stay for a little while, few in number, but we multiplied, and the Egyptians made us into slaves. And they oppressed us and gave us harsh exploitation and we cried unto God and God heard our affliction and brought us out of there with a strong hand and an outstretched arm and with signs and wonders and brought us to this place and gave us this land, flowing with milk and honey (Deut. 26:5–9)." Recitation of this narrative impressed slavery and redemption on the consciousness of every Israelite and later, every Jew. Law, too, remembers slavery, invoking the memory of their ancestors' slavery and liberation as justification for laws that demand that Israelites act against their own economic interest. The redemption from bondage in Egypt is the paradigm for a key tenet of biblical theology: God is the overturner of the powerful, and at God's will, the low become high. That theme became even more important as Israel fell on hard times,

and it took on a new valence, a vector toward the future: as God brought Israel out from Egypt, God will redeem Israel from exile. The narrator does not innocently identify Hagar as an "Egyptian": no coincidence, it is a direct allusion to the central myth of Israel's origins.

Other details of the Hagar story also correspond to Israel's sacred history. Sarai abused and degraded Hagar, *watte'annehā,* in the same language by which the old credo in Deuteronomy 26 describes the Egyptian treatment of Israel, *waye'annûnû.* Like Hagar, the people of Israel were exploited, oppressed, and degraded in addition to being slaves. And like Hagar, Israel went into slavery knowing that this would be so. The angel's demand that Hagar return and be oppressed, **hit'anî,** also echoes the Covenant among the Carcasses in Genesis, chapter 15. There, God intensified the promises to Abram by going through a solemn oath-swearing covenant ceremony. While reciting the promise of progeny and future, God announced that Abram's descendants would be strangers in a land that was not theirs, and that people would enslave and degrade them for four hundred years before God would redeem them. The fulfillment of God's promises will be delayed: all Abram can expect is to die peacefully before the troubles begin.

The parallels between Genesis chapters 15 and 16 are striking. In chapter 15, God tells Abram that God will multiply his progeny, but that his descendants will be degraded slaves and that God will bring them out and give them the land. In chapter 16, God's angel tells Hagar to return to be exploited; afterward she will have a child who cannot be exploited, and God will multiply her progeny. The story of Hagar parallels the story of Israel: she is the archetype.

The exploitation offered both Abram and Hagar points to a disturbing aspect of God's behavior: why does God insist that suffering come before reward? This scenario repeated itself many times in Israel's experience, but nowhere is an explanation given as to why Israel—and Hagar too—have to suffer. The only explanation Abram is given is that the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full. This makes sense—Israel cannot inherit the land until the Amorites have polluted it so much that (in the words of Leviticus 18) "it will vomit them out" and Israel can come in. But the "iniquity of the Amorites" explains only why Israel has to wait for the land; it says nothing about why they have to be slaves while they wait. The pattern of Hagar and Abram and of later Israel shows that the way to God's reward is through the margins of society and the depths of degradation. Only then, it seems, does God redeem. This pattern offers

hope to the oppressed, but it remains as an unexplained aspect of God's behavior in the world.

The close correspondence between Hagar and Israel continues in the denouement of her story, after the birth of Isaac.

◈ *Act II. The Leaving of Ishmael (Gen. 21)*

Scene 1. At the weaning of Isaac (Gen. 21:8–13)

The boy grew and was weaned, and Abraham held a huge banquet on the day he weaned Isaac.
Sarah saw the son of Hagar the Egyptian that she had borne for Abraham playing.
She said to Abraham, "Send away this slave-woman with her son, for the son of this servant-woman will not inherit together with my son, with Isaac."
The matter seemed wrong in the eyes of Abraham because it concerned his son.
God said to Abraham, "Let it not seem wrong in your eyes concerning the boy and your servant-woman. Whatever Sarah tells you to do, listen to her, because through Isaac will your seed be called. And the son of this servant-woman, him too I will make into a nation, for he is your seed."

Sarai is central to God's plan and God renames her Sarah, announcing that it was through her that God's covenant with Abraham would be fulfilled (Gen. 17:16–21). But at the weaning ceremony, Sarah sees Ishmael "playing." What the lad was doing, the story doesn't say. The verb for his behavior, *ṣḥq*, can mean "to play," "to laugh," or "to sport," and can cover a wide range of activity. The Septuagint adds that Ishmael was playing "with her son Isaac," but it also doesn't tell us exactly what he was doing. Whatever it was, in Sarah's eyes it was a threat: her son, after all, is supposed to be the "player," for Isaac, *yiṣḥaq*, meaning "he plays," is from the same root. So, once again, Sarah takes the initiative. Acting to ensure that Isaac will truly inherit the promise that God made to her and Abraham, she asks Abraham to send Hagar and Ishmael away. Abraham is reluctant. Until God informed him that God's covenant would be with Sarah's child, he had been satisfied to have Ishmael as his heir to the covenant (Gen. 17:15–17, 19). Once again, God intervenes to instruct Abraham to listen to Sarah, reminding him that Isaac will carry on Abraham's promised line, and reassuring him that Ishmael will also have an Abrahamic lineage. As a result, Hagar and Ishmael are sent away.

Scene 2. The redemption of Ishmael (Gen. 21:14–21)

Abraham arose early in the morning.
He took a bread and a skein of water.
He gave (them) to Hagar, placed (them) on her shoulder with the child.
And he sent her away.
She walked wandering in the wilderness of Beersheba.
The water in the skein was finished.
She sent the boy away under one of the bushes.
She went and sat facing the boy, as far away as a bow shot, for she said, "Let me not see the boy's death."
She sat facing the boy and lifted her voice and wept.
God heard the voice of the boy.
The angel of God called to Hagar from the sky and said, "What is it, Hagar? Do not be afraid, for God has heard the voice of the boy as he is there.
"Arise, lift up the boy, and hold your hand on him, for I will make him a great nation."
God opened her eyes and she saw a well of water.
She went and filled the skein of water and gave drink to the boy.
God was with the boy and he grew up.
He lived in the wilderness, and became a bow (and arrow) hunter.
He lived in the wilderness of Paran and his mother took a wife for him from the land of Egypt.

Some readers are horrified at Abraham's cavalier treatment of human beings, and horrified that God orders him to do this. But we should note that in a world in which slavery is accepted, Hagar and Ishmael are not sold: they are freed. Hagar and Ishmael leave Abraham's household as emancipated slaves. Of course, emancipation is not without its problems. Hagar, who found Beer-lahai-roi quite easily when she ran away from Sarai, now wanders in the desert until their water runs out. Ishmael would have died had God not intervened. But God, hearing the boy's voice, gives them water in the wilderness, and once again pronounces a great future that will come from Ishmael. This part of their story is also a forerunner of Israel's story, when the emancipated Israelite slaves wander thirsty in the desert until God provides water (Exo. 15–18). And God awards Ishmael the promise that Israel will be given in

the wilderness of Sinai: each is to be a nation with a special destiny. In slavery and in freedom, Hagar is Israel.

The final note in the story reminds us that Ishmael's future is shaped by Hagar's understanding. A single mother, she is both father and mother, completing her parental duties by arranging for his marriage. Abraham has no role in shaping the future of Hagar and her descendants. He has relinquished that right by emancipating them; God has given Hagar that right by treating her as the head of her own family and lineage.

The Hagar story is not the only episode in Genesis that foreshadows the sacred history of Israel. Many of the ancestor tales contain such intimations. The great commentator Nahmanides had a maxim, *ma'aśeh 'abôt sîman labbanîm,* "the deed of the ancestors is a sign for the children." The Rabbis understand the adventures of patriarchs in this way, and we may note that some of the experiences of the women in Genesis share this same paradigmatic, archetypal nature. Abraham's descent to Egypt because of famine in Genesis 12 foreshadows the famine-induced descent of Jacob and his family to Egypt at the end of Genesis. However, it is Sarai who most anticipates the fortunes of Israel as she becomes a forced concubine in Pharaoh's harem and then is rescued by God's miraculous intervention. And Hagar anticipates Israel as she lives out the life of an oppressed, covenanted, and eventually emancipated slave in Abraham's household.

The story of Sarai and Hagar is not a story of the conflict between "us" and "other," but between "us" and "another us." Hagar is the type of Israel, she is the redeemed slave, she is "us." And Sarai is both type and mother of Israel, she is both "us" and the one from whom Israel is born. Pitting part of Israel's consciousness against another part, the story creates tension in the mind of the readers. At the heart of the Abraham–Sarah cycle is a story demonstrating that the destiny of the people around Israel is not utterly different from Israel's. Readers often follow the line of Abraham–Isaac–Jacob, viewing the other peoples as branches off the trunk. But the stories themselves show a more complicated sense of history. In their view, the other nations formed in these stories—Moab, Ammon, Ishmael, Edom—have destinies that are closely intertwined with Israel's. By God's grant, Esau and the Edomites inhabit Mount Seir, and the Moabites and Ammonites are settled in their lands. And by God's grant, the Ishmaelites are in everybody's face, untamable and not subservient to the laws of the states in which they live. The ancestral stories of Genesis understand the extreme complexity of history

and the difficult nature of covenants with God. They reflect the reality of a world with refugees, political oppression, and famine. They understand the intricacy of a special destiny and the need to maintain the destiny and the specialness of Israel without alienating or demonizing the other peoples. Instead of seeing the Ishmaelites as an unsocialized element within its boundaries or as demonic opponents of God's will or even as people who have to be expelled or tamed, Genesis integrates Ishmael into Israel's self-understanding as its God-approved alter ego. For Ishmael is in many respects the polar opposite of Israel, and a nation that often found itself marginal, exploited, and on the brink of destruction may have appreciated Ishmael's destiny of utter freedom.

The story of Hagar as the archetype of Israel and of the coming and leaving of her son Ishmael depicts the destinies of Israel and Ishmael as parallel and presents a model of separation without denigration. But separation, nonetheless.

Also by Tikva Frymer-Kensky

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In memory of my grandparents,
Myer Norman and Deborah Rachel Berman,
who taught me that Godwrestling is
part struggle and part embrace

iat he should be afflicted, he was afflicted. When she would say: Wait ır him until he recovers himself, the angel would wait for him, as stated n Genesis 12:17]: AT THE WORD OF SARAI.[2]

THAT SARAH SHOULD HAVE GIVEN CHILDREN SUCK Genesis 21:7]. She suckled builders {reading *banim*, children, as *banaim*, uilders}. Our mother Sarah was extremely modest. Said Abraham to her: This is not a time for modesty, but uncover your breasts so that all may now that the Holy One, Blessed be He, has begun to perform miracles." She uncovered her breasts, and the milk gushed forth as from two ountains, and noble ladies came and had their children suckled by her, aying, "We do not merit that our children should be suckled with the nilk of that righteous woman." The Rabbis said: Whoever came for the ake of heaven became God-fearing.[3]

. . . When Isaac returned to his mother, she asked him, "Where nave you been, my son?" He answered her, "Father took me, led me up mountains and down valleys, took me up a certain mountain, built an altar, arranged the wood, bound me upon it, and took hold of a knife to slay me. If an angel had not come from heaven and said to him, 'ABRAHAM, ABRAHAM, LAY NOT THY HAND UPON THE LAD' [Genesis 22:11–12], I should have been slain." On his mother, Sarah, hearing this, she cried out, and before she had time to finish her cry her soul departed, as it is written, AND ABRAHAM CAME TO MOURN FOR SARAH AND TO WEEP FOR HER [ibid., 23:2]. From where did he come? From Mount Moriah {the mountain where he was to sacrifice Isaac}.[4]

R. Simeon b. Yoḥai said: Hagar was Pharaoh's daughter. When Pharaoh saw what was done on Sarah's behalf in his own house, he took his daughter and gave her to Sarah, saying, "Better let my daughter be a

2. *Midrash Tanhuma* 3:8, in *Midrash Tanhuman*, trans. John T. Townsend (Hoboken, NJ: Ktav Publishing House, 1989).

3. *Genesis Rabbah* 53:9, in *The Midrash*, ed. and trans. H. Freedman and Maurice Simon et al. (London: Soncino Press, 1951).

4. *Ecclesiastes Rabbah* 9:7, in ibid.

handmaid in this house than a mistress in another house"; thus it is written, AND SHE HAD A HANDMAID, AN EGYPTIAN, WHOSE NAME WAS HAGAR [Genesis 16:1], he [Pharaoh] saying, "Here is thy reward (*agar*)."[5]

Ladies used to come and inquire how she {Sarah} was, and she would say to them, "Go and ask about the welfare of this poor woman [Hagar]." Hagar would tell them: "My mistress Sarai is not inwardly what she is outwardly: She appears to be a righteous woman, but she is not. For had she been a righteous woman, see how many years have passed without her conceiving, whereas I conceived in one night!"[6]

God's Covenant with Sarah

by Karen Prager

Karen Prager's story of the relationship between Sarah and Hagar gives voice to the idea that the personal is the political. How does her account differ from the biblical narrative, and how is it the same? How does her vision of Sarah compare to that of the Rabbis?

Commentary: God speaks to Hagar and God speaks to Sarah in Genesis 15–18. In this story, Hagar and Sarah give voice to their longings. Sarah tells us how she came to understand herself, and how she made peace with Hagar, with herself, and with God.

Sarai and Abram dwelled with Mamre the Amorite; Abram's nephew Lot lived in Sodom. One morning Abram came to Sarai and said, "God has granted me another vision. Our land surrounds us! We shall be buried here in peace. But there is more. You and I shall have a child!" Sarai turned to the valley with wistful gaze. She said, "You and I are old now.

5. *Genesis Rabbah* 45:1, in ibid.

6. *Genesis Rabbah* 45:4, in ibid.

ɔur black hair is ribboned white, and my eyes speak of sunshine and ughter. God makes me no such promises."

Hagar was indentured to Abram in Egypt while Sarai lived with haraoh. Hagar was poor; her family was of lowly status. Hagar was not free woman. Her survival lay in her travels with the family from Haran. arai thought, "Why not let Hagar bear an heir for our fortune?" Hagar d as Sarai said, and was Abram's concubine until she became pregnant.

Sarai spoke to Hagar and said, "Do you think you are better for bram than I because you are pregnant with his child?" Hagar spoke ıck, "I am your servant; I endure your aging husband at your bidding. Do ɔu now begrudge Hagar her only child?" Sarai cried, "I grieve for the ıild I never had. Your belly affronts me; it taunts my loss." Hagar toned, "What loving husband have I with whom to share an infant? I ve birth alone, in the shadow of your anger. Once born, my child will ıve your inheritance. What will he know of Hagar's ancestors? What ill he know of Egypt?"

Sarai said bitterly, "In Egypt I hated my husband. Now I hate you. et out of my sight."

In fear and in fury, Hagar left their encampment. On the road to ıur, near a spring of water, Hagar gave birth to a son, Ishmael. And ehold! An angel of God came to her. The angel was comely, with tawny ıir. He spoke softly, "Where are you going, Hagar?" Hagar cried and ughed. "I have a beautiful son. Who will love him but I?" The angel id, "Your love is more powerful than the Amorite army. Ishmael will ther a dark and mighty people. Return and find a sister in Sarai. Raise ɔur child with the Hebrew family." The angel quenched Hagar's thirst, ıd she returned to Sarai.

While Hagar wandered, Sarai sought God. God sent three angels. bram bathed their feet; Sarai made them cakes. The angels promised em, "You will yet have a son." Sarai found laughter, saying, "Now I am ithered! Am I to have enjoyment with this old man, my husband?" hen God spoke to them and chided, "You think you know what is to ɔme? For time everlasting I will maintain my covenant with your child. s many stars as are in the sky, that is how many your people will ımber. I will make of your son a great nation."

Then God named them Sarah and Abraham, the parents of a nation. s God had promised, Sarah became pregnant. In her joy and shame, she

again sought God's counsel. "God, I have wronged another woman with what I have demanded. How can I deserve Your benevolence?" God said, "I made woman in My image. As you are, so is Hagar. If you speak to her, she will tell you the gifts you may offer her." So God sent Sarah back to Hagar, whom she met carrying Ishmael, returning to camp.

Sarah cried to Hagar, "Must it always be so? As was done to me I must do? My sexuality was an Egyptian pharaoh's plaything, and long my hate and anger remained. I know the sorrow of lying with a man I do not love, yet here I have made such a bed for you! Tell me how I may I heal this wrong."

Hagar said, "Let Ishmael and Isaac grow up as brothers. Each shall have two mothers and one father. You alone shall be my family. Together we will teach our children about the God we have found. Your child shall have his inheritance. Ishmael will know his homeland through our stories, and will return to Egypt to build a nation."

This is how Hagar and Sarah came to raise the ancestors of two great nations. In time, Hagar and Ishmael went south to reclaim their land. God attended to their journey with Her love.

From "The Death of Sarah"

by Susan Gross

Causing a woman to give birth at ninety is certainly within God's power, but can Sarah cope with it? Susan Gross's evocative description of an aged Sarah contemplating this eventuality asks that question. Do you see it the same way? How does this portrayal of Sarah compare to those of Karen Prager and Ellen Umansky?

Sarah tore stringy green husks away from the new-white pole beans. Halfway through the job she took the bean basket from between her legs, set it down on the red earth, and kneaded the joints of her fingers. Then she ran her hands through her white hair, slowly. Her fingers ached.

FEMALE SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR: TWO DESCRIPTIVE PATTERNS WITHIN THE 'BIRTH OF THE HERO' PARADIGM*

Athalya Brenner

I

The 'birth of the hero' myth, or paradigm, is a well-known and widely used model. As defined by Rank (1964), Campbell (1933), Dundes (1965) and others, it is a widespread literary (be it oral or written) pattern which tells how a hero is born despite many hardships and how he spends his early formative years. The difficult circumstances attending the birth and childhood stories serve, of course, to enhance the miraculous elements of the fact that the future hero manages to attain maturity: the more severe the circumstances described, the more impressive the results. The birth stories of Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, Samson and others all belong to the same category or literary paradigm. Each particular instance may contain all the themes that make up the complete literary structure or only some of those pertinent to the structure of the genre and its message.

The 'birth of the hero' myth is obviously not a unique pattern exclusive to biblical literature. The myth is an almost universal one which crops up in chronologically and geographically disparate cultures, while common themes link its various manifestations together; and dissimilarities accentuate differences of origin and cultural circumstances. The birth stories of Sargon the Great or King Oedipus are as legitimate members of the genre as the birth story of Moses—with individual differences, of course. However, the recurrent appearance of this type of

* Reprinted from *VT* 36/3 (1986): 257-73.

tory, albeit with modifications, is indicative of the popularity of he genre in Hebrew tradition. In time, such stories undoubtedly ame to influence one another and to exhibit similarities that nay have originated from a process of ever-increasing mutual lependance as much as ultimate common provenance. Thus, an :xchange of individual features or correspondent themes ›etween biblical members of the category appears to have been ınderstandable, even inevitable.

A short summary of the full paradigm—which, I stress again, need not be manifest *in toto* in any particular occurrence of it—would run as follows. A woman, preferably of noble origin, is barren until quite an advanced age. Variations on the theme are possible, as long as they deal with pre-conception difficulties. The woman (and sometimes the prospective father) has a divine revelation in which the future birth is announced, and sometimes the son's fate in early or later years is alluded to. The ensuing response of the recipients varies according to personal temperament from unquestioning acceptance to incredulity and to attempts to influence the future by various means. In due course the child is born, and manages to attain maturity and fulfil his destiny despite dangers which would have demolished a lesser mortal. In this article I propose to deal with the cluster of sub-themes, all subordinate to the central motif of the hardships which enhance the improbability of the hero's birth and childhood, that are connected with the figure of the hero's mother. Henceforth I shall attempt to describe and classify the segment in which the mother features in individual biblical birth stories, and to relate my findings to the didactic message that these stories contain concerning female social behaviour.

The biblical stories can be categorized under two paradigmatic headings, each of which can be sub-divided in turn into two distinct types.

(1) The story involves two mothers rather than one. In this case, two possibilities emerge:

a. At least two heroes are born, so to speak. Necessarily, then, one of the newborn children (usually the first) or more will prove to be a 'false' hero; and only one, as

time will tell, will become the 'real' hero who carries the divine promise (see below).

b. Two mothers (or even three) will produce, between them, one hero (Naomi and Ruth; Moses' biological mother, his sister, and the daughter of the Pharaoh who becomes his adoptive mother).

(2) In stories where only one prospective mother features, two sub-models are in evidence:

a. A single mother has two sons, or more (Eve, Rebekah).
b. A single mother has one son (Samson's mother).

My discussion will concentrate on types 1a and 1b. A few remarks will be made about 2a, while 2b lies outside the scope of the present investigation.

The arrangement of mothers-to-be in complementary pairs (types 1a and 1b) merits special consideration for its literary as well as its social significance. I have mentioned that, where this device is employed, two mothers appear instead of one; and it follows that, if more than one heir apparent/future hero is produced, a process of elimination will take place. Only one mother will be the 'real' mother of the 'real' hero, only one offspring will be the person whose birth and subsequent career the particular narrative celebrates.

II

Sarah and Hagar, Leah and Rachel and Bilhah and Zilpah, Hannah and Peninnah are paired-off women who, in each case, are married to or live under the legal protection of the same male. This literary state of affairs undoubtedly reflects a certain social background. The women discussed (if the stories about them represent historical conditions, not to mention actual historical figures) are described as living within a patriarchal-polygamous society, with all the traditional domestic difficulties that such a situation entails for the persons involved. However, it would be a mistake to let the matter stand here. The attitudes attributed to the members of each female pair, even their arrangement and description as such a pair, are reminiscent of

one another. They are depicted as individual manifestat... es the same model of behaviour, conventionalized stere... es whose conduct is predictable from the fact that they are female. Any two paired-off women of my 1a category are always defined as two rivals who are interlinked by family ties and interlocked in social combat, as if no alternative pattern of social behaviour is conceivable for them in such a situation. In each and every case the conflict between the two is described as so ingrained as to exclude any possibility of a permanent peaceful resolution. The only satisfactory conclusion for the competition, according to the relevant narratives, is either the demise (Rachel) or the expulsion (Hagar) of one of the participants. From the point of view of the ultimate outcome, then, the competition is truly deadly or, to say the least, highly destructive.

All the 1a paradigmatic pairs are bound tightly together in many ways, so much so that no single member of a given pair is a full personality in her own right but just a psychological segment. The two women complement each other: viewed together, as parts of one single entity, they might constitute a satisfactory image of one person. Another way of defining this literary device is to describe it in terms of a juxtaposition: one woman is the 'real' figure, in the sense that she is the future hero's mother, and her opposite number is a shadow figure or reflection. Who represents the substance and who embodies false aspirations, however, becomes apparent as the story unfolds. Despite certain clues, the link between the females is so pronounced as to exclude an easy solution. Thus, the internal tension of the plot is maintained and even further increased.

Let us take a look at Sarah and Hagar (Gen. 16 and 21). They are different in many ways and stand opposite each other, like a figure and its mirrored image. Sarah is socially superior within the family structure and beyond it; she is a free woman who has jurisdiction over her own property and is a sole wife to her husband. Hagar is a slave who is directly subordinate to Sarah and her status vis-à-vis Abraham is non-existent, as the stor shows: even when she is given to Abraham for the purpose producing a son, she is ultimately answerable to her mistre (16.6). Hence, she does not even enjoy the comparative

inferior, albeit legally binding status of a concubine. In addition, Sarah originally comes from Abraham's immediate kin (Gen. 11.26-30) and perhaps enjoys the higher status of an adopted sister (chs. 12 and 20; and cf. E.A. Speiser's commentary [1964: 78-9, 149-50] for these passages). Hagar, in contradistinction, is a foreigner from Egypt (16.1), which makes her position within the household lowlier still. Sarah's exceptional beauty is referred to beforehand (12.11), while silence is maintained on the question of Hagar's looks. Sarah enjoys her husband's steadfast love, while his attitude towards Hagar does not extend beyond natural kindness. On the other hand, Sarah is old while Hagar is presumably younger; Sarah has been barren for many married years, while Hagar conceives shortly after she has been loaned to Abraham for that purpose (16.3-4).

The two women apparently share one overriding ambition: to supply a son and heir to their master, either by biological means (Hagar) or else, if that fails, by adoptive means (Sarah). One would expect them to co-operate despite their differences, for they share a basic *raison d'être*. However, this is hardly the case. They do not get along. Both are equally to blame: Sarah for making her slave's life a misery (16.6) and, finally, for bringing about the latter's expulsion from the household (21.10); and Hagar for trying to use her pregnancy to ameliorate her position at the expense of her mistress (16.4), and for attempting to run away after having been provoked (16.6). Neither of them is satisfied with her lot, in spite of the fact that each has what the other lacks. Furthermore, although their whole being is wrapped up in the production of a male heir, the eventual fulfilment of this ambition is apparently not sufficient. No truce is effected after Hagar gives birth. Sarah, in contrast to her previously declared intention, goes back on her word and does not treat the child as her 'adopted' offspring. When her own son is born, against great odds and according to the divine promise, she does not rest until Hagar and her son (Abraham's son) are sent away. Now she is busy ensuring her son's inheritance rights: nothing is good enough for him but an exclusive claim (ch. 21). The inevitable culmination of her activity is that the family is broken up. It is true that God declares that this elimination of Ishmael from the inner family circle fits in with his

design (21.12-13). Nevertheless, this causes the family unit (not to mention Abraham himself) considerable suffering. In addition, a precedent is set for the future behaviour of the two women's descendants: they will be as hostile towards one another as their mothers have been. The rift caused by the maternal inability to co-operate in the name of family interests thus has far-reaching consequences.

Leah and Rachel are presented as a pair of opposites as well (Gen. 29–31). Here the structure of the story is even more interesting than that of the previous one, for in each a handmaid is used—on one occasion or another—for the same purpose that Sarah has used Hagar. And again, the unfortunate husband does not have much say in the procedure but follows his wives' lead. Differences in details between the two stories are obvious. Nevertheless, the basic motifs—two women whose prime motivation is motherhood, who do not get along together, whose behavior is ultimately destructive and causes family friction and damage to themselves through continuing competition between their children—remain the same. The arrangement of the female characters in double pairs, dual mirror images of the female principles involved, serves to highlight several of the themes intrinsic to the paradigm as a whole (difficulty of conceiving the hero and of singling him out from his peers, future friction, female attitudes). On the whole, the double arrangement looks like an elaborated imitation of the Sarah–Hagar narratives. Structurally speaking, it does not matter whether in both cases the literary product reflects historical, practical reality or is fictitious. Neither the differences in individual depiction, nor the incompleteness of the analogy between the two cases (that is, only hints of the rivalry between the handmaids and their mistresses; no details of rivalry between the inferior women themselves, which could have produced an appropriate reflection of their mistresses' conduct) are structurally important. What matters is the literary fact that tradition and authors chose to present the history—real or otherwise—of the heroes' mothers in this case too in accordance with the lines described above.

Leah and Rachel are two sisters who are married to the same man. However, they are not equals. Again each has what the

other lacks, and none is satisfied with her lot in spite of her own advantages within the family hierarchy. Both have their own personal possessions (the handmaids). Leah's seniority is twofold and thus well established (like Sarah's): she is the elder sister who married Jacob first. Rachel is doubly inferior socially: she is younger, a second wife. Unlike Sarah, Leah is not beloved by her husband but is the fertile one. By contrast, Rachel is the loved wife but remains barren for a long time. Let us note in passing that the distribution of sub-themes and sub-motifs varies from one story to the other, but the basic material remains stable. Thus Rachel tries to overcome her biological disability by producing an adoptive son through her handmaid Bilhah (30.3-8). Leah, whose own fertility has now temporarily failed, follows suit (vv. 9-13). Like Hagar, the slaves belong to the official wives: they are not consulted about their fate and have to obey their mistresses' orders. They do not marry the husband, and Jacob himself complies with his wives' plans without an audible murmur. The result of all this feverish heir-oriented activity benefits the family unit at first: many male children are produced. One would assume that the eight sons will bring about a truce of sorts between the sisters, for at this juncture Leah has four biological sons and two adoptive ones, and Rachel has two adoptive sons. However, this is not the case. Leah 'hires' Jacob from Rachel (note that Jacob agrees to this arrangement made in his absence) not for love, but with the required result in mind; and eventually gives birth to two additional sons and one daughter (30.14-21). As for Rachel, she finally has Joseph (vv. 22-24). As his very name implies, her ambition does not rest there. It is ironical that Rachel, who has previously declared that she will die if she has no children (30.1) and is not satisfied with the legal and biological children born later, dies precisely while trying to produce yet another child (35.16-19). The child lives, but Rachel pays dearly for her continuing fight with her sister.

The two mothers-sisters together form one split image whose ambitions and behaviour are characterized by a common concern. Despite that, they enjoy no intimacy but, instead, quarrel and bicker incessantly. Only once do they co-operate: when they feel that Laban has robbed their children of their

rightful inheritance they act with their husband against their father (ch. 31). The temporary alliance is effected by what they conceive of as external danger—again, to their children. It is no wonder that the latter eventually follow in their mothers' footsteps. There is hatred and intrigue among them, and the domestic power politics in which they all continue to indulge leads to the long sojourn in Egypt, with all the sorrows and hardships that period entails for the community and for individuals within it. Once again, I stress that the whole process fits in—according to biblical writers and editors—with the divine plan for the Children of Israel. Future heroes are duly born and raised. They attain their destinies despite initial difficulties, of which many are linked not only to maternal disability (barrenness) but also to maternal conduct within the family unit. The success in overcoming these and other problems of survival serves, within the framework of the individual mythic paradigm as well as the combined plan of the continuous biblical narrative, to accentuate sharply the impact of what has come to pass and to strengthen faith in the God who has pre-destined the whole process. Nevertheless, one is left with the impression that the mothers' conduct leaves much to be desired.

A similar paradigm, albeit of a shortened and less detailed format, is found at the beginning of Samuel's birth story (1 Sam. 1). Peninnah and Hannah are married to Elkanah. Peninnah is fertile and has children; Hannah is barren. Hence, Peninnah taunts Hannah. On the other hand, the latter is beloved by her husband, and her position within the household probably reflects her husband's affection. Nevertheless, Hannah is not satisfied. Her husband's contention that his love for her is worth more than ten sons (v. 8) is silently but tearfully rejected as invalid. Symptomatically for this type of narrative, the future hero is not one of the more fertile wife's sons, but the offspring of the beloved and previously barren one. This is similar to the story of Sarah and Hagar, although in the case of Jacob's wives the situation is slightly different: the two mothers produce between them more than one significant future hero (Judah, Levi, Joseph, Benjamin), which moves family strife into future generations until it ultimately blossoms into inter-tribal and national conflicts.

III

What do type 1a narratives teach us about the social role of heroes' mothers, and how do these reports of the women's conduct evaluate their performance within the social niche allegedly assigned to them by the framework of their own society? In other words, what are the socio-psychological characteristics attributed to the hero's mother type within the paradigmatic model of the hero's birth story?

The chief aspiration which informs these women's being, as delineated by the narratives, is biological motherhood and its benefits. Such motivation should be distinguished from so-called natural maternal love or wifely affection. We have seen that even biological motherhood is not sufficient, and that the fight to ensure the economic status of the son assumes central place after his birth. Therefore, the conduct of the women involved should be judged as—and apparently is intended to be judged as—an act born out of calculations of power politics rather than mere emotion or similar consideration. Further, the respective husbands (be they Abraham, Jacob or Elkanah) do not count for much either from the romantic or from any other angle. They are pawns in their wives' deadly serious game of producing heirs and organizing family finance. And lest we err and think that the women's behaviour advances the situation of the family as a whole, we have seen how time and time again their personal ambitions run counter to the supreme value of preserving the existing social order and protecting the boundaries and well-being of the family unit. They are described as noisy, quarrelsome, disruptive, irresponsible. They have been chosen to serve as vessels for carrying the divine promise, but their conduct proves them hardly worthy of their destiny. The fact that they put political ambition above the overriding concern of the community's survival brands them as socially maladjusted. The final judgment passed on these paired-off women (and I shall have to refer to the pairing-off notion again later) is that they do not understand the implications of their circumstances and fail to act wisely. The consequences—later strife and further divisions within family, community and nation—are thus

painfully foreshadowed. The continued welfare of the family is greatly compromised by their behaviour. Seen against the described background of the polygamous-patriarchal family to which they belong, newly arrived in the land and unsure of its existence, this is a serious criticism indeed.

Let us note that, by and large, males in situations of stress and possible conflict are not judged so harshly. Abraham and Lot manage to part company in peace, despite the economic competition within the family unit (Gen. 13). David and Jonathan keep their friendship despite their political rivalry. Are we to conclude that men are capable of true friendship and mutually helpful cooperation, not to mention love, even under stress and when personal survival is at stake, whereas women by definition, even when they are great women chosen to conceive heroes and leaders, are incapable of generous and wise conduct, not to mention compassion for their colleagues and competitors? Even biological sisters, it seems, fall victim to their personal ambitions and forget their common origin, although in a manner completely different from male sibling rivalry (and see below, VII, for type 2a).

IV

Type 1b of the segment that deals with the hero's mother within the 'birth of the hero' paradigm displays structural similarities as well as dissimilarities to its predecessor. The structural variation perforce signifies and entails a variation in plot sequence but also, which is much more important for our investigation, is extended to matters of views concerning the evaluation of the female psyche and social conduct.

Essentially, the paired-off model—two mothers rather than one—is retained in this category too. Therefore, this type of narrative is here classified as a sub-category of paradigm 1, together with 1a. However, only one son and heir is produced according to this structure. Other features that are characteristic of 1a but undergo an alteration in 1b are, for instance, the lack of a divine vision or promise and a further minimization of the biological father's role in the latter. In one of the two cases classified under this heading we even witness an expansion of

the basic pair model into three maternal figures, which must have some significance for that particular story as a whole. The main change, however, is the high degree of responsible co-operation attributed to the women involved in each case.

Naomi and Ruth are not married to the same person but, again, they form a pair along the general principles of the 1a paradigm. The beginning of the book of Ruth (ch. 1) makes this immediately clear. Naomi is the senior partner: she is older, and the mother-in-law. Ruth is the inferior member of the pair: she is younger and subordinate, by status as well as by will, to Naomi (Sasson 1989: 123-24). The structural analogy to the Sarah–Hagar story is further apparent in that Naomi is a native of Bethlehem, while Ruth is a foreigner and thus doubly inferior. In another respect, though, the situation is reversed: Ruth, as implied by the narrative itself and elaborated in later Jewish tradition (Levine 1973), is the one endowed with the good looks. Both share the major traits of childlessness: Naomi has lost her sons (1.5), while Ruth remains barren until a relatively advanced age. An additional handicap from which they both suffer is lack of husbands, which makes the eventuality of the hero's birth even more remote. On the surface, the story contains conditions which have previously (in type 1a narratives) led to friction and competition between the mothers. Even more so: if only one child is to be born, what is more 'natural' than a tug-of-war between the two mother figures concerning ownership and its attendant fringe benefits? Nevertheless, and although the question of motherhood is presented in the text in a somewhat ambiguous fashion,[1] this does not occur. When Ruth finally marries, after much planning and manipulative action initiated by Naomi, she actually relinquishes her maternal status in favour of her mother-in-law (ch. 4). For all intents and purposes the biological mother, in contradistinction to previous behaviour patterns, in fact gives in to the adoptive(?)[2] mother (4.17)—and willingly so. The reason given by the text for Ruth's generosity is her love for Naomi, which makes her more

1. So in Ruth, where it is far from clear whose son the infant really is, Naomi's or Ruth's; and see below.

2. Cf. Brenner 1983.

valuable for Naomi than any number of male sons (4.14-15). It is Ruth's love which preserves the two women together, feeds them and ultimately resolves the problem of their sad plight through the production of a male heir.

The similarities in motifs and themes to those of the 1a model are quite obvious. However, the basic difference in the evaluation of potential and actual female conduct exemplified in Ruth's character—which changes the entire psycho-social moral of the story so far as its chief female actors are concerned—is not sufficiently explained merely by their not being married to the same person. We have seen that the male figure, even in the 1a type, is hardly the target of the competition: he is secondary in relation to the main object of giving birth to a son. The same central theme is present here too, and could have led to bitter strife in this instance also. If this does not happen it is, as the story itself stresses, because of Ruth's generous and unselfish behaviour. This makes co-operation between the two women viable, and ultimately saves both—and the family line—from extinction. Thus, through the abolition of supposedly conventional female behaviour patterns, a new hero is born. And a greater prize is still in store: a descendant of the latter, King David, will turn out to be a super-hero who changes the course of Israelite history.

The story of the birth of Moses (Exod. 2.1-10) belongs, so far as its deep structure is concerned, to the same 1b sub-class of the hero's birth genre. Deviations from the stories previously discussed abound, but most of them should be regarded as relating to the individual plot rather than the structural-generic level. For instance, the central motif which deals with the many hardships linked with the hero's birth and early childhood is retained, but assumes a new form. The recurrent sub-themes of maternal barrenness (1a, 1b) and friction (1a) are dropped in favour of another: external danger to the future hero from the father's (biological or adoptive) side.[1] The structural function of the latter sub-theme, however, is parallel to that of the former:

1. Pharaoh automatically, if not formally, becomes Moses' adoptive father, for his daughter assumes responsibility for the baby's fate and raises him in her father's house.

both illuminate the same facet of the hero's fate. A few items that we have already encountered within this type of story, such as details concerning the outward appearance of the participants, are dropped altogether. Social data defining the status of the female figures are kept to the bare minimum, and we notice that some characteristics are inverted: for instance, the foreign lady's status is not a handicap (as in the other stories) but an asset. The characters have no names, and their emotions are hardly elaborated upon. All these are variations which are anchored in the provenance and individual nature of this particular paradigm. The difference lies, nonetheless, in the introduction of three maternal figures instead of two (and two father figures—Moses' biological father, and the hostile Pharaoh in whose house the child grows up safely—instead of one paternal figure; however, this last feature lies outside the scope of the present inquiry).[1]

Three anonymous women co-operate in order to ensure Moses' welfare. One is the biological mother (daughter of Levi), the other the adoptive mother (the daughter of Pharaoh; and note the symmetry in familial status and the adjectival modifiers denoting them which are applied to each of the two women). So far, the paradigm is similar to that found in the book of Ruth: the first woman actually relinquishes her rights and claims concerning the infant in favour of the second—something that, in the present case, advances the child's chances of survival and the eventual fulfilment of his destiny. These two would have made a paired-off arrangement not dissimilar in initial structure to that of Ruth and Naomi. However, a third figure is introduced early on (Exod. 2.4). Like the other two, she too is defined as being a daughter, this time the presumably mature

1. There can hardly be any doubt that the father figure of Pharaoh is psychologically ambivalent. The contiguity of the preceding biblical story (Exod. 1) identifies him as the Pharaoh who conspired to get rid of all Hebrew male infants, hence he is the ultimate source for the initial dangers to Moses. On the other hand, his is the house in which Moses grows up securely until he is ready to achieve his destiny. This Pharaoh embodies both protection and threat, like any father figure; and Moses' eventual rebellion against him strengthens his function as such even further.

daughter of the biological mother; and she is assigned the role of a go-between who links the real and surrogate mothers together (vv. 7, 8). It seems, therefore, that Moses' birth story is a variation, or an expansion, of the 1b literary model exemplified in the biblical story of Ruth and Naomi. The basic structure of the latter still informs the former, but a third figure is inserted to mediate between the two females. The result for the child is beneficial: as a result of the three women's concerted efforts he manages to survive. The biological mother demonstrates, by implication, how a 'real' woman should behave: she gives up her child in order to have him (and cf. the Judgment of Solomon, 1 Kgs 3.16-28). In other words, she is well-adjusted enough to put the baby's welfare above her own wishes—unlike Sarah, Jacob's wives and their handmaids (type 1a). Incidentally, of course, all this fuss around the child enhances the tension; and the listener or reader gradually realizes that only a very special child deserves such devotion and care.

V

A combined structural variation of the 1a (two paired-off mothers and two infants) and 1b (two mothers and one infant) paradigms underlies the Lukan narrative of the birth of Jesus (Lk. 1.8–2.7). Here motifs and themes from both narrative subclasses are joined together to produce a new tradition of a super-hero's birth.

The general social background is, again, patriarchal; although, in this case, it is monogamous rather than polygamous (1a). Hardships which enhance the improbability of the child's eventual birth are many: barrenness of the woman and advanced age of both parents in the case of Elizabeth and her husband; Mary's social difficulties, emanating from the special circumstances of the conception and her betrothed status. The two women receive divine revelations which anticipate the births (as in the 1a, and unlike the 1b, traditions). They could well have been presented as rivals, for a number of features point to their being a contrasted pair. They differ in age, place of origin, social standing, and probably beauty too. They are kinswomen (Lk. 1.36), which may be another potential reason

for contention between mothers-to-be and future sons alike. Once more, as in the Naomi/Ruth story, one is an older woman and one a younger one; and the generation conflict is resolved without competition. This time, however, the elder and superior member of the pair acknowledges the superiority of the younger: Elizabeth readily admits that Mary's son will be greater than hers (1.39-35), in contradistinction to the type 1a behavioural patterns displayed by heroes' mothers. This is a new development, a sublimation of older themes and motifs. Faith triumphs, as it should, over personal ambition and ensures not only the peaceful survival of a divinely ordained human condition but also, through the birth of the two heroes (John and Jesus), the evolution of a new socio-religious era. The paired-off unit of the two women is reconciled and mutually supportive: they practise understanding rather than hostility, adjustment to their personal role in history rather than selfishly motivated strife. This, in its turn, informs and anticipates the lives and fates of their respective sons by eliminating the possibility of future power struggles between the heroes-to-be and by promoting co-operation instead.

A few elements are shared by type 1b and the combined-feature story of Elizabeth and Mary. These include factors of omission as well as items of contents and matters of world-view that appear to be different from corresponding items in the type 1a narratives. An interesting feature is the minimization of the father's role which is, perhaps, more characteristic of the stories of Naomi/Ruth and Moses than of the story of Elizabeth and Mary.[1] Another item is relevant to the Naomi/Ruth and Elizabeth/Mary pairs: both are portrayed as female couples of strong, distinct personalities, unlike the somewhat flat and single-dimension characters of the 1a paradigm.[2] The last point is, again, the different view of female adjustability to her social role as a mother and overseer of family survival which is

1. Zacharias and Joseph play a much bigger role in their stories than Abraham and Jacob do in their sons' birth accounts, but even the former characters play a role that is secondary to that of their womenfolk.

2. Those, as we remember, are incapable of basic human emotions such as love, affection, humility and a well-developed sense of personal security.

expressed, implicitly or explicitly, in each narrative structural model. For the time being, let us keep these differences in mind. I shall come back to them, and to their possible significance, after I have made some comments on the 2a (one mother, two sons) paradigm.

VI

In some stories of the birth of the hero only one mother is featured. The idea of conflict, through which the 'real' hero identifies himself as such while the 'false' hero is exposed for what he really stands for, is presented through the prism of sibling rivalry between two blood brothers (preferably twins). This arrangement (2a), whether it reflects so-called 'historical' facts or not, contains a paired-off entity that is structurally different from the literary device that I have named 'paired-off women' (1a, 1b). Both literary models share a few motivating features which underline them, such as a universally recognized psychological factor accounting for strife and competition within a certain family, and a narrational or pseudo-historical explanation for the continuing friction and consequent dispersion of the family unit (as in 1a). Nevertheless, it is basically unlike either of the literary paradigms mentioned above. The rivalry is never resolved until one of the two 'heroes' is disposed of this way or the other (rather like 1a, but unlike the harmonious behaviour achieved by the women in 1b). The competitive factions are now male figures. These, unlike their female counterparts of the paired-off traditions, form a truly contradictory split image: one is (at least relatively) a positive character, while the other is a totally negative figure. Cain and Abel, Jacob and Esau are not complementary pairs (like the women in 1a, 1b), but opposite manifestations of qualitative moral values. Here the picture obtained from the description is in the tradition of the psycho-moralistic schism between good and evil, Eve and Lilith, God and the Satan. The judgment delivered on one member of the pair, and the relative exoneration of the other, are much more severe and decisive than those meted out to both members of the 1a type pairs. Naturally, this kind of moral judgment is dissimilar to the praise reserved for the harmony

achieved out of contradiction by the 1b type women. Thus, within various versions of the hero's birth myth, as it was adapted for explaining processes of divine elimination and selection, two solutions are offered for the problem of inter-family strife and for the psychological, emotional and social factors which underlie it.

VII

Let us return to the 1a and 1b types. In Genesis and 1 Samuel the paired-off women destined to be heroes' mothers are depicted as maladjusted to their social role, for they are unable to conform to family needs. Outside these sources, women described as pairs within a related paradigm are different: they are capable of correct social attitudes and social behaviour rightly dictated by family priorities. These are diametrically opposed views of female social functioning, with more than a hint of male criticism for the Great Matriarchs of the 1a type. Such criticism is not to be regarded as a trifling matter. The implied attribution of female maladjustment should be understood as referring to an allegedly serious failing. As new-comers and foreigners, all members of the founding Hebrew families were required to place the supreme value of communal survival above personal needs. Whoever chose to prefer personal aspirations put the future of the group into jeopardy, which makes God's saving grace in nurturing the community and keeping his promise even more impressive, but does not absolve the social offenders. On the other hand, the type of paired-off women who behaved as was expected of them (1b) and helped to advance the divine design at the expense of their personal (unmentioned) needs, were lavishly praised for their deeds.

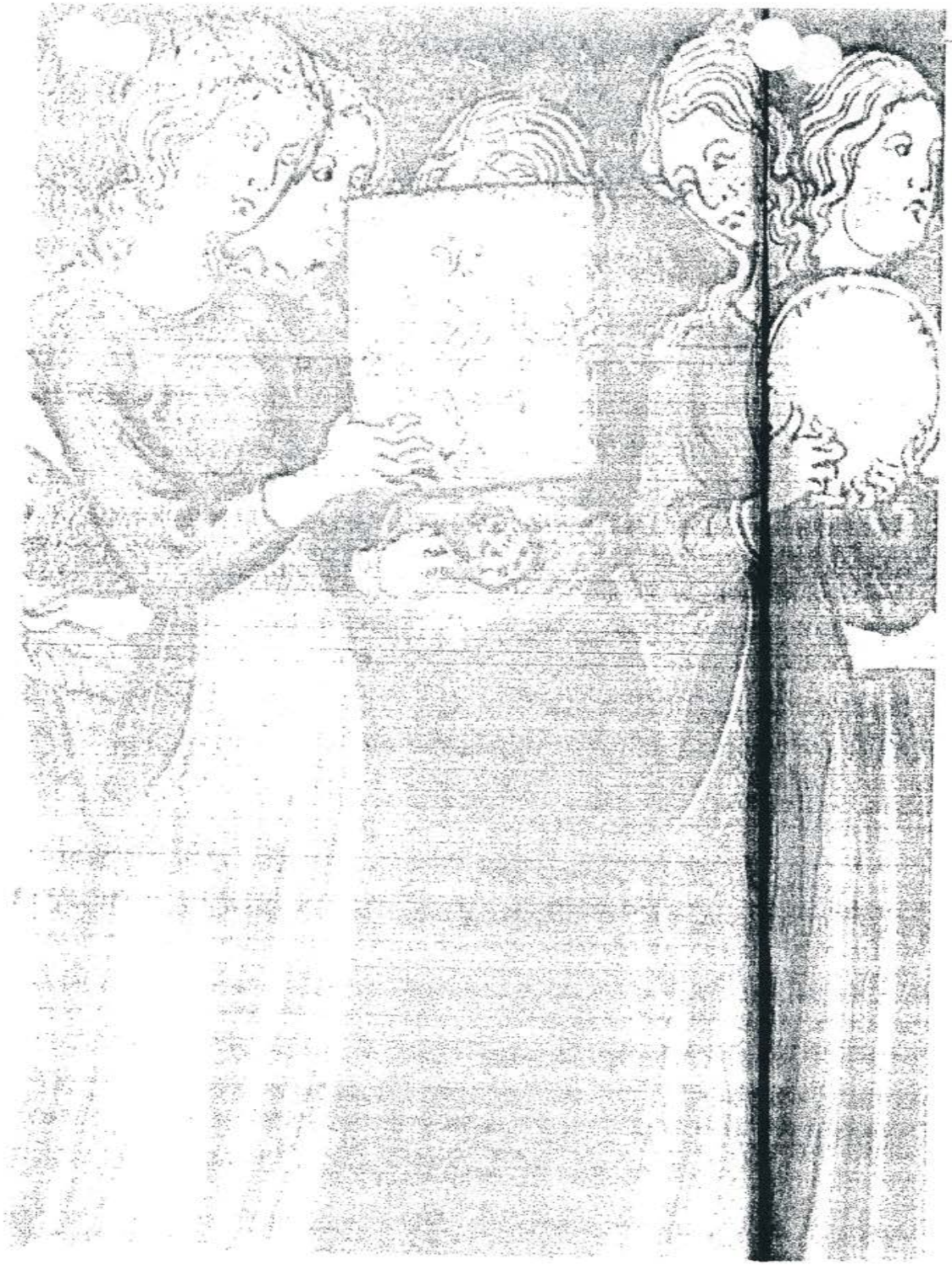
Why are some women (1a) implicitly or explicitly depicted as stereotypes (non-individualized manifestations) of social maladjustment, while others (1b) are recognized as capable of selfless and thus correct social conduct? The obvious answer would be to attribute the negative view to the marital status of the 1a women: is it not natural for co-wives to fight over their own and their offspring's destinies, especially since they ...ably love the same male? I have already tried to

demonstrate that this is too simple a solution. The struggle between the women is a regular power struggle, unaffected by love inasmuch as it is centered round motherhood and its attendant benefits.

Did later generations and more developed literary tastes come to view the female psyche more leniently, for the stories depicting female behaviour favourably belong to an era later than that in which the 1a traditions were being formed? Such an ideological change—if this it is—was hardly likely to have happened where and when there is no indication of a general social change which would have promoted a more favourable view of the 'other' sex: the background, throughout the biblical period, remains patriarchal (although not necessarily monogamous). We might try to say that the New Testament deals with the beginnings of a pioneering society, where women are often accorded a better standing as valuable members. This too is an insufficient answer: it may explain the positive attitudes attributed to Elizabeth and Mary, but not the literary subtype as a whole.

A third, more speculative, reflection would lead us to assume that whereas type 1a is a male-oriented, male-written judgment on female sociability and potential of socialization, type 1b is female oriented in the sense that it originated in female circles which tended to view their own species in a different light. Such a claim is partially supported by two features of the 1b paradigm mentioned above: the women are obviously seen as strong and constant characters; and the male role is kept to a skeletal minimum. Showing female authorship for all three stories which belong to this category—Exodus 2, Ruth and Lk. 1.1-2.7—would have been quite to my personal taste. However, this is a task for the future; and here we should let the matter rest and regrettably so.[1]

1. An earlier and partial version of this article was read in the S... meeting in Strasbourg (August 1984). I owe the last two parts, as well as numerous other points, to questions and insights offered by colleag... during the discussion period that followed.



Ellen Frankel, Ph.D.

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This book is printed on acid-free paper. ♾

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To my parents, Ann and David Frankel,
who encouraged me to make the Torah my own

וירא

4. VAYERA:

Nostalgia—The Pain of Home

(Genesis 18:1–22:24)

TORAH TEACHES: Three divine messengers come to Abraham and announce that Sarah will yet give birth to a son. When Sarah overhears this, she laughs, thinking to herself: I am almost ninety and no longer menstruating! But Shekhinah upbraids her: Is anything too difficult for the Creator of Life?

God also reveals to Abraham that the nearby cities of Sodom and Gomorrah will be destroyed because of their wickedness. Abraham negotiates with God to spare Sodom, where his nephew Lot and his family live. God agrees—if at least ten righteous people can be found there.

Then two of the angel-messengers go to Sodom and find shelter there with Lot. When the evil townspeople seek to molest them, the angels thwart their designs by blinding them. Then God tells Lot to flee with his family before the city is destroyed, but only his wife and two daughters consent to join him. During their flight, Lot's wife looks back and turns into a pillar of salt, so that only three of them escape the firestorm engulfing the cities of the plain. Convinced that the rest of humanity is doomed, Lot's daughters get their father drunk and sleep with him, and each gives birth to a son.

Then Abraham journeys to the kingdom of Abimelekh, where he protects himself from death a second time by telling the king that his wife, Sarah, is really his sister. Visited by a divine dream and a plague of barrenness, the king discovers the truth and placates Abraham and Sarah with gifts and safe settlement in his domain. Then Abimelekh and Abraham conclude a covenant at the well of Beersheba.

At the age of ninety, Sarah gives birth to Isaac—"Laughing Boy"—as God has promised. When the baby is eight days old, he, his older half-brother, Ishmael, and their aged father are circumcised. Then Sarah, fearful of Ishmael's harmful influence on her son, demands that Abraham cast out Hagar and Ishmael. God instructs Abraham to honor Sarah's wish. In the desert, God saves the two exiles, promising Hagar that Ishmael will become a great nation.

Then God calls upon Abraham to sacrifice his son Isaac on Mount Moriah. But when Abraham raises the knife to kill his son, the Merciful One stays his hand, and so Abraham sacrifices a ram instead. In reward for his obedience, God blesses Abraham with a fruitful and glorious future.

THE DESERT INNKEEPER AND HIS SHORT-ORDER COOK

OUR BUBBES DECLARE: How exhausting it is, running a Jewish home! What a nudnik Hospitality is, and how quickly we have to jump when he yells!

SARAH THE ANCIENT ONE RECOUNTS: When three strangers suddenly appeared at our tent one day, Abraham ordered me to serve them immediately. As it is written: "ABRAHAM HASTENED INTO THE TENT TO SARAH AND SAID, 'QUICK, THREE MEASURES OF CHOICE FLOUR! KNEAD AND MAKE CAKES!'" (18:6) He himself ran to the herd to select a calf for our guests, which he then gave to one of our servant boys to prepare.

OUR MOTHERS NOTE: How familiar this scene is! Abraham, driven by his desire to be hospitable, drives his household with the same sense of urgency. What if Sarah had been in the middle of other tasks when he'd called—weaving a garment for her husband, caring for a sick servant, talking to God? So intent is Abraham to please his guests that he doesn't stop at the threshold to see if he is interrupting something. On such occasions, Sarah is no different to him from his servant boy.

OUR BUBBES ADD: The food is cooked in a pot, and the plate gets the honor.

SARAH'S LAUGHTER

OUR DAUGHTERS ASK: Why does Sarah laugh?

SARAH THE ANCIENT ONE ANSWERS: Having overheard my secret thoughts, God misrepresented my laughter to Abraham, implying that it showed my lack of faith, boasting to him: "IS ANYTHING TOO WONDROUS FOR YHVH?" (18:14) Yet it was not at God that I laughed but at myself, at my own foolish fantasy. For I thought: "NOW THAT I AM WITHERED, AM I TO HAVE ENJOYMENT—WITH MY HUSBAND SO OLD?" (14:12) When God took me to task, I denied my laughter not because I doubted God's capacity for miracles but because I doubted my own.

THE MOTHER OF LAUGHTER

OUR DAUGHTERS ASK: When Sarah first overhears the angels talking with Abraham, promising her a child, Sarah laughs, then denies having done so. When she gives birth to her son, she recalls that moment of disbelief and reclaims it, boasting that "GOD HAS GIVEN ME LAUGHTER. ALL WHO HEAR ABOUT IT"—that is, the birth of a son to a ninety-year-old crone—"WILL LAUGH WITH ME!" (21:6) Is Sarah's laughter a sign of shame or joy?

LEAH THE NAMER ANSWERS: Sarah is naming not her son but *herself* as "Mother of Laughter." For in giving birth to Isaac, she changes from a laughingstock (to her husband, to Hagar, to her neighbors, to herself) to matriarch of the covenant. Isaac is her *belly laugh*, her way of *ribbing* and *kidding* God and Abraham.

BUT OUR BUBBES CAUTION: Remember what it says in the Torah: "The heart may ache even in laughter, and joy may end in grief" (Proverbs 14:13).

WOMAN AS EAVESDROPPER

OUR DAUGHTERS ASK: Why doesn't God speak directly to Sarah? As it is written: "[Sarah] WAS LISTENING AT THE ENTRANCE OF THE TENT, WHICH WAS BEHIND [Abraham]" (18:10). Why does she only *overhear* the conversation between God and Abraham, laughing to herself when she hears one of the strangers announce that she will bear a child in her old age? And why does God ask Abraham, not Sarah: "WHY DID SARAH LAUGH?" (18:13) Is Sarah being criticized for eavesdropping on men's conversation or for laughing at what they say?

WILY REBECCA ANSWERS: The angels are aware all along that Sarah's listening in. Even before they begin speaking with Abraham, they make sure she is nearby in the tent. No, the angels' news is designed specifically for her—and so's the method of transmission.

THE DARK SIDE OF HOSPITALITY

OUR DAUGHTERS ASK: How can Lot offer his daughters in place of his guests? As it is written: "YOU MAY DO TO [my two daughters] AS YOU PLEASE; BUT DO NOT DO ANYTHING TO THESE MEN, SINCE THEY HAVE COME UNDER THE SHELTER OF MY ROOF" (19:8). Don't tell us there is no other choice!

THE SAGES IN OUR OWN TIME ANSWER: If we look at the problem through the lens of the social scientist, we discover political and economic reasons behind Lot's choice: hospitality cements social bonds, incurs reciprocal obligation, balances power among potential rivals. Thus when the wicked Sodomites call for Lot's guests, "THAT WE MAY KNOW THEM" (19:5), he must choose among several competing pressures: to placate his neighbors, safeguard his guests, or protect his daughters. Since his daughters lack the power to either jeopardize or strengthen his position, it is no wonder that Lot chooses to sacrifice their future marriageability rather than dishonor his guests or provoke his neighbors. Such a move is certainly politically expedient.

DINAH THE WOUNDED ONE PROTESTS: But how can we not recoil at Lot's willingness to sacrifice his daughters' virginity to protect two strangers under his roof! At least when Abraham decides to sacrifice his son, he is answering to God. Lot, on the other hand, is yielding only to wicked neighbors and social convention. We shouldn't be surprised that his daughters later sleep with him—he has already essentially violated their chastity and made his priorities clear to them.

LOT'S OTHER DAUGHTER, PALTIT

THE RABBIS TEACH: Lot is told to take his two "REMAINING DAUGHTERS" (19:15) and flee the city. From this we learn that Lot had another daughter besides the two who escape Sodom with him. This third daughter was named Paltit. Because she had once offered hospitality to strangers, the wicked men of Sodom burned her to death. Her best friend, likewise goodhearted, met a similar fate at their hands, because she had once smuggled food to a visitor. The Sodomites killed her by burying her in the earth up to her neck, drenching her in honey, and then letting bees sting her to death.

OUR DAUGHTERS ASK: What were the Rabbis' motives in inventing these gruesome tales?

THE RABBIS ANSWER: To blacken Lot's name even more by suggesting what would have happened to his "remaining daughters" had he turned them over to these unprincipled men. We were also justifying God's destruction of a community that so flagrantly violated the norms of hospitality.

MOTHER RACHEL ADDS: The Rabbis understand too that women's natural impulse is to open up their hearts and homes to guests, a dangerous habit in a place like Sodom.

BACKWARD GLANCES

OUR DAUGHTERS ASK: Why does Lot's wife look back?

EDITH, THE ONE-WHO-LOOKS-BACK (WHOM THE RABBIS NAMED *IDIT*), ANSWERS: I looked back to all that I had left behind—my other daughter's grave, my friends and relatives, my home with its cherished mementos, my childhood—and I wept. And so hot was the desert sun and the brimstone torching Sodom that my flowing tears dried instantly, turning me into a pillar of salt.

THE RABBIS ADD: Her turning into a pillar of salt is an example of the divine principle, *midah keneged midah,* "measure for measure." Lot's wife brings this fate upon herself through indiscretion: When the two angels come to stay in Lot's house, Lot prudently keeps their visit a secret, but his wife goes to a neighbor to borrow salt to cook for them—and so gives them away. Because of her thoughtlessness, she pays back the borrowed salt with her life.

EDITH OBJECTS: No, it was because of my thoughtfulness—at the wrong time.

INCEST AT THE END OF THE WORLD

OUR DAUGHTERS ASK: The Torah claims that Lot's daughters seduce their father because they fear that "THERE IS NOT A MAN ON EARTH TO CONSORT WITH US IN THE WAY OF THE WORLD" (19:31) once Sodom has been destroyed. Do they really think that Lot is the last man on earth? That's hard to believe.

WILY REBECCA ANSWERS: Of course it is! In my opinion, their actions are motivated by knowledge, not ignorance. Realizing that their father had been willing to turn them over to the same men who previously murdered their sister, Paltit, they fear that he will now sacrifice them to save his own skin—as Abraham had twice passed off their great-aunt Sarah as his sister to save his own life. So they barter their own maidenheads for security, each obtaining from Lot a son to support her in her old age. For with their old world in flames and their mother petrified, what other options do they have?

AN INAUSPICIOUS BEGINNING, AN AUSPICIOUS END

OUR DAUGHTERS ASK: Lot and his elder daughter engender Moab, whose line leads to Ruth, great-grandmother of David and ancestor of the Messiah. How can an incestuous union give rise to kings and redeemers?

THE SAGES IN OUR OWN TIME TEACH: We are reminded of incestuous couplings from other ancient traditions—Osiris and his sister Isis, Tiamat and her kinsman Marduk, Zeus and his daughter Aphrodite, Oedipus and his mother Jocasta, among others.

BERURIAH OBSERVES: These myths teach us that when two people so closely related produce offspring, they are likely to embody intensified family traits, for good and for ill. Thus David exhibits extraordinary courage, lust, and creativity.

ESTHER THE HIDDEN ONE ADDS: The Messiah too will be extraordinary, embodying the composite genome of all humanity.

THE WIFE-SISTER RUSE REVISITED

OUR DAUGHTERS ASK: Why does Abraham again try to pass off his wife as his sister, this time with King Abimelekh?

THE RABBIS TEACH: Abraham knows all along that God will intervene to save Sarah's virtue.

THE SAGES IN OUR OWN TIME TEACH: In ancient Near Eastern culture, "wife-sister" was a technical term, designating a special marital status that marked certain women as off-limits even to pharaohs or kings.

BUT SARAH THE ANCIENT ONE COUNTERS: No, my husband had become too skilled at dissembling! That is why I did not protest later when God demanded that Abraham offer up my only son. By then I understood that God was not testing Abraham but teaching him a lesson: that even a mock sacrifice, like the mock adultery in Pharaoh's and Abimelekh's courts, can permanently scar its victims.

TAKING NOTE OF SARAH

OUR DAUGHTERS ASK: Who's really responsible for Isaac's birth?

MOTHER RACHEL TEACHES: How mystical is the process of birthing children! God opens Sarah's womb. Sarah conceives and gives birth to a child.

Abraham provides his seed and names him. All three acts—opening the channel of life, nurturing and sending the child forth, giving the child an identity—are equally essential to that child's development; and they are only the beginning. It has been said that it takes a whole village to raise a child. Actually, it takes the whole world.

ISAAC'S BRIS AND WEANING PARTIES

THE RABBIS RECOUNT: Abraham and Sarah hold two great feasts in honor of their son: the first on the eighth day after his birth, when Isaac is circumcised; the second when he is weaned. Miracles happen on both occasions. At the circumcision party, Sarah's breasts overflow with so much milk that she nurses all one hundred babies who attend the feast. Those whose mothers are thinking only pious thoughts while Sarah nurses them grow up to become converts to Judaism, the ancestors of all righteous proselytes. Those whose mothers doubt the miracle grow up to be the rulers of the world, whose kingdoms are all lost because they reject the Torah.

At Isaac's weaning (which according to Rabbi Hoshaya the Elder takes place when he is thirteen, giving us the precedent for the bar mitzvah), all thirty-one kings who will later be killed by Joshua are in attendance, with their regents. The giant Og is also there, and he boasts that he can crush the puny Isaac with one finger. Accordingly, on that day, his doom is sealed. Even God is a guest, which is why the party is called "great," as it is written: "AND ABRAHAM HELD A GREAT FEAST" (21:8).

THE BANISHMENT OF HAGAR

OUR DAUGHTERS ASK: How could Sarah have been so cruel to Hagar!

HAGAR THE STRANGER ANSWERS: When Sarah saw my son, Ishmael, playing with her own son, she ordered Abraham to "CAST OUT THAT SLAVE WOMAN AND HER SON" (21:10) from the camp. Abraham protested, but his God sided with Sarah, saying: "DO NOT BE DISTRESSED OVER THE BOY OR YOUR SLAVE; WHATEVER SARAH TELLS YOU, DO AS SHE SAYS, FOR IT IS THROUGH ISAAC THAT OFFSPRING SHALL BE CONTINUED FOR YOU. AS FOR THE SON OF THE SLAVE WOMAN, I WILL MAKE A NATION OF HIM TOO, FOR HE IS YOUR SEED" (21:12–13).

THE RABBIS OFFER A DIFFERENT EXPLANATION: Ishmael "plays at being" Isaac by mocking him. The Hebrew word for play, *mitzahek*, itself mocks Isaac's name, *Yitzhak*.

BUT SARAH THE ANCIENT ONE REBUKES THEM: You need not demonize Ishmael and his mother in order to understand my actions—or the Holy One's. I was a realist; Abraham an idealist. I understood that Abraham's older son, originally designated as his heir, would always pose a threat to Isaac's future. To protect my son, I hardened my heart against his rival.

HAGAR'S PROVISIONS

OUR DAUGHTERS ASK: Why doesn't Abraham do more to prepare Hagar and Ishmael for their exile? Why does he give them only "SOME BREAD AND A SKIN OF WATER" (21:14)? Why provision them so meagerly? He could have also given them a camel or a servant—or, at the very least, a blessing.

ESTHER THE HIDDEN ONE ANSWERS: In acting this way, Abraham demonstrates his faith that God will provide. He takes to heart God's promise that Ishmael will become a great nation. This episode is a rehearsal of his later test of faith with his other son.

DINAH THE WOUNDED ONE OBJECTS: It could have been otherwise! Sarah after all only orders him to send the two of them away. It is Abraham's choice to give them so little for their journey.

THE TRIAL OF HAGAR

OUR DAUGHTERS ASK: Why does Hagar push Ishmael away when she thinks he's going to die? As it is written: "[She] SAT DOWN AT A DISTANCE, *A BOWSHOT AWAY*; FOR SHE THOUGHT, 'LET ME NOT LOOK ON AS THE CHILD DIES'" (21:16). Is that any way for a mother to act!

MOTHER RACHEL ANSWERS: Too often parents find themselves in this position, powerless to save their children from the Angel of Death. We can't blame Hagar for averting her eyes and ears from Ishmael's death rattle. Is it not difficult to endure a child's death even "at a distance"—away at war, on an operating table, or on a mountaintop beneath his father's knife? Perhaps it's only that distance that releases Hagar's tears and summons God's help. Had she remained close to Ishmael, she might have been too paralyzed by his suffering to call out at all.

THE CRY OF THE BOY

OUR DAUGHTERS ASK: Why does God hear Ishmael's cry, not Hagar's? As it is written: "GOD HEARD THE CRY OF THE BOY" (21:17). Only after hearing the child's cry does an angel appear to Hagar and assure her: "FEAR NOT, FOR GOD HAS HEEDED THE CRY OF THE BOY WHERE HE IS" (21:17). Why doesn't her own distress draw this response?

THE RABBIS ANSWER: Hagar's eyes are at first so blinded by tears that she is unable to see the miraculous well nearby. Too overcome with grief over her son's approaching death, she fails to attend to her own survival. But when Ishmael calls out from "where he [was]," the angel appears and reassures Hagar that they will both live. It is the child's selfishness, not the mother's selflessness, that storms heaven's gate. Only then do Hagar's eyes open so that she sees the well that has been there all along. As it is written: "THEN GOD OPENED HER EYES AND SHE SAW A WELL OF WATER" (21:19).

HAGAR THE BANISHED ONE ADDS: Sometimes it's our children, speaking from where they are, who teach us how to see what we need to survive.

AND OUR BUBBES CHIME IN: A child's tears reach the heavens.

THE AKEDAH

OUR DAUGHTERS ASK: Where is Sarah when Abraham and Isaac set off for Mount Moriah? What are her reactions when her husband goes off with her only son? Why is she silent?

THE RABBIS ANSWER: After Abraham and Isaac leave, Sarah goes to Hebron, looking for them. Satan—the Tempter, the Adversary, the Alter Ego—appears to her and reveals that Abraham intends to sacrifice her son; hearing this, her heart breaks from sorrow and she dies. As it is written: "SARAH DIED IN KIRYAT-ARBA—NOW HEBRON" (23:2). But others teach that Satan reveals to her that Abraham has spared her son from his knife; and then her heart bursts from joy. Such is the anatomy of a mother's heart.

SARAH THE ANCIENT ONE RETORTS: What do the Rabbis know of a mother's heart!

חיי שרה

5. HAYEI SARAH:

Love and Marriage

(GENESIS 23:1–25:18)

TORAH TEACHES: At the age of 127, Sarah dies. Abraham mourns her death, and when he rises up from the mourning stool, he buys the Cave of Makhpelah as a burial place.

Determined that his son Isaac not marry a Canaanite woman, Abraham then sends his servant Eliezer back to the old country to find Isaac a bride. To select the appropriate woman, Eliezer sets up a test, and lo and behold! Rebecca, Abraham's great-niece, passes it, for without being asked, the young woman waters Eliezer's camels as well as giving him drink. Eliezer then asks her father, Bethuel, and her brother, Laban, for Rebecca's hand, and they agree, but only after Rebecca herself gives her consent.

Eliezer returns to Canaan with Rebecca and her nurse, Deborah. Isaac marries Rebecca, bringing her into Sarah's tent, where he finally finds comfort after his mother's death.

Then Abraham remarries, has many more children, and dies at the age of 175. His sons Isaac and Ishmael bury him beside Sarah in the Cave of Makhpelah. Ishmael also has many children, and he dies at the age of 137.

THE DEATH OF SARAH

OUR DAUGHTERS ASK: Why is this parasha called *Hayei Sarah*, "The Life of Sarah," when it begins with her death?

WILY REBECCA, SARAH'S DAUGHTER-IN-LAW, ANSWERS: Because her death—the first Jewish burial—triggers all the events that follow. At 137, Abraham is "NOW OLD" (24:1). Sarah's death finally ages him. After her burial, Abraham turns his attention to marrying off his heir, Sarah's only son, my husband, Isaac. With that done, Abraham takes his third consort, Keturah, and fathers more children to comfort him in his dotage. And my poor grief-stricken Isaac, liberated at thirty-seven from Sarah's watchful gaze, is finally ready to bring a wife into his mother's tent.

BERURIAH THE SCHOLAR NOTES: This is the only time in the Bible when a woman's age is noted at her death.

OUR BUBBES EXCLAIM: She must have been some *balebuste!*



The Women's Torah Commentary

New Insights from Women Rabbis on the 54 Weekly Torah Portions

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RABBI MICHAL SHEKEL

לְךָ לְךָ

Lech Lecha

What's in a Name?

Adonai's messenger found her by a spring of water in the wilderness, the spring on the way to Shur. He said: "Hagar, Sarai's servant, where have you come from and where are you going?" She said: "I have fled from my mistress Sarai." Adonai's messenger said to her: "Return to your mistress and let yourself be afflicted under her hand." Adonai's messenger said to her: "I will greatly increase your offspring and they will be too many to count." Adonai's messenger said to her: "For you are pregnant and will bear a son whom you shall call Ishmael, for Adonai has heard your affliction. . . ." She called the name of Adonai who had spoken to her "You Are the God Whom I See," for she said: "Do I truly see after being seen?"

(GENESIS 16:7–11, 13)

Parashat Lech Lecha contains within it two journeys, each of which encompasses both a spiritual and physical aspect. The first is the well-known story of Abram leaving his native land to follow God (Gen. 12). The second is subtler, but still powerful. It is the journey undertaken by Sarai's maidservant, Hagar.

In Gen. 16, Sarai, following ancient Near Eastern custom, gives Hagar to Abram in order that he may father a child, with Hagar acting as a surrogate for Sarai. Hagar becomes pregnant, and difficulties develop between Sarai and her maidservant, causing Hagar to flee. While she is in the wilderness, Hagar has an encounter with the Divine, in which she is told to return to Sarai. She is also presented with a name for her child, Ishmael, and is told his fate.

This encounter between Hagar and the Divine is a cause of discomfort in traditional Jewish interpretation. In Gen. 16:7, it is Adonai's messenger who finds Hagar. In the next four verses (16:8–11), Adonai's messenger speaks to Hagar.[1] In verse 13, Hagar names Adonai. This last verse causes much unease. Would God speak directly to a woman, and would she dare reply? According to one midrash, Hagar misinterpreted what she saw. It was a Divine messenger she encountered. God would never "condescend" to speak with a woman.[2]

Yet, Gen. 16:13 reveals the nature of the Divine revelation experienced by Hagar. Every time that God is mentioned in this narrative, God's Divine Hebrew name, YHVH, which is read as Adonai, is used. There is no doubt that it was Adonai's angel, or messenger, who first spoke to her, but at the very end of the chapter she encounters God directly. This pattern is similar to that of Abraham's Divine encounter in chapter 18, when the birth of Isaac is announced. There, three Divine messengers approach Abraham as he sits outside his tent (Gen. 18:1–2). But by the end of the chapter, the messengers have departed and Abraham is standing in God's presence (18:22).

What actually happens to Hagar during this encounter with the Divine? One can discover three occurrences in this *parashah* that mirror Abram's experiences. First, Hagar leaves her home, her personal

lechi lach, "go forth" (fem.). Although it is not specified as such in the text, this parallels Abram's *lech lecha,* "go forth" (masc.). Thus, her leaving is similar to his departure from his home. Second, God makes a *brit,* a covenant, with her, in which she is promised that she will have numerous offspring, just as Abraham receives this same assurance in a more elaborate covenant that appears later in this Torah portion (Gen. 17:19). Third, she is told her son's name, just as Abraham will later be told his other son's name before his birth.

But here the parallel ends; for, most significantly, Hagar gives God a name. Abram has never done this, nor has anyone else. Throughout the early chapters of the Torah, Abram needs signs to substantiate his covenant with God.[3] Hagar is somehow more accepting, more comfortable with God. Hagar accepts her encounter for what it is. She takes the initiative and she names God.

What courage! In these early chapters of the Torah, the act of naming is highly significant. It is both empowering and embracing. The first human being names all the creatures and, in so doing, discovers that there is no fitting mate for it. Adam names his wife, Eve, placing himself in relationship to her. Eve names her children Cain and Seth.[4] God names the children of Sarah and Hagar. God will also rename adult individuals, beginning with Abram and Sarai. From the very beginning, humans name animals and humans name each other. Yet here, for the first and only time in a Divine encounter, a human, a woman, names God.

Hagar names God *el ro'i,* "God Who sees me." This is in response to God's naming her child Yishma'el, which means "God hears." In naming God, Hagar affirms that God sees as well as hears. Here, too, there is a parallel with Abraham. After the *akedah,* the binding of Isaac, Abraham calls the mountain where he offered his son "Adonai sees," personalizing his relationship with God

through the familiar name Adonai. Hagar gives her relationship with the Divine a more formal aspect by using the title *el,* God. They have in common that both affirm God as seeing. Hagar is a woman who has had a spiritual encounter and is strengthened by it to such an extent that she is the first person in the Torah who has the *chutzpah* to endow the Divine with a name.

Consciously or not, Hagar has a sense of the Divine that is evident from the moment she flees Sarai. In her act of running away, Hagar stops by a spring of water and, not surprisingly, this is where she encounters God. Water often acts as a symbol of spiritual belief and strength in the Torah. The matriarchs Rebecca and Rachel are first introduced to us at wells. The children of Israel are strengthened by crossing the Sea of Reeds, and are spiritually weakened whenever there is a lack of water, complaining that they want to return to Egypt. In the later books of the Torah, water is used for spiritual purification. When the prophetess Miriam (whose name contains the word *yam,* "sea") dies, we are told that the people were without water. As the people lose faith and quarrel, Moses, spiritually frustrated, strikes the rock and brings forth water. In Genesis, just six chapters after Hagar's encounter with God, she and Ishmael will be sent out into the wilderness. When her water runs out, she will lose faith and sit down to watch her son die. But her "God of Seeing" will open her eyes and Hagar will find a well.

Hagar has arrived at a place of spiritual focus and renewal. Her encounter with God happens at a well that is henceforth called *Be'er-lehai-ro'i* (Gen. 16:14), commonly translated as the "Well of the Living One Who Sees Me." She has discovered a place of healing. It is at this same location that Isaac will seek comfort after the *akedah* and his mother's death.[5] Furthermore, this well is out of Kadesh. Not far away, between Kadesh and Shur, will be Abraham's

home after the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. Abraham will also find solace here, as do Hagar and Isaac in their respective times of distress. It is at Kadesh that Miriam dies, and here that the children of Israel need to regain their spiritual strength before they can continue their journey (Num. 20).

Hagar is a woman of innate spirituality encompassing a sense of the Divine. Ironically, this can be seen by the omission of Hagar from the most significant part of the Torah portion *Lech Lecha*, the renaming of individuals performed by God. Abram's name is changed to Abraham (taken to mean "father of a multitude") and Sarai's name is changed to Sarah (meaning "princess").[6] Yet, Hagar is left out. Why?

The significance of the name changes is the addition of the Hebrew letter *hey* to both Abram and Sarai's name. This letter is significant because it is part of God's name. Before the name change, Sarai had a *yod* in her name, another Divine letter, with the Hebrew numerical value of ten. The letter *hey* is the Hebrew numerical equivalent of five. In changing Abram and Sarai's names, traditional explanations hold, God has distributed a symbol of the Divine name equally between the two of them. Yet, forgotten in all this is that Hagar also has the Divine letter *hey* in her name. There was no reason to change her name, because she already had a measure of the Divine presence.

Why is this ignored in traditional interpretations of the text? One can read the tradition as saying that Hagar is an outsider, the other, alien to God, by interpreting her name as *Hey ger*, "Adonai is foreign." Yet, all her actions in chapter 16 prove that this is not so. Hagar sets off on a journey and finds a holy place that others will find only later. She is met by Divine messengers, is told she will have a child, and that her offspring will be "too many to count." The

Divine messenger names her child; Hagar reciprocates by naming the Divine. Hagar is no stranger to God; she is comfortable with God's presence in a way that is less formal than God's relationship with Abraham or Sarah. Hers is a more personal relationship with God. This is symbolized by the Divine letter *hey*, which is a part of her name from the moment we first meet her. For surely, Hagar fulfills the destiny of her name, *hey gar*, "Adonai dwells" with her.

WOMEN'S BIBLE COMMENTARY

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editors



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and life in the thornier world to which all of us are consigned.

"The daughters of men" (6:1–4). Women—"the daughters of men"—are also involved in another, briefer creation tale in Gen. 6:1–4 that marks the passage from ideal to reality. Here the women themselves are the fruit attracting the divine "sons of God," members of God's entourage in ancient Israelite tradition. In this story, sexual intercourse rather than eating is the way that the border between God's realm and the realm of human beings is breached. Surely the two actions are symbolic equivalents in a pattern that leads to limits on the quality of human existence, in this case to the length of life allowed mortals (Gen. 6:3). In this brief mythological snippet, as in the fuller tale of Genesis 3, the female is integral to the passage to reality, to the onset of historical time and human culture, the days of the "heroes that were of old, warriors of renown" (6:4).

Women in the genealogies. One of the markers of time in the creation account of Genesis 1–11 is the genealogy. Women are absent from the lists of begetters and begotten in Gen. 4:17–26; 5:1–32; and 10:1–32, with one interesting exception. In 4:19, a descendant of Cain named Lamech takes two wives, Adah and Zillah. The women are each given credit for birthing sons who found groups responsible for one or another aspect of human civilization (e.g., dwelling in tents, raising cattle, playing music, forging instruments of bronze and iron). By giving birth, the women further the march of human culture. One daughter is also mentioned by name, Naamah (4:22). In 4:23 Lamech addresses to his wives what appears to be a war boast about his defeat of an enemy. Why does he address this enigmatic, taunting victory cry to his wives? Does he want to impress them with his prowess? Does he wish to encourage them to compose a woman's victory song of their own for him (see Judges 5; Ex. 15:20–21)?

Unnamed daughters are mentioned along with sons in the list of Gen. 11:10–32. Two women who are important in the genealogy of Israel's ancestors are mentioned by name. Sarai (=Sarah; see 17:15), the wife of Abram (=Abraham; see 17:5), is introduced in 11:29, along with the comment that she was barren. The genealogist of chap. 11 also mentions the name of Abram's brother's wife, Milcah. Her children, and notably her granddaughter Rebekah who will be Isaac's wife, are listed in Gen. 22:20–23.

The Mothers and Fathers of Israel (chaps. 12–50)

Commentaries on Genesis 12–50 generally focus on Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph, ancestral heroes of Israel. Their life stories are built from traditional elements such as the hero's unusual birth, his stormy relationship with his brothers, youthful adventures often including marriage, the constant presence of a divine helper, and the hero's aging and finally his death. Theologically, Genesis 12–50 is treated as the foundation story of the patriarchal religion of Israel. It includes important scenes of covenant making with God, altar building, divine promises of land and descendants, and tests of the patriarchs' faith.

Genesis 12–36 and 38 differ significantly from the Joseph tale in 37, 39–50 in style, setting, and orientation. The former's popular, down-to-earth style contrasts with the latter's more elaborate style. The context of the former is family, flocks, and sojourning in flight from famine. The characters are socially marginal and often confront authorities via trickery and deception. Joseph, on the other hand, sold into slavery by his jealous, scheming brothers, leaves this pastoral world, eventually rising to become the leading bureaucrat of Egypt, a member of the establishment itself. He and his brothers, all sons of Israel, are later reunited in Egypt, setting the stage for the next book in the Bible, Exodus. Often ignored, the patterns of women's lives in Genesis are every bit as interesting and important as those of the men, for the women both reflect and help to create Israel.

The matriarchs (chaps.12–36; 38). *Introduction.* Like the tales of Genesis 1–11, with their recurring patterns of world ordering, the tales of the matriarchs have recurring narrative patterns typical of traditional literature. In Genesis 12–36 and 38, certain motifs mark the life history of the women at the turning points of youth, marriage, and parenthood. The women often appear by wells or springs and are often soon to become wives (Rebekah, Rachel) or mothers (Hagar); they are often barren women soon to become

mothers (Sarah, Rebekah, Rachel). If not barn, the women have other problems associated with sexuality (Dinah, Leah) or fertility (Tamar) that render them marginal unless or until the problem is solved. For those who are to have children, predictions about the birth and lives of their children are received in divinely sent annunciations. Finally, many of the women engage in acts of trickery or deception in order to further the careers of their sons or husbands (Sarah: 12:10–20; Rebekah: chap. 27; Rachel: 31:19, 33–35; Tamar: chap. 38). These recurring motifs or combinations of them tend to emphasize certain themes: (1) the role of the woman as wife and mother in the private rather than the public realm; (2) the frequent position of women intermediaries who link groups of men through marriage alliances; (3) the marginal status of women who are prevented from fulfilling the roles defined for women in Genesis 3 (e.g., the barren women, the raped Dinah, the abandoned Hagar, the childless widow Tamar, and the unloved Leah).

On one level, much of this defining appears to be done from men's perspectives. The tales of marriage, for example, really have to do with relationships between the men, be it Abraham and his kinfolk in Mesopotamia or Jacob and Rebekah's brother Laban, or Abraham and Pharaoh. So in Genesis 34, a tale of would-be marital relations gone awry, the central issue is less the victimization of Dinah, who had been the potential link between the sons of Hamor and the sons of Jacob, than the relationships between the men. These relationships have to do with face-saving, feuding, and vengeance, all causes of warfare in pre-state, decentralized societies. It is also a male point of view that regards woman with her potent sources of "uncleanness" (see Gen. 31:34–35) as a danger, and a male point of view that places her under man's control after eating from the tree in Genesis 3. It is logical to assume that men—male priests and a lengthy scribal tradition—are responsible for incorporating into law and custom notions of what the "proper" place of women is, namely, to be a young virgin in the father's home or a child-producing, sexually faithful wife in her husband's. Thus, all women who do not—or who do not appear to—fulfill these roles fall between the cracks of the social structure. They are either rehabilitated by other laws preserved by men or by the male God's intervention, or they fade away.

On the other hand, the God of Genesis, with whom the important value judgment lies, is partial to marginal people of both genders. On some level that god is the god of the tricksters who use deception to deal with the power establishment, whether the establishment is the elders of one's family or non-Israelites. Although their positions are circumscribed by the men around them, Sarah, Rebekah, Tamar, Rachel, and Leah exercise great power over husbands, father-in-law, and father in situations involving the family, children, and sexuality. It is, moreover, the women who are the critical ancestors for the proper continuation of the Israelites. Isaac must come from Sarah and no other woman. Abraham's seed is not enough to guarantee his status. Similarly, Joseph must be Rachel's son. The blessing and the inheritance go to Jacob, Rebekah's favorite son, not Esau, her husband's. The women's wishes and God's wishes are one in this respect. Finally, a number of the women are portrayed as active tricksters who, like Eve, alter the rules, men's rules. Would not women authors and audiences take special pleasure in Rebekah's fooling her dotty old husband or in Rachel's using men's attitudes to menstruation to deceive her father Laban, or in Tamar's more directly and daringly using her sexuality to obtain sons through Judah? Like Adam, the men in many of the women's stories of Genesis are bumbling, passive, and ineffectual.

Wives at wells and water. The associations in literature between fertility and water are ancient intuitive acknowledgments of our watery origins on earth and in mother, and of the source of life upon which we continue to depend. Four scenes involving water, women, and marriage or childbirth are found in Genesis: 16:7–14; 21:8–21 (Hagar); 24:10–27 (Rebekah); and 29:1–12 (Rachel). In the latter two scenes men from Abraham's kin come to Mesopotamia to seek a wife from among his kin. In Genesis 24, Abraham's senior servant is sent to seek a wife for Abraham's son Isaac. In Gen. 29:1–12, Jacob seeks a wife for himself from his mother's family (see 24:15) after fleeing from the brother whose birthright he has stolen (see below on Rebekah and Genesis 27). The man meets the wife-to-be at the watering hole, is welcomed by her family, and negotiates terms for the marriage. In each case wives are found by wells, but there are important differences. The appearance of Rebekah and her hospitable words are a sign

requested of God by the emissary so that he might recognize the right wife for Abraham's son. God's control is certain and appears in the repetitious language of traditional literature. Rebekah herself is described as a beautiful, untouched young woman quick to serve and nurture and quick to agree to fulfilling her role in the divine plan (24:58). In a thematic echo of Gen. 2:24, Isaac loves her as soon as he sees her, for she is said to be an emotional replacement for his mother, Sarah, who had died (24:67). In Gen. 29:1–12, Jacob meets the woman, his cousin Rachel, at the well and shows his physical strength by rolling the heavy stone from the well and watering his uncle Laban's flock (compare Ex. 2:15–17). Jacob weeps when he greets Rachel, in ritualized behavior typical of kinship reunions in tribal cultures. The woman is acquired in exchange for seven years' work, but her elder and less attractive sister Leah is substituted on the wedding night by their father, Laban, himself a trickster. Jacob ends up with two wives, indentured to his father-in-law for seven more years. Jacob's tale of acquiring a wife is the more humorous of the two, as trickster confronts trickster. In both accounts, however, the emphasis on marriage within the kinship group is very strong. The central issue is relationships between male kin, mediated by the women, who are in effect items of exchange, extremely valuable commodities as precious as the water with which they are associated, but commodities nevertheless.

From a literary perspective, the themes of marriage within the group and of woman as mediator are emphasized, issues that were important to the stories' authors and audiences. Can more be learned, however, from these scenes about real-life social behavior in ancient Israel? It has been suggested that Rebekah's interaction with her family in 24:57–58 indicates that the Israelite woman was asked her permission before marriage agreements were concluded. The story indicates, however, that Rebekah is merely agreeing to leave quickly rather than spend ten days with her family (24:55). No formal law involving the woman's permission appears to be involved here. The mention of a ten-day good-bye period is a reminder that the young woman's family and she might never see one another again. Provision of bride-price certainly seems customary in 24:53 and in 29:18, as it is in countless cultures. Was it customary, as Laban claims in his defense of the substitution of Leah for Rachel, to marry off the elder daughter before the younger, or is he as a trickster good at finding excuses for acts of deception? It has also been suggested that the tale of Jacob gives evidence of matrilocal customs among Israel's ancestors, that is, living with the wife's family. Jacob's living in Laban's household is, however, considered irregular by the tradition as we now have it. Things are put right only when he returns to Israel. What does seem clear from the accounts about Rebekah and Rachel is that marriage within the group is an important means of safeguarding group identity and that cross-cousin marriage, a means of maintaining in-group marriage relations in many traditional cultures, may well have been an actual custom in some period in ancient Israel.

Hagar: Mothering a hero. The story of Hagar leads to a wider discussion of the major themes of this study: the barrenness of the patriarch's wives, the annunciation scenes, and the wives' positions as mother of the patriarch of the next generation. Hagar's status is contingent on that of her mistress, Sarah, the wife of Abraham. Sarah bears no children and gives Hagar, her Egyptian maid, to Abraham as a wife (16:3), hoping she will become a surrogate mother for Sarah (16:2). The custom of having children through another woman (note the expression "that she may bear upon my knees," 30:3) is found also in the tale of barren Rachel. It is probably safe to assume that surrogate motherhood was an actual custom in the ancient Near East (see Speiser and Westermann for nonbiblical parallels) and would have been eminently possible in a world in which slavery was practiced and persons' sexual services could be donated by their masters or mistresses. Surrogate motherhood allowed a barren woman to regularize her status in a world in which children were a woman's status and in which childlessness was regarded as a virtual sign of divine disfavor (see 16:2; 30:1–2; and below also on Genesis 38). Childless wives were humiliated and taunted by co-wives (Gen. 16:4). The tension in the scene between Jacob and Rachel in 30:1–2 is fraught with desperate realism, as she cries, "Give me children, or I shall die!" And he responds bitterly, "Am I in the place of God, who has withheld from you the fruit of the womb?" It is always the woman in this culture who is perceived as the cause of infertility—so Sarah, so Rebekah, so Rachel.

By the same token, virtually no hero worth his salt in Genesis is born under circumstances that are ordinary for his mother. It is the unusual and often initially infertile women who have special births. It is their sons who count in the ongoing tradition. These women mother nations and receive special communications about the child to be born. They often engineer the births, thereby showing considerable power in matters related to fertility and sexuality. Hagar is not a barren woman, but a victim sensing a new power on conceiving Abraham's child. She now finds her mistress "to be of less worth [literally, "lighter-weight"] in her eyes." Sarah knows she has lost status and complains to her husband, who tells her that the maid is hers to do with as she wishes, for this is a woman's world of competition concerning children. It is in this light that we understand the scene involving Jacob and Leah in 30:14–16. One of the sons of Leah, the fertile wife of trickery whom Jacob had never loved, finds some mandrakes, plants that were believed to have the capacity to produce fertility. Rachel, desperate for children, begs Leah for the plants, and she grudgingly agrees, in exchange for a night with their husband Jacob. Upon returning from the fields, Jacob is told by Leah that he is with her that night, having been "hired" with her son's mandrakes. Without a comment he goes to her. He obeys in this world of women, as Abraham defers to Sarah in the matter of Hagar.

Sarah afflicts Hagar, who flees to the wilderness. There by a spring of water God appears to her in the first of the annunciation scenes in Genesis. She is told about the son to be born and, like Abraham, is promised a multitude of descendants and declares that she has seen God. After the son Ishmael ("God will hear") is born, Abraham and Sarah are visited by three men, manifestations of God, who announce that a son will be born to them. Sarah has the nerve to laugh at the unlikely news (18:12), for she and her husband are old and past childbearing. In these scenes the women see God and confront God; they demand and receive some answers. Similarly, when Rebekah, who finally becomes pregnant after her husband petitions God, feels the children moving around violently (literally, "crushing one another") within her, she inquires of God and is told about the feuding twins, Jacob and Esau. She is made the keeper of the information that the elder, Esau, will serve Jacob, the younger, and she actively sets out to fulfill God's prediction (25:21–23).

Hagar receives a second prediction from God about her son Ishmael in a setting of wilderness and water. Sarah sees Ishmael playing with Isaac (21:9) and demands that Abraham banish Hagar and her son. "The son of this slave woman shall not inherit along with my son Isaac" (21:10). Her words shiver with contempt for the upstarts, the upstarts that she herself had created. Abraham greatly disapproves, for his son Ishmael's sake, but again the voice of Sarah, the matriarch, and the voice of God are one. Abraham's wishes in the matter of inheritance are unimportant and misguided, as will be Isaac's once he has sons.

This passage is a difficult one in biblical ethics. Abraham cares not at all about the maid he has bedded, and Sarah is contemptuous of mother and child and would expose them to death. The author works hard to rationalize and justify the emotions and actions of Abraham and Sarah (21:12–13). Yet while reading this story one has the distinct feeling it is being told from Hagar and Ishmael's point of view. One is moved by the portrait of the mother who places the child apart because she cannot bear to watch him die: the weeping mother (21:16) and the divinely protected boy ultimately rescued by God and promised a great future; the blessed child and mother, for whom God opens a well of water in the wilderness so that they might drink and live.

The motif of the exposed, endangered, and delivered child is as common in the stories of great heroes as that of their mothers' unusual, difficult conceptions. Compare Moses' origins (Ex. 2:1–10). The motif occurs also in Greek narratives about Oedipus and about the Persian king Cyrus. Embedded in the Israelite tale of origins is thus another related people's story of its hero's youth, and on some level Abraham and Sarah are its necessary villains. God is the god of those deserted in the wilderness, of those on the fringes, who are usually in the Hebrew Scriptures not Ishmaelites but Israelites, whose tales are those of the tricksters to follow.

Tricksters, Israelites, and women. One of the biblical authors' favorite narrative patterns is that of the trickster. Israelites tend to portray their ancestors and thereby to imagine themselves as underdogs, as people outside the establishment who achieve success in roundabout, irregular ways. One of the ways marginals confront those in power and

achieve their goals is through deception or trickery. The improvement in their status may be only temporary, for to be a trickster is to be of unstable status, to be involved in transformation and change. In Genesis, tricksters are found among Israelites sojourning in foreign lands, among younger sons who would inherit, and among women.

The wife/sister tales (12:10–20; 20:1–18; 26:1–17). Three times in Genesis when the patriarch and his wife are "sojourning"—traveling as resident aliens—in a foreign land the ruler of that country is told that the wife is a sister of the patriarch. In two versions he takes her to be his own woman, and each time the couple is eventually found out. Despite their similarities, the three stories possess quite different nuances and voices. It is assumed in all three versions that a brother has more power to exchange his sister than a husband his wife. The patriarchs are portrayed as assuming that the foreigners would not hesitate to kill a husband in order to get a woman but that they would engage in normal marital exchanges with a brother. The story that makes the most sense in a crass, male-centered way is the version in 12:10–20, where it is clear that Abram has more to gain as the brother of an unattached, protected woman than as the husband of a "used" one.

In Gen. 12:10–20, Sarai and Abram are cotricksters. Abram asks Sarai to participate with him in the deception that she is his sister, praising her beauty and using coaxing language (12:13 begins "Please say you are . . ."; author's translation). She is actually taken as wife by the dupe, Pharaoh, who showers wealth on the supposed brother-in-law. God, who has other plans, interrupts the trickery with a plague, and Pharaoh, now alerted, dismisses the con artists, who nevertheless leave with their newfound goods intact. This is no woman-affirming tale. Sarai is an exchange item to be traded for wealth. She is shown as accepting this role, as are all the women in Genesis. She and Abram play out their roles in a particular social structure, but do so as marginals. Facing famine in their own land, they flee to Egypt, where they have insecure status. There they use deception to improve their situation at the expense of those who have authority over them.

In Genesis 20 and 26 the gender roles are as clearly marked. These tales are again about underdogs but not necessarily about tricksters. In the version in chap. 20 the author apparently worries about the ethics of the situation. He reveals that Sarah *is* Abraham's half sister. As in some ancient Near Eastern dynasties, marriage between half siblings is not taboo. The deception is not really a deception after all. Authority is not duped but respected, for the ruler, Abimelech, never actually has relations with Sarah and is portrayed as morally outraged at the thought of taking another man's wife. Sarah's role is more sedate in this version, as perhaps befits a more aristocratic but still male-oriented tale. Finally, in Genesis 26, the role of the wife Rebekah is even more circumscribed. Isaac, out of fear that the ruler will take Rebekah and kill him, says without consulting her that Rebekah is his sister. But before anything happens Abimelech observes them "sporting" as man and wife and forgoes any interest in the woman. The three stories differ in their concern for piety and propriety. In Genesis 26, God tightly controls the action and protects the patriarch and his wife so that a good story never develops. Neither Isaac nor Rebekah plays an interesting role. In Genesis 20, a morally upright patriarch and equally blameless ruler relate on a somewhat more equal footing, the woman being a passive character. Only Genesis 12 reveals earthy tricksters who use the woman's sexuality as a resource to dupe a monarch. It belongs, in this way, to a fund of comparable male-centered folk literature.

Rebekah the trickster (chap. 27). In Genesis 27, the woman herself is the trickster who formulates the plan and succeeds, moving the men around her like chess pieces. Lest the reader think that here one finally encounters a more liberated woman, beware that again success is gained through the symbolic counterpart of sex—food. Moreover, the status in question is not that of the woman but of her son. Nevertheless, within the confines and assumptions of her male-dominated world, Rebekah is very good at what she does. Indeed, she determines and directs the course of the clan and in doing so is the one who knows and fulfills what God wants.

Genesis 27 begins with a father's intimate words to his eldest and favorite son. Isaac, now blind and elderly, tells Esau that he might die at any time. He asks Esau, the hunter, to catch game and make him the food he loves that he might bless him before his death. Someone has overheard the father's request and his promise. Rebekah, the wife and mother, who had received special information from God that her younger son Jacob, and not Esau, was

IN THE IMAGE OF GOD

A Feminist Commentary on the Torah

Judith S. Antonelli



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Sarah: First Jewess

Lekh Lekha (12:1–17:27)

It is often said that Avraham the patriarch was the first Jew—but Sarah the matriarch was also the first Jew(ess). Although the oral tradition indicates that Avraham understood the concept of monotheism at age three, we are also told that Sarah's capacity for prophecy was greater than Avraham's. The Torah portrays the couple as a team, who left Charan with "all their substance that they had gathered and the souls they had acquired" (Gen. 12:5). Avraham converted many men and Sarah converted many women to the belief in One God. How did their journey begin?

AMATLAI, SOURCE OF TRUTH AND REASON

Nimrod, a descendant of Cham, was king of Babylonia, "the first to amass power in the world" (Gen. 10:8–10). As the king, he was god, and his temple was the Tower of Babel (A.Z. 53b). Nimrod was so named because "he led all the world in rebellion" (*marad*) (Er. 53a). He was a "mighty hunter" and initiated warfare in the world.

Terach—the father of Nachor and Haran by two different wives—was the prince of Nimrod's army. His third wife, Amatlai (B.B. 91a), gave birth to Avram. When the king's astrologer predicted that this child would be greater than Nimrod, the king ordered Avram killed. Terach, however, substituted a servant's child and hid Amatlai and her baby in a cave, bringing them provisions monthly. Avram did not emerge from the cave with his mother until he was ten, when Sarah was born. His understanding of God began at age three (SY 27; GR 64:4), while he was secluded in the cave with his mother.

Her name, אמתלאי, is vocalized as Amatlai by the Jastrow dictionary, which also defines *amatla* as "something tangible; [a] plausible reason for correcting or retracting an evidence." Her name contains the word "truth" *(emet),* which in Hebrew is linguistically related to "mother" *(imah)*. Avram discovered the truth about God from his mother, who taught him reasoning and logic.

When Terach told Avram that his statues had created the world, Amatlai helped her son prove the silliness of idol worship by making food for the gods to "eat" (SY 35). When he saw they could not eat, Avram angrily took a hatchet and broke all but one idol. He put the hatchet in the hand of the remaining statue and told his father that this god had destroyed the others. Walking straight into the trap of Avram's clever logic, Terach responded that the idol was not capable of doing such a deed, so Avram replied, "Then how could it have created the world?"

Terach was so angry that he exposed Avram to Nimrod and falsely accused his own child, Haran, of initiating the baby-substitution plot. Nimrod commanded that both Avram and Haran be thrown into a fiery furnace as punishment. Avram emerged from the furnace unscathed, but Haran did not, for he did not believe in God but rather had made up his mind to follow whoever prevailed, Avram or Nimrod.

Haran was the father of three children—Lot, Milkah, and Sarai. Haran's daughters each married one of his paternal brothers: Milkah married Uncle Nachor and Sarai married Uncle Avram. There is otherwise no background information on Sarai. Are we to believe that she simply followed Avram in his rebellion against idolatry, or did she have her own rebellion in becoming Sarah, the first Jew?

BABYLONIAN PRINCESS-PRIESTESS

> The name of Avram's wife was Sarai. The name of Nachor's wife was Milkah, the daughter of Haran, who was the father of Milkah and the father of Yiskah. Sarai was barren; she had no children. (Gen. 11:29-30)

Sarai and Yiskah are one and the same woman (Rashi; San. 69b; Meg. 14a). She is called Yiskah because "she could see [*sokhah*] the future by *ruach hakodesh*" (divine inspiration). Yiskah also refers to "royalty" *(nesikhut),* and Sarai means "my princess." *Brakhot* 13a notes, "At first she became a princess to her own people, but later she became a princess to all the world."

As Terach's granddaughter and daughter-in-law, Sarai was a part of Babylonian royalty. Moreover, as is true for all ancient pagan societies, Babylonian royalty and priesthood were inextricably linked. Since Sarai was a princess, it is highly likely that she also was a priestess. Her role as a priestess would depend on whether her service was to a goddess or a god.

A priestess who served a goddess lived in "cloister-like buildings attached to temples in Babylon," where she would be "not free to choose her temporary partner, but under obligation not to refuse any man who offers the appointed price."[1] The

1. Briffault, 3:219.

rituals were "universal in Western Asia" and "observed at one time throughout Semitic lands."[2] This role has been called "sacred prostitution"; the female religious prostitute is referred to in the Torah as a *kedeshah* (holy one).

Ritual defloration thus continued after the Flood. "In Babylonia, every woman was under the obligation of proceeding once in her lifetime, most probably before her marriage, to the temple of the great goddess . . . and of waiting there until a stranger threw a piece of money into her lap. . . . She then retired with the stranger to an adjoining house, and surrendered to his embraces."[3] This description by Briffault is taken from the Greek historian Herodotus (5th cent. B.C.E.), who further explained that the woman "goes with the first man who throws [a coin] and rejects none. By having intercourse she has discharged her duty to the goddess and she goes away to her home. . . . Those women who excel in beauty and stature are soon released, but such as are ugly have to wait long before they can comply with the custom, sometimes as much as three or four years."[4]

Such a description clearly reveals the degrading nature of the practice. However, proponents of feminist spirituality have asserted that these pagan sex rites "revered" women and that it was Judaism that lowered women's status in the ancient world.[5]

In Phoenicia (what is now Lebanon), having sex with a stranger before getting married was believed to win the favor of the deity. The Amorites, one of the seven Canaanite nations, had a law that "she who was about to marry should sit in fornication seven days by the gate."[6]

A priestess who served a god, on the other hand, did not participate in this "sacred prostitution." Rather, her service was a "sacred marriage" known as the *hieros gamos*—a seasonal ritual involving a type of sympathetic magic designed to ensure the fertility of the land, in which she would have intercourse with the king, who was considered the representative of the god.

In Babylonia, such a priestess was called a *naditu*.[7] She was usually the oldest daughter from a wealthy, high-status family. Upon marriageable age, she would be dedicated to a god and economic transactions comparable to those of a marriage settlement would be carried out between the girl's family and the temple, which was a rich institution with a vast estate.

Naditus in Sippar who were dedicated to the sun god Shamash lived in a cloister. Often, there were as many as two hundred such women at a time. They were the highest-ranking *naditus*, were recruited from the wealthiest families, and were not allowed to marry. Once initiated (during puberty) with a three-day ceremony, their duties con-

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2. Ibid., 3:214, 220.

3. Ibid., 3:219–220.

4. Harry Carter (trans.), *The Histories of Herodotus*, vol. 1 (New York: Heritage Press, 1958), p. 82.

5. See, for example, Nancy Qualls-Corbett, *The Sacred Prostitute* (Toronto: Inner City Books, 1988). The author is a Jungian analyst who believes that the sacred prostitute can and should be "a vital, functioning aspect of individual psychic processes" (p. 19).

6. Briffault, 3:220.

7. The following information is from Ulla Jeyes, "The Naditu Women of Sippar," in *Images of Women in Antiquity*, ed. Averil Cameron and Amélie Kuhrt (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1983), pp. 260–272.

sisted of constant attention to Shamash and his goddess, Aja—bringing offerings twice daily, plus once a month when the sun changed zodiac signs and on festivals.

Both Aja and the *naditu* were called the *kallatu* of Shamash. Like the Hebrew *kallah,* the word means "bride" or "daughter-in-law" and designated "a young girl who goes to live and be provided for in her father-in-law's house some years before the consummation of her marriage to the son of the house."[8] Thus a girl's dedication to this god was a substitute (patrilocal) marriage. When these cloistered *naditus* died, they were buried in the temple graveyard.

Other *naditus*, such as those dedicated to Marduk in Babylon and Ninurta in Nippur, were not cloistered and could marry as long as they bore no children. If they did bear a child, they were not punished or disgraced. It was, however, common for a married *naditu* to give another woman to her husband for childbearing.

SARAH AS NADITU

Sarah, who was married but childless and gave her female slave to her husband for childbearing, fits the description of a noncloistered Naditu. There is more specific evidence of this in the Code of Hammurabi, the legal code of society, which was named after the sixth of eleven kings in the Old Babylonian dynasty.[9]

Table 3–1 shows that Sarah and Avraham lived in what is called the Old Babylonian Period and that Sarah would have been twelve years old, just entering puberty, when the institution of *naditu* was at its height. Furthermore, the year in which Sarah was taken to Pharaoh's palace in Egypt—2023 A.M. or 1739 B.C.E.—occurs in that period.

The status of a *naditu* is delineated in the Code of Hammurabi in laws numbers 40, 110, 127, 137, 144–147, and 178–182. The most relevant passages for our purposes are 144 through 147, which are completely descriptive of Sarah as a *naditu*, Avraham as her husband, and Hagar as her female slave.

144: If a man is married to a *naditu* who gave him a female slave to bear children in her place, he may not marry a *shugetu* [another kind of priestess].

TABLE 3–1. Events of the Old Babylonian Period

Event	Jewish Year	Common Era
Old Babylonian Period	1882–2212 A.M.	1880–1550 B.C.E.
Avraham	1948–2123 A.M.	1814–1639 B.C.E.
Sarah	1958–2085 A.M.	1804–1677 B.C.E.
Naditu's heyday	1970–2050 A.M.	1792–1712 B.C.E.
Hammurabi	2033–2075 A.M.	1728–1686 B.C.E.

8. Ibid., p. 265.

9. James B. Pritchard, *The Ancient Near East,* vol. 1 (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1958), pp. 138–167.

145: If a man is married to a *naditu* who did not give him a slave for childbearing, he may marry a *shugetu* and bring her into the house, but the *shugetu* has a lower rank than the *naditu*. (Thus, Sarah gave her slave Hagar to Avraham to keep him from marrying a *shugetu*).

146: If a *naditu* gives her slave to her husband for childbearing and the slave becomes arrogant to her mistress after bearing children, the *naditu* may not sell her but may "mark her with the slave-mark and count her among the slaves." (Thus, Sarah had to evict Hagar rather than selling her in the slave market, as was usually done.)

147: A *naditu* can sell the slave if she does not become pregnant.

A *naditu*, unlike the the average woman, could buy and sell property (law no. 40). She was, however, forbidden from opening a wine store and could be burnt at the stake for even entering one (law no. 110).

A man who falsely accused a *naditu*, or any woman, of a sexual indiscretion but had no proof, was "dragged into court and half of his hair . . . cut off" (law no. 127).

The remainder of the laws concern the Naditu's property rights. If a man divorced a *naditu* or a *shugetu* who had borne his child, he had to return the woman's dowry and half of their joint possessions as child support. After the children were grown, the woman would receive the portion of an individual heiress (law no. 137).

Laws numbers 178 through 182 discuss the control that a Naditu's brothers had over her inheritance. If she had a dowry from her father as well as his written permission to control her own inheritance, she did so. If she had a dowry but no written permission, her brothers controlled her inheritance but were required to maintain her at the level to which she was accustomed. If they did not, she could rent out her portion of the land, but she could not sell it.

A *naditu* with no dowry got the use of one-third of her father's estate in this way, but it was owned by her brothers. There are some technical differences in the use of the property by cloistered versus noncloistered *naditus*. A *shugetu*, on the other hand, got no share at all in her father's estate, whether she had a dowry or not. If she had no dowry, her brothers were supposed to give her one and marry her off (183–184).

SARAH'S REBELLION

"Why were the matriarchs barren?" *Genesis Rabbah* 45:5 asks, and then it gives three reasons: that God desired their prayers, that "the greater part of their lives would not be in servitude," and that they would be endeared to their husbands. The first two reasons are easily understandable.

The third reason means "that their husbands might derive pleasure from them, for when a woman is pregnant she is repulsive and ugly." This is pure misogyny and has nothing to do with God. However, it echoes the behavior of the men in the generation of the Flood and provides insight into why the pagan priests did not allow married Naditus to become pregnant—it was so they would always be "desirable," by male standards, for their sex-object role in the ritual.

Sarah, like Zillah, probably had to drink *mashkeh akarot* to keep herself sterile (and hence, thin). Even after she escaped the pagan priestesshood and no longer drank the potion, she remained unable to conceive. Like Zillah, Sarah was "remembered by God" in her old age. We can understand her delight at finally bearing a child at age ninety—no wonder she laughed.

Sarah's struggle in the twenty-first century A.M. may not have been totally unlike women's struggles today, as we enter the twenty-first century C.E. She may have felt sorely oppressed by the sexual objectification and exploitation of women in her society. Today, the sexual slave trade is a purely secular affair, but in her day, it was the "religion"; the pimps were the temple priests and prostitution was called "serving a god/goddess." When women were bought and sold, it was called "dedication" to the temple. Nonetheless, *naditus* were granted more financial independence than the average woman, which no doubt made the role a more attractive alternative to marriage for many women.

For Sarah, the belief in a Creator of the Universe Who was beyond gender and sexual relations must have been a liberating force indeed. While the pagan priests insisted on, and benefited from, her performance of the sexual rites, this new religion would not require her to sleep with men on command. Her service to the God of Israel was not a sexual one. Herein lay her freedom, and her own reason for "*Lekhi lakh.*"

EGYPT AND GERAR: REJECTING THE "SACRED MARRIAGE"

Pharaoh in Egypt (Gen. 12:10–20) and Avimelekh in Gerar (20:1–18) were kings and were considered by their cultures to be representatives of gods. Sarah, as a Naditu, would have been expected to perform the *hieros gamos*, the "sacred marriage" ceremony, with these men. Since this ritual was essentially an annual sympathetic magic intended to fertilize the earth, it would be especially important in times of famine. Given the Torah's repugnance for pagan religion, it is not surprising—indeed, it is normative—that these details are not described.

If Sarah had indeed hated the practice of *hieros gamos*, she would desperately have tried to escape her fate. This she did: with God's help, she acted very powerfully in her own defense. When Sarah went down to Egypt with Avraham, she hid in a box but was discovered by the customs officials, who praised her as being "suitable" for Pharaoh. Although her physical beauty is usually cited as the reason for this, we should note that she was sixty-five years old at the time. Thus, it was not youthful beauty but rather the dignity she commanded with her royal-religious status that was apparent to the officials who claimed her for Pharaoh.

It was customary to bring a woman to the king and slay the husband through a contrived charge, the Rabbis say, so Avraham asked Sarah to pose as his sister. Some commentators say that Avraham was confident that they could get out of Egypt safely before anything happened to Sarah, but Nachmanides reprimands Avraham, as he

considers his behavior to be "a great sin." He considers it a sin that Avraham left Canaan to begin with during the famine, instead of trusting in God. Because he left, the exile to Egypt was decreed for his descendants.

Moreover, it *was* Avraham's idea to go (*Zohar* I:79a). He pleaded with Sarah and persuaded her to go with him, "for a man is not permitted to take his wife with him to another country without her consent."

When Sarah and Avraham later went to Gerar, Avraham did not even ask Sarah to pose as his sister this time but rather asserted the lie "forcibly and against her inclination" (Rashi) because he was sure she would not consent after what happened in Egypt. In both situations, Avraham's moral failing was in *abandoning* Sarah to her fate. Either way, she would have been taken for sexual purposes by these rulers, but Avraham had the choice to either suffer along with his wife or escape while she suffered alone. He chose the latter course.

In Egypt, Pharaoh lavished Avraham with gifts *before* the truth was told (Gen. 12:16). The Rabbis learn from this (B.M. 59a) that "a man must always observe the honor due to his wife, because blessings rest on his home only on account of her. . . . Honor your wives, that you may be enriched." In Gerar, Avraham only benefited materially *after* the truth was told (20:14).

SARAH'S VINDICATION

In both cases, the royal households were struck with plagues *al devar* ("by the word of") Sarah. The *Zohar* says: "The Shekhinah did not leave Sarai all that night. When Pharaoh tried to approach her, an angel came and struck him. Whenever Sarai said, 'Strike,' it would strike." Moreover, "she, as it were, gave out the order and the Holy One administered the blows" (I:82a, 111b–112a). The Midrash and Rashi also describe this.

The Midrash, saying Pharaoh was struck with a plague because he "took possession of Sarah for one night" (GR 41:1), notes that even the beams of his house were struck "because he dared to approach the shoe of such a lady" (41:2).

Avimelekh did not touch Sarah because God came to him in a dream and warned him that he would die if he did. Even so, his house was plagued with a disease that closed up all the orifices of people's bodies—wombs, excretory channels, mouths, throats, eyes, and ears—"because he dared to approach the shoe of such a lady" (GR 52:13).

In both households, the same interaction between Sarah and God is described (GR 41:2, 52:13): "All night Sarah lay prostrate on her face, crying, 'Sovereign of the Universe! Avraham went forth [from his land] on Your assurance, and I went forth on faith; Avraham is outside this prison while I am within!' Said the Holy One to her, 'All that I do, I do for your sake, and all will say, It is by the word of Sarah, Avraham's wife.'"

While this informs us that God spoke only to Avraham about leaving Babylonia—and Sarah left on faith from her husband's encounter with God—there is no reason to assume from this that Hashem is more the "God of Avraham" than the "God of

Sarah." Here, in the palaces of Pharaoh and Avimelekh, *she* cried out and God *immediately* responded, speaking to her and acting on her behalf and at her command.

Upon departing from Gerar, Avimelekh gave Avraham a thousand pieces of silver and said to Sarah, "Let it be *kesut enayim* for you and all who are with you—*nokhachat*" (Gen. 20:16).

Kesut enayim, a "covering of the eyes," indicates some form of compensation, or even vindication, for what Sarah went through. It connotes a face-saving device so that people would not look at her as if she had done something wrong. *Nokhachat* means, in modern Hebrew, to be convinced, straightforward, honest, facing, in front of, opposite, or present. Various translations of the Torah render it as "you can stand up tall" (Kaplan), "you may face everyone" (Silbermann), "you are cleared before everyone" (Jewish Publication Society), "you can come before everyone without disguise" (Hirsch), and "before all men are you righted" (Hertz). The Jerusalem Bible badly mistranslates it as "thus she was reproved."

Rashi explains:

> These will put a covering over the eyes of all who are with you so that they shall not hold you in light esteem. But had I sent you back empty-handed, they might have said, "After he abused her he sent her back"; now, however, that I have had to lavish money and to mollify you they will understand that I have sent you back against my own will by a miracle. . . . You will have an opening of the mouth [an opportunity] to defend yourself and to point to these evident facts.

In other words, just as today's victims of rape and sexual abuse are often blamed for "provoking" the deed, so, too, would Sarah's society have blamed her, thus making her easy prey for repeat abuse scenarios. The "covering of the eyes" therefore protected her both from people's reproachful looks in general and from men's lewd gazes in particular.

A number of other interpretations are given for the *kesut enayim,* including the ideas that it was a special garment or a curse that was later fulfilled by Isaac having dim vision (GR 52:12; Meg. 28a; B.K. 93a).

HAGAR

Pharaoh gave his daughter Hagar to Sarah as a *shifchah,* a female slave, in response to what God did on Sarah's behalf in his palace. Avimelekh did the same thing (GR 45:1). Both kings believed it was better for their daughters to be slaves in Sarah's household than mistresses in their own. Most likely, the women were born to each king's concubine rather than his wife, the queen. Hagar's story is told (Gen. 16:1–16, 21:1–21), but the story of the daughter of Avimelekh is not.

Avraham took Hagar when Sarah suggested it, because he "listened to [her] voice" (Gen. 16:2), meaning her *ruach hakodesh* (Rashi; GR 45:2). By giving him her female slave, Sarah prevented Avraham from bringing another pagan priestess (a *shugetu*) into her household. Moreover, by offering Hagar, she maintained control of the situ-

ation. Sarah persuaded Hagar, saying, "Happy are you to be united to such a holy man" (GR 45:3).

Sarah intended that Avraham take Hagar *as a wife, and not a concubine* (Gen. 16:3; GR 45:3). "This reflects the ethical conduct of Sarah and her respect towards her husband," Nachmanides says. It also reflects her ethical conduct and respect for the other woman. Avraham was obligated to support Hagar, and henceforth neither he nor Sarah could sell her in the slave market (GR 45:1). Hagar's status was raised from a *shifchah*—a slave or bondwoman, who was bound to unpaid service in repayment of a debt (in this case, Pharaoh's debt to Sarah)—to an *amah*, a maidservant. Hagar was freed from slavery, but she was still secondary to Sarah.

Hagar's situation should not be compared to modern "surrogate motherhood," in which a woman's womb is "rented" by a male sperm donor, who (with his wife) then takes the child. Hagar had an ongoing relationship with Avraham, and *she raised Ishmael*—she remained his mother and he, her son.

When Hagar became arrogant with Sarah and equated her barrenness to a lack of righteousness, Sarah became angry but did not cast her out as the Code of Hammurabi permitted. First she confronted Avraham: "When you prayed to the Holy One [for children], you prayed only on behalf of yourself [Gen. 15:2], whereas you should have prayed on behalf of both of us" (Rashi; GR 45:5). "Besides this, you deprive me of your words, since you hear how I am despised and yet you keep silent!"

Once again, Avraham took the easier way out. Why did the man who would later plead on behalf of the corrupt Sodomites not speak up in defense of his wife? This is the first instance in the Torah where a person is rebuked for remaining silent in the face of injustice. Avraham's lack of prayer on Sarah's behalf is equally amazing in light of the fact that he prayed for other barren women, who then conceived (GR 39:11).

However, when Sarah said to him, "Let God judge between me and you!" (Gen. 16:5), the Rabbis state: "Woe to the one who cries [for divine intervention], even more than the one against whom it is invoked! . . . Both the one who cries for divine intervention and the one against whom it is invoked come under the threat, but punishment is meted out first to the one who cries, more severely than for the one against whom justice is invoked" (B.K. 93a). "Sarah should have reached Avraham's age [at death, 175], but because she said, 'Let God judge between me and you,' her life was reduced by 48 years" (GR 45:5). "Whoever plunges eagerly into litigation does not escape from it unscathed."

However, Rashi interprets the "you" whom God should judge to refer to Hagar, saying that Sarah "cast the evil eye on Hagar so that she miscarried" her first pregnancy and only later got pregnant with Ishmael.

Avraham did nothing except tell Sarah to do whatever she wished with Hagar (Gen. 16:6). Was Avraham wrongly passive—or was Sarah right and did he once again "listen to her voice" as a husband should? Sarah began to oppress Hagar, restraining her from sexual relations, making her carry water buckets and bath towels, and even slapping her with a slipper (GR 45:6). However, when Hagar ran away, an angel told her to return and submit to Sarah. This implies that Sarah's anger, if not her behavior, was legitimate. Nachmanides, however, believes that Sarah and Avraham were both wrong.

Hagar was met by four or five angels when she ran away—more than appeared to anyone else in the Torah at one time—but she was not afraid because the members of Avraham and Sarah's household "were seers, so she was accustomed to them" (GR 45:7). Since contact with angels in itself is not prophecy, Hagar is not listed among the female prophets. She did, however, give Hashem the Name, "God of Vision" (Gen. 16:13).

When Sarah later casts Hagar out, it is because Ishmael *metzachek* (mocks or makes sport of) Isaac. Ishmael, who was nineteen years old, was shooting arrows at Isaac, who was five (SY 69). Ishmael also "was indulging in idolatrous practices. . . . [Sarah] observed him worshipping idols, and performing the practices which his mother had taught him" (*Zohar* I:118b). Ishmael brought idols in from the street, playing with and worshiping them (ER 1:1). Besides building altars and catching locusts and sacrificing them, Ishmael also committed rape and adultery, which Sarah knew about (GR 53:11).

There is reason to presume a sexual connotation with Isaac as well. The verb *letzachek* is used to describe (1) what Isaac was doing with Rivkah that made Avimelekh realize they were not brother and sister; (2) what Mrs. Potiphar said Joseph was doing at her house; and (3) what occurred at the feast of the golden calf when the people rose up to "make merry." Thus, it could imply that Ishmael was sexually abusing Isaac.

Ishmael claimed a double portion of the inheritance as the firstborn (Rashi), to which Sarah replied, "The son of this maidservant shall not inherit with my son Isaac" (Gen. 21:10). Once again, Sarah's behavior was validated by divine decree. Avraham did not want to send Ishmael away, but God instructed him, "All that Sarah says to you, listen to her voice" (Gen. 21:12).

ISHMAEL'S WIVES

In Egypt Hagar found Ishmael a wife (Gen. 21:21), whose name was Merivah (SY 70). She had four sons and two daughters, one of whom was Basmat, the wife of Esav. One day, Avraham went to visit Ishmael, but his son was not home and Merivah did not welcome him or offer him a drink. He also heard her whipping and cursing her children inside the tent.

Consequently, Ishmael divorced Merivah and married a Canaanite woman named Malkhit (SY 86). The next time Avraham went to visit and Ishmael was not home, Malkhit welcomed him and gave him food and drink, exhibiting the level of hospitality for which Avraham himself was so greatly known.

THE COVENANT

When God made a covenant with Avram (Gen. 17), promising him descendants, fruitfulness, and the land of Canaan, God also demanded a change of names. Avram

became Avraham and Sarai became Sarah. That is, the letter *Yod* (with a numerical value of ten) was taken from Sarai's name and split into two *Heh*s (each of which has a numerical value of five), one for her and one for him.

"Her husband was crowned through her, but she was not crowned through her husband," says GR 47:1. Sarah was "her husband's ruler," the Rabbis agree. The letter *Yod* was "upset" at being "withdrawn from the name of that righteous woman," so God had to promise the *Yod* to use it later, in Joshua's name.

The covenant, God emphasized, must come through Sarah. It is *her* firstborn, not Avraham's, who will carry it on.

SARAH'S LAUGHTER

> Avraham fell on his face and laughed. He said to himself, "Can a hundred-year-old man have children? Can Sarah, who is 90, give birth?" . . . Sarah no longer had female periods. She laughed in herself, saying, "Now that I have reached menopause, shall I be rejuvenated? And my husband is old!" . . . God said to Avraham, "Why did Sarah laugh and say, 'How can I have a child when I am so old?' Is anything too difficult for Hashem?" . . . Sarah was afraid and denied it, saying, "I did not laugh." God said, "You did laugh." (Gen. 17:17, 18:11–15)

How considerate it was of God to cater to Avraham's male ego by omitting what Sarah said about *him* being old! Why was it all right for Avraham to laugh, but not Sarah? There are two factors that appear to make Sarah's laugh *more* excusable, and not less.

1. A leap of faith was required of Sarah that was not required of Avraham. Since a man can beget children in old age while a woman cannot do so after menopause, a miracle was necessary in Sarah's body, but not in Avraham's.
2. Avraham heard the news directly from God, but Sarah heard it from three men, who she did not know were divine messengers.

Rashi explains that Avraham's laughter was rejoicing; Sarah's was more like a sneer. The verses themselves indicate that Avraham laughed out loud, while Sarah laughed inwardly. He acted happy, while she remained silent, showing no expression whatsoever of praise, thanksgiving, or joy.

In Judaism, the greater a person is, the more responsible he or she is for acting properly. A scholar is held much more accountable for a minor transgression than the average person. (This is the opposite of the secular world, where the higher up you are, the more you are allowed to get away with.)

Hence, it is precisely because Sarah's situation required *more* faith that she was held *more* accountable. Because she was a greater prophet than Avraham, she should have known better than he.

On the day that Sarah conceived (which was Rosh Hashanah), "many barren women were remembered, many sick were healed, many prayers were answered with

hers, and there was great rejoicing in the world" (Rashi). The deaf regained their hearing, the blind regained their sight, and the insane regained their sanity. Even the sun and moon shined brighter on this day (GR 53:8).

Nonetheless, people derided Sarah, saying she had found Isaac on the street. As a result, when women brought their babies to Isaac's weaning banquet, Sarah's "breasts opened like two fountains and she suckled them all" (B.M. 87a). Because people continued to gossip, saying Avimelekh was the father, God made Isaac's features just like Avraham's.

THE BINDING OF ISAAC AND SARAH'S DEATH

When God told Avraham to sacrifice Isaac, Avraham agonized over what to tell Sarah and made up a lame excuse that Isaac should go away to study at the academy of Shem and Ever. Sarah agreed but wept at her separation from Isaac, saying, "I have no other son or daughter but him" (SY 76).

When Sarah heard that Isaac had been taken to be sacrificed, she died of shock. "Her soul flew from her," says Rashi. According to this view, she never learned that her son was still alive. Another version, however, says that Isaac returned home and Sarah asked him where he had been. When he told her what happened, Sarah screamed six times—which is why there are six *tekiahs* when the *shofar* is blown on Rosh Hashanah—and then died (LR 20:2). (It is hard to decide which version is sadder.) She died in *Cheshvan* (Est.R. 7:11).

Sarah's death at age 127 and her burial are recorded in great detail (Gen. 23), more so than for any other woman in the Torah. She was, in fact, buried like a queen (SY 83). "All this was to show that the likes of Sarah were not to be found among all the women of the world. . . . Sarah's death was not brought about by the tortuous serpent, which possessed no power over her as over the rest of humanity" (*Zohar* I: 124b, 125a).

Sarah lies buried in the Cave of Machpelah in Israel with Avraham, where "he lies sleeping in the arms of Sarah, [while] she is looking fondly at his head" (B.B. 58a).

Unit 7 Paper *Midrash*

The Central Concept of the Lesson

This lesson will utilize Jo Milgrom's workshop in visual theology paper *Midrash.* Participants will be taught how to express their personal *midrash* of a text through the language of symbols.

Goal: Participants will be able to personally experience the Biblical story through the creation of a personal collage.

Objectives:

1. Participants will be able to summarize the story of The *Akedah.*
2. Participants will be expressing through collage their personal experience of The *Akedah.*
3. Participants will be able to summarize some of the *Midrashic* stories concerning The *Akedah.*
4. Participants will be exposed to works of art by artists who through the centuries depicted their visions of The *Akedah.*

Texts:

Genesis 22:1-19
Midrash Rabbah: Genesis
Handmade Midrash
Pictures of The *Akedah*

Materials

Colored Construction paper
Glue

I. Paper *Midrash*

A. Description

1. It is a visual theology, namely through the language of visual images and lines one can access direct perception which is a different kind of seeing. This type of seeing is essential to the creative process and thinking.
2. "The goal of the handmade *midrash* exercises is to awaken and nourish each individual's capacity for the creation of *midrash* by introducing to the study of Bible and religion a visual language that is parallel but antecedent to the language of words."[1]
3. Participants utilize simple art activities such as tearing paper, working with clay or drawing with a pencil to explain the Biblical text.
4. "The goal is to help the interfering ego stand aside and allow fragments of fantasy to emerge into the consciousness. Natural inhibitions are disarmed by the utter simplicity of the task, the absence of expectations, and the honoring of ordinary materials of daily living."[2]

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[1] Jo Milgrom, *Handmade Midrash: Workshops in Visual Theology*, (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society, 1992), p. 3.

[2] Ibid., p. 6.

5. Participants will be speaking through the language of symbols as they produce these very simple, childlike forms.
6. "They always mean something, irrespective of aesthetics or value judgments. These drawings, sculptures, or collages cannot be wrong, bad, or ugly."[3]
7. Participants will learn to recognize that Biblical events and phenomena occur at many levels of meaning.
8. Through symbolic thinking, participants will discover that new meanings of the Biblical text will appear. Hidden forms, meanings, and feelings may surface.
9. Archetypal motifs may emerge from the text.
10. "This method incorporates strategies in creative thinking and problem solving that are related to the search for meaning via a religious tradition. It affirms that people can effect change in their lives, for the whole point of seeing something differently is to do something about it."[4]
11. The process of creating handmade *midrash* removes the participant from the process of logical thinking and sequential time by drawing on their imagination to relate to a Biblical text with images that appear in their mind's eye. This may occur even before they actually can verbalize what they have seen.
12. "Defining the Biblical concepts (the familiar) through creative metaphor (the strange) is the raw material of *midrash.*"[5]

B. The Procedure - The workshop takes approximately 3 hours and consists of the following components:
   1. Biblical text study which will include *midrashic* texts.
   2. Slides or pictures relating the texts to matters of art history.
   3. Hands-on creative art (handmade *Midrash*). This takes about 20 minutes.
      a) The forms may be figurative, geometric, abstract, or amorphous blobs.
      b) The only thing that matters is the meaning that the person attaches to them.
      c) They can be two dimensional or three dimensional (a sculpture).
   4. Small group discussion.
      a) Once the artwork has been created participants form small groups of 2-6 people.
      b) Have participants describe to you what they see in the piece that you have created.
      c) Participants describe to each other what they have created and what it means to them.
      d) They explain what was the easiest form or more difficult to make and why.

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[3] Ibid., p. 7.
[4] Ibid., p. 8.
[5] Ibid., p. 10.

e) Discuss the role of color.
f) Discuss the size, movement, proportion of the piece.
g) Discuss how the parts relate to each other.

5. Writing a synthesis[6]
   a) Free-associate allowing strange images and thoughts to surface and be expressed.
   b) Depolarize by bringing opposites together. Bridge a gap between two things that may seem different but, from a different point of view, may be closely related. An example of this is hate and love and how they are closely related rather than being opposite.
   c) Find correspondences between what is happening in the picture and in inner feelings and thoughts.
   d) Look for a balance of feeling, form, and concept. Does one figure dominate or emerge from the background? Does the total configuration obscure the parts? Can the whole be seen through a part thus deriving a universal concept from the particular? The bottom line is the personal application.
6. Participants are encouraged to repeat the writing experience at home a few days after the class as there tends to be more that emerges after its original process.

II. Read *Genesis* 22:1-19

A. Have participants take turns reading the text.
B. Discuss the text.
C. Then have participants take turns reading some of the *midrashim* from *Genesis Rabbah.*
D. Discuss these *midrashim* and how they relate to the text.

III. Handmade *Midrash*

A. Invite participants to choose three or fours sheets of colored construction paper.
B. Instruct participants to tear five forms: Abraham, Isaac, the ram, the altar, and the Divine Presence.
   1. They may arrange them as they please.
   2. One of the papers may serve as the background or the collage can be sculptural.
   3. The work is to be done quietly without conversation.
C. Classical or New Age music may be played in the background.
D. Participants are urged to play with the forms and not to think of the exercise as an aesthetic or moral trial.[7]
E. Participants may add a sixth form if they desire.

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[6] Ibid., p. 11.
[7] Ibid., p. 121.

IV. Dialogue with other participants

A. Participants break up into small groups.
B. They are asked to confront the following question: Where am I in my *Akedah*?
C. They should focus also on the questions found in the section which describes the group experience.

V. Writing a synthesis

A. Participants write in accordance with the questions found in the above writing section.
B. They are asked to confront the following question: Where am I in my *Akedah*?

VI. Second writing exercise

A. As discussed above, encourage participants to redo the writing exercise a number of days after the workshop.

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29and Abimelech said to Abraham, "What mean these seven ewes which you have set apart?" 30He replied, "You are to accept these seven ewes from me as proof that I dug this well." 31Hence that place was called Beer-sheba,[c] for there the two of them swore an oath. 32When they had concluded the pact at Beer-sheba, Abimelech and Phicol, chief of his troops, departed and returned to the land of the Philistines. 33[Abraham] planted a tamarisk at Beer-sheba, and invoked there the name of the LORD, the Everlasting God. 34And Abraham resided in the land of the Philistines a long time.

29 וַיֹּאמֶר אֲבִימֶלֶךְ אֶל־אַבְרָהָם מָה הֵנָּה
שֶׁבַע כְּבָשֹׂת הָאֵלֶּה אֲשֶׁר הִצַּבְתָּ לְבַדָּנָה׃
30 וַיֹּאמֶר כִּי אֶת־שֶׁבַע כְּבָשֹׂת תִּקַּח מִיָּדִי
בַּעֲבוּר תִּהְיֶה־לִּי לְעֵדָה כִּי חָפַרְתִּי אֶת־
הַבְּאֵר הַזֹּאת׃ 31 עַל־כֵּן קָרָא לַמָּקוֹם
הַהוּא בְּאֵר שָׁבַע כִּי שָׁם נִשְׁבְּעוּ שְׁנֵיהֶם׃
32 וַיִּכְרְתוּ בְרִית בִּבְאֵר שָׁבַע וַיָּקָם
אֲבִימֶלֶךְ וּפִיכֹל שַׂר־צְבָאוֹ וַיָּשֻׁבוּ אֶל־
אֶרֶץ פְּלִשְׁתִּים׃ 33 וַיִּטַּע אֶשֶׁל בִּבְאֵר
שָׁבַע וַיִּקְרָא־שָׁם בְּשֵׁם יְהוָה אֵל עוֹלָם׃
34 וַיָּגָר אַבְרָהָם בְּאֶרֶץ פְּלִשְׁתִּים יָמִים
רַבִּים׃ פ

22 Some time afterward, God put Abraham to the test. He said to him, "Abraham," and he answered, "Here I am." 2And He said, "Take your son, your favored one, Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the heights that I will point out to you." 3So early next morning, Abraham saddled his ass and took with him two of his servants and his son Isaac. He split the wood for the burnt offering, and he set out for the place of which God had told him. 4On the third day Abraham looked up and saw the place from afar. 5Then Abraham said to his servants, "You stay here with the ass. The boy and I will go up there; we will worship and we will return to you."

6Abraham took the wood for the burnt offering and put it on his son Isaac. He himself took the firestone[a] and the knife; and the two walked off together. 7Then Isaac said to his father Abraham, "Father!" And he answered, "Yes, my son." And he said, "Here are the firestone and the wood; but where is the sheep for the burnt offering?" 8And Abraham said,

כב וַיְהִי אַחַר הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה
וְהָאֱלֹהִים נִסָּה אֶת־אַבְרָהָם וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלָיו
אַבְרָהָם וַיֹּאמֶר הִנֵּנִי׃ 2 וַיֹּאמֶר קַח־נָא
אֶת־בִּנְךָ אֶת־יְחִידְךָ אֲשֶׁר־אָהַבְתָּ אֶת־
יִצְחָק וְלֶךְ־לְךָ אֶל־אֶרֶץ הַמֹּרִיָּה וְהַעֲלֵהוּ
שָׁם לְעֹלָה עַל אַחַד הֶהָרִים אֲשֶׁר אֹמַר
אֵלֶיךָ׃ 3 וַיַּשְׁכֵּם אַבְרָהָם בַּבֹּקֶר וַיַּחֲבֹשׁ
אֶת־חֲמֹרוֹ וַיִּקַּח אֶת־שְׁנֵי נְעָרָיו אִתּוֹ וְאֶת
יִצְחָק בְּנוֹ וַיְבַקַּע עֲצֵי עֹלָה וַיָּקָם וַיֵּלֶךְ
אֶל־הַמָּקוֹם אֲשֶׁר־אָמַר־לוֹ הָאֱלֹהִים׃
4 בַּיּוֹם הַשְּׁלִישִׁי וַיִּשָּׂא אַבְרָהָם אֶת־עֵינָיו
וַיַּרְא אֶת־הַמָּקוֹם מֵרָחֹק׃ 5 וַיֹּאמֶר
אַבְרָהָם אֶל־נְעָרָיו שְׁבוּ־לָכֶם פֹּה עִם־
הַחֲמוֹר וַאֲנִי וְהַנַּעַר נֵלְכָה עַד־כֹּה
וְנִשְׁתַּחֲוֶה וְנָשׁוּבָה אֲלֵיכֶם׃
6 וַיִּקַּח אַבְרָהָם אֶת־עֲצֵי הָעֹלָה וַיָּשֶׂם
עַל־יִצְחָק בְּנוֹ וַיִּקַּח בְּיָדוֹ אֶת־הָאֵשׁ וְאֶת־
הַמַּאֲכֶלֶת וַיֵּלְכוּ שְׁנֵיהֶם יַחְדָּו׃ 7 וַיֹּאמֶר
יִצְחָק אֶל־אַבְרָהָם אָבִיו וַיֹּאמֶר אָבִי
וַיֹּאמֶר הִנֵּנִי בְנִי וַיֹּאמֶר הִנֵּה הָאֵשׁ
וְהָעֵצִים וְאַיֵּה הַשֶּׂה לְעֹלָה׃ 8 וַיֹּאמֶר

c *I.e., "well of seven" or "well of oath."*

a *Lit. "fire."*

"God will see to the sheep for His burnt offering, my son." And the two of them walked on together.

9They arrived at the place of which God had told him. Abraham built an altar there; he laid out the wood; he bound his son Isaac; he laid him on the altar, on top of the wood. 10And Abraham picked up the knife to slay his son. 11Then an angel of the LORD called to him from heaven: "Abraham! Abraham!" And he answered, "Here I am." 12And he said, "Do not raise your hand against the boy, or do anything to him. For now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your favored one, from Me." 13When Abraham looked up, his eye fell upon a[b] ram, caught in the thicket by its horns. So Abraham went and took the ram and offered it up as a burnt offering in place of his son. 14And Abraham named that site Adonai-yireh,[c] whence the present saying, "On the mount of the LORD there is vision."[d]

15The angel of the LORD called to Abraham a second time from heaven, 16and said, "By Myself I swear, the LORD declares: Because you have done this and have not withheld your son, your favored one, 17I will bestow My blessing upon you and make your descendants as numerous as the stars of heaven and the sands on the seashore; and your descendants shall seize the gates of their foes. 18All the nations of the earth shall bless themselves by your descendants, because you have obeyed My command." 19Abraham then returned to his servants, and they departed together for Beer-sheba; and Abraham stayed in Beer-sheba.

20Some time later, Abraham was told, "Milcah too has borne children to your brother Nahor: 21Uz the first-born, and Buz his brother,

אַבְרָהָם אֱלֹהִים יִרְאֶה־לּוֹ הַשֶּׂה לְעֹלָה
בְּנִי וַיֵּלְכוּ שְׁנֵיהֶם יַחְדָּו׃
9 וַיָּבֹאוּ אֶל־הַמָּקוֹם אֲשֶׁר אָמַר־לוֹ
הָאֱלֹהִים וַיִּבֶן שָׁם אַבְרָהָם אֶת־הַמִּזְבֵּחַ
וַיַּעֲרֹךְ אֶת־הָעֵצִים וַיַּעֲקֹד אֶת־יִצְחָק בְּנוֹ
וַיָּשֶׂם אֹתוֹ עַל־הַמִּזְבֵּחַ מִמַּעַל לָעֵצִים׃
10 וַיִּשְׁלַח אַבְרָהָם אֶת־יָדוֹ וַיִּקַּח אֶת־
הַמַּאֲכֶלֶת לִשְׁחֹט אֶת־בְּנוֹ׃ 11 וַיִּקְרָא אֵלָיו
מַלְאַךְ יְהוָה מִן־הַשָּׁמַיִם וַיֹּאמֶר אַבְרָהָם |
אַבְרָהָם וַיֹּאמֶר הִנֵּנִי׃ 12 וַיֹּאמֶר אַל־
תִּשְׁלַח יָדְךָ אֶל־הַנַּעַר וְאַל־תַּעַשׂ לוֹ
מְאוּמָה כִּי | עַתָּה יָדַעְתִּי כִּי־יְרֵא אֱלֹהִים
אַתָּה וְלֹא חָשַׂכְתָּ אֶת־בִּנְךָ אֶת־יְחִידְךָ
מִמֶּנִּי׃ 13 וַיִּשָּׂא אַבְרָהָם אֶת־עֵינָיו וַיַּרְא
וְהִנֵּה־אַיִל אַחַר נֶאֱחַז בַּסְּבַךְ בְּקַרְנָיו וַיֵּלֶךְ
אַבְרָהָם וַיִּקַּח אֶת־הָאַיִל וַיַּעֲלֵהוּ לְעֹלָה
תַּחַת בְּנוֹ׃ 14 וַיִּקְרָא אַבְרָהָם שֵׁם־הַמָּקוֹם
הַהוּא יְהוָה | יִרְאֶה אֲשֶׁר יֵאָמֵר הַיּוֹם
בְּהַר יְהוָה יֵרָאֶה׃
15 וַיִּקְרָא מַלְאַךְ יְהוָה אֶל־אַבְרָהָם שֵׁנִית
מִן־הַשָּׁמָיִם׃ 16 וַיֹּאמֶר בִּי נִשְׁבַּעְתִּי נְאֻם־
יְהוָה כִּי יַעַן אֲשֶׁר עָשִׂיתָ אֶת־הַדָּבָר הַזֶּה
וְלֹא חָשַׂכְתָּ אֶת־בִּנְךָ אֶת־יְחִידֶךָ׃ 17 כִּי־
בָרֵךְ אֲבָרֶכְךָ וְהַרְבָּה אַרְבֶּה אֶת־זַרְעֲךָ
כְּכוֹכְבֵי הַשָּׁמַיִם וְכַחוֹל אֲשֶׁר עַל־שְׂפַת
הַיָּם וְיִרַשׁ זַרְעֲךָ אֵת שַׁעַר אֹיְבָיו׃
18 וְהִתְבָּרְכוּ בְזַרְעֲךָ כֹּל גּוֹיֵי הָאָרֶץ עֵקֶב
אֲשֶׁר שָׁמַעְתָּ בְּקֹלִי׃ 19 וַיָּשָׁב אַבְרָהָם
אֶל־נְעָרָיו וַיָּקֻמוּ וַיֵּלְכוּ יַחְדָּו אֶל־בְּאֵר
שָׁבַע וַיֵּשֶׁב אַבְרָהָם בִּבְאֵר שָׁבַע׃ פ

20 וַיְהִי אַחֲרֵי הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה וַיֻּגַּד
לְאַבְרָהָם לֵאמֹר הִנֵּה יָלְדָה מִלְכָּה גַּם־
הִוא בָּנִים לְנָחוֹר אָחִיךָ׃ 21 אֶת־עוּץ בְּכֹרוֹ

b *Reading* 'eḥad *with many Heb. mss. and ancient versions; text* 'aḥar *"after."*
c *I.e., "the Lord will see"; cf. v. 8.*
d *Heb.* Behar Adonai yera'eh.

Midrash Rabbah: Genesis, Translated by. H. Freedman and M. Simon, London, England: Soncino Press, 1939.

Midrash Rabbah - Genesis LV:1

AND IT CAME TO PASS AFTER THESE THINGS, THAT GOD DID PROVE (NISSAH) ABRAHAM (XXI, 1). It is written, Thou hast given a banner (nes) to them that fear Thee, that it may be displayed (le-hithnoses) because of the truth. Selah (Ps. LX, 6): this means, trial upon trial, greatness after greatness, in order to try them in the world and exalt them in the world like a ship's ensign [flying aloft].1 And what is its purpose? 'Because of the truth. Selah': in order that the equity of God's justice may be verified in the world. Thus, if one says, ' Whom He wishes to enrich, He enriches; to impoverish, He impoverishes; whom He desires, He makes a king2; when He wished, He made Abraham wealthy, and when He wished He made him a king,' then you can answer him and say, ' Can you do what Abraham did? ' Abraham was a hundred years old, when his son Isaac was born unto him (Gen. XXI, 5); yet after all this pain3 it was said to him, TAKE NOW THY SON, THINE ONLY SON (XXII,2), yet he did not refuse. Hence, ' Thou hast given a banner to them that fear Thee, that it may be displayed'; so it is written, THAT GOD DID PROVE ABRAHAM.

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(1) Nes and le-hithnoses are connected with nissah, to prove or try, and with the idea of exaltation, from nes, an ensign flying aloft. The verse is then translated:God imposes a trial upon them that fear Him, so that He may then exalt them.
(2) All arbitrarily and without cause or justification.
(3) Of being childless so long.

Midrash Rabbah - Genesis LV:2

2. The Lord trieth the righteous, etc. (Ps. XI, 5). R. Jonathan said: A potter does not examine defective vessels, because he cannot give them a single blow without breaking them. What then does he examine? Only the sound vessels, for he will not break them even with many blows. Similarly, the Holy One, blessed be He, tests not the wicked but the righteous, as it says, ' The Lord trieth the righteous.' R. Jose b. R. Hanina said: When a flax worker knows that his flax is of good quality, the more he beats it the more it improves and the more it glistens; but if it is of inferior quality, he cannot give it one knock without it splitting. Similarly, the Lord does not test the wicked but only the righteous, as it says, ' The Lord trieth the righteous.' R. Eleazar said: When a man possesses two cows, one strong and the other feeble, upon which does he put the yoke? Surely upon the strong one Similarly, God tests none but the righteous, as it says, ' The Lord trieth the righteous."

Midrash Rabbah - Genesis LV:3

3. Another interpretation: ' The Lord trieth the righteous' alludes to Abraham, as it says, THAT GOD DID PROVE ABRAHAM. R. Abin commenced his discourse thus: Forasmuch as the king's word hath power; and who may say unto him: What doest thou (Eccl. VIII, 4)? Said R. Abin: This

may be compared to a teacher who instructed his disciple, (Thou shalt not wrest judgment (Deut. XVI, 19), yet he himself wrested judgment; Thou shalt not respect persons (ib.), yet himself respected persons; Neither shalt thou take a gift (ib.), yet himself took gifts;)2 do not lend money on interest, yet himself lent on interest. Said his disciple to him: ' Master, you tell me, " do not lend money on interest," yet you yourself lend on interest!' He replied: 'I tell you not to lend on interest to an Israelite, but you may lend on interest to other nations, for it is written, Unto a foreigner thou mayest lend on interest; but unto thy brother thou shalt not lend upon interest (ib. XXIII, 21).3 Similarly, Israel said to the Holy One, blessed be He: ' Sovereign of the Universe! Thou didst write in Thy Torah, Thou shalt not take vengeance, nor bear any grudge (Lev. XIX, 18), yet Thou doest so Thyself, as it says, The Lord avengeth and is full of wrath, the Lord taketh vengeance on His adversaries, and He reserveth wrath for His enemies' (Nahum 1, 2). Said God to them: 'I wrote in My Torah, " Thou shalt not take vengeance, nor bear any grudge" against Israel; but in respect of the nations -Avenge the children of Israel,' etc. (Num. XXXI, 2).4 Similarly it is written, Ye shall not try the Lord your God (Deut. VI, 16), yet GOD DID PROVE ABRAHAM.5

(1) Supra,XXXII,3.
(2) The bracketed passage is added from cur. edd. in accordance with Eccl. R. VIII, 4.
(3) V. Joseph M. Judaism as Creed and Life, p. 428, for the grounds of this distinction. It is noteworthy that the other objections remain unanswered-perversion of justice, respecting persons, and taking bribes are not permitted under any conditions.
(4) The Bible is full of predictions against Israel, unless they reformed. The Rabbis, of course, were fully aware of this, and in the present passage they did not mean to teach that God is partial and favours Israel, but rather expressed their confidence that even when Israel sinned timely repentance would avert disaster whereas the idolaters would never repent.-Y.T. observes: In the illustration it may be assumed that the teacher did not in fact pervert judgment, etc., but that it merely appeared so to his disciple. In the same way, God never disobeys His own moral law, even when to man it appears so.
(5) The answer to the difficulty is not explicitly given but is left to be inferred from the general tenor of the preceding remarks. To try God is a sign of inadequate faith, whereas God tried Abraham in order to strengthen his faith in Him (Y.T.).

Midrash Rabbah - Genesis LV:4

4. AFTER THESE THINGS-misgivings were experienced on that occasion.1 Who then had misgivings? Abraham, saying to himself: 'I have rejoiced and made all others rejoice,2 yet I did not set aside a single bullock or ram for the Holy One, blessed be He.' Said God to him: ' I know that even if thou wast commanded to offer thine only son to Me, thou wouldst not refuse.' According to R. Leazar who maintained that the employment of wa-elohim3 where Elohim would suffice intimates, He and His Court, it was the ministering angels who spoke thus: 'This Abraham rejoiced and made all others rejoice, yet did not set aside for God a single bullock or ram.' Said the Holy One, blessed be He, to them: 'Even if we tell him to offer his own son, he will not refuse.' Isaac and Ishmael were engaged in a controversy: the latter argued, ' I am more beloved than thou, because I was circumcised at the age of thirteen'; while the other retorted, 'I am more beloved than thou, because I was circumcised at eight days.' Said Ishmael to him: 'I am more beloved, because I could have protested, yet did not.' At that moment Isaac exclaimed: ' O that

God would appear to me and bid me cut off one of my limbs! then I would not refuse.' Said God: ' Even if I bid thee sacrifice thyself, thou wilt not refuse.' (Another version: Said Ishmael to him: ' I am more beloved than thou, since I was circumcised at the age of thirteen, but thou wast circumcised as a baby and couldst not refuse.' Isaac retorted: ' All that thou didst lend to the Holy One, blessed be He, was three drops of blood. But lo, I am now thirty-seven years old,4 yet if God desired of me that I be slaughtered, I would not refuse.' Said the Holy One, blessed be He, 'This is the moment! ' Straightway, GOD DID PROVE ABRAHAM.)

(1) A play on ' ahar ' (after), which is now connected with hirhur, misgiving.
(2) At the banquet in honour of Isaae's weaning.
(3) And God; in the present case E.V. ' that God'.
(4) Sarah was ninety years old at his birth and a hundred and twenty-seven years at her death, which, according to the Rabbis, was caused by shock when she was wrongly informed that Isaac had been sacrificed- infra, LVIII, 5.

Midrash Rabbah - Genesis LV:5

5. Wherewith shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself before God on high (Micah VI, 6)? R. Joshua of Siknin said in R. Levi's name: Though this passage was [apparently] said about Mesha, king of Moab,1 yet it refers to none but Isaac. For it says, ' Wherewith shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself before God on high'... Shall I give my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul? (Now in the case of Isaac the deed was not actually done, yet He accepted it as though it were completed, whereas in the case of Mesha it was not accepted.)2

(1) Who sacrificed his son as a burnt-offering. The verse continues: Shall I give my firstborn for my transgression. For the incident v. II Kings III, 27.
(2) The bracketed passage is added from cur. edd. Y.T.: The following verse goes on to say that God requires man To do justly, and to love mercy, etc. Hence the whole may well refer to Isaac, whom God never intended to be sacrificed, His true worship consisting in acting with justice and love. But actual human sacrifice, such as Mesha's, is abhorrent to Him.

Midrash Rabbah - Genesis LV:6

6. THAT GOD DID PROVE (NISSAH) ABRAHAM. R. Jose the Galilean said: He exalted him like a ship's ensign(nes). R. Akiba said: He tested him unequivocally, that people might not say that He confused and perplexed him so that he did not know what to do.l AND SAID UNTO HIM: ABRAHAM; AND HE SAID: HERE AM I (ib.). R. Joshua said: On two occasions Moses compared himself to Abraham, and God answered him, Glorify not thyself in the presence of the king, and stand not in the place of great men (Prov. XXV, 6). Now Abraham said, HERE AM I- ready for priesthood, ready for kingship, and he attained priesthood and kingship. He attained priesthood, as it says, The Lord hath sworn, and will not repent: Thou art a priest for ever after the manner of Melchizedek (Ps. CX, 4); kingship: Thou art a mighty prince among us (Gen. XXIII, 5). Moses too said, Here am I (Ex. III, 4)-ready for priesthood, ready for kingship- but God answered, Draw not nigh hither-halom (ib. 5); now 'drawing nigh' refers to priesthood, as in the verse, And

the common man that draweth nigh shall be put to death (Num. I, 51), while 'halom' connotes kingship, as in the verse, That Thou hast brought me thus far-halom (II Sam. VII, 18).2

(1) God did not order Isaac to be sacrificed immediately, but only after a three days' journey to Mount Moriah, during which Abraham had ample time for reflection.
(2) This refers to David's royal rank.-For the full passage v. Ex.. R. II, 6, and Deut. R. II, 7.

Midrash Rabbah - Genesis LV:7

7. AND HE SAID: TAKE, I PRAY THEE, THY SON, etc. (XXII, 2). Said He to him: TAKE, I PRAY THEE -I beg thee1-THY SON. ' ' Which son? ' he asked. THINE ONLY SON. replied He. But each is the only one of his mother? -WHOM THOU LOVEST. - Is there a limit to the affections? ' ' EVEN ISAAC, ' said He. And why did He not reveal it to him without delay? In order to make him [Isaac] even more beloved in his eyes and reward him for every word spoken. This agrees with the dictum of R. Johanan, who said: Get thee out of thy country (Gen. XII, 1) means from thy province And from thy kindred (ib.)-from the place where thou art settled; And from thy father's house-literally thy father's house. Unto the land that I will show thee (ib.). Why did He not reveal it to him there and then? In order to make it more beloved in his eyes and to reward him for every step. R. Levi b. Hayyatha said: 'Get thee' is written twice,2 and we do not know which was more precious [in the eyes of God], the first or the second. But when it is written, AND GET THEE INTO THE LAND OF MORIAH (XXII, 2) it follows that the second occasion was more precious than the first.3 AND GET THEE INTO THE LAND OF MORIAH. R. Hiyya the Elder and R. Jannai discussed this. One said: To the place whence instruction (hora'ah) went forth to the world.4 While the other explained it: To the place whence religious awe (yirah) went forth to the world.' (Similarly, the word aron (the Ark). R. Hiyya and R. Jannai-one said: The place whence orah (light) goes forth to the world; while the other explained it: The place whence yirah (religious reverence) goes forth to the world. Similarly, the word debir5; R. Hiyya and R. Jannai discussed this. One said: The place whence [God's] speech (dibbur) went forth to the world; while the other explained it: The place whence retribution (deber) goes forth to the world.) R. Joshua b. Levi said 6: It means the place whence the Holy One, blessed be He, shoots (moreh)7 at the other nations and hurls them into Gehenna. R. Simeon b. Yohai said: To the place that corresponds (ra'ui) to the Heavenly Temple. R. Judan b. Palya said: To the place that He will show (mareh) thee.8 R. Phinehas said: To the seat of the world's dominion (marwetha). The Rabbis said: To the place where incense would be offered, as you read, I will get me to the mountain of myrrh-Mor (S.S. IV, 6) 9 AND OFFER HIM THERE FOR A BURNT-OFFERING (ib.). R. Judah said: He [Abraham] said to Him: ' Sovereign of the Universe! Can there be a sacrifice without a priest? ' ' I have already appointed thee to be a priest,' replied the Holy One, blessed be He: thus it is written, ' Thou art a priest for ever ' (Ps. CX, 4). UPON ONE OF THE MOUNTAINS WHICH I WILL TELL THEE O F (ib.). For10 R. Huna said on the authority of R. Eliezer: The Holy One, blessed be He, first places the righteous in doubt and suspense, and then reveals to them the real meaning of the matter. Thus, TO THE LAND THAT I WILL SHOW THEE (XII, 1); UPON ONE OF THE MOUNTAINS WHICH I WILL TELL THEE OF; And make unto it the proclamation that I bid thee (Jonah III, 2); similarly, Arise, go forth into the plain, and I will there speak with thee (Ezek. III, 22).

(1) If you do not emerge successfully from this trial, it will be said that the previous trials by which I tested you were of no value (Sanh. 89b).
(2) Here, in connection with the sacrifice, and in ch. XII, 1, when Abraham was told to leave home.
(3) Mah.: for the first was from without into Eretz Israel, while the second was in Eretz Israel itself, to a more sacred spot.
(4) It was the spot where in later times the Chamber of Hewn Stones in the Temple stood and the Great Sanhedrin sat and sent forth religious teaching to all Israel.
(4) The Temple radiated a spirit of awe and reverence.
(5) In I Kings VI, 19: E.V. 'sanctuary'; A.V. 'oracle'. It was the holy of holies, and the Rabbis now discuss the exact significance of the word.
(6) Reverting to the word MORIAH.
(7) M.K. Or perhaps: makes decrees (lit. ' instructs ') about other nations.
(8) Probably by a special sign; v. infra, LVI, 1.
(9) All these are plays on the word ' Moriah '.
(10) This is really the middle of a passage (v. supra XXXIX, 9), which explains the abrupt 'for'. Cur. edd. omit.

Midrash Rabbah - Genesis LV:8

8. AND ABRAHAM ROSE EARLY IN THE MORNING, AND SADDLED HIS ASS (XXII, 3). R. Simeon b. Yohai said: Love upsets the natural order, and hate upsets the natural order. 1 Love upsets the natural order: AND ABRAHAM ROSE EARLY IN THE MORNING, etc.: surely he had plenty of slaves?2 But the reason was that love3 upset the natural order. Hate upsets the natural order: And Baalam rose up in the morning, and saddled his ass (Num. XXII, 21): surely he had plenty of slaves? Hate, however, upsets the natural order. Love upsets the natural order: And Joseph made ready his chariot, etc. (Gen. XLVI, 29): yet surely Joseph had plenty of slaves? But love upsets the natural order. Hate upsets the natural order: And he made ready his chariot (Ex. XIV, 6)4: yet surely he had plenty of slaves? Thus hate upsets the natural order. R. Simeon b. Yohai said: Let saddling counteract saddling. Let the saddling done by our father Abraham in order to go and fulfil the will of Him at whose word the world came into existence counteract the saddling done by Baalam in order to go and curse Israel. Let preparing counteract preparing. Let Joseph's preparing [of his chariot] to meet his father counteract Pharaoh's preparing to go and pursue Israel. R. Ishmael taught: Let the sword of the hand counteract the sword of the hand. Let the sword taken in the hand of our father Abraham, as it says, And Abraham stretched forth his hand, and took the knife to slay his son (Gen. XXII, 1O), come and counteract the sword grasped by Pharaoh's hand when he said, I will draw my sword, my hand shall destroy them (Ex. XV, 9). AND TOOK TWO OF HIS YOUNG MEN WITH HIM, A N D ISAAC HIS SON.. R. Abbahu said: Two people behaved with propriety, Abraham and Saul: Abraham, as it says, AND TOOK TWO OF HIS YOUNG MEN WITH HIM; Saul, as it says, And Saul... went, he and two men with him (I Sam. XXVIII, 8).5 AND HE CLEAVED THE WOOD FOR THE BURNT-OFFERING. R. Hiyya b. R. Jose said in the name of R. Miasha, and it was also repeated in the name of R. Bannaiah: As a reward for the two cleavings wherewith our father Abraham cleaved the wood of the burnt-offering,6 he earned that God should cleave [divide] the Sea before his descendants, as it says, And the waters were divided (Ex. XIV, 21). Said R. Levi: Enough of this!7 In truth Abraham

acted according to his powers and the Holy One, blessed be He, according to His powers. AND ROSE UP, AND WENT UNTO THE PLACE. He was rewarded for rising up and for going.8

(1) Through love or hate a man acts as he would not otherwise, disregarding his own dignity.
(2) To saddle his ass, which was not a dignified proceeding for a man of his rank.
(3) His love for God.
(4) The Heb. is in the singular (not 'chariots ', as E.V.); hence it is assumed that Pharaoh did it himself.
(5) Both took companions because it would have been undignified for them to go alone, though the nature of their mission might have prompted them to go unaccompanied (Mah.).
(6) ' Wood ' is in the plural, whence it is deduced that he cut up two logs.
(7) It is wrong to compare these two incidents as though they were on a par.
(8) For each separately. Otherwise, why state AND ROSE UP, which is obvious? (M.K.).

Midrash Rabbah - Genesis LVI:1

1. ON THE THIRD DAY. etc. (XXII, 4). It is written, After two days He will revive us, on the third day He will raise us up, that we may live in His presence (Hos. VI, 2). E.g. on the third day of the tribal ancestorsl: And Joseph said unto them the third day: This do, and live (Gen. XLII, 18); on the third day of Revelation: And it came to pass on the third day, when it was morning (Ex. XIX, 16); on the third day of the spies: And hide yourselves there three days (Josh. II, 16); on the third day of Jonah: And Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights (Jonah II. 1); on the third day of those returning from the Exile: And we abode there three days (Ezra VIII, 32); on the third day of resurrection: 'After two days He will revive us, on the third day He will raise us up'; on the third day of Esther: Now it came to pass on the third day, that Esther put on her royal apparel (Est. V, I)-i.e. she put on the royal apparel of her ancestor.2 For whose sake?3 The Rabbis say: For the sake of the third day, when Revelation took place. R. Levi maintained: In the merit of what Abraham did on the third day, as it says, ON THE THIRD DAY, etc. AND SAW THE PLACE AFAR OFF (ib.). What did he see?4 He saw a cloud enveloping the mountain,5 and said: 'It appears that that is the place where the Holy One, blessed be He, told me to sacrifice my son.'

1) The children of Jacob.
(2) Viz, Saul (Y.T. and Radal). M.K. and Mah.: she was clothed in the holy spirit; or, her ancestors' merit stood her in good stead.-The point of all these quotations is that relief from distress or the climax of events occurred on the third day.
(3) Did relief come to all these on the third day?
(4) Which told him that this was the place.
(5) And he recognized it as the cloud of God 's glory.

Midrash Rabbah - Genesis LVI:2

2. He then said to him [Isaac]: 'Isaac, my son, seest thou what I see?' 'Yes,' he replied. Said he to his two servants: ' See ye what I see? ' ' No,' they answered. Since ye do not see it, ABIDE YE HERE WITH THE ASS,' (XXII, 5), he bade them, for ye are like the ass,1 whence it follows that

slaves are like an ass 2 The Rabbis proved [it from this verse spoken at] the Revelation: Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work... thou, nor thy daughter, nor thy man-servant, nor thy maid-servant, nor thy cattle (Ex. XX, 10). R. Isaac said: This place shall one day be alienated from its Owner.3 For ever? [No], for it is stated, This is My resting-place for ever; here will I dwell for I have desired it; (Ps. CXXXII, 14)-when he comes of whom it is written, Lowly, and riding upon an ass (Zech. I, 9).4 AND I AND THE LAD WILL GO YONDER- AD KOH. Said R. Joshua b. Levi: We will go and see what is to be the eventual outcome of koh.5 AND WE WILL WORSHIP, AND WE WILL COME BACK TO YOU. He thus informed him6 that he [Isaac] would return safely from Mount Moriah. R. Isaac said: Everything happened as a reward for worshipping. 7 Abraham returned in peace from Mount Moriah only as a reward for worshipping: AND WE WILL WORSHIP AND WE WILL COME BACK TO YOU. Israel were redeemed only as a reward for worshipping: And the people believed... then they bowed their heads and worshipped (Ex. IV, 31). The Torah was given only as a reward for worshipping: And worship ye afar off (ib. XXIV, 1).8 Hannah was remembered only as a reward for worshipping: And they worshipped before the Lord (I Sam. I, 19). The exiles will be reassembled only as a reward for worshipping: And it shall come to pass in that day, that a great horn shall be blown; and they shall come that were lost... and that were dispersed... and they shall worship the Lord in the holy mountain at Jerusalem (Isa. XXVII, 13). The Temple was built only as a reward for worshipping: Exalt ye the Lord our God, and worship at His holy hill (Ps. XCIX, 9).9 The dead will come to life again only as a reward for worshipping: O come, let us worship and bend the knee; let us kneel before the Lord our Maker (Ps. XCV, 6).10

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(1) Which has not seen it either.
(2) In a legal sense, that they cannot acquire or transmit property. Actually they had definite rights, and from the religious point of view were semi-Jews.
(3) The site of the sacrifice, which corresponded to Jerusalem, would one day be alienated from God; or (M.K.) from its owners, the Jews being exiled from it. This is hinted at in AND SAW THE PLACE AFAR OFF-far from its Owner.
(4) Sc. the Messiah. This is based on a figurative interpretation of the present verse, shebu lakem (E.V. 'abide ye'), which is now rendered: Return ye (the Hebrew can mean that). When? With the ass-when he (Messiah) comes travelling on an ass.
(5) God promised me, Koh (so) shall thy seed be (Gen. XV, 5): we will see how that can be fulfilled, now that I am to lose my son.
(6) God informed Abraham, by making him unintentionally prophesy, AND WE WILL COME BACK. Others (as in Tanhuma): His own mouth thus informed him, etc.
(7) The Hebrew word means 'prostration'.
(8) Though this comes after Revelation, the whole incident recorded in that passage is assumed to have taken place before Revelation.
(9) God is exalted by the building of the Temple.
(10) Let us kneel, etc., is not in the text, but has been added. Rash.: This is probably deduced from Our Maker, understood in the sense of our Maker in a new life. Cf. supra, XXXIX,11: And I will make thee: after I have made thee newly created, etc.

3. AND ABRAHAM TOOK THE WOOD OF THE BURNT - OFFERING (XXII, 6)-like one who carries his stake on his shoulder. 1 AND HE TOOK IN HIS HAND THE FIRE AND THE KNIFE (MA AKELETH). R. Hanina said: Why is a knife called ma'akeleth? Because it makes food (oklim) fit to be eaten.2 While the Rabbis said: All eating (akiloth) which Israel enjoy in this world, they enjoy only in the merit of that MA AKELETH. (KNIFE). AND THEY WENT BOTH OF THEM TOGETHER (ib.): one to bind and the other to be bound, one to slaughter and the other to be slaughtered.3

(1) The stake on which he is to be executed.
(2) An animal (food, oklim, from which ma'akeleth is now derived) is ritually slaughtered with a knife, and only then may it be eaten.
(3) Yet they went TOGETHER -in the same spirit.

Midrash Rabbah - Genesis LVI:4

4. AND ISAAC SPOKE UNTO ABRAHAM HIS FATHER, AND SAID: MY FATHER (XXII, 7). Samael1 went to the Patriarch Abraham and upbraided him saying: What means this, old man! Hast thou lost thy wits? thou goest to slay a son granted to thee at the age of a hundred!' 'Even this I do,' replied he. 'And if He sets thee an even greater test, canst thou stand it?' said he, as it is written, If a thing be put to thee as a trial,2 wilt thou be wearied (Job IV, 2)? ' Even more than this,' he replied. ' To-morrow He will say to thee, " Thou art a murderer, and art guilty," ' ' Still am I content,' he rejoined. Seeing that he could achieve nought with him, he approached Isaac and said: 'Son of an unhappy mother! He goes to slay thee.' ' I accept my fate,' he replied. ' If so,' said he, ' shall all those fine tunics which thy mother made be a legacy for Ishmael, the hated of her house?'3 If a word is not wholly effective, it may yet avail in part'; hence it is written, AND ISSAC SPOKE UNTO ABRAHAM HIS FATHER, AND SAID: MY FATHER: why HIS FATHER... MY FATHER?4 So that he should be filled with compassion for him. 5 A N D H E S A I D: BEHOLD, THE FIRE AND THE WOOD. 'May that man be drowned who has thus incited him,' exclaimed he. At all events, GOD WILL PROVIDE HIMSELF THE LAMB, O my son; and if not, THOU ART FOR A BURNT-OFFERING, MY SON. ' SO THEY WENT BOTH OF THEM TOGETHER-one to slaughter and the other to be slaughtered.

(1) The name of a wicked angel; cf. Sot. 1O b.
(2) E.V. ' If one ventures a word unto thee'.
(3) Or perhaps: shall all the steps taken by thy mother against Ishmael have been for nought, and he, the hated of the house, be the heir?
(4) Why is the relationship stressed?
(5) Thus, though Samael could not induce him to resist, he nevertheless induced him to plead indirectly.

Midrash Rabbah - Genesis LVI:5

5. AND THEY CAME TO THE PLACE WHICH GOD HAD TOLD HIM OF; AND ABRAHAM BUILT THE ALTAR THERE (XXII, 9). And where was Isaac? Said R. Levi: He had taken and hidden him, saying, ' Lest he who sought to seduce him1 throw a stone at him and disqualify him from serving as a sacrifice.2 AND BOUND ISAAC HIS SON. R. Hanina b. Isaac said: Even as Abraham bound his son Isaac below, so the Holy One, blessed be He, bound the Princes of the heathens above.3 Yet they did not remain [thus bound]. For when Israel alienated themselves [from God] in the days of Jeremiah, the Holy One, blessed be He, said to them: 'What think ye: that those fetters still exist?' as it says, For shall they be like tangled thorns (sirim) for ever (Nahum 1, 10), which means: For are the Princes (sarim) to be entangled [i.e. bound] for ever? No; for When they [the Israelites] are drunken according to their drink (ib.),4 their fetters are broken, for it is written, They shall be devoured as stubble fully dry (ib.). When the Patriarch Abraham stretched forth his hand to take the knife to slay his son, the angels wept, as it says, Behold, their valiant ones [the angels] cry without- huzah (Isa. XXXIII, 7). What does ' huzah ' mean? R. 'Azariah said: It is unnatural It is unnatural that he should slay his son with his own hand. And what did they say? The highways lie waste? (ib. 8)-does not Abraham show hospitality to travellers? The wayfaring man ceaseth shabath (ib.)-as in the verse, It had ceased (hadal) to be with Sarah (Gen. XVIII, 11).5 He hath broken the covenant (Isa. Ioc. cit.), viz. But My covenant will I establish with Isaac (Gen. XVII, 21).6 He hath despised the cities (Isa. Ioc. cit.), viz. And [Abraham] dwelt between Kadesh and Shur (Gen. XX, 1).7 He regardeth not man (Isa. Ioc. cit.) - has Abraham no merit in his favour? And who says that this verse refers to the angels?8-Here it says, UPON (M I - M A ' A L) THE WOOD, while in another passage it says, Above (mi-ma'al) Him stood the seraphim (Isa. VI, 2).

(1) From obedience willingness to allow himself to be sacrificed.
(2) By maiming him.
(3) Every nation was thought to possess a 'Prince'-a guardian angel and patron.-I.e. made than subservient to Israel.
(4) I.e. when they have forfeited thar rights through sin.
(5) Shabath in the former verse is rendered by hadal in the latter this being more familiar to the Rabbis (M.K. Th.).
(6) That covenant will now be broken if he is sacrificed.
(7) The angels urged in his favour that he 'despised' his former residence in order to practise hospitality; v. supra LII, 1.
(8) How does this verse indicate a protest by the angels?

Midrash Rabbah - Genesis LVI:6

6. AND ABRAHAM STRETCHED FORTH HIS HAND, AND TOOK THE KNIFE. Rab asked R. Hiyya the Elder: Regarding Rabbi's teaching, in which he said: How do we know that ritual slaughtering must be with a movable object?1 From this verse: AND ABRAHAM STRETCHED FORTH HIS HAND, AND TOOK THE KNIFE2- did he tell you this as haggadah, in which case he might retract3; or did he state it as a tradition, in which case he would not retract from it? For R. Levi taught: If they [e.g. sharp flints] were fast [to the ground or rocks] from the very beginning, they are unfit; but if they had been originally detached but subsequently fixed in the ground, they are fit. For we learned: If one slaughters with a hand-sickle,4 a flint, or a reed, the slaughtering is fit5 R. Jose b. Abin said: Five things were said of a reed stalk: You may not

slaughter, circumcise, cut meat, wipe your hands,6 nor pick your teeth with it, because an evil spirit rests upon it.

(1) But not something immovable that is part of the ground, e.g. a sharp ledge of rock which otherwise is fit, and against which the animal's throat can be drawn.
(2) Which implies that it was movable.
(3) Deductions made in the spirit of haggadah are not binding laws.
(4) Jast.: an implement combining knife and saw.
(5) Hul. 15b, 16a. The point of Rab's question is this: if the deduction from the verse was made as a true law, then an immovable object is absolutely unfit, even if it had been movable at one time; and, moreover, not only is it unfit at the outset, but even if one does slaughter with it the animal is not permitted for food. Obviously then Levi does not accept this view, and Rab's question is whether Rabbi stated this only as haggadah, in which case it may not represent his view as far as a practical ruling is concerned, and he can agree with Levi; or did he state it as an actual law in which case he must disagree with Levi?
(6) Because sharp shreds or splinters detach themselves from it and these are dangerous.

Midrash Rabbah - Genesis LVI:7

7. AND THE ANGEL OF THE LORD CALLED UNTO HIM OUT OF HEAVEN, AND SAID: ABRAHAM, ABRAHAM (XXII, 11). R. Hiyya taught: This is an expression of love and encouragement. R. Liezer said: [The repetition indicates that He spake] to him and to future generations: There is no generation which does not contain men like Abraham, and there is no generation which does not contain men like Jacob, Moses, and Samuel.1 AND HE SAID: LAY NOT THY HAND UPON THE LAD, etc. (XXII, 12). Where was the knife? Tears had fallen from the angels upon it and dissolved it. 'Then I will strangle him,' said he [Abraham] to Him. 'LAY NOT THY HAND UPON THE LAD,' was the reply. Let us bring forth a drop of blood from him,' he pleaded. NEITHER DO THOU ANY THING TO HIM, He answered -'inflict no blemish upon him.2 FOR NOW I KNOW- I have made it known to all-that thou lovest Me, A N D THOU HAST NOT WITHHELD, etc. And do not say, "All ills that do not affect one's own person are not ill,"3 for indeed I ascribe merit to thee as though I had bidden thee sacrifice thyself and thou hadst not refused."4

(1) We find the names of these men repeated as in the present passage, and this intimates that He spoke to future generations, too, each of which would contain such men.-They represent respectively the spirit of philanthropy, service of God, study of the Torah, and civil justice, which may be regarded as the fundamentals of civilisation.-Y.T.
(2) A play on words, me'umah (anything) being read mumah, a blemish.
(3) Great though the sacrifice was, it nevertheless did not demand his own life.
(4) This is based on the Heb. YEHIDEKA (E.V. 'THINE ONLY SON'), which the Midrash renders, thy soul (life), as in the verse, Deliver my life from the sword, my soul (yehidathi, same root; this is the Midrashic rendering, approximating to E.V. 'mine only one') from the power of the dog (Ps. XXII, 21).

Midrash Rabbah - Genesis LVI:8

8. (Another comment: R. Isaac said: When Abraham wished to sacrifice his son Isaac, he said to him: 'Father, I am a young man and am afraid that my body may tremble through fear of the knife and I will grieve thee, whereby the slaughter may be rendered unfit and this will not count as a real sacrifice; therefore bind me very firmly. Forthwith, HE BOUND ISAAC: can one bind a man thirty-seven years old? (another version: twenty-six years old)1 without his consent? Presently, AND ABRAHAM STRETCHED FORTH. HIS HAND-he stretched forth his hand to take the knife while the tears streamed from his eyes, and these tears, prompted by a father's compassion, dropped into Isaac's eyes. Yet even so, his heart rejoiced to obey the will of his Creator. The angels assembled in groups above. What did they cry? The highways lie waste, the wayfaring man ceaseth; He hath broken the covenant, He hath despised the cities (Isa. XXXIII, 8) -has He no pleasure in Jerusalem and the Temple, which He had intended giving as a possession to the descendants of Isaac? He regardeth not man (ib.): if no merit has stood in Abraham's favour, then no creature has any value before him.)2 R. Aha said: [Abraham wondered]: Surely Thou too indulgest in prevarication! Yesterday Thou saidest, For in Isaac shall seed be called to thee (Gen. XXI, 12); Thou didst then retract and say, Take now thy son (ib. XXII, 2); while now Thou biddest me, LAY NOT THY HAND UPON THE LAD! Said the Holy One, blessed be He, to him: ' O Abraham, My covenant will I not profane (Ps. LXXXIX, 35), And I will establish My covenant with Isaac (Gen. XVII, 21). When I bade thee, "Take now thy son," etc., I will not alter that which is gone out of My lips (Ps. Ioc. cit.). Did I tell thee, Slaughter him? No! but, " Take him up."3 Thou hast taken him up. Now take him down.'4

(1) Sarah was ninety years old at his birth and 127 at her death, which according to some was occasioned by the false report that Isaac had actually been sacrificed. The second view rejects this, and is based on the statement supra, LIV, 6, that Abraham spent 26 years in Hebron, the beginning of which coincided with Isaac's birth and the end with his sacrifice.
(2) The bracketed passage is added from cur. edd.
(3) Lit. translation.
(4) In cur. edd. a parable illustrating this follows.

Midrash Rabbah - Genesis LVI:9

9. AND ABRAHAM LIFTED UP HIS EYES, AND LOOKED, AND BEHOLD BEHIND HIM (AHAR) A RAM (XXII, 13). What does A H A R mean? Said R. Judan: After all that happened,1 Israel still fall into the clutches of sin and [in consequence] become the victims of persecution; yet they will be ultimately redeemed by the ram's horn, as it says, And the Lord God will blow the horn, etc. (Zech. IX, 14). R. Judah b. R. Simon interpreted: At the end of [after] all generations Israel will fall into the clutches of sin and be the victims of persecution; yet eventually they will be redeemed by the ram's horn, as it says, 'And the Lord God will blow the horn,' etc.2 R. Hanina b. R. Isaac said: Throughout the year Israel are in sin's clutches and led astray by their troubles, but on New Year they take the shofar and blow on it, and eventually they will be redeemed by the ram's horn, as it says, ' And the Lord God will blow the horn.' R. Abba b. R. Pappi and R. Joshua of Siknin in R. Levi's name said: Because the Patriarch Abraham saw the ram extricate himself from one thicket and go and become entangled in another, the Holy One, blessed be He, said to him: ' So will thy children be entangled in countries, changing from Babylon to Media, from Media to Greece, and from Greece to Edom; yet they will eventually be redeemed by the ram's horn,' as it is written, And the Lord God will blow the horn... the Lord of hosts will defend them

(ib. 14 f.). AND ABRAHAM WENT AND TOOK THE RAM, AND OFFERED HIM UP FOR A BURNT-OFFERING IN THE STEAD OF HIS SON (ib.). R. Judan said in R. Banai's name: He prayed to him: 'Sovereign of the Universe! Look upon the blood of this ram as though it were the blood of my son Isaac; its emurim as though they were my son's emurim,' even as we learned3: When a man declares: This animal be instead of this one, in exchange for that, or a substitute for this, it is a valid exchange 4 R. Phinehas said in R. Banai's name, He prayed: ' Sovereign of the Universe! Regard it as though I had sacrificed my son Isaac first and then this ram instead of him,' [IN THE STEAD being understood] as in the verse, And Jotham his son reigned in his stead (II Kings XV, 7).5 It is even as we learned6: [When one declares I vow a sacrifice] like the lamb or like the animals of the Temple stalls,7 R. Johanan said: He meant, like the lamb of the daily burnt-offering8: Resh Lakish said: He meant, like Isaac's ram.9 There [in Babylon] they say: Like the offspring of a sin-offering. Bar Kappara taught: He meant, like the lamb which has never given suck.10

(1) E.J.- After all that God has done for Israel, redeeming than from Egypt. etc.
(2) They understand ahar (lit. ' after ') and ' ram ' to hint at the Messianic future.
(3) Tem. 26b.
(4) 'It is a valid exchange' is a technical expression denoting that both are holy; v. Lev. XXVII, 23.
(5) Not, of course, as a substitute but as his successor; and so Abraham too prayed that the ram might be regarded as additional to Isaac.
(6) Ned. 10b.
(7) I.e. the animals kept for sacrifice.
(8) And this must be brought.
(9) Hence he must bring a ram.
(10) The relevance of this whole paragraph is obscure. Th. conjectures that something has fallen out of the text.

Midrash Rabbah - Genesis LVI:10

10. AND ABRAHAM CALLED THE NAME OF THE PLACE ADONAI JIREH-THE LORD SEETH (XXII, 14). R. Bibi Rabbah said in R. Johanan's name: He said to Him: ' Sovereign of the Universe! When Thou didst order me, " Take now thy son, thine only son" (ib. 2), I could have answered, "Yesterday Thou didst promise me, For in Isaac shall seed be called to thee (ib. XXI, 12), and now Thou sayest, ' Take now thy son,' etc." Yet Heaven forfend! I did not do this, but suppressed my feelings of compassion in order to do Thy will. Even so it may be Thy will, O Lord our God,1 that when Isaac's children are in trouble, Thou wilt remember that binding in their favour and be filled with compassion for them.' Abraham called it 'Jireh': AND ABRAHAM CALLED THE NAME OF THAT PLACE ADONAI-JIREH. Shem called it Salem [Shalem]: And Melchizedek king of Salem (Gen. XIV, 18).2 Said the Holy One, blessed be He: 'If I call it Jireh as did Abraham, then Shem, a righteous man, will resent it; while if I call it Salem as did Shem, Abraham, the righteous man, will resent it. Hence I will call it Jerusalem, including both names, Jireh Salem. '3 R. Berekiah said in R. Helbo's name: While it was yet Salem the Holy One, blessed be He, made Himself a tabernacle and prayed in it, as it says, In Salem also is set His tabernacle, and His dwelling-place in Zion (Ps. LXXVI, 3). And what did He say: 'O that I may see 4 the building of the Temple!' Another interpretation: This verse teaches that the Holy One,

blessed be He, showed him the Temple built, destroyed and rebuilt. For it says, AND ABRAHAM CALLED THE NAME OF THAT PLACE ADONAI-JIREH (THE LORD SEETH): this alludes to the Temple built, as in the verse, Three times in a year shall all thy males be seen... in the place where He shall choose (Deut. XVI, 16)5 AS IT IS SAID TO THIS DAY: IN THE MOUNT refers to it destroyed, as in the verse, For the mountain of Zion, which is desolate (Lam. V, 18); WHERE THE LORD IS S E E N refers to it rebuilt and firmly established in the Messianic era, as in the verse, When the Lord hath built up Zion, when He hath been seen in His glory (Ps. CII, 17)

(1) This phrase is now liturgical, with the addition, 'and the God of our fathers.'
(2) The Midrash on Psalm LXXVI shows that this was Shem.
(3) 'He will see peace.'
(4) So cur. edd.
(5) Sc. the Temple; thus 'seeing' is connected with the Temple while it was standing.

Midrash Rabbah - Genesis LVI:11

11. AND THE ANGEL OF THE LORD CALLED UNTO ABRAHAM A SECOND TIME OUT OF HEAVEN, AND SAID: BY MYSELF HAVE I SWORN (XXII, 15 f.). What was the need of this oath? He had begged Him: 'Swear to me not to try me again henceforth, nor my son Isaac. R. Levi in the name of R. Hama b. R. Hanina gave another reason for this oath: He had begged: ' Swear to me not to test me again henceforth.'1 This may be likened to a king who was married to a noble lady. She gave birth to her first son by him, and he divorced her; a second, and he divorced her; a third, and he divorced her.2 When she had given birth to a tenth son by him, they all assembled and demanded of him: 'Swear to us not to divorce our mother again.' Similarly, when Abraham had been tried for the tenth time,3 he said to Him: 'Swear to me not to test me again.' R. Hanan commented: BECAUSE THOU HAST DONE THIS THING (ib.)-it was the tenth trial, yet you say, BECAUSE THOU HAST DONE THIS THING! The fact, however, is that this was the last trial, which was as weighty as all the rest together, and had he not submitted to it, all would have been lost. THAT IN BLESSING I WILL BLESS THEE, etc. XXII, 17): a blessing for the father and a blessing for the son; AND IN MULTIPLYING WILL I MULTIPLY: an increase for the father and an increase for the son.4 AND THY SEED SHALL POSSESS THE GATE OF HIS ENEMIES (ib.). Rabbi said: This alludes to Tadmor.5 Happy is he who will see the downfall of Tadmor which took part in both destructions.6 R. Judan and R. Hanina-one of them said: At the destruction of the first Temple she supplied eighty thousand archers, and at the destruction of the second, eight thousand archers. SO ABRAHAM RETURNED UNTO HIS YOUNG MEN (XXII, 19). And where was Isaac? R. Berekiah said in the name of the Rabbis of the other place7: He sent him to Shem to study Torah.8 This may be compared to a woman who became wealthy through her distaff.9 Said she: ' Since I have become wealthy through this distaff, it will never leave my hand.' (Thus said Abraham: 'All that has come to me is only because I engaged in Torah and good deeds; therefore I am unwilling that it should ever depart from my seed.')10 R. Jose b. R. Hanina said: He sent him [home] at night, for fear of the [evil] eye.11 For from the moment that Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah ascended unscathed from the fiery furnace they are no more mentioned. Whither then had they gone? R. Leazar said: They died through the spittle12; R. Jose b. R. Hanina said: They died through an [evil] eye. R. Joshua b. Levi said: They changed their locality and went to Joshua, the son of Jehozadak, to study Torah; that is meant by the verse, Hear now, O Joshua the high priest, thou, and thy fellows that sit before thee; for they are men that are a

sign (Zech.III, 8). R. Tanhuma b. Abina commented in R. Hanina's name: For this very purpose did Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah descend into the fiery furnace, that a sign should be wrought through them.13

(1) But he did not plead for Isaac too.
(2) Remarrying her after each divoree.
(3) The ten trials have been variously computed.
(4) In both cases the verb is repeated in the original, and that is the basis of the present comment.
(5) Palmyra.
(6) Sc. of the two Temples.
(7) Sc. Babylon.
(8) Cf. supra, XLIII, 6.
(9) I.e. her spinning.
(10) Bracketed passage added from cur. edd.
(11) The admiration that would be shown on account of his narrow escape might adversely affect him.
(12) The nations spat at them in scorn that a people with such a God should yet breed apostates; so much spittle collected that the heroes were drowned in it! Y.T.: This is metaphorical: they died through the anguish of knowing that by their faith they had brought scorn upon Israel. V. also Sanh. (Sonc. ed.), p. 623, n. 3.
(13) Either of God's greatness, or of loyalty to God even at the cost of one's life.

Midrash Rabbah - Genesis LVII:1

1. AND IT CAME TO PASS AFTER THESE THINGS, THAT IT WAS TOLD ABRAHAM, SAYING: BEHOLD, MILCAH, SHE ALSO HATH BORNE CHILDREN, etc. (XXII, 20). It is written, A tranquil heart is the life of the flesh (Prov. XIV, 30): thus, while he was yet on Mount Moriah he was informed that his son's mate [Rebekah] had been born, as it says, BEHOLD, MILCAH, SHE ALSO HATH BORNE, etc.1 It shall be health to thy navel, and marrow to thy bones (ib. III, 8). R. Berekiah said in R. Isaac's name: If thou healest, it will be for thyself. What is the proof? If thou healest, it will be for thine own flesh',2 for while he was yet on Mount Moriah he was informed that his son's mate had been born, as it says, BEHOLD, MILCAH, SHE ALSO HATH BORNE CHILDREN.

(1) And so Abraham might have a tranquil heart. Th.: the Midrash renders, A tranquil heart is the life of kinsmen-through being informed that a new kinswoman had been born, who would eventually be Issac's wife, Abraham had a tranquil heart.
(2) This is his rendering of the verse, reading le-shareka (to thy navel) as li-she'ereka, for thy flesh.-Abraham, being healed and tranquillised after his fears for Isaac, now found that a wife was ready for 'his own flesh'- Isaac.-The translation and explanation are conjectural.

Unit 8 Mystical and Hasidic Interpretation of the Bible

The Central Concept of the Lesson

This lesson will focus on mystical and Hasidic interpretations and ways to analyze a text utilizing this methodology.

Goal: Participants will be able to describe some mystical interpretations of a Biblical text.

Objectives:
1. Participants will be able to summarize the *Zohar's* discussion of Jacob and the ladder.
2. Participants will be able to discuss some characteristics of the Hasidic movement.
3. Participants will be able to list eight different Hasidic masters and summarize their interpretations of the Jacob's ladder story.
4. Participants will be able to discuss the history of Jewish mysticism.

Texts:
Genesis 28:10-22
Degel Mahaney Efrayim
God was in this Place & I, i did not know
Kedushat Levi
Magid Devarav Le Yaakov
Ohev Yisroel
Sefat Emet
Toledoth Yaakov Yosef
Zohar

I. Introduction to Jewish Mystical Interpretation

A. A brief mention of some of the mystical movements to familiarize the students with the fact the mysticism is not new to Judaism.

1. Biblical
   a. Prophets
      1) Isaiah 6
         a) In this chapter Isaiah sees God seated upon a throne.
         b) There are *Seraphs* in attendance and they are described in detail.
         c) This is where we find the text for the *Kedushah*:
            קָדוֹשׁ קָדוֹשׁ קָדוֹשׁ יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת מְלֹא כָל הָאָרֶץ כְּבוֹדוֹ
      2). Ezekiel.
         a) He has a vision in chapter 1. In this chapter we find Ezekiel, exiled in Babylonia, have a vision that contains two types of heavenly hosts: the *Hayot*, or Creatures and the *Ofannim* or Wheels.
         b) In this text Ezekiel has been shown what life is like in heaven and has been shown some of the heavenly hosts.
         c) The vision that he provides to us is in great detail and very precise.
         d) This vision is known to Ezekiel as the *Kavod*. It later was used by mystics in what is known as *Merkabah* mysticism.
2. Second Temple
   a. *I Enoch*

1) The "tradition of Enoch's spiritual relocation gave rise to many *aggadic* stories, including one that Enoch, son of Jared, when he was taken away by God, saw the secrets of the mysteries of the universe, the future of the world, and the predetermined course of human history."[1]

2) Scholars believe that *I Enoch* was written by many different authors over numerous periods beginning in the pre-Maccabean time period and ending around 104 B.C.

3) The text contains sections on the eschatological era and the final judgment of the wicked and righteous. There is a section on fallen angels, an astrological treatise that concerns the nature of the solar year, and a section on dream visions.

3. Rabbinic
   a. *Merkavah* mysticism
      1) It is one of the most dazzling of the mystical systems.
      2) "It Includes wild apocalyptic speculation, monastic manuals, obscure numerological systems, magical incantations, as well as hymns and liturgies"[2]
      3) Scholars believe that it began in 900 B.C.E. and continued until 900 C.E.
   b. *Sefer Yetzirah* (Book of Creation)
      1) It deals with cosmogony and cosmology which is the origin and order of the universe.
      2) "Creation is the work of the God of Israel and it took place on two different levels: the ideal, immaterial level and the concrete level. This was done according to a complex process that brings in the 10 numbers (*sefirot*) of decimal notation and the 22 letters of the Hebrew alphabet."[3]
      3) The basic idea is that speech is not just a means of communication. It has the power to create as well. The language of creation was the Hebrew language.
      4) "The universe is produced by means of *sefirot* and the letters are constituted according to the law of correspondences between the astral world, the seasons that mark the rhythm of time, and man in his psychosomatic structure."[4]
4. Medieval
   a. *Zohar* – description is provided in Section IV below.
   b. Lurianic Kabbalah
      1) Rabbi Isaac Luria developed this system. He lived during the time that the Jews who were expelled from Spain migrated to Israel.
      2) He lived in Safed with some of the most powerful mystics in Jewish history.
      3) He gave us the following concepts:
         a) *tsimtsum* – the self-limitation of God
         b) *shevirah* – the shattering of the vessels

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[1] Isaac, E. "Introduction to I Enoch," in *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, (New York: Doubleday, 1983), p. 5.
[2] Blumenthal, David R., *Understanding Jewish Mysticism*, (New York: Ktav Publishing House, Inc., 1978), p. 4.
[3] Ibid., p. 8.
[4] Ibid., p. 8.

c) *tikkun* – the restoration of the world
d) *kelippot* – the shells
e) Four Worlds – Emanation, Creation, Formation, and Making.
f) Sparks – the remnants of the divine light

5. Modern
   a. Hasidism – description is provided in Section V below.

II. Introduction to *Sod*, a mystical interpretation

A. PaRDeS - an explanation of the meaning and the different methods of interpretation with particular emphasis on *Sod.*
   1. *Peshat* - Participants will be asked to define and explain *peshat* which was learned in Unit one.
   2. *Remez* - allegory.
   3. *Derash* - Participants will be asked to define and explain *derash* which was learned in Units 1 and 2.
   4. *Sod* - a hidden meaning.

III. Text - *Genesis* 28:10-22

A. Participants will take turns reading the text.
B. Discussion of what the text means to the participants.
C. This is done before reading any of the mystical texts in order for participants to become familiar with the Biblical text.

IV. *Zohar*

A. History of the authorship of the text.
   1. Our tradition believes that author was Shimon bar Yohai, who wrote the text in the second century. It was written in Aramaic.
   2. Gersholm Scholem, a 20th century scholar, established that it was written in the 13th century by Moses de Leon. It is considered a pseudepigraphy.[5] This theory has been modified by more recent scholars, such as Yehuda Liebes, who suggests that de Leon was part of a group who wrote the *Zohar.*[6]
   3. For many Jews, it was their third Bible, second only to the Bible and the Talmud. It is the most important work of the Kabbalah.
   4. "The ideas contained in the *Zohar* are very different from those taught in Sunday school (and certainly from those taught in parochial school). Often they will seem far-out, even heretical, over against the usual received knowledge. In fact, if they do not startle you, you have not fully understood them. Yet these ideas have a deep value, for they will teach you something about, and deepen your appreciation of mystical theology and mystical experience."[7]

B. Explanation of how the book is written.
   1. It is a commentary on the Torah and is broken down by weekly *parashiot.*

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[5] For more information concerning this consult Scholem's *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism*, chapter 5.
[6] Note provided by Rabbi David Greenstein who also wrote that this theory is gaining acceptance and has been challenged by Israel Ta-Shma, whose views have not been accepted so far.
[7] Blumenthal.., p. 101.

2. "The *Zohar* is 'theosophy' (or 'theosophical gnosis'). It purports not only to interpret God's revealed words and acts, but also to describe the inner workings of God's mind."[8]
3. It describes the realms of spirits and angels.
4. "It claims to describe the various, often conflicting elements that comprise the consciousness of God . . . The *Zohar* teaches that personal consciousness is of the essence of God, that personal consciousness is the common element in man and God – the image of God in which man was created."[9]
5. In order to read the text, one must give up any preconceived ideas of God.
6. "The cautious student may prefer to treat this system as a symbolic system or as a mythic structure, yet he should be aware that, for the *Zohar* and its readers, this is real. It is (esoteric) truth."[10]
7. The *Zohar* teaches that the main elements in God's psychology are made up of the *sefirot*. In order to understand the text, the student should be aware of the ten *sefirot*.[11]
   a. *Keter*: God's transcendent, or pure, royalty; the "supreme crown" of God;
   b. *Hokhma*: the wisdom, or mind, of God;
   c. *Bina*: God's (intuitive) understanding, differentiation, known as the supernal mother;"
   d. *Gevura*: God's transcendent, or pure, power of God; chiefly manifested as the power of stern judgment and punishment;
   e. *Hesed*: God's transcendent, or pure, grace (unmerited love);
   f. *Tiferet*: God's active royalty; His Kingship; also known as *Rachamim* which is the "compassion" of God;
   g. *Netsah*: God's active grace; the "lasting endurance" of God;
   h. *Hod*: God's active power; the "majesty" of God;
   i. *Yesod*: God's righteous power (confluence of the above *sefirot*); the "basis" or "foundation" of all active forces in God;
   j. *Malkhut*: God's engaged royalty; His Providence (connection with all the lower realms); His Presence or face; the "kindom" of God, the mystical archetype of Israel's community; or as the Shekhinah.
8. In order to understand a *Zoharic* text, the reader must realize that each text exists on many different levels.[12]
   a. The level of the Biblical text.
   b. The accepted rabbinic interpretation of a passage.
   c. The actual decipherment of the *sefirotic* symbolism.
   d. The consideration of the meaning of the text based on the reader's understanding of the nature of the interaction of the *sefirot* being described.

C. Read *Vayeze*
   1. 149b - *And he dreamed*

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[8] Ibid., p. 113.
[9] Ibid., p. 113.
[10] Ibid., p. 114.
[11] Ibid., p. 114.
[12] Ibid., pp. 115-119.

a. Discuss how *Zohar* uses this verse to explain the difference between dreams and visions.

2. 150a - *And Jacob awakened out of his sleep, and he said: "Surely the Lord is in this place, and I knew it not.*
   a. Discuss the concept of *Anokhi* found in the *Zohar* and its relationship to the *Shekinah.*
3. 150b - *And he was afraid, and said: "How full of awe is this place."*
   a. Discuss how the author ties the covenant into this verse.

V. Hasidic Movement

A. Use of Biblical text
   1. Explain how the masters would weave Biblical text, *midrashim*, and Talmud into their weekly *drashes* on the *parashah.*

B. Provide participants with the following Hasidic masters whose texts will be read.
   1. Rabbi Israel ben Eliezer (1700 – 1760)
      a. He is the founder of the Hasidic movement.
      b. Baal Shem Tov means Master of the Good Name.
      c. Often is referred to as the Besht.
      d. He was born in Podolia, Ukraine.
      e. It is hard to distinguish between the facts and fiction concerning his life since there are many stories about him.
      f. Discuss how it developed in reaction against the rabbis who were concerned with the study of the Talmud and rabbinic texts and did not have time to devote to the majority of the people.
      g. Concept of "God is everywhere."
   2. Rabbi Dov Baer, Maggid of Mezerich (1704 – 1772)
      a. Next to the Baal Shem Tov, he was the most important person in the Hasidic movement.
      b. According to Louis Jacobs, the relationship between the Baal Shem Tov and the Maggid was one of "associates of equal rank."
      c. The Maggid had excellent organizing skills and was responsible for gathering together a group of disciples who spread the word of Hasidism throughout Eastern Europe.
      d. He did not have any writings of his own but his doctrines are found in the works of his disciples.
      e. Solomon of Lutzk wrote, with the Maggid's approval, Maggid Devarav Le-Yaakov or Likkutey Amarim.
   3. Rabbi Yaakov Yosef of Polennoye (died 1782)
      a. He was a disciple of the Baal Shem Tov.
      b. Wrote the *Toledot Yaakov Yosef* (The Generations of Jacob Joseph) which was the first Hasidic book to be published. It is a running commentary of the Torah.
      c. He aroused the ire of the Mitnaggedim.
      d. Devoted his life to recording the words of the Baal Shem Tov.
   4. Rabbi Moses Hayyim Ephraim (1748 - 1800)

a. Known as the Degel after his book entitled Degel Mahaney Efrayim which is one of the classical works of Hasidism.
b. Grandson of the Baal Shem Tov and was brought up by him.
c. Was never a Hasidic master.
d. Lived in Sudlikov.
e. In his book, he records many of the discourses he heard from the Baal Shem Tov.

5. Rabbi Menachem Nahum of Chernobyl (1730 – 1787)
   a. Was born and educated in Lithuania.
   b. Came under the influence of the Baal Shem in his youth.
   c. Was a disciple of the Maggid.
   d. Was an itinerant preacher in Chernobyl.
   e. *Meor Eynayim* (Illumination of the Eyes) is a book on his exposition of the Torah.
6. Rabbi Levi Yitzhak of Berdichev (1740 – 1810)
   a. Was called by the Hasidim the "Berditchever" or the "Berditchever Rov" and was one of the few of the Hasidic masters to serve as a rabbi in a town.
   b. In 1766 he became a disciple of the Maggid.
   c. Tried to serve as a rabbi in both Zelechov and Pinsk but the Mitnaggedim were against him. He finally settled in Berdichev.
   d. He wrote a commentary on the Torah entitled *Kedushat Levi* (The Holiness of Levi).
7. Rabbi Avraham Yehoshua Heshel (1745 – 1825)
   a. He was The Apter Rebbe and served as rabbi in Kolbuszov, Apt and Jassy.
   b. Was a disciple of Rabbi Elimelech.
   c. He eventually moved to Medzeboz, the city of the Baal Shem Tov.
   d. Wrote the book *Ohev Yisrael*.
8. Rabbi Yehudah Leib Alter of Ger (1847 – 1905)
   a. He was the rebbe of Gora Kalwaria (called Ger in Yiddish and Gur in Hebrew) near Warsaw.
   b. He served as the Gerer rebbe from 1871-1905.
   c. He had a reputation for great learning and personal integrity.
   d. Lived a modest life supported by his wife who ran a tobacco shop.
   e. His work, *Sefat Emet*, is a five volume text made up of his personal teachings that he gave each Shabbat and on the festivals.
   f. The title "*Sefat Emet* was based on an interpretation of Proverbs 12:19 found in the last teaching he had entered into the collection, a comment on *parashat Va-yehi* for 1904/05. There *emet* is associated with the speech of all Israel, "because the witness to God is not the individual person but the totality of Israel."[13]
   g. "R. Yehudah Leib saw the task of Ger as that of restoring speech to the (silent) of faith, *safah* to *emet*, of recreating, on the far side of Kotsker questioning, a new and simplified religious language, one that can express

[13] Green, Arthur, *The Language of TRUTH: The Torah Commentary of the Sefat Emet*, (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society, 1994), p. xxviii.

higher or deeper truth without falling prey to the question of whether anyone in our time can attain such high rungs of knowledge."[14]

C. Read and discuss texts by the above Hasidic masters
   1. Discuss how each master uses the text to present a topic that they are interested in.
   2. Compare masters to see if there is any similarity between their messages.

VI. ***God was in this Place & I, i did not know***

A. Have students read this book before the class.
B. Using the book, discuss the seven different writer's versions of what the text actually teaches us.
C. Have the students discuss what understanding they have gained from both this book and the mystical interpretations of the Biblical text.

[14] Ibid., p. xxviii.

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"You shall not take a wife from among the Canaanite women," 7and that Jacob had obeyed his father and mother and gone to Paddan-aram, 8Esau realized that the Canaanite women displeased his father Isaac. 9So Esau went to Ishmael and took to wife, in addition to the wives he had, Mahalath the daughter of Ishmael son of Abraham, sister of Nebaioth.

יַעֲקֹב אֶל־אָבִיו וְאֶל־אִמּוֹ וַיֵּלֶךְ פַּדֶּנָה
אֲרָם׃ 8 וַיַּרְא עֵשָׂו כִּי רָעוֹת בְּנוֹת כְּנָעַן
בְּעֵינֵי יִצְחָק אָבִיו׃ 9 וַיֵּלֶךְ עֵשָׂו אֶל־
יִשְׁמָעֵאל וַיִּקַּח אֶת־מָחֲלַת | בַּת־יִשְׁמָעֵאל
בֶּן־אַבְרָהָם אֲחֹת נְבָיוֹת עַל־נָשָׁיו לוֹ
לְאִשָּׁה׃ ס

VA-YETSE'

ויצא

10Jacob left Beer-sheba, and set out for Haran. 11He came upon a certain place and stopped there for the night, for the sun had set. Taking one of the stones of that place, he put it under his head and lay down in that place. 12He had a dream; a stairway[b] was set on the ground and its top reached to the sky, and angels of God were going up and down on it. 13And the LORD was standing beside him and He said, "I am the LORD, the God of your father Abraham and the God of Isaac: the ground on which you are lying I will assign to you and to your offspring. 14Your descendants shall be as the dust of the earth; you shall spread out to the west and to the east, to the north and to the south. All the families of the earth shall bless themselves by you and your descendants. 15Remember, I am with you: I will protect you wherever you go and will bring you back to this land. I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you."

16Jacob awoke from his sleep and said, "Surely the LORD is present in this place, and I did not know it!" 17Shaken, he said, "How awesome is this place! This is none other than the abode of God, and that is the gateway to heaven." 18Early in the morning, Jacob took the stone that he had put under his head and set it up as a pillar and poured oil on the top of it. 19He named that site Bethel;[c] but previously the name of the city had been Luz.

10 וַיֵּצֵא יַעֲקֹב מִבְּאֵר שָׁבַע וַיֵּלֶךְ חָרָנָה׃
11 וַיִּפְגַּע בַּמָּקוֹם וַיָּלֶן שָׁם כִּי־בָא הַשָּׁמֶשׁ
וַיִּקַּח מֵאַבְנֵי הַמָּקוֹם וַיָּשֶׂם מְרַאֲשֹׁתָיו
וַיִּשְׁכַּב בַּמָּקוֹם הַהוּא׃ 12 וַיַּחֲלֹם וְהִנֵּה
סֻלָּם מֻצָּב אַרְצָה וְרֹאשׁוֹ מַגִּיעַ הַשָּׁמָיְמָה
וְהִנֵּה מַלְאֲכֵי אֱלֹהִים עֹלִים וְיֹרְדִים בּוֹ׃
13 וְהִנֵּה יְהוָה נִצָּב עָלָיו וַיֹּאמַר אֲנִי יְהוָה
אֱלֹהֵי אַבְרָהָם אָבִיךָ וֵאלֹהֵי יִצְחָק הָאָרֶץ
אֲשֶׁר אַתָּה שֹׁכֵב עָלֶיהָ לְךָ אֶתְּנֶנָּה
וּלְזַרְעֶךָ׃ 14 וְהָיָה זַרְעֲךָ כַּעֲפַר הָאָרֶץ
וּפָרַצְתָּ יָמָּה וָקֵדְמָה וְצָפֹנָה וָנֶגְבָּה וְנִבְרְכוּ
בְךָ כָּל־מִשְׁפְּחֹת הָאֲדָמָה וּבְזַרְעֶךָ׃
15 וְהִנֵּה אָנֹכִי עִמָּךְ וּשְׁמַרְתִּיךָ בְּכֹל אֲשֶׁר־
תֵּלֵךְ וַהֲשִׁבֹתִיךָ אֶל־הָאֲדָמָה הַזֹּאת כִּי
לֹא אֶעֱזָבְךָ עַד אֲשֶׁר אִם־עָשִׂיתִי אֶת
אֲשֶׁר־דִּבַּרְתִּי לָךְ׃
16 וַיִּיקַץ יַעֲקֹב מִשְּׁנָתוֹ וַיֹּאמֶר אָכֵן יֵשׁ
יְהוָה בַּמָּקוֹם הַזֶּה וְאָנֹכִי לֹא יָדָעְתִּי׃
17 וַיִּירָא וַיֹּאמֶר מַה־נּוֹרָא הַמָּקוֹם הַזֶּה
אֵין זֶה כִּי אִם־בֵּית אֱלֹהִים וְזֶה שַׁעַר
הַשָּׁמָיִם׃ 18 וַיַּשְׁכֵּם יַעֲקֹב בַּבֹּקֶר וַיִּקַּח
אֶת־הָאֶבֶן אֲשֶׁר־שָׂם מְרַאֲשֹׁתָיו וַיָּשֶׂם
אֹתָהּ מַצֵּבָה וַיִּצֹק שֶׁמֶן עַל־רֹאשָׁהּ׃
19 וַיִּקְרָא אֶת־שֵׁם־הַמָּקוֹם הַהוּא בֵּית־אֵל
וְאוּלָם לוּז שֵׁם־הָעִיר לָרִאשֹׁנָה׃

b Or "ramp"; others "ladder."
c I.e., "house of God."

20 וַיִּדַּר יַעֲקֹב נֶדֶר לֵאמֹר אִם־יִהְיֶה
אֱלֹהִים עִמָּדִי וּשְׁמָרַנִי בַּדֶּרֶךְ הַזֶּה אֲשֶׁר
אָנֹכִי הוֹלֵךְ וְנָתַן־לִי לֶחֶם לֶאֱכֹל וּבֶגֶד
לִלְבֹּשׁ׃ 21 וְשַׁבְתִּי בְשָׁלוֹם אֶל־בֵּית אָבִי
וְהָיָה יְהוָה לִי לֵאלֹהִים׃ 22 וְהָאֶבֶן הַזֹּאת
אֲשֶׁר־שַׂמְתִּי מַצֵּבָה יִהְיֶה בֵּית אֱלֹהִים
וְכֹל אֲשֶׁר תִּתֶּן־לִי עַשֵּׂר אֲעַשְּׂרֶנּוּ לָךְ׃

20Jacob then made a vow, saying, "If God remains with me, if He protects me on this journey that I am making, and gives me bread to eat and clothing to wear, 21and if I return safe to my father's house—the LORD shall be my God. 22And this stone, which I have set up as a pillar, shall be God's abode; and of all that You give me, I will set aside a tithe for You."

כט

29 וַיִּשָּׂא יַעֲקֹב רַגְלָיו וַיֵּלֶךְ אַרְצָה
בְּנֵי־קֶדֶם׃ 2 וַיַּרְא וְהִנֵּה בְאֵר בַּשָּׂדֶה וְהִנֵּה־
שָׁם שְׁלֹשָׁה עֲדְרֵי־צֹאן רֹבְצִים עָלֶיהָ כִּי
מִן־הַבְּאֵר הַהִוא יַשְׁקוּ הָעֲדָרִים וְהָאֶבֶן
גְּדֹלָה עַל־פִּי הַבְּאֵר׃ 3 וְנֶאֶסְפוּ־שָׁמָּה כָּל־
הָעֲדָרִים וְגָלְלוּ אֶת־הָאֶבֶן מֵעַל פִּי הַבְּאֵר
וְהִשְׁקוּ אֶת־הַצֹּאן וְהֵשִׁיבוּ אֶת־הָאֶבֶן
עַל־פִּי הַבְּאֵר לִמְקֹמָהּ׃
4 וַיֹּאמֶר לָהֶם יַעֲקֹב אַחַי מֵאַיִן אַתֶּם
וַיֹּאמְרוּ מֵחָרָן אֲנָחְנוּ׃ 5 וַיֹּאמֶר לָהֶם
הֲיְדַעְתֶּם אֶת־לָבָן בֶּן־נָחוֹר וַיֹּאמְרוּ
יָדָעְנוּ׃ 6 וַיֹּאמֶר לָהֶם הֲשָׁלוֹם לוֹ וַיֹּאמְרוּ
שָׁלוֹם וְהִנֵּה רָחֵל בִּתּוֹ בָּאָה עִם־הַצֹּאן׃
7 וַיֹּאמֶר הֵן עוֹד הַיּוֹם גָּדוֹל לֹא־עֵת הֵאָסֵף
הַמִּקְנֶה הַשְׁקוּ הַצֹּאן וּלְכוּ רְעוּ׃ 8 וַיֹּאמְרוּ
לֹא נוּכַל עַד אֲשֶׁר יֵאָסְפוּ כָּל־הָעֲדָרִים
וְגָלֲלוּ אֶת־הָאֶבֶן מֵעַל פִּי הַבְּאֵר וְהִשְׁקִינוּ
הַצֹּאן׃
9 עוֹדֶנּוּ מְדַבֵּר עִמָּם וְרָחֵל | בָּאָה עִם־
הַצֹּאן אֲשֶׁר לְאָבִיהָ כִּי רֹעָה הִוא׃ 10 וַיְהִי
כַּאֲשֶׁר רָאָה יַעֲקֹב אֶת־רָחֵל בַּת־לָבָן אֲחִי
אִמּוֹ וְאֶת־צֹאן לָבָן אֲחִי אִמּוֹ וַיִּגַּשׁ יַעֲקֹב
וַיָּגֶל אֶת־הָאֶבֶן מֵעַל פִּי הַבְּאֵר וַיַּשְׁקְ
אֶת־צֹאן לָבָן אֲחִי אִמּוֹ׃ 11 וַיִּשַּׁק יַעֲקֹב
לְרָחֵל וַיִּשָּׂא אֶת־קֹלוֹ וַיֵּבְךְ׃ 12 וַיַּגֶּד יַעֲקֹב

29 Jacob a-resumed his journey-a and came to the land of the Easterners. 2There before his eyes was a well in the open. Three flocks of sheep were lying there beside it, for the flocks were watered from that well. The stone on the mouth of the well was large. 3When all the flocks were gathered there, the stone would be rolled from the mouth of the well and the sheep watered; then the stone would be put back in its place on the mouth of the well.

4Jacob said to them, "My friends, where are you from?" And they said, "We are from Haran." 5He said to them, "Do you know Laban the son of Nahor?" And they said, "Yes, we do." 6He continued, "Is he well?" They answered, "Yes, he is; and there is his daughter Rachel, coming with the flock." 7He said, "It is still broad daylight, too early to round up the animals; water the flock and take them to pasture." 8But they said, "We cannot, until all the flocks are rounded up; then the stone is rolled off the mouth of the well and we water the sheep."

9While he was still speaking with them, Rachel came with her father's flock; for she was a shepherdess. 10And when Jacob saw Rachel, the daughter of his uncle[b] Laban, and the flock of his uncle Laban, Jacob went up and rolled the stone off the mouth of the well, and watered the flock of his uncle Laban. 11Then Jacob kissed Rachel, and broke into tears. 12Jacob told Rachel

a-a Lit. "lifted up his feet."
b Lit. "his mother's brother."

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AND HE DREAMED . It may be asked, how came Jacob, the holy man, the perfection of the Patriarchs, to have a vision only in a dream, and that in such a holy spot? The reason is that Jacob at that time was not yet married, and that Isaac was still alive. It is true that we find him subsequently saying: "and I saw in a dream" (Gen. XXXI, 10), at a time when he was already married. But that was due to the inferiority of the place, as well as to the fact that Isaac was still alive. So when he came into the Holy Land with all the tribes, with "the foundation of the house, the mother of the children rejoicing", we read, "and God spake unto Israel in the visions of the night" (Gen. XLVI, 2)-not "dream", but "visions", which are of another and higher grade. Dreams are transmitted through the medium of Gabriel, who is the sixth in rank of inspiration; but a vision comes through the grade of the Hayyah that rules in the night. True, it says in one place, "Gabriel, make this man to understand the vision" (Dan. VIII, 16). The reason there is that a dream is more precise than a vision, and may explain what is obscure in a vision, and therefore Gabriel was sent to explain to Daniel what was obscure in his vision. A "vision" (mar'eh=vision, or mirror) is so called because it is like a mirror, in which all images are reflected. (Thus we read: "And I appeared... as El Shaddai" (Ex. VI, 2), this grade being like a mirror which showed another form, since all supernal forms are reflected in it.) **AND BEHOLD A LADDER SET UP ON THE EARTH**. This ladder signifies the grade on which the other grades rest, to wit, the "Foundation of the world". **AND THE TOP OF IT REACHED TO HEAVEN** , so as to be attached to it. For this grade is the conclusion of the Body standing between the upper and the lower world in the same way as the sign of the covenant is situated at the end of the trunk of the body, between the thighs. **AND BEHOLD, THE ANGELS OF GOD ASCENDING AND DESCENDING ON IT** ; this alludes to the Chieftains who have charge of all the nations, and who ascend and descend on that ladder. When Israel are sinful, the ladder is lowered and the Chieftains ascend by it; but when Israel are righteous, the ladder is removed and all the Chieftains are left below and are deprived of their dominion. Jacob thus saw in this dream the domination of Esau and the domination of the other nations. According to another explanation, the angels ascended and descended on the top of the ladder; for when the top was detached, the ladder was lowered and the Chieftains ascended, but when it was attached again, the ladder was lifted and they remained below. But it comes to the same thing.

It says of Solomon that" In Gibeon the Lord appeared to him in a dream by night" (I Kings III, 5).

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Here we have "appearing" and "dream" combined, to show that there was there a mingling of two grades, a higher and a lower, the reason being that Solomon had not then yet attained his full development. But when he had perfected himself it is written of him, "And God gave Solomon wisdom" (Ibid. V, 9), also" And Solomon's wisdom excelled, etc." (Ibid. 10); for the moon then reached its fullness and the Temple was built, and thus Solomon saw wisdom eye to eye and had no need of dreams. After he sinned, however, he was beholden again to dreams as before. Hence it says that "God appeared unto him twice" (Ibid. XI, 9)-twice, that is, in dreams, for communications through wisdom he had every day. Moreover, the dream-medium of Solomon excelled that of all other men inasmuch as it was a mingling of grade with grade, of vision with vision. In his later days, however, darkness fell upon him on account of his sins, and the moon waned because he observed not the holy covenant and gave himself up to strange women. This was the condition God made with David, saying: "If thy children keep my covenant... their children also for ever shall sit upon the throne" (Ps. CXXXII, 12), where the expression "for ever" it of the same import as the phrase "as the days of the heaven above the earth" (Deut. XI, 21). And since Solomon did not keep the covenant properly, the moon began to wane, and so in the end he was beholden again to dreams; and likewise Jacob was beholden to dreams, as explained before. **AND BEHOLD, THE LORD STOOD** (nitsab) UPON IT, ETC. Here Jacob discerned the essential unity of the object of faith. This is implied in the term nitsab (firmly knit), which implies that Jacob saw all grades stationed as one on that ladder so as to be knit into one whole. And inasmuch as that ladder is situated between two sides, God said to him: **I AM THE LORD, THE GOD OF ABRAHAM THY FATHER, AND THE GOD OF ISAAC**, these two being respectively of the two sides, one of the right and the other of the left. According to another explanation, the Lord was standing over him, to wit, over Jacob, so as to form the Divine Chariot, with the Community of Israel, embodied in Jacob, as the uniting link in the midst, between the right and the left. That Jacob was in the midst is proved by the fact that the text here calls Abraham "thy father", but not Isaac, thus showing that Jacob was next to Abraham; and hence the text naturally continues: **THE LAND WHEREON THOU LIEST** , showing that the whole formed one sacred Chariot. Here Jacob saw that he was to be the crown of the patriarchs. The words "the God of thy father Abraham and the God of Isaac" show that Jacob was attached to either side and holding fast to both of them. But as long as he was not married this fact is not disclosed in the text, save to those who can read between the lines. After he married and begat children, however, it was openly stated, as it is written: "And he erected there an altar, and the God of Israel called him El

(godlike)". From here we learn that whoever is incomplete below remains incomplete on high. Jacob was an exception, yet he too before marriage was not perfected openly; or rather, he only foresaw that he eventually would be perfected. It is true, God had already said to him, "And, behold, I am with thee, and will keep thee whithersoever thou goest." This, however, only implies that God's care and protection were always with him in the hour of need, in this world; but as regards the higher world, he was not sure of it till he had perfected himself. **AND JACOB AWARENED OUT OF HIS SLEEP, AND HE SAID: SURELY THE LORD IS IN THIS PLACE, AND I KNEW IT NOT.** How, we may ask, could he have known? The truth is, however, that he meant much the same as Saul when he said: "and I have not entreated the Presence of the Lord" (I Sam. XIII, 12). What Jacob really said was: "And I have not known Anokhi (I, i.e. the Shekinah)"; as much as to say: "Behold all this revelation has been vouchsafed to me whilst yet I have not reached the stage of a knowledge of Anokhi (I) and of entering under the wings of the Shekinah, so as to attain perfection". Similarly, Rebekah said: "If it be so, what boots me Anokhi (I)?" (Gen. XXV, 22), because she saw every day the splendour of the Shekinah,

Soncino Zohar, Bereshith, Section 1, Page 150b

but when she felt the pains of approaching childbirth, "she went to enquire of the Lord" (Ibid.), that is, she proceeded from the Shekinah grade to another grade, identical with the Lord (TETRAGRAMMATON). Hence Jacob said: "Have I seen all this without knowing Anokhi?", because he was single, and had not yet come under the wings of the Shekinah. Straightway: **AND HE WAS AFRAID, AND SAID: HOW FULL OF AWE IS THIS PLACE**. The word "place" here has a twofold significance. It refers in the first instance to the place mentioned by Jacob in the preceding verse; but it also refers to the mark of the holy covenant, which should not be left inoperative. (These two significations, however, are only two aspects of one and the same idea.) Jacob then said: **THIS IS NONE OTHER THAN THE HOUSE OF GOD**, implying: This is not to remain idle; its covenant is not meant to exist in isolation. It is in sooth a godly abode, to be used for the promotion of fecundity and for receiving blessing from all the bodily organs. For indeed this is **THE GATE OF HEAVEN**, or, in other words, the gate of the Body, the gate assuredly through which pass the blessings downwards, so that it is attached both on high and below: on high, as being the gate of heaven, and below, as being none other than the house of God." Hence "he was afraid, and said: How full of awe is this place!" But mankind (it may be added) pay no regard to its preciousness, so as thereby to become perfect on high and here below.'

The father of the youth went up to him and kissed him. R. Isaac said: 'When I heard him speak thus, I wept and said: Blessed be the Merciful One who has not allowed divine Wisdom to perish from the world. I followed them until we entered the next town, a distance of three parasangs. Hardly had they arrived in the town when the man had his son affianced. I said to him: "You act upon your own words." I also repeated the remark of R. Simeon, that all these verses are allegorical and have a profound significance. When I repeated all this in the presence of R. Simeon, he remarked to me that I should not think that all this exposition was merely the youth's own idea: it contains recondite thoughts which bear the seal of divine Wisdom.' **AND JACOB VOWED A VOW, SAYING: IF GOD WILL BE WITH ME, ETC.** Said R. Judah: After receiving all these promises, how could Jacob still say, If God will be with me, etc."? What Jacob meant, however, was this: "Some dreams are true and some not, so if this dream should come true, and God will really be with me as I have dreamt, then "the Lord shall be to me for God", that is, I shall draw blessings from the well-spring of the universal stream towards the region called Elohim.' For Israel being in the centre take first of the original well-spring, and after the bounty reaches them they pass it on toward that region. Hence we may render: "and the Lord shall be toward me, first, and afterwards the whole will be drawn toward Elohim": i.e. in the same way as Elohim will fulfil for me all these good promises, so will I draw toward Him from my region all those blessings and will make Him the all-comprehensive uniting force. When will that be? "When I come back to my father's house in peace", when I shall be settled in my own grade, in the grade of peace so as to make perfect my father's house, then "will the Lord be toward me, toward Elohim (God)".' According to another explanation, Jacob meant: "I desire to come back to my father's house in peace, because there is the Holy Land, and there I will become perfected, and the Lord shall be my God. In that place will I duly rise from this grade to another grade, and there I will engage myself in His worship." R. Hiya adduced here the verse: The tale of iniquities is too heavy for me; our transgressions, thou wilt pardon them (Ps. LXV, 4). 'The two halves of the verse', he said, 'do not seem to fit one another. The truth is, however, that David first prayed for himself and then for mankind in general, as though to say, "I know my own sins, but there are a great number of sinners in the world whose sins are much more grievous than mine; this being so, both mine

and theirs, all our transgressions, thou wilt pardon them." For when sinners become numerous in the world, they go up to the place where the records are kept,

as it is written, "there is a sitting in judgment and the books are open" (Dan. VII, 10). That book stood, as it were, over the head of David, and hence he said, "The tale of iniquities is too heavy for me, and therefore", he went on, "our transgressions thou wilt pardon them". Jacob, being in a similar condition, felt distrustful, not of God, but of himself, and he feared lest his sins should prevent him from returning in peace and deprive him of God's providential care. **THEN SHALL THE LORD BE MY GOD**: i.e. should I return in peace, I shall not care even if the attribute of divine mercy becomes justice towards me, inasmuch as I will worship Him continually.' R. Aha said that Jacob's words amounted to saying: 'Now I have no need of severity, but when I will return to my father's house, I will link myself with that attribute also.' Said R. Jose: 'That is not so, but what Jacob ptactically said was: Now I require the attribute of divine justice to guard me (against my enemies) until I return in peace to my father's house, but then I will combine mercy with justice, and bind all attributes in a firm unity.'

The Baal Shem Tov[1]

I have heard from my master [the Baal Shem Tov] that a person's many sins can blunt his experience of worshiping God. As a result of his degradation, he does not believe that his Torah study and prayer can bring spiritual sustenance to all universes. He does not realize that all the angels are sustained through his words of Torah and prayer.

But if you are aware of the results of your actions, it would cause you to serve God with the greatest joy and awe. You would be careful with every motion, with every word and letter, to do everything in the best possible manner.

Consider Solomon's words, *When you lie between the lips* (Ps. 68:14). This means that God anxiously watches a person's lips, and kisses them when he speaks words of Torah or prayer with love and reverence.

Think about this. What man would not be seized with trembling and quaking from the fact that the great, awesome King anxiously watches the lips of the lowest mortals and the most despised of men . . .

Our sages teach us that "the humility of Rabbi Zechariah caused the Holy Temple to be destroyed" (Gittin 56a). [There is humility that can cause destruction, and this is when a person feels that he is too small for his deeds to have any effect on high.]

Think about this and realize that you are *a ladder standing on earth, whose top reaches the heavens* (Gen. 28:12). Every motion that you make, every word that you speak, all your travels and affairs, make a mark on high, and even higher than high. Consider this, and you will be careful that all your ways and affairs be for the sake of heaven.

A person may think, "Of what importance am I to blemish or rectify anything on high or below? Why should all my affairs make a mark on high?" Because of such thoughts, he follows his desires, saying, *I will have peace*, [*though I walk in stubbornness of my heart*]" (Deut. 28:9). When you express love here on earth, you arouse the Attribute of Love on high in all the universes (Zohar 2:23b).

Our sages teach us, "Know what is above from you" (Avot 2:1). They are saying that you should know that the Attributes on high are "from you" – they are all aroused through your deeds.

---

[1] Yosef, Rabbi Yaakov, *Toledoth Yaakov Yosef*, found in The Light Beyond by Rabbi Aryeh Kaplan, (New York: Maznaim Publishing Corporation, 1981), pp. 229-230.

The Mezricher Magid[1]

The question was raised as to why there are different customs regarding the order of prayer [such as Ashkenaz and Sephard], and how each individual should pray.

I replied that it is impossible adequately to explain these things in writing. But the following can be revealed:

Our sages teach us that [a person entering and leaving] the Holy Temple [*Beit HaMikdash*] would have to bow 13 times, paralleling the 13 gates [of the Temple] (Shekalim 6:1,2). These are also alluded to in the Book of Ezekiel, where each tribe will have its own gate when the holiness of Jerusalem is restored to the status it had in the time of the Temple (Ez. 48:31).

It is known that the Temple here on earth paralleled the Temple on high. (Zohar 2:59b) The Holy Temple on high therefore also has a gate for each tribe, as explained in the writings of the Ari.

Paralleling these gates were the 13 times that a person had to bow. These kneelings involved the transmission [of the spiritual sustenance that flows through these gates] as is known to those who delve into the writings of the Ari.

The concept of prayer is therefore [the key with which] each individual enters through his won gate. We are thus taught that prayer is, *the ladder standing on earth, with its head reaching the heavens* (Gen. 28:12). Each gate has its own combination, and it is for this reason that there are different orders of prayer. [Each of the twelve tribes has its own liturgy.]

The thirteenth gate, however, is for the individual who does not know from which of the twelve tribes he originates. Since he does not which gate to use, [he can use this one] to enter the Kings's courtyard.

This thirteenth gate also parallels the thirteenth Attribute of Mercy, which is *and cleanses* (Ex. 34:6).[2] This includes the other twelve Attributes, as is known to those who comprehend.

Knowing the paths of heaven as he did, the godly Ari taught a way for those who do not know from which tribe they originate. For this reason, he arranged a special order of prayer based on all the others, as known to those who are well versed.

It may then be asked why the other twelve gates were needed, since they are all included in the thirteenth. Why is the thirteenth gate not enough?

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[1] Baer, Rabbi Dov, *Magid Devarav Le Yaakov*, found in The Light Beyond by Rabbi Aryeh Kaplan, (New York: Maznaim Publishing Corporation, 1981), pp. 204-205.

[2] The Thirteen Attributes of Mercy are cited in Exodus 34:6: "God (1), merciful (2) and gracious (3), slow (4) to anger (5), and abundant in love (6), and truth (7). Keeping mercy (8) to the thousandth generation (9), forgiving sin (10), rebellion (11) and error (12), and cleansing (13).

The answer is, however, that each tribe originally knew its own particular order of prayer, and it was certainly best for each one to enter through its own gate. . .

Now that people do not know the tribe of their origin, and we also do not know which customs apply to which tribes, it is best to follow the order arranged by the Ari, which is universal.

The prophet Ezekiel predicted that in the Ultimate Future there would only be twelve gates in Jerusalem [one for each tribe]. The reason for this is that everyone will then know his own tribe.

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Upright Practices, The Light of the Eyes

TRANSLATION AND INTRODUCTION BY
ARTHUR GREEN

PREFACE BY
SAMUEL H. DRESNER

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Cover Art:
The drawings of MARK PODWAL appear regularly on the Op-Ed page of the New York Times and he has exhibited in numerous museums, including The Louvre and, in New York, The Jewish Museum. He has published several books, including *Let My People Go: A Haggadah, A Book of Hebrew Letters,* and the forthcoming *The Golem: The Legend of a Legend* with a text by Elie Wiesel. Since no portrait of Rabbi Menahem Nahum of Chernobyl exists, the artist painted a bearded figure immersed in prayer wearing phylacteries and prayer shawl, surrounded by Hebrew letters.

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Having the task of raising up all the future generations, he had to go down from his own rung and lower himself to that level where they were to be. He SET OUT FOR HARAN, the place of judgment forces. That is why HE CAME UPON A CERTAIN PLACE, also interpreted to read "he prayed to God," he prayed for them from there. Understand this.

V

JACOB LEFT BEER-SHEBA . . . HE HAD A DREAM . . . AND ANGELS OF GOD WERE GOING UP AND DOWN ON IT.

The Midrash says that Jacob foresaw the four kingdoms of the four exiles, Babylonia, Medea, Greece, and Edom [=Rome]. He saw each of them rise and fall. God said to him: Why do you not come up the ladder? He replied: I am afraid lest I fall like all the others. God answered: Had you had faith in Me and come up, no nation or culture could ever have had power over you or your seed. Now that you have shown this lack of faith, these nations shall enslave your children. And yet despite this, never say that I am deserting them in their exile. "I will make an end of all the nations among which I have banished you, but I will not make an end of you" (Jer. 46:28).

In understanding this, we must first remember that the source of Torah and the fount of wisdom from which we receive the revealed word is in the thought of God Himself; God's *ḥokhmah* and *binah* are the World of Thought. There the Torah exists in a completely hidden way, not revealed at all. In that place there exists neither speech nor language. In order to be revealed as word, the Torah must pass through *da'at*, that which is to bring it from the World of Thought into the World of Speech. *Da'at* includes both love and fear, both compassion and rigor. It is because Moses represents *da'at* that the Torah so frequently says: "The Lord spoke unto Moses saying, 'Speak unto the children of Israel.' "[1] We have shown this elsewhere as well: Moses brings the hidden Torah from the World of Thought to the children of Israel in the form of speech. By means of *da'at*, the revelatory power of speech has been joined to the source of secret wisdom. For this reason the Zohar tells us that "any word spoken by a person without fear and love does not fly upward." As we have said, *da'at* contains both love and fear; only through it can the revealed word be joined to its sublime and hidden source, [even] without understanding.[2]

1. Moses, as *da'at*, is the channel of revelation that brings language and expression to that which had formerly been beyond speech.

This is why a person who studies Torah or prays with both love and fear can attain proper awareness and create a channel in his mind and speech so that the eternal fount of wisdom may flow into him. The Torah that he speaks has become completely one with its source in *ḥokhmah* and *binah* above. Study marked by such love and fear truly shows the rung of *da'at*; its words go right up to their very root, and a great act of union takes place. Study without this content, of course, is not the same. Here the words are cut off from their root; there is no one to join the revealed word to its source in the wellsprings above. Not rising and being joined to its source, the verbal Torah that you study cannot receive the flow of fine oil that might otherwise come upon it.

Thus should you understand "Judgment forces are sweetened only in their root": this refers to *binah*, as we have said earlier: "I am *binah* and *gevurah* is mine," says Scripture (Prov. 8:14).[3] The Torah is called *binah* and it claims the judgment forces as its own; they must all be brought back to Torah, out of which they first arose. It is there that they can be transformed. When such forces come on a person, he begins to become more aware, and love and fear enter into his sacred speech. He then takes hold of himself with this renewed awareness, and this *da'at* binds his words to the World of Thought, bringing about that unification. Then are his words uplifted and bound to their root. Since *da'at* is the joining of love and fear, compassion and judgment, the judgment forces that are now surrounded by compassion may rise up to that World of Thought, the place where there is

2. He has now reversed the process, showing that *da'at* is crucial to both directions of the flow. In the transmission of Torah from God to man, *da'at* represents conscious mind, the level of understanding to which speech is first appropriate and where speech may enter. As we turn to God in prayer, *da'at* represents our religious awareness or presence of mind; only with this mind, composed first of love and fear, can prayer ascend to God. Even with proper prayer and inwardness, however, true understanding of *ḥokhmah* and *binah* is beyond human reach.

3. Conventionally translated: "I am understanding and power is mine," but here meaning that *binah*, the second of the *sefirot*, stands at the head of the left column and is thus the ultimate source of judgment, even of the demonic. See above, *bereshit* 2.

no judgment at all. Only down below are compassion and judgment split off from one another; up above there is only the Torah of Compassion . . . simple mercy . . . thus by means of *da'at* does one attain in utter unity to the World of Thought, the place where judgment and compassion are rejoined and transformed.

What has happened is that those forces, formerly in a downward trend, are now uplifted through *da'at* and made holy again; joined to love, they become the proper fear of God. The good in them has been uplifted and the evil falls away. These forces had come from judgment above, and it was only due to human failings that they had been mixed with evil and become forces of persecution.[4] By studying Torah in love and fear one has taken the good out of these forces to rejoin it to Torah. Thus are the judgment forces sweetened: The good is separated out of the evil, and the evil falls by the way. Thus have I heard in the name of the Ba'al Shem Tov concerning the following passage in the Talmud:

Mar 'Ukva sent this question to Rabbi Eleazar: "There are people standing up against me, and I have the power to turn them over to the civil authorities. What shall I do?" He [Rabbi Eleazar] drew lines on paper and wrote to him: " 'I resolved I would watch my step lest I offend by my speech; I would keep my mouth muzzled while the wicked was in my presence' (Ps. 39:2). Even though confronted by the wicked, I should keep my mouth muzzled." He sent back: "But they bother me terribly, and I have no way to punish them." Rabbi Eleazar answered: " 'Be silent and wait (*titḤoLeL*) for the Lord' (Ps. 37:7)—Be silent and He will cause them to drop before you like corpses (*ḤaLaLim*). Go to the House of Study over them morning and evening, and they will be destroyed on their own." The Ba'al Shem Tov interpreted this passage in accord with what we have taught. Rabbi Eleazar offered great advice, saying that if you go to the House of Study morning and evening, bearing them in mind, the judgment forces in those enemies will be sweetened. The fact that a person has enemies below is only the result of some judgment on him from above, mixed with evil impurities and then garbed in the sort of person in this world who would be appropriate to such a role. The best advice in this situation is not to challenge the enemy, but to go daily to the House of Study, into the innermost Torah, to a place of awareness. By studying and praying with love and fear you will arouse true *da'at*. Then you and your words will be raised up to the World of Thought, that place where there is no judgment, no Satan, no enemy, but only pure goodness. Then you, along with those fallen forces that had become enemies, will be drawn into the good.

4. Heb.: *li-fe'ol dinim*. See Introduction on the ambiguities of the term *dinim* and the difficulty in translating it.

All this can happen only when you have truly accepted that those fallen powers contain the holy letters; whatever judgment forces come down on you, they contain fallen letters. That is why we speak about and deal with events that happen to us through language. The very letters through which we talk about the event are letters through which, in their fallen state, the event had taken place. In holding fast to the letters of Torah, through love and fear, the person is drawn by the force of those letters to the Torah's source. Then the fallen letters . . . are also returned to their root, to the good. Everything that comes into this world, whether for good or ill, comes about through certain permutations of the letters. By raising up the good that is within the judgments, the evil that had become mixed with good is separated and falls away and everything becomes a part of the good. Then those people who had been enemies are also transformed into friends; without the judgment forces from above, they will do no ill. This is what Rabbi Eleazar meant when he said, "He will cause them to drop before you like corpses"—the evil in those forces will indeed fall; all life taken from it, it will be as a corpse. The good that had been a part of those forces will have been redeemed, reincluded in the good and transformed into the fear of God. . . . Thus Scripture said: "Be silent and wait for the Lord." Bring those letters that had been a part of the evil up to the world of silence, the World of Thought, in which neither speech nor language has come to be. In that place there can be only good, with no pollution by evil at all. This *da'at* is, as we have said, symbolized by our father Jacob.

This then is JACOB LEFT BEER-SHEBA: Jacob, as *da'at*, left the realm of hidden Torah, that source of wisdom which is called the well of living waters or Beer-sheba (for of wisdom Scripture says: "She has hewn out her seven pillars"—Prov. 9:1). *Da'at* draws forth from this spring and brings it out into speech; only in this way is the uplifting and sweetening of the fallen letters made possible. Thus HE WENT TO HARAN: mind has to go forth to that place of divine anger (*ḤaRoN*) . . . to bring those forces back up to their original wellsprings in the World of Thought. HE CAME UPON A CERTAIN PLACE: The Hebrew verb used for "came upon" can also refer to

prayer; you begin to pray from the very place to which you have fallen. If your prayer is a mindful one, combining both love and fear with the letters of Torah, the letters of that judgment place will be joined to them as well. [This place had represented] the hiding of God's face, as in "I will keep My countenance hidden" and this is "for there is no God within me" (Deut. 31:18). It is the damage wrought by sin that takes one away from God: But now that the forces of judgment and the fallen letters are raised up by the presence of mind and are joined to the good, he is able to STOP THERE FOR THE NIGHT, as in "He lies between my breasts" (Cant. 1:13—*wa-yaLeN/yaLiN*). By repairing the damage and uplifting the judgments he indeed can cleave to God. Evil is there only because "there is no God within me"; once the presence of God has been restored, all is goodness and blessing. And so Jacob lay down there, as one who "lies between my breasts." This refers to the dwelling of God in the midst of the people Israel.

FOR THE SUN HAD SET: We learn elsewhere that "the Lord God is the sun and a shield" (Ps. 84:12). His divinity, despite a thousand differences, is like the sun, in that one cannot look into it except through a shield or visor. Thus can the brilliant light of *Eyn Sof* not be perceived except in greatly reduced form. Now the sun has set before its time by a person's fall into the place of judgment; as he is redeemed from there, the brilliant sun begins to shine on him once again. . . . All this because he took SOME OF THE STONES OF THAT PLACE: He took the letters (which the *Sefer Yeẓirah* calls stones) from that very place, and he PUT THEM AT HIS HEAD, he raised them up to the source of the letters, the wellspring of Torah, the World of Thought. In this sense *wa-yaḥalom*, he became well again (*ḤaLom/ḤaLiM*—Aram.); he healed the sickness of the judgment forces and brought them back into the good.

Now there was A LADDER SET UPON THE GROUND. Mind is such a ladder, reaching downward to the most revealed of levels, its TOP REACHING TO HEAVEN, to the place of true liberation, the World of Thought.[5] The ANGELS OF GOD, those emissaries of divine judgment, WERE GOING UP AND DOWN ON

5. True liberation is found in the boundlessness of the fully contemplative life, set loose from those attachments to corporeal things that necessarily keep one in a world of limitation. The World of Thought, identified with *binah*, is associated with freedom or liberation by a long Kabbalistic tradition in the exegesis of the Jubilee command (Lev. 25:10).

IT. RaSHI says that each would first go up and then descend. This means that by the true application of mind to prayer and study, performing them with the proper combination of love and fear, the very letters that had formed words of judgment against a person are rejoined to the good. Then the evil is separated and falls aside, as we have said. AND BEHOLD THE LORD WAS BESIDE HIM: Here the name used (YHWH) is that which indicates compassion; the transforming of judgments arouses the flow of divine compassion from the source of life. Now we see that HE LAY DOWN IN THAT PLACE should indeed be interpreted as did the mystics, referring to the twenty-two letters of the alphabet.[6] The letters of Creation were there too, but in a fallen state. By cleaving to the Torah with presence of mind, he able to uplift these letters also and to join them to the good.

In the exile of Israel, some of those judging forces from above take on the form of nations that bring us suffering. Were Israel to have full faith in the power of mind, and apply it to Torah study with proper devotion, they would uplift and transform all such judgments into pure good. Each of those nations would then have only one cycle of ascendency, followed by immediate decline, for the good would have been lifted out from it. It is only because our faith is imperfect that the exile lasts so long. Even those who do pray and study, if their minds are not fully attuned and if not accompanied by love and fear, cannot form the ladders needed for the transformation of judgment forces. This can be done only by mind. The true meaning of exile, then, is that mind is in exile because it is not employed properly in the service of God. The lessening of faith brings about a diminishing of mind; faith, the seventh of the upper rungs,[7] is the gateway through which one must enter to get to *da'at* and all the rest. The *Sefer Yeẓirah* tells us that God chooses to group all in sevens: seven lands, seven seas, and so forth. Now we understand why this is, for any ascent to the higher rungs must begin with the seventh, that is, with faith.

Now we may understand what the Midrash meant in saying that Jacob saw the four kingdoms, the four exiles. He saw the forces of judgment rising and descending, he saw how . . . such forces might be transformed. God's question to Jacob as to why he did not come up

6. See above, the second teaching of this section.
7. Faith is often a name for the *shekhinah*, seventh among the seven lower *sefirot*.

the ladder can now be interpreted; He teaches a great truth to Israel. The fact that we, worthy as we may be, are not uplifted and our exile is not ended is because the Jacob (=*da'at*) in us does not rise upward. This in turn is true because we are of little faith; our mind itself remains in a state of exile. That is why the Midrash says: "Had you shown faith in Me"—for all of this depends on faith. "Now that you showed this lack of faith," the Midrash goes on to say, by not serving God with presence of mind, with love and fear, and thus by not uplifting and transforming those forces of judgment, you indeed will be subjected to these four exiles. Nevertheless, God promises, "I will make an end of all the nations . . . but I will not make an end of you." In the end it will have to be that mind and faith spread forth in Israel; all those nations that had oppressed us will vanish from both this world and the next as the good in those judgment forces is sweetened and the evil falls away.

We are told that the nations are given this world, while Israel have the world to come. We should not, however, take this teaching too literally. We have also learned that all the worlds, all creatures great and small, were created for the sake of Israel. Surely they were not created for one from whom this world would entirely be taken away! Understand the matter rather this way: "For by *yod he* has the Lord formed the worlds (Isa. 26:4).[8] The world to come was created by *yod*, while this world was formed by *he*." This *he* that follows the *yod* is the second letter of the divine name, and these two letters are referred to in the Zohar as "two companions who are never separated." They are joined together as one; there exists no separation between them at all. So it is with the two worlds created through them: They too must be one and inseparable. This world is that of matter, the corporeal, while the other is that of form, of the soul. Just as in the case of a human being, so long as body and soul are joined together he lives, but they part company when he dies, so it is with the two worlds. Israel must therefore conduct themselves in this world by the ways of the soul, that which truly belongs to the next, so that the two worlds never be quite separate from one another. By purifying their bodies and avoiding in this world both the bad and the excessive, they are ever able to convert matter into form. They must use only that of this world needed for the soul, that element of the next world that

8. Based on Midrashic interpretation. Literally "For in Yah the Lord you have an everlasting rock."

gives them life. If they were indeed to do so entirely, matter and form would be completely one; matter would be so purified that it too could be called form, its corporeal existence only secondary. Then the life-force from above, that life of the world-to-come, would flow through it as well. All this would come about through the unifying force of mind, of that *da'at* SET UPON THE GROUND but whose TOP REACHES HEAVEN. Mind could make it so that this world too could be considered a world of life. People then would not fear to look at the light from above, their corporeal selves being so purified and joined to the soul. . . .

This world, bearing that divine life within it, has been granted to Israel alone, for it is truly the world to come. The excesses and luxuries of this world that have been assigned to the nations are not even a part of that "body" which the other-worldly soul inhabits. These are outside the body, mere lifeless waste and dross. This is referred to as "this world as dead," bearing within it no presence of the holy life. . . . Anyone with intelligence will be able to see clearly that the things of this world as the nations have them are in fact repulsive, being utterly without life.[9] Indeed one can see that it is all lifeless, mere excess and nothing more.

It is only Israel's lack of faith and mind, needed to bind this world to the world of the soul, that causes the world to fall constantly and to remain cut off from life. Then judgment comes to the world, and it is only for the few righteous ones in each generation who serve God with mind and with love and fear that the world is allowed to exist and does not fall utterly. It is they who turn God's justice back to mercy and bind the world to soul again. Thus Scripture says: "When evildoers rise up against me, my ears shall hear" (Ps. 92:12): The evildoers are the result of judgments, and I raise them up to that place where there is no speech but only hearing, the World of Thought.[10] There they are transformed.

In messianic times (speedily and in our day, God willing!) there will be so much mind-awareness in the world that this world and its corporeal self will indeed be purified and matter will be joined to

9. The author may be referring either to idolatry or to course materialism. The life of luxury as lived by the royalty and nobility of Eastern Europe was a natural object for the preachers' derision.

10. *Binah* is beyond voice; one may listen to and be instructed by its silence, but there is as yet no word. The purely contemplative may instruct, but only in silence. It is there that "evil" forces are transformed.

form, the two worlds united. Then evil, excess, and dross will all fall to the side, [eventually] to be purified. The nations that hold fast to them will also then fall, as life is removed entirely from that dross. . . . But this world, precious to God and beloved by Him, has in truth been given to Israel, the people He has loved from among all peoples and cultures. All is one: Divinity above, Israel, Torah, the world-to-come, and this world. All bring forth the flow of His Godliness, this world in a more external way, but containing within it that inward self of the world-to-come. These must be joined into a total oneness, such that will allow body to be translated into soul, just as happens within a single human person. This task has been given to Israel, the people close to Him; no others have a part in it until the redeemer comes. Then matter will be so purified that the term "this world" will no longer apply at all; everything will be one and it will be called the world-to-come. Of this Scripture says: "On that day shall the Lord be one and His name one" (Zech. 14:9).
Amen Selah unto eternity. Blessed is the Lord forever. Amen. Amen.

VI

JACOB LEFT BEER-SHEBA AND SET OUT FOR HARAN.

RaSHI comments: "When he reached Haran he decided to go back. The ground leapt forth to meet him; of this it is said: 'He came upon a certain place.' "[1]

A righteous person serves God by means of the life-strength and mental powers that are given him from above. Each one conceives of God according to his own measure, and in each the presence of God is concentrated, if you will, in just that degree. When the person has lived at that rung for some time, however, that presence of God is taken away from him, in order that he might strengthen himself to come to yet a higher rung of spiritual attainment. So long as he remains at that same rung, he is unable to reach beyond it; the very presence of

1. The comment is actually that of the Talmud, not RaSHI. See sources. *Wa-yelekh Haranah* is taken to mean that he arrived at Haran. Realizing that he had already passed the site of Bethel, the place sanctified by his forefathers, he set out to return. Then the place leapt out to him, and he found himself there immediately.

that rung within him and the force of habit blind him to seeing an thing higher. Such is the nature of habit, to keep one within its pat When it is taken from him, the *zaddiq* will reach out to hold fast to h root.[2] Realizing that he has fallen, he will struggle upward. Th greater struggle will arouse further help from above, for we receiv help only insofar as we arouse it from below, as is known. But the such a person will indeed be able to reach a higher rung.

Even when this presence does depart from him, some holy in print of it will remain. It is this that allows him to seek renewe strength; without it he would just remain in that lower state, di tanced from the holy. It is this imprint that inspires him to go on ward, and it is of the very nature of the holy that it always leave some impression even after it has gone. Of this the rabbis said: "Th *shekhinah* has never departed from the Western Wall."[3]

"The righteous will fall seven times and rise up" (Prov. 24:16) Each time he falls, this means to say, he rises to a yet higher rung This may be true of the *zaddiq*, but is not true of everyone. For thos who are not among the *zaddiqim*, God takes great concern that the not be utterly lost to Him. He wants to draw them near; because the were not bound to God, they indeed did fall into the domain of thos forces of judgment. He who cleaves to God is not subject to such forces; he is attached to the very source of life, the source in which there is no judgment. The contrary is true, however, of the one who does not cleave to Him. Then God brings Himself down in reduced form, right to that very place where the judged one is. In this way he is drawn near to God, approaching Beer-Sheba, the place of His fear, the well of living waters. He who cleaves to that place will be sated (*SHeVa'/SaVe'a*) with all good forever.

And so JACOB LEFT BEER-SHEBA. Jacob, the lower rung (for his name does mean "heel"), departed from Beer-Sheba and went to Haran, the place of judgment forces. But "when he reached Haran he decided to go back." It was the judgments themselves that caused him to "return," as he saw the presence of God right there with them. And then "the ground leapt forth to meet him"; this refers to the "land of the living" (= the *shekhinah*), for we have been taught that

2. Periods of insecurity are essential to the spiritual life; only through them does the seeker continue to strive and not fall prey to self-satisfaction.

3. Though the *shekhinah* did depart with the destruction of the Temple, a sufficient imprint of it is left to make the Wall a holy place.

"more than the calf wants to suck, the cow wants to nurse."[4] The life above longs to dwell within the person, and is held back only by our inability to receive it. Once he "decides to go back," however, he has set about the process of arousal from below, the "feminine waters," and then the "land" may come forth to meet him. Of this the rabbis said: "One who comes to purify himself is given assistance." Once a person has all this set firmly in his heart, the forces of judgment are themselves transformed and they fall away from him, having accomplished what they were set there to do.

Of this they said: "The departure of a *ẓaddiq* from a place leaves an impression." When a *ẓaddiq* leaves a certain [inner] place, he still finds an imprint there; in this way he is able to raise himself to a higher rung, as we have said. Therefore a person should have faith that whatever suffering he undergoes or whatever loss he sustains, even in the smallest way, he is being called to draw near to God, to seek out the presence of divinity there, now drawn down to his own level. Take note of what our sages have taught us: "What is the smallest measure of distress that may still be considered suffering? . . . Even if a person puts his hand in his pocket expecting to find three coins, and he pulls out only two. . . ." Even in something so minor as this you should see the presence of God as having reduced itself to come specifically to you. This is God's mercy, so that none be utterly lost to Him. When you think of things in this way, they really turn out to be just this way from above. Of this Scripture says: "In their distress they sought You" (Isa. 26:16) or "God is in your distress" (Job 22:25). "Distress" refers to the forces of judgment.

We also read in Scripture: "Know today and set it upon your heart that the Lord is God in heaven above and on the earth below, there is none else" (Deut. 4:39). Some bit of suffering or distress, even that as slight as we have mentioned, is sure to come on a person every day. This should arouse his presence of mind, and that mind should draw him near to the source of life. Scripture elsewhere teaches: "By His mind were the depths split" (Prov. 3:20), showing that it is awareness of the mind that causes the lower rungs, the depths, to be split open. So "Know today" means that your mind should be so inspired by the events of each day. "Set it upon your heart" means that you should return to God, who is called "The Rock of my heart" (Ps.

4. The *shekhinah*, having a maternal concern for her children, leaps forths to meet and help them once they decide to return to her.

73:26). "The Lord (YHWH)," the aspect of mercy, "is God," the forces of judgment. These forces have come on you as an act of divine mercy, so that you not be utterly lost to Him. "In heaven above" now refers to the *ẓaddiq*, the one from whom divine life needs to be taken away.[5] "Earth below" refers to the others, those who have fallen down into the place of judgment forces. "There is none else"—there is no other counsel; the *ẓaddiq* receives one form of help from above, the other receives another.[6] All this is as we have taught it.

Blessed is the Lord forever. Amen. Amen.

VII

JACOB LIFTED UP HIS FEET AND WENT TO THE LAND OF THE EASTERNERS. (Gen. 29:1)

RaSHI comments: Once he had been told the good news and promised that God would watch over him, his heart lifted his feet and he walked with ease.

We read elsewhere: "Behold I send you Elijah the Prophet before the coming of God's great and awesome day. He will turn the hearts of parents to their children and the children's hearts to their parents . . ." (Mal. 3:23). Truly before the coming of messiah (speedily in our time!) Elijah will bring the news. The mind will then become broadened, as Scripture says: "Earth will be filled with knowledge (*de'aḥ/da'at*) of the Lord as the water fills the sea" (Isa. 11:9). But this quality is present in every Jew and at all times as well.

The Talmud tells of the heretic who taught [that the human being was composed of two parts, each fashioned by a distinct deity]: "From midpoint up, Hormiz, and from midpoint down, Ahormiz.[1]" The truth is, in fact, that the powers of evil and corporeality do well in the lower half of the human being. From midpoint up there is no source of evil. Once it is aroused below, however, that same evil can come to dominate the upper portion as well. This is what led the heretic to think that there were two powers in the universe. A human

5. So that he struggle harder to reach a higher rung.

6. There is nothing—whether suffering or the feeling of God's absence—that does not in one way or another represent a message from above to return to His presence.

1. Corruptions for the names of the two principles of Zoroastrianism, Ormuzd and Ahriman. Some versions ascribe the claim to a "magus" rather than a "heretic."

Kedushat Levi[1]

ויחלם והנה סלם כו' - *He had a dream and behold a ladder etc.* (Gen. 28:12). That the man in the beginning of his service is excited (burns) within his heart he thinks because of him (by means of his leading) all the upper worlds behave, and with this his heart gets stronger in his service; and afterwards, when he is already strong in his service, then there is no thinking at all, only about the Blessed Hashem, and the Blessed Hashem will be pleased by it, that he will become the chariot to the Shekinah. That is: *He had a dream* – a language of strength, as (Isaiah 38:16): *And you will restore me to health and let me live*; that is, that he will be strong in his service to the Lord in his heart, that he is strong in his service, that is at the time of the beginning of his service, he needs strength, the strength was by means of this: *And behold a ladder is set standing on the ground* – a man is in this world; and his head reaches toward the heavens – in his service he reaches upwards. *And behold angels of God were ascending and descending on it* – that the angels that are upward are raised by means of him; this '*bo*' – by means of the man. And on the contrary, God forbid, causes a descent, as a saying of our sages, may their memory be for a blessing: From the time of the destruction of the house of study, the ministering angels were lessened in their ability. But afterwards, he is already strong in his service, as it were: *And behold the Lord was standing over him* – it was by means of his service, that it will become the chariot to the Shekinah; as it is understood.

והנה ה' נצב עליו גו' – *And behold the Lord was standing over him etc., I am the Lord the God of Abraham your father and the God of Isaac etc.* (Gen. 28:13). Rabbi Jacob ben Harosh presents a question: Why after Isaac is it not written "your father"? And it seems to me with the assistance of heaven, that behold Abraham went from the land of Israel to outside the land to Egypt, why was it not so with Isaac, said our rabbis (Bereshit Rabbah 64:3). That he was not permitted to go out to the outside of the land, therefore Jacob, it was permitted to him also to go out from the land of Israel to outside of the land, it says: *the God of Abraham your father*; and it is not written "your father" with Isaac, to teach about the reason mentioned above from the point of view of this *heter* (permission) Abraham is your father, because there is for him and equivalence with him in this *heter* (permission), this is why it is not so after Isaac, it is understood.

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[1] Yitzchak, Levi, *Kedushat Levi*, Jerusalem, 1958, translated by Terry M. Greenstein from Volume 1, pp. 69-70.

או יאמר: והנה - Or you might say: *Behold the Lord was standing over him and said etc.* (Gen. 28:13). That it is known, that Abraham your father, may he rest in peace, to serve the Lord in love, and Isaac – with his fear, and every one thought, that he will please and he will glorify the Blessed Hashem by serving him: Abraham your father, may he rest in peace, thought that he will glorify the Blessed Hashem in his love of Him; and Isaac thought, that he will glorify the Blessed Hashem in serving him with his fear; and glory (*tiferet*) is the attribute of Jacob your father, may he rest in peace, and therefore our sages said, may their memories be a blessing (Bereshit Rabbah 76.1) that Jacob – was chosen of the patriarchs, because his level was higher, since all the fathers – yearned for Jacob's attribute, that everyone wanted the Blessed Hashem to be glorified by him, but Jacob brought about the world of glory (*tiferet*) which would be revealed. And that is: *And behold the Lord was standing over him* – what was over him because he served with inner glory and it was a chariot to the Lord by way of the world of *tiferet*. And he said: *I am the Lord the God of Abraham your father and the God of Isaac* – an explanation: In that I am standing over you, that this is glorification, that it is also because Abraham and Isaac, that they thought also, that the Blessed Hashem would be glorified by their love of Him and by their fear of Him; as it is understood.

ויקרא שם המקום ההוא בית-אל – *And he called the name of that place Beth El* (Gen. 28:19). And this is the subject – Since all the creations from the Blessed Hashem are created by means of letters. And these letters have pointings (vowels) high ones and middle ones and lower ones. Likewise to those who are created, there is movement, which move themselves by means of the high arousal, and that is a high pointing. And there is that which moves by means of the lower arousal, and equal to this is the lowest pointing. And there is movement connected and fixed by the nature of creation. Equal to this is the middle pointing, that is *m'lapoom* (*holam*), the pointing '*sureq*' – these are 'connector' letters. And behold for Jacob our forefather was the high arousal, and for this it was said by him *and he had a dream – holam*- high pointing. And to this it was said: *And behold the Lord was standing over him* – because it was for him the high arousal and he gave birth to Joseph – he is the attribute of connectedness to the middle point. And Jacob, as his attribute is the *holam* pointing, that is why: *He named that place Beth El*, since it is the house where God dwells – the highest arousal; and it is understood.

Degel Mahaney Efrayim, Va-yetzay[1]
When All Seems Dark

And Jacob went out from Beersheba, and went toward Haran. And he lighted upon the place . . . and behold a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to Heaven; and behold the angels of God ascending and descending on it (Gen. 28:10-12).

Contained in this passage is the mystery of greatness and smallness [of soul]. The saying of my master, my grandfather, his soul is in Eden, his memory is for a blessing, is well known, that *the living creatures run to and fro* (Ez. 1:14), and it is impossible for a man to remain always at the same stage, but he must ascend and descend. His descent is for the purpose of a further ascent. For when a man considers that he is in a state of smallness he prays to the Lord, as it is said: *But from thence ye will seek the Lord thy God; and thou shalt find him* (Deut. 4:29). The meaning of *from thence* is, from the place in which you find yourself, as my master, my grandfather, his soul is in Eden, his memory is for a blessing, has said.

Commentary by Louis Jacobs: *The mystics speak of the "dark night of the soul" when man falls back after his ascent of soul and feels very remote from God. They urge him not to be dismayed, but to press on until new light illumines his soul. The Jewish mystics deal with the same problem but the terminology they use is "smallness"* (katnut)*, when all seems dark and narrow, and "greatness"* (gadlut)*, when all is bright and clear and man senses himself to be very near to God. In Hasidic thought the idea receives a special kind of emphasis. The Hasidic ideal is* devekut*, "attachment" (to God), a state in which God is always in the mind. But man, being what he is, cannot possibly live always at this stage. He falls from it from time to time, but as a result he reflects on his remoteness from God and, making an even greater effort to be near, he rises even higher. Thus his very descent is the means for a further, even higher ascent, and so it goes on. It is as if someone is slowly climbing a high mountain and has to step back occasionally in order to gain fresh strength for the ascent. This is the Hasidic interpretation quoted by Moses Hayyim Ephraim here of "the living creatures ran to and fro," i.e., they recoiled and then drew near to God and then recoiled again and they could not always be near. There is a further pun on the word* hayyot *(living creatures). This word is read* hiyyut*, "vitality." There is an ebb and flow in man's spiritual vitality. A further interpretation on the same lines in the name of*

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[1] Ephraim, Moses Hayyim, *Degel Mahaney Efrayim*, pp. 40-41 found in Hasidic Thought by Louis Jacobs, (New York: Behrman House, Inc., 1976), pp.

the Baal Shem Tov is also quoted. "From thence" in the verse in Deuteronomy is interpreted to mean "from whatever place [i.e., spiritual state] man finds himself." Whether he is in the state of gadlut *or that of* katnut *he has to seek God, and if he persists he will find God even in the state of* katnut *and thus rise again.*

Now this is hinted at in the verse: *And Jacob went out from Beersheba.* This means that the zaddik sometimes falls from his high stage and is outside the influx of divine grace. It is well known that the *Shekhinah* is called Beersheba. Hence it says: *and went toward Haran*, that is to say, he falls into the state of smallness. When he senses that this has happened to him then: *And he alighted upon the place*, that is, he prays for it to the Place, blessed be He. *And he took of the stones of the place*, that is to say, the place in which he finds himself, as above, *from thence ye will seek the Lord thy God,* as we have said in the name of my master, my grandfather, his memory is for a blessing. And then: *And he dreamed and behold a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to Heaven.* This means that the descent, *set upon the earth*, is really a ladder by which one can ascend to an even higher stage, as is well known that descent is for the purpose of an even higher ascent. Therefore, it says: *and the top of it reached to Heaven*, namely he will attain to an even higher stage.

Commentary by Louis Jacobs: *The* zaddik *is the "righteous man," the "saint," but the term is used in the Hasidic literature especially to mean the "holy master." According to the kabbalistic doctrine of the ten* Sefirot, *there are ten powers or potencies in the godhead, the lowest of which is known as* Malkhut *(Sovereignty). This is known as the* Shekhinah *(Divine Presence) conceived of in feminine terms, because it is, as it were, the passive principle in the Godhead. Of the ten* Sefirot *three are thought of as having to do with the divine thought and the other seven having to do with the divine emotions.* Malkhut *is the lowest of these seven and into it flow the light of the other* Sefirot *to give it vitality, and so enable it to pour out the divine grace upon those below.*
Thus, in a sense, the other Sefirot *can be said to give birth to* Malkhut; *but* Malkhut, *in turn, then pours out the divine flow to all creatures. For this reason* Malkhut *can be called a "daughter" (of the* Sefirot*) and it can also be called a "well" (from which creatures derive their sustenance). If* Malkhut *is itself counted as one of the seven lower* Sefirot *as well as being the recipient of their flow,* Malkhut *can be called Beersheba (interpreted as "the daughter of the seven")* Beer *means well, hence the interpretation of Beersheba as "the well of the seven." Jacob emerges from Beersheba, i.e., he falls into the state of* katnut *and so is outside the flow of the divine grace from* Malkhut. *He then goes to Haran (which is read as* haron af, *"wrath," "anger," "sternness"), that is to say, he falls from*

his high spiritual stage, in which he is the recipient of divine grace, into the state of katnut. *In rabbinic literature a name for God is* Makom, *"the Place" (interpreted as "the Place of the world"), so that Jacob's alighting upon the place is said to man that he prayed to God. Thus Moses Hayyim Ephraim interprets the verse to mean that when Jacob saw that he had fallen from grace he entreated God to help him rise again and in his new ascent took of the very stones of the place into which he had fallen. Therefore, the vision of the ladder was shown to him. This ladder, with its feet on the ground, suggests the descent of the* zaddik, *but its head reaches to Heaven, since the very descent provides the means for raising the* zaddik *to even greater heights.*

And behold the angels of God, i.e., he sees that this happened to all the *zaddikim*, they all fall, but this very fall is for the purpose of an even higher ascent, as it is said of Abraham that he went up and out of Egypt, and so of Isaac and so of others.

Commentary by Louis Jacobs: *The "angels" represent* zaddikim *who lead holy lives. No one should be too distressed when he descends because this is the normal pattern of the spiritual life and is to be observed even among the* zaddikim. *Of Abraham and other biblical heroes Scripture says that they went up out of Egypt. Now Egypt is the symbol of spiritual bondage and darkness, but their ascent was occasioned by their previous descent. They went up out of Egypt, i.e., as a result of first being in Egypt.*

The Apter Rebbe[1]

Man is a microcosm – a miniature universe – and he thus consists of [what is considered to be] a complete structure. All universes, both spiritual and physical, make up a [similar] complete structure.

[Entire universes are therefore counterparts of the various parts of the human body.] Some universes correspond to the head, while others parallel the brain, the nose, the eyes, ears, hands and feet. The same is true of all other parts of the body.

Each of these universes contains countless thousands upon thousands of worlds.

In the universes that correspond to the hands and feet, the [evil] Outside Forces have a grasp. This is particularly true of the [universes corresponding to the] fingernails and toenails.

All of this follows God's thoughts and wisdom, according to what He deemed necessary for creation.

The patriarch Jacob was a "throne" for God's glory, as is well known.

Each throne, however, is encompassed by yet another throne. This continues step by step, for thousands upon thousands of steps. There is also the concept of the "high and exalted Throne."

To the extent that we can express it, Jacob was literally a throne and vehicle on high for God's Glory. This is because Jacob's attribute was truth, and Truth is the central point of all the spiritual universes on high.

It is for this reason that God said to Jacob, *Behold I (Anochi) am with you* (Gen. 28:15). [The Hebrew word for "I"] – *Anochi* – has the same *Gematria* (numerical value) as *Kisey*, the word for Throne.

There is absolutely no thought or concept that can grasp God at all. [The question therefore arises,] how can He even call Himself "I"?

This is what god was telling Jacob: The very fact that I call Myself "I" – *Anochi* - which is the very first concept of identification – is only because I am "with you." It is only possible through your attribute and concept.

The word *Anochi* – "I" – has the same numerical value as *Kisey* – throne. [God was therefore telling Jacob that His throne was "with you."]

Jacob had purified and sanctified his body to such an extent that it became a vehicle for the holy spiritual universes [that parallel it].

[The fact that man can speak about God at all thus stems from the fact that he can sanctify himself, imitating God to some small extent, and thus becoming a vehicle for His Essence.]

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[1] Heshel, Rabbi Avraham Yehoshua, *Ohev Yisroel*, found in The Light Beyond by Rabbi Aryeh Kaplan, (New York: Maznaim Publishing Corporation, 1981), pp. 50-51.

Va-Yetse' – Sefat Emet[1]

The land upon which you are lying will I give unto you and your descendants (Gen. 28:13). The rabbis taught that the blessed Holy One folded up the entire Land of Israel and placed it beneath him. Just as our Father Jacob included all the souls of Israel, so did he now have the entire land. Jacob is the [ideal] person whom God created in His world, and his image is engraved beneath the Throne of Glory. Thus this place belonged to him, since it includes all places.

The Talmud says that one who gives joy to the Sabbath is given an inheritance without limits. There it quotes the verse: *Then you will rejoice on the Lord; I will cause you to ride upon the high places of the earth, and I will feed you from the inheritance of your Father Jacob* (Is. 58:14). This inheritance is not attributed to Abraham, of whom Scripture says: *Walk about in the land, its length and its breadth* (Gen. 13:17), but rather to Jacob, of whom our chapter says: *You will spread forth to the sea and to the east, to the north and to the south* (Gen. 28:14). On the Sabbath everything ascends to its root. That is the meaning of [the verse:] *Let no man go forth from his place on the Sabbath day* (Ex. 16:29).

This was the purpose of man's creation: that each finds the place belonging to him. Then surely the blessing *You will spread forth* will apply. That is the meaning of *the land upon which you are lying will I give unto you.* It is the place that belonged to him. Jacob our Father contained all six directions: *the ladder set in the ground, but with its top reaching heaven* (Gen. 28:12) represented the two vertical directions, and then he was told: *You shall spread forth,* and so on, representing the four others. . .

Rabbi Arthur Green' commentary

Jacob is the perfect human being, the parallel within humanity to the Sabbath in time and the Holy Land in space. According to the rabbis, he was "as beautiful as Adam"; and his image, inscribed on god's throne, was an object of godly devotion. This image of a perfected human has ancient roots in all of our religious traditions, both East and West. We lesser humans live out our religious lives by imitating those great souls or by discovering, sometimes to our great surprise, that we too, partake of their wholeness.

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[1] Alter, Rabbi Yehudah Leib, *The Language of TRUTH: The Torah Commentary of the Sefat Emet,* translated and interpreted by Arthur Green, (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society, 1994) pp. 43-44.

This rabbinic and later mystical image of Jacob as the ideal of human perfection stands in strong contrast to the Bible's own account of him as trickster, a tradition reflected even in his name. Perhaps there is a message of hope in this irony: Jacob, even Jacob, was capable of becoming Israel, the one who prevailed over God and man. You too, O ordinary mortal. . .

Unit 9 Medieval Jewish Commentators

The Central Concept for the Lesson

This unit will focus on the medieval Biblical commentators. Participants will be introduced to a brief history of the time period. They will learn about some of the commentators and the methodologies that they utilized to analyze the Biblical text. Participants will be introduced to *Torat Chaim Mikraot Gedolot: Bereshit* as well as the Biblical commentator Nehama Leibowitz.

Goal: Participants will be able to discuss the Medieval Period of Biblical scholarship.

Objectives:
1. Participants will be able to paraphrase the historical and political times of the medieval commentators.
2. Participants will be able to identify four medieval commentators.
3. Participants will become familiar with *Torat Chaim Mikraot Gedolot: Bereshit* and be able to identify the different commentators found on a page in this Biblical text.

Texts

Genesis 32:4-33
Ibn Ezra commentary
Mikraot Gedolot: Genesis (English translation)
Ramban commentary
Rashi commentary
Sforno commentary
Studies in Bereshit

I. Introduction to the Medieval Period

A. A brief lecture on the Jew in the world of European Christianity.
   1. Discuss the role of the Jew in society.
      a. Economic
         1) Jobs
         2) Land ownership
      b. Religious
         1) Synagogues
            a) size
            b) allowed in some countries
            c) new synagogues versus old
   2. Tolerance or not
   3. Crusades
   4. Inquisition
   5. Forced conversion
   6. Forced expulsions

B. A brief lecture of the Jew in the world of Islam.
   1. Discuss the role of the Jew in society.
      a. *Dhimmi* - secondary status
         1) How it affected the Jew economically.
         2) How it affected the Jew religiously.
      b. Relative religious tolerance
         1) Restrictions on size of synagogue.

c. Restrictions on social interaction
1) Could work together but not own business.
2) Could not eat together.
3) Could not marry a Jewish man

II. Introduction to Medieval Commentators

A. Solomon ben Isaac (Rashi) 1040-1105
1. Location
a. Franco-Germany
2. Method
a. Used either *peshat* on a verse unless an *aggadah* fit the answer better. Remind participants that *aggadah* is *midrash*. Have participants define *midrash*.
b. Grammar, syntax, word usage
c. Most often atomistic in his approach except *Shir Hashirim* where he is global.
3. Influences
a. Anti-Christian polemic

B. Samuel ben Meir (Rashbam) 1085-1174
1. Location
a. Franco-Germany
b. Rashi's grandson
2. Method
a. Radical *peshat*. Used it on legal questions as well.
b. He said that there were two meanings: theological and historical.
c. If he didn't have anything to say about a verse, he would refer to his grandfather Rashi and *derash*.

C. Abraham Ibn Ezra - 1092-1167
1. Location
a. Spain, France, England
2. Method
a. One of the first to write an introduction to his commentaries.
b. Focused on grammar.
c. Used *peshat* except on legal material due to Karaites[1]. Ask participants to define *peshat*.
d. Believed in one truthful meaning of the text.
3. Influences
a. Arabic philosophy and culture.
b. Karaites

D. Moses ben Maimon (Maimonides/Rambam) 1135-1204
1. Location
a. Spain to Egypt

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[1] They are a Jewish sect which came into being at the beginning of the eighth century. Its doctrine is characterized primarily by its denial of the talmudic-rabbinical tradition. For more information concerning the Karites consult the Encyclopaeda Judaica.

2. Method
   a. He needed to get beyond *peshat* and thus believed in analyzing text with allegory and the metaphysical. He described the relationship between God and the Jewish people.
   b. Grammar and linguistics.
3. Influences
   a Arabic philosophy and culture

E. David Kimhi (Radak) 1160-1235
1. Location
   a. Provence
2. Method
   a. Eclectic and synthetic *peshat*
3. Influences
   a. Rationalist philosophy versus Kabbalists.
   b. Spanish literature which had been translated into Hebrew from Arabic.
   c. Grammar and lexicology from Spain.

F. Moshe ben Nahman (Ramban/Nahmanides) 1195-1270
1. Location
   a. Barcelona/Israel
2. Method
   a. First to put Kabbalah into the commentary.
   b. Everything is omni-significant.
   c. PaRDeS

G. Levi ben Gershon (Ralbag/Gersonides) 1288-1344
1. Location
   a. Provence
   b. He was expelled from Northern France
2. Method
   a. Moral summaries
   b. Influenced by *peshat*
   c. Autonomous
   d. He was the first person to believe in scientific progression. We are moving forward, not relearning.

H. Ovadiah Sforno 1470-1550
1. Location
   a. Italy
2. Method
   a. Was able to attend the university.
   b. Used *peshat*.
   c. Often went beyond *peshat* and offered scientific, philosophical or ethical explanations of text.
   d. Also used allegorical or mystical interpretations.
3. Influences
   a. In the beginning of his life things were peaceful but near the end things began to get difficult for the Jews.
   b. The Expulsion from Spain in 1492 had an effect on the Jews in Italy.

c. These difficult times are reflected in his later writings.

III. Introduction to *Mikraot Gedolot*

A. The term originally applied to Rabbinic Bibles which contained the full Bible and the rabbinic commentaries. They were large (folio-size) editions of all or part of the Bible.

B. Since the end of the last century the term signifies small editions of the Torah with commentaries. It means important, rather than large.

C. The original printers were Christian and thus there may have been a Christian influence in the original choice of commentators.

D. The first Rabbinic Bible published in Israel is *Torat Chaim Mikraot Gedolot,* which has five volumes, *Genesis* to *Deuteronomy*..

E. There are commentaries in it that never appeared in Rabbinic Bibles: i.e. Saadia, the Maharam and Rabbeinu Hananel.

F. Rabbinic Bibles were traditionally limited to European commentators and this set includes an eastern writer.

G. The chronological cutoff is the 16th century.

H. By cutting off at this point, it omits virtually all Zoharic influence.

I. Therefore, the text has *peshat,* high quality medieval interpretation, and the opportunity to include a few new and unstudied rabbinic commentaries by early writers whose fame and contributions are primarily Talmudic or halakhic.

IV. Text - *Genesis* 32:4-33

A. Participants will take turns reading the text.

B. Participants will discuss the text and it's meaning.

V. Medieval Commentary

A. Read and discuss the following commentators in English translation. The question we will focus on is the following: With whom did Jacob fight? We will only read commentaries dealing with Gen. 32:25-33.

1. Ibn Ezra
2. Rashi
3. Ramban
4. Sforno

B. Introduce Nehama Leibowitz and her commentary on the Torah

1. This series of discussions will bring in many of the medieval Biblical commentators.
2. Participants will study Leibowitz's commentary on the chapter.

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VA-YISHLAḤ

4Jacob sent messengers ahead to his brother Esau in the land of Seir, the country of Edom, 5and instructed them as follows, *b*-"Thus shall you say, 'To my lord Esau, thus says your servant Jacob:-*b* I stayed with Laban and remained until now; 6I have acquired cattle, asses, sheep, and male and female slaves; and I send this message to my lord in the hope of gaining your favor.'" 7The messengers returned to Jacob, saying, "We came to your brother Esau; he himself is coming to meet you, and there are four hundred men with him." 8Jacob was greatly frightened; in his anxiety, he divided the people with him, and the flocks and herds and camels, into two camps, 9thinking, "If Esau comes to the one camp and attacks it, the other camp may yet escape."

10Then Jacob said, "O God of my father Abraham and God of my father Isaac, O LORD, who said to me, 'Return to your native land and I will deal bountifully with you'! 11I am unworthy of all the kindness that You have so steadfastly shown Your servant: with my staff alone I crossed this Jordan, and now I have become two camps. 12Deliver me, I pray, from the hand of my brother, from the hand of Esau; else, I fear, he may come and strike me down, mothers and children alike. 13Yet You have said, 'I will deal bountifully with you and make your offspring as the sands of the sea, which are too numerous to count.'"

14After spending the night there, he selected from what was at hand these presents for his brother Esau: 15200 she-goats and 20 he-goats; 200 ewes and 20 rams; 1630 milch camels with their colts; 40 cows and 10 bulls; 20 she-asses and 10 he-asses. 17These he put in the charge of his servants, drove by drove, and he told his servants, "Go on ahead, and keep a distance between droves." 18He instructed the one in front

b-b *Or "Thus you shall say to my lord Esau, 'Thus says your servant Jacob:...'"*

וישלח

4 וַיִּשְׁלַח יַעֲקֹב מַלְאָכִים לְפָנָיו אֶל־עֵשָׂו
אָחִיו אַרְצָה שֵׂעִיר שְׂדֵה אֱדוֹם: 5 וַיְצַו
אֹתָם לֵאמֹר כֹּה תֹאמְרוּן לַאדֹנִי לְעֵשָׂו
כֹּה אָמַר עַבְדְּךָ יַעֲקֹב עִם־לָבָן גַּרְתִּי וָאֵחַר
עַד־עָתָּה: 6 וַיְהִי־לִי שׁוֹר וַחֲמוֹר צֹאן
וְעֶבֶד וְשִׁפְחָה וָאֶשְׁלְחָה לְהַגִּיד לַאדֹנִי
לִמְצֹא־חֵן בְּעֵינֶיךָ: 7 וַיָּשֻׁבוּ הַמַּלְאָכִים
אֶל־יַעֲקֹב לֵאמֹר בָּאנוּ אֶל־אָחִיךָ אֶל־עֵשָׂו
וְגַם הֹלֵךְ לִקְרָאתְךָ וְאַרְבַּע־מֵאוֹת אִישׁ
עִמּוֹ: 8 וַיִּירָא יַעֲקֹב מְאֹד וַיֵּצֶר לוֹ וַיַּחַץ
אֶת־הָעָם אֲשֶׁר־אִתּוֹ וְאֶת־הַצֹּאן וְאֶת־
הַבָּקָר וְהַגְּמַלִּים לִשְׁנֵי מַחֲנוֹת: 9 וַיֹּאמֶר
אִם־יָבוֹא עֵשָׂו אֶל־הַמַּחֲנֶה הָאַחַת וְהִכָּהוּ
וְהָיָה הַמַּחֲנֶה הַנִּשְׁאָר לִפְלֵיטָה:
10 וַיֹּאמֶר יַעֲקֹב אֱלֹהֵי אָבִי אַבְרָהָם וֵאלֹהֵי
אָבִי יִצְחָק יְהוָה הָאֹמֵר אֵלַי שׁוּב לְאַרְצְךָ
וּלְמוֹלַדְתְּךָ וְאֵיטִיבָה עִמָּךְ: 11 קָטֹנְתִּי מִכֹּל
הַחֲסָדִים וּמִכָּל־הָאֱמֶת אֲשֶׁר עָשִׂיתָ אֶת־
עַבְדֶּךָ כִּי בְמַקְלִי עָבַרְתִּי אֶת־הַיַּרְדֵּן הַזֶּה
וְעַתָּה הָיִיתִי לִשְׁנֵי מַחֲנוֹת: 12 הַצִּילֵנִי נָא
מִיַּד אָחִי מִיַּד עֵשָׂו כִּי־יָרֵא אָנֹכִי אֹתוֹ
פֶּן־יָבוֹא וְהִכַּנִי אֵם עַל־בָּנִים: 13 וְאַתָּה
אָמַרְתָּ הֵיטֵב אֵיטִיב עִמָּךְ וְשַׂמְתִּי אֶת־
זַרְעֲךָ כְּחוֹל הַיָּם אֲשֶׁר לֹא־יִסָּפֵר מֵרֹב:
14 וַיָּלֶן שָׁם בַּלַּיְלָה הַהוּא וַיִּקַּח מִן־הַבָּא
בְיָדוֹ מִנְחָה לְעֵשָׂו אָחִיו: 15 עִזִּים מָאתַיִם
וּתְיָשִׁים עֶשְׂרִים רְחֵלִים מָאתַיִם וְאֵילִים
עֶשְׂרִים: 16 גְּמַלִּים מֵינִיקוֹת וּבְנֵיהֶם
שְׁלֹשִׁים פָּרוֹת אַרְבָּעִים וּפָרִים עֲשָׂרָה
אֲתֹנֹת עֶשְׂרִים וַעְיָרִם עֲשָׂרָה: 17 וַיִּתֵּן
בְּיַד־עֲבָדָיו עֵדֶר עֵדֶר לְבַדּוֹ וַיֹּאמֶר אֶל־
עֲבָדָיו עִבְרוּ לְפָנַי וְרֶוַח תָּשִׂימוּ בֵּין עֵדֶר
וּבֵין עֵדֶר: 18 וַיְצַו אֶת־הָרִאשׁוֹן לֵאמֹר כִּי

יִפְגָּשְׁךָ֣ עֵשָׂ֣ו אָחִ֔י וְשָׁאֲלֵ֥ךָ לֵאמֹ֖ר לְמִ֣י
אַ֑תָּה וְאָנָ֥ה תֵלֵ֖ךְ וּלְמִ֥י אֵ֛לֶּה לְפָנֶֽיךָ׃
19 וְאָמַרְתָּ֗ לְעַבְדְּךָ֙ לְיַעֲקֹ֔ב מִנְחָ֥ה הִ֖וא
שְׁלוּחָ֣ה לַאדֹנִ֑י לְעֵשָׂ֔ו וְהִנֵּ֥ה גַם־הֽוּא
אַחֲרֵינוּ׃ 20 וַיְצַ֗ו גַּ֚ם אֶת־הַשֵּׁנִ֔י גַּ֖ם אֶת־
הַשְּׁלִישִׁ֑י גַּ֚ם אֶת־כָּל־הַהֹלְכִ֔ים אַחֲרֵ֖י
הָעֲדָרִ֑ים לֵאמֹר֙ כַּדָּבָ֣ר הַזֶּ֔ה תְּדַבְּרוּן֙ אֶל־
עֵשָׂ֔ו בְּמֹצַאֲכֶ֖ם אֹתֽוֹ׃ 21 וַאֲמַרְתֶּ֣ם גַּ֔ם הִנֵּ֥ה
עַבְדְּךָ֖ יַעֲקֹ֑ב אַחֲרֵ֔ינוּ כִּֽי־אָמַ֗ר אֲכַפְּרָ֤ה פָנָיו֙
בַּמִּנְחָ֣ה הַהֹלֶ֔כֶת לְפָנָ֖י וְאַחֲרֵי־כֵ֥ן אֶרְאֶ֛ה
פָּנָ֖יו אוּלַ֣י יִשָּׂ֑א פָּנָֽי׃ 22 וַתַּעֲבֹ֥ר הַמִּנְחָ֖ה
עַל־פָּנָ֑יו וְה֣וּא לָ֔ן בַּלַּ֖יְלָה הַה֥וּא בַּמַּחֲנֶֽה׃
23 וַיָּ֕קָם ׀ בַּלַּ֥יְלָה הֽוּא֮ וַיִּקַּ֣ח אֶת־שְׁתֵּ֣י נָשָׁיו֒
וְאֶת־שְׁתֵּ֣י שִׁפְחֹתָ֗יו וְאֶת־אַחַ֤ד עָשָׂר֙
יְלָדָ֔יו וַיַּעֲבֹ֕ר אֵ֖ת מַעֲבַ֣ר יַבֹּֽק׃ 24 וַיִּקָּחֵ֔ם
וַיַּעֲבִרֵ֖ם אֶת־הַנָּ֑חַל וַיַּעֲבֵ֖ר אֶת־אֲשֶׁר־לֽוֹ׃
25 וַיִּוָּתֵ֥ר יַעֲקֹ֖ב לְבַדּ֑וֹ וַיֵּאָבֵ֥ק אִ֛ישׁ עִמּ֖וֹ עַ֥ד
עֲלֽוֹת הַשָּׁחַ֖ר׃ 26 וַיַּ֣רְא כִּי֩ לֹ֨א יָכֹ֜ל לֽוֹ וַיִּגַּ֗ע
בְּכַף־יְרֵכ֔וֹ וַתֵּקַ֥ע כַּף־יֶ֖רֶךְ יַעֲקֹ֑ב בְּהֵאָבְקֹ֖
עִמּֽוֹ׃ 27 וַיֹּ֣אמֶר שַׁלְּחֵ֔נִי כִּ֥י עָלָ֖ה הַשָּׁ֑חַר
וַיֹּ֗אמֶר לֹ֤א אֲשַׁלֵּחֲךָ֙ כִּ֣י אִם־בֵּרַכְתָּ֔נִי׃
28 וַיֹּ֥אמֶר אֵלָ֖יו מַה־שְּׁמֶ֑ךָ וַיֹּ֖אמֶר יַעֲקֹֽב׃
29 וַיֹּ֗אמֶר לֹ֤א יַעֲקֹב֙ יֵאָמֵ֣ר ע֔וֹד שִׁמְךָ֖ כִּֽי
אִם־יִשְׂרָאֵ֑ל כִּֽי־שָׂרִ֙יתָ֙ עִם־אֱלֹהִ֣ים וְעִם־
אֲנָשִׁ֔ים וַתּוּכָֽל׃ 30 וַיִּשְׁאַ֥ל יַעֲקֹ֖ב וַיֹּ֣אמֶר
הַגִּֽידָה־נָּ֤א שְׁמֶךָ֙ וַיֹּ֣אמֶר לָמָ֔ה זֶּ֥ה תִשְׁאַ֖ל
לִשְׁמִ֑י וַיְבָ֥רֶךְ אֹת֖וֹ שָֽׁם׃ 31 וַיִּקְרָ֣א יַעֲקֹ֗ב
שֵׁם֙ הַמָּק֣וֹם פְּנִיאֵ֔ל כִּֽי־רָאִ֥יתִי אֱלֹהִ֖ים
פָּנִ֣ים אֶל־פָּנִ֑ים וַתִּנָּצֵ֖ל נַפְשִֽׁי׃ 32 וַיִּזְרַח־
לּ֤וֹ הַשֶּׁ֙מֶשׁ֙ כַּאֲשֶׁ֣ר עָבַ֔ר אֶת־פְּנוּאֵ֑ל וְה֖וּא
צֹלֵ֥עַ עַל־יְרֵכֽוֹ׃ 33 עַל־כֵּ֗ן לֹא־יֹאכְל֤וּ בְנֵי־
יִשְׂרָאֵל֙ אֶת־גִּ֣יד הַנָּשֶׁ֔ה אֲשֶׁ֖ר עַל־כַּ֣ף הַיָּרֵ֑ךְ

as follows, "When my brother Esau meets you and asks you, 'Whose man are you? Where are you going? And whose [animals] are these ahead of you?' 19you shall answer, 'Your servant Jacob's; they are a gift sent to my lord Esau; and [Jacob] himself is right behind us.'" 20He gave similar instructions to the second one, and the third, and all the others who followed the droves, namely, "Thus and so shall you say to Esau when you reach him. 21And you shall add, 'And your servant Jacob himself is right behind us.'" For he reasoned, "If I propitiate him with presents in advance, and then face him, perhaps he will show me favor." 22And so the gift went on ahead, while he remained in camp that night.

23That same night he arose, and taking his two wives, his two maidservants, and his eleven children, he crossed the ford of the Jabbok. 24After taking them across the stream, he sent across all his possessions. 25Jacob was left alone. And a man wrestled with him until the break of dawn. 26When he saw that he had not prevailed against him, he wrenched Jacob's hip at its socket, so that the socket of his hip was strained as he wrestled with him. 27Then he said, "Let me go, for dawn is breaking." But he answered, "I will not let you go, unless you bless me." 28Said the other, "What is your name?" He replied, "Jacob." 29Said he, "Your name shall no longer be Jacob, but Israel, for you have striven[c] with [d]-beings divine and human,-[d] and have prevailed." 30Jacob asked, "Pray tell me your name." But he said, "You must not ask my name!" And he took leave of him there. 31So Jacob named the place Peniel,[e] meaning, "I have seen a divine being face to face, yet my life has been preserved." 32The sun rose upon him as he passed Penuel, limping on his hip. 33That is

c *Heb.* saritha, *connected with first part of "Israel."*
d-d *Or "God (*Elohim, *connected with second part of 'Israel') and men."*
e *Understood as "face of God."*

why the children of Israel to this day do not eat the thigh muscle that is on the socket of the hip, since Jacob's hip socket was wrenched at the thigh muscle.

עַד הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה כִּי נָגַע בְּכַף־יֶרֶךְ יַעֲקֹב בְּגִיד הַנָּשֶׁה׃

33 Looking up, Jacob saw Esau coming, accompanied by four hundred men. He divided the children among Leah, Rachel, and the two maids, 2putting the maids and their children first, Leah and her children next, and Rachel and Joseph last. 3He himself went on ahead and bowed low to the ground seven times until he was near his brother. 4Esau ran to greet him. He embraced him and, falling on his neck, he kissed him; and they wept. 5Looking about, he saw the women and the children. "Who," he asked, "are these with you?" He answered, "The children with whom God has favored your servant." 6Then the maids, with their children, came forward and bowed low; 7next Leah, with her children, came forward and bowed low; and last, Joseph and Rachel came forward and bowed low; 8And he asked, "What do you mean by all this company which I have met?" He answered, "To gain my lord's favor." 9Esau said, "I have enough, my brother; let what you have remain yours." 10But Jacob said, "No, I pray you; if you would do me this favor, accept from me this gift; for to see your face is like seeing the face of God, and you have received me favorably. 11Please accept my present which has been brought to you, for God has favored me and I have plenty." And when he urged him, he accepted.

12And [Esau] said, "Let us start on our journey, and I will proceed at your pace." 13But he said to him, "My lord knows that the children are frail and that the flocks and herds, which are nursing, are a care to me; if they are driven hard a single day, all the flocks will die. 14Let

לג וַיִּשָּׂא יַעֲקֹב עֵינָיו וַיַּרְא וְהִנֵּה עֵשָׂו בָּא וְעִמּוֹ אַרְבַּע מֵאוֹת אִישׁ וַיַּחַץ אֶת־הַיְלָדִים עַל־לֵאָה וְעַל־רָחֵל וְעַל שְׁתֵּי הַשְּׁפָחוֹת׃ 2 וַיָּשֶׂם אֶת־הַשְּׁפָחוֹת וְאֶת־יַלְדֵיהֶן רִאשֹׁנָה וְאֶת־לֵאָה וְיַלְדֶיהָ אַחֲרֹנִים וְאֶת־רָחֵל וְאֶת־יוֹסֵף אַחֲרֹנִים׃ 3 וְהוּא עָבַר לִפְנֵיהֶם וַיִּשְׁתַּחוּ אַרְצָה שֶׁבַע פְּעָמִים עַד־גִּשְׁתּוֹ עַד־אָחִיו׃ 4 וַיָּרָץ עֵשָׂו לִקְרָאתוֹ וַיְחַבְּקֵהוּ וַיִּפֹּל עַל־צַוָּארָו וַיִּשָּׁקֵהוּ* וַיִּבְכּוּ׃ 5 וַיִּשָּׂא אֶת־עֵינָיו וַיַּרְא אֶת־הַנָּשִׁים וְאֶת־הַיְלָדִים וַיֹּאמֶר מִי־אֵלֶּה לָךְ וַיֹּאמֶר הַיְלָדִים אֲשֶׁר־חָנַן אֱלֹהִים אֶת־עַבְדֶּךָ׃ 6 וַתִּגַּשְׁן הַשְּׁפָחוֹת הֵנָּה וְיַלְדֵיהֶן וַתִּשְׁתַּחֲוֶיןָ׃ 7 וַתִּגַּשׁ גַּם־לֵאָה וִילָדֶיהָ וַיִּשְׁתַּחֲווּ וְאַחַר נִגַּשׁ יוֹסֵף וְרָחֵל וַיִּשְׁתַּחֲווּ׃ 8 וַיֹּאמֶר מִי לְךָ כָּל־הַמַּחֲנֶה הַזֶּה אֲשֶׁר פָּגָשְׁתִּי וַיֹּאמֶר לִמְצֹא־חֵן בְּעֵינֵי אֲדֹנִי׃ 9 וַיֹּאמֶר עֵשָׂו יֶשׁ־לִי רָב אָחִי יְהִי לְךָ אֲשֶׁר־לָךְ׃ 10 וַיֹּאמֶר יַעֲקֹב אַל־נָא אִם־נָא מָצָאתִי חֵן בְּעֵינֶיךָ וְלָקַחְתָּ מִנְחָתִי מִיָּדִי כִּי עַל־כֵּן רָאִיתִי פָנֶיךָ כִּרְאֹת פְּנֵי אֱלֹהִים וַתִּרְצֵנִי׃ 11 קַח־נָא אֶת־בִּרְכָתִי אֲשֶׁר הֻבָאת לָךְ כִּי־חַנַּנִי אֱלֹהִים וְכִי יֶשׁ־לִי־כֹל וַיִּפְצַר־בּוֹ וַיִּקָּח׃
12 וַיֹּאמֶר נִסְעָה וְנֵלֵכָה וְאֵלְכָה לְנֶגְדֶּךָ׃ 13 וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלָיו אֲדֹנִי יֹדֵעַ כִּי־הַיְלָדִים רַכִּים וְהַצֹּאן וְהַבָּקָר עָלוֹת עָלָי וּדְפָקוּם יוֹם אֶחָד וָמֵתוּ כָּל־הַצֹּאן׃ 14 יַעֲבָר־נָא אֲדֹנִי לִפְנֵי עַבְדּוֹ וַאֲנִי אֶתְנַהֲלָה לְאִטִּי

ν. 4. נקוד על ו׳ ר׳ ש׳ ק׳ ה׳ ו׳

Genesis 32:24-33
Ibn Ezra

25. **AND THERE WRESTLED A MAN.** *Va-ye'avek* (and there wrestled) comes from the same root as *avak* (dust). They struggled so that dust arose between them.

UNTIL THE BREAKING OF THE DAY. *Ad alot ha-shachar* (until the breaking of the day) means until the darkness of the night went away. [Ibn Ezra interprets *alot* (breaking) to mean go up, i.e., to depart, and *shachar* (dawn) to mean darkness, for this is what the root of *shachar* means.] Others say that *shachar* (dawn) refers to the image of light that appears in the clouds before sunrise. [According to this interpretation *shachar* means dawn and *alot* the rising. *Alot ha-shachar* thus means the breaking of dawn.] *Shacher* (light) in *wherein there is no light* (*shacher*) (Is. 8:20) is similar.

26. **THAT HE PREVAILED NOT AGAINST HIM.** The angel against Jacob.

HE TOUCHED THE HOLLOW OF HIS THIGH. Jacob's thigh.

WAS STRAINED. *Va-teka* (was strained) is similar to *teka* (be moved) in *Lest My soul be moved* (*teka*) *from thee* (Jer. 6:8). The hollow of Jacob's thigh moved out of its place.

33. **THE SINEW OF THE THIGH-VEIN.** The meaning of the term *gid ha-nasheh* (the sinew of the thigh-vein) is known from the tradition received and transmitted to us by the Talmudic Sages. No one but those lacking in understanding and knowledge of nature have any doubt as to its definition. The latter interpret *gid* (sinew) to refer to the penis and hold that *nassheh* (thigh-vein) comes from the same root as *nashim* (women). [There was an anti-Rabbinic interpretation that explained the prohibition against eating the *gid ha-nasheh* as follows: Therefore the children of Israel do not engage (eat) in abnormal intercourse with women (*gid ha-nasheh*). According to Krinsky it is this interpretation which Ibn Ezra negates.

Note, the angel that appeared to Jacob was corporeal. This will be explained to you, if God will enlighten you, in the chapter that begins, *for My name is in him* (Ex. 23:21).

Ibn Ezra, *Ibn Ezra's Commentary On The Pentateuch: Genesis*, translated and annotated by H. Norman Strickman and Arthur M. Silver, (New York: Menorah Publishing Company, Inc., 1988), pp. 317-318.

Genesis 32:24-33

Rashi

24. יעקב AND JACOB WAS LEFT ALONE - He had forgotten some small jars and he returned them (Chul. 91a). ויאבק איש AND A MAN WRESTLED - Menachem (ben Seruk) explains: "a man covered himself with dust", taking the verb as connected in sense with אבק "dust". It would mean that they were raising the dust with their feet through their movements. I, however, am of the opinion that it means "he fastened himself on", and that it is an Aramaic word, as (Sanh. 63b) "after they have joined (אביקו) it", and (Menach. 42a) "and he twined (the fringes") with loops". It denotes "intertwining", for such is the manner of two people who make strong efforts to throw each other - one clasps the other and twines himself round him with his arms. (Aramaic אבק corresponds to Hebrew חבק.) Our Rabbis of blessed memory explained that he was Esau's guardian angel (Midrash Rabbah - Genesis LXXVII:3 - R. Hama b. R. Hanina said: It was the guardian Prince [angel] of Esau. To this Jacob alluded when he said to him [Esau]: Forasmuch as I have seen thy face, as one seeth the face of Elohim, and thou wast pleased with me (Gen. XXXIII, 10). This may be compared to an athlete who was wrestling with a royal prince; lifting up his eyes and seeing the king standing near him, he threw himself down before him.)

25. ויגע בכף-ירכו HE TOUCHED THE HOLLOW OF HIS THIGH - The upper thigh-bone that is sunk in the hip is called כף because the flesh on it (on this bone) has the form of the hollow part of a pot-ladle (כף). ותקע AND WAS STRAINED - It was violently torn from its joint. Similar in meaning is (Jer. VI:8) "Lest My soul be alienated (תקע) from thee" - i.e. removed from thee; and in the Mishana לקפקע בצתם, which means to remove violently (לשרש) their roots.

26. כי עלה השחר FOR THE DAY BREAKETH, and I have to sing God's praise at night (Chul. 91b; Gen. R. 78). [AND HE SAID: LET ME GO, FOR THE DAY BREAKETH (XXXII, 27). It is written, They are new every morning; great is Thy faithfulness (Lam. III, 23). R. Simeon b. Abba interpreted this: Because Thou renewest us every morning, we know that great is Thy faithfulness to redeem us. R. Alexandria interpreted it: From the fact that Thou renewest us every morning, we know that great is Thy faithfulness to resurrect the dead. R. Samuel b. Nahman said in R. Jonathan's

name: A celestial company never repeats [God's] praises. R. Helbo said: The Holy One, blessed be He, creates a new company of angels every day, and they utter song before Him and then depart [evermore]. R. Berekiah observed: I objected to R. Helbo: But it is written, AND HE SAID: LET ME GO, FOR THE DAY BREAKETH. But he retorted: Strangler! think you to strangle me? It was Michael or Gabriel, who are celestial princes; all others are exchanged, but they are not exchanged. Hadrian-rot his bones! asked R. Joshua b. Hananiah: ' Do you maintain that the celestial company do not praise [God] and repeat [their praises], but that every day the Holy One, blessed be He, creates a company of new angels and they utter song before Him and then depart? Yes he replied. And whither do they go? he pursued. To the source whence they were created, was the answer. And whence are they created? he went on. From Nehar Dinur, he replied.] ברכתני [EXCEPT] THOU BLESS ME - admit my right to the blessings which my father gave me and to which Esau lays claim.

28. לא יעקב [THY NAME SHALL] NO MORE BE CALLED JACOB [BUT ISRAEL.] (lit., "not Jacob - supplanting - shall any more be said to thee") - It shall no longer be said that the blessings came to you through supplanting and subtlety but through noble conduct (שררה) and in an open manner. Because later on the Holy One, blessed be He, will reveal Himself to you at Bethel and will change your name. There He will bless you, and I shall be there and admit your right to them (the blessings). It is to this that the passage refers (Hos. XII:5), "And he strove with an angel and prevailed; he wept and made supplication unto him" - it means the angel wept and made supplication unto him (Jacob). What was the subject of his supplication? This is stated in the next verse: "At Bethel He will meet us and there He will speak with us - implying the request, "Wait until he will speak with us there", and then I will admit your right to the blessings." Jacob, however, would not agree to this, and against his own wish he had to admit his right to the blessings. That is what is meant when it states (v. 30) "And he declared him blessed there", that he begged him to wait and he did not agree to do so (Gen. R. 78). ועם אנשים AND WITH MEN - Esau and Laban. ותוכל AND HAST PREVAILED over them.

29. למה זה תשאל WHEREFORE IS IT THAT THOU DOST ASK [AFTER MY NAME]? - We have no fixed names; our names change, all depending upon the service we are commanded to carry out as the errand with which we are charged.

31. ויזרח לו השמש AND THE SUN SHONE UPON HIM - This is the expression that people use: "When we reach such-and-such a place the dawn broke upon us". This is its literal sense. But the Midrash says that לו means, "for his needs" - to heal his lameness. Thus, too, you read in Scripture a similar metaphor (Mal. III:30) "the sun of righteousness with healing in its wings". The hours that it had set before its time for his sake. והוא צלע AND HE LIMPED - He was limping when the sun rose.

32. גיד הנשה THE SINEW OF THE THIGH-VEIN - Why is its name called גיד הגשה? Because it sprang (גשת) and rose from its proper position. The word has the meaning of "springing". Other examples are: (Jer. LI:30) "Their strength sprang away (נשתת)" and (XLI:1) "for God hath made all my trouble spring away from me (נשני)".

Rashi, *Chumash with Rashi's Commentary*, edited by Rabbi A.M. Silbermann, (Jerusalem: Silbermann Family, 1945), pp. 159-160.

Genesis 32:24-33

Ramban

25. **AND JACOB WAS LEFT ALONE.** That is, for he had forgotten some small jars, and he returned for them. These are the words of Rashi. But in line with the plain meaning of Scripture, the verse, *And he took them, and made them pass the brook* (Gen. 32:24) means that he made them [his family] pass together with him, *and he made pass that which was his* (Gen. 32:24) – [i.e., his camp and his belongings] – by commanding others to do it. He returned [to his camp after ferrying his family across], and he commanded that all other pass over the brook before him, and so he remained behind them.

'VAYEI'AVEIK' A MAN WITH HIM, A man covered himself with dust. So Menachem ben Saruk explained it, being derived from the word *avak* (dust); by their movements, they were raising dust with their feet. I, however, am of the opinion that it means " and he attached himself to,' and that it is an Aramaic word, as in, "After they have joined (*aviku*) it;" (San. 63b) "And they twined the Fringes with loops" (Menacoth 42a). This is all the language of Rashi.

In the language of the Sages, *avikah* is often used to convey the sense of *chavikah* (loop), as in: "There are *avkso* (loops) in the punishing scourge;" (Makkoth 23a), "A couch is called *dargesh* when it is set up and taken apart by means of loops, through which the cords are fastened" (Nedarim 56b). Similarly the word *avukah* (a torch) is so called in the language of the Sages because it is made up of small pieces of wood which are tied and bound together. This is because the letter *cheth* is difficult to pronounce in their language and so they used the easier *aleph.* Many times the *cheth* disappears completely as in *tuteich* (Chullin 7b: *metutei* – from beneath her feet) (underneath) in place of *techuteich; mesuta* (a bath) (Kiddushin 33a) in place of *maschuta; asita* (a mortar) (Shabbat 77b) in place of *chasita.* And it is possible that the word *vayei'aveik* is actually *vayeichaveik*, as *vayechabkeihu* (and he embraced him) (Gen. 33:4), for perhaps it is the way of the Hebrew language to interchange the *aleph* and the *cheth.* Thus we find: *And in the fourth chariot grizzled 'amutzim' horses* (Zechariah 6:3), which is the same as *chamitzim*, derived from the expression, *'chamutz' (crimsoned) garments* (Isaiah 63:1). Commentators (R'dak in his Book of Roots, under the root *erez*) have said that *'va'aruzim' for thy merchandise*

(Ezekiel 27:24) is like *vecharuzim*, derived from the expression, *thy neck 'bacharuzim' (with beads)* (Song of Songs 1:10). So to did they say concerning the word *vate'altzeihu* (Judges 16:16) that it is like *vatechaltzeihu (and she pressed him)*, this being an inverted form of *vatilchatzeihu,* [the root of which is *lachatz* (oppression)]. Perhaps this is the opinion of Onkelos who said, in translation of the word *vayei'aveik, ve'ishtadeil,* and so he translated the expression, *And if a man 'yephateh'* (Exodus 22:15) "as if *yeshadeil*," if he embraces and kisses which is the manner of seduction. It may be that Onkelos found no word comparable to *vayei'aveik*, and so he considered it a matter of cunning, for all effort implies cunning and a clarification of circumstances. In Bereshit Rabba 77:3 the Sages said: "Who became filled with dust? The man that was with him." This agrees with Menachem ben Saruk, who said that *vayei'aveik* means "he covered himself with dust" and this is the correct interpretation.

26. **AND HE SAW THAT HE PREVAILED NOT AGAINST HIM.** *Ye angels of His, ye mighty in strength, that fulfill His word* (Psalms 103:20). Because of this the angel could not prevail against him to harm him for it was not permitted to him to do other than that which he did to him, namely, to disjoint the hollow of his thigh. Now the Rabbis have said in Bereshit Rabbah 77:4: "He touched all the righteous people who were destined to come from Jacob. This refers to the generation of religious persecution." [This refers to the religious persecution during the reign of Emperor Hadrian, 117-138 C.E.] The purport of this Midrash is this entire event constitutes a hint to his generations, indicating that there will be a generation from the seed of Jacob against Esau [Rome] will prevail to the extent of almost uprooting his seed. This occurred in one generation during the period of the Sages of the Mishnah, which was the generation of Rabbi Yehudah ben Baba [in Sanhedrin 13b it is recounted how this Sage suffered martyrdom for the sake of ordaining his disciples, an act which the Romans had forbidden] and his companions [possibly a reference to the *Assarah harugei malchuth*, the Ten great Rabbis who endured martyrdom rather than abide by the Hadrianic regulations]. As they said: "Rabbi Chiya bar Abba said, 'If a person were to tell me, "Give your life for the sanctification of the Name of the Holy One, blessed be He," I would give it, providing only that they slay me immediately. But in the generation of religious persecution I could not endure!' And what did the Romans do in that generation? They would bring iron balls and heat them in fire and then place them under their arm-pits and cause their death" (Shir Hashirim Rabba 2:18). And there are other generations in which they have done to

us such things as these and even worse, but we have endured and it has passed over us, just as it is hinted in the verse, *And Jacob came in peace* (Gen. 33:18).

30. WHY IS IT THAT THOU DOST ASK AFTER MY NAME? The angel said: "There is no advantage to you in knowing my name for no one possesses the power and the capability other than God alone. If you will call upon me I will not answer you, nor will I save you from your trouble. However, I will now bless you, *for so I am commanded* (Leviticus 8:35). But Scripture does not explain the contents of the blessing. That which our Rabbis have said is most probable, namely that the angel, despite himself, conceded to him at that place the legitimacy of his father's blessings, as Jacob did not wish to wait for him until he arrived at Beth-el.

Ramban, *Ramban (Nachmanides) Commentary on the Torah: Genesis*, translated and annotated by Rabbi Dr. Charles B. Chavel, (New York: Shilo Publishing House, Inc., 1971), pp. 404-406.

Sforno

Gen. 32:24 – *And he sent over all his possessions*. He instructed everyone to precede him in crossing over the ford, as we find *And went ahead of the Cushite(II Samuel 18:23)*.

32:25 – *And Jacob was left alone.* He was the last to leave the camp in order to direct everyone to take along all his possessions so that nothing be left behind.

And there wrestled a man with him. Without a doubt this was the work of an angel sent by God, as we find, *"Shoot!" And he shot (II Kings 13:17)* (The purpose of this encounter) was to demonstrate that God will save Jacob and his children (in all their confrontations) with Esau and even though there will be material loss at times, ultimately there will be salvation and blessing, with mastery both in heaven above and here on earth.

32:26 – *He perceived he could not overcome him. . .*because Jacob cleaved fully and constantly to God in thought and speech.

He touched. (The angel) told him the sins which the future leaders of Israel would commit. His (resultant) concern stopped his concentration on God, enabling the angel to touch the hollow of his thigh as they wrestled.

32:27 – *I will not let you go. . .* for "the righteous are greater than the angels" (Sanhedrin 92a).

32:29 – *No longer will it be said that your name is Jacob. . .* at the "end of days." You will survive all the nations and therefore the significance of the name "Jacob" will be fulfilled since it implies existence "at the end." Hence the name Jacob is no longer necessary to indicate that you will be there at the "end" of all the nations.

But Israel, for you have striven. You will then be called Israel to show that "you have striven with the Divine and man," as we find, *God will punish the host of the high heaven, on high, and the kings of the earth upon the earth (Isaiah 24:21).*

32:30 – *Tell me, if you please, your name. . .* which indicates your essence and your mission, that I might know why you were sent to confront me, so I will be able to repent and pray (to rectify the sin which caused you to come and confront me, so I will be able to repent and pray (to rectify the sin which caused you to come and confront me, so I will be able to repent and pray (to rectify the sin which caused you to come and confront me).

Why then do you inquire of My name? Our spiritual essence, clothed in human form, cannot be defined in human terminology, as it says, *It is hidden (Judges 13:18)*, and as for the mission, that is according to the will of God.

32:32 – *And the sun rose upon him after he passed over Penuel and he limped.* After he passed, Penuel limping, the sun rose and its rays healed him, as it will come to pass in the future, as it says, *But to you who fear My name, the sun of righteousness will rise with healing in its wings (Malachi 3:20).*

32:33 – *Therefore the Children of Israel eat not . . .* to demonstrate that the injury inflicted on the hollow of his thigh is unessential to us.

כד כה וַיִּקַּח֙ וַיַּעֲבִרֵ֣ם אֶת־הַנָּ֔חַל וַיַּעֲבֵ֖ר אֶת־אֲשֶׁר־לֽוֹ׃ וַיִּוָּתֵ֥ר יַעֲקֹ֖ב לְבַדּ֑וֹ וַיֵּאָבֵ֥ק
כד. וּדְבָרִינוּן, וְאַעְבְּרִנּוּן יָת נַחְלָא, וְאַעְבַּר יָת דְּלֵיהּ: כה. וְאִשְׁתְּאַר יַעֲקֹב בִּלְחוֹדוֹהִי, וְאִשְׁתַּדַּל

רס"ג (כה) **ויאבק איש עמו**, "פצארעה שכצא"[2].

2 כן היא הנוס' הנכונה בכ"י העתיקים המדוייקים, וענינה ויאבק עמו אחד. וברוב הנוס' "וצארעה רגל" ותקון המעתיקים הוא. וכתב ר"א בן שלמה בפירושו לשופטים ו: אמר רבינו סעדיה בפירוש ויאבק איש עמו "פצארעה שכ'צא אלי וקת טלע אלפגר" זה האיש מלאך הוא, ותרגמתיו "שכ'צא" ולא תרגמתיו "רגלא" כיון שראיתי דניאל קראו איש שנ' והאיש גבריאל (דניאל ט כא) וארא והנה איש לבוש בדים (שם י ה) אע"פ שאני סבור שנראה לו כבעל גוף.

רשב"ם (כה) **ויותר יעקב לבדו**, כלומר שהעביר כל אשר לו, שלא היה עוד לעבור אלא הוא לבדו, ורצה לעבור אחריהם, כי לברוח דרך אחרת שלא יפגשנו עשו נתכוון. **ויאבק** מלאך עמו, שלא יוכל לברוח ויראה קיום [הבטחתו] של הק' שלא יזיקהו עשו.

רמב"ן (כה) **ויותר יעקב לבדו**, **ששכח פכים קטנים וחזר עליהן**, לשון רש"י. ועל דרך הפשט **ויקחם ויעבירם את הנחל**, **העבירם עמו. ויעבר את אשר לו**, **בצווי**, כי חזר וצוה שיעברו לפניו ונשאר הוא אחריהם. **ויאבק איש עמו**, **ויתעפר**, כך פירשו מנחם, לשון אבק שמעלין אבק ברגליהם. ולי נראה לשון **ויתקשר**, ולשון **ארמי הוא**, **בתר דאביקו ביה**, **ואביקו ליה מיבק**, זה לשון רש"י. **ואביקה בלשון חכמים חביקה שמשו בה הרבה**, **אבקתא אית בה**[40], **דרגש עיולי ואפוקי באבקתא**[41], וכן **אבוקה**[42] בלשונם בעבור היותה מעצים דקים חגורים וקשורים יחד, כי **החי"ת תכבד בלשונם והקלו אותה לאל"ף**, ופעמים רבים **יבליעו החי"ת**, **תותך**[43] במקום **תחותך**, **מסותא**[44] במקום **מסחותא**, **אסיתא חסירתא**[45]. ואפשר שיהיה **ויאבק ויחבק** כמו **ויחבקהו**, כי אולי כן הלשון, ומצינו ברודים אמוצים (זכריה ו ג), כמו חמוצים. מלשון חמוץ בגדים (ישעיה סג א). ואמרו המפרשים[46] כי וארוזים במרכולתך (יחזקאל כז כד) כמו וחרוזים, מן צוארך בחרוזים (שה"ש א י), וכן אמרו במלת ותאלצהו (שופטים טו טז), שהוא כמו **ותחלצהו**, מהופך מן **ותלחצהו**, ושמא הוא דעת אונקלוס שאמר[47] **ואשתדל**, וכך תרגם וכי יפתה (שמות כב טו),

40 מכות כג, א. פי' מקום נקב שמכניסים את הרצועה. 41 נדרים נו, ב. לענין הבדל שבין מטה ודרגש, מטה אעולי ואפוקי בבדיני, בנקבים של ארוכות מכניס ומוציא ראש החבל. דרגיש אעולי ואפוקי באבקתא, לוולאות תלוין בנקבי ארוכותיו ובהן מכניסין ראשי רצועות התלויות בשפת העור (ר"ן). 42 ברכות מג ב.
43 חולין ז, ב: מתותיה כרעי (מתחת רגליה), ועי' ערוך השלם ע' תחות. 44 ב"מ ו ב, מרחץ. 45 שבת עז, ב, מדוכה שחסר החקוקה מבפנים (רש"י). 46 ראה ספר השרשים לרד"ק שרש ארז. 47 על המלה ויאבק ואשתדל, ענינו עסק שהתעסק עמו בדבר קטטה (אור התרגום).

מהר"ם (כד) **ויקחם ויעברם**, ב' [בקע ים] ויעבירם (ביבשה) (תהלים עח יג), מלמד שנבקע נהר יבק מפני מקלו של יעקב והעבירם ביבשה. וזש"ה כי במקלי עברתי את הירדן הזה (לעיל פסוק יא), היה כתוב שם המפורש ומתחילה שהיה צריך להעביר נשותיו וילדיו נבקע, ולבסוף כשנשאר על פכין קטנים וחזר, הנהר לא רצה ליבקע בעבור העברת פכין קטנים.

חזקוני (כה) **ויאבק איש עמו**, מלאך בדמות איש לעכבו שלא יוכל לברוח, ויראה הוא הבטחת הקב"ה שלא יזיקהו עשו[22]. **עד עלות השחר**, עד הסתלק שחרות הלילה[23].

22 כן ע רש רשב"ם. 23 כן בראב"ע: "עד סור שחרות הלילה".

רש"י (כד) **את אשר לו**, **הבהמות והמטלטלים**. עשה עצמו כגשר, נוטל מכאן ומניח כאן[33].
(כה) **ויותר יעקב**, **שכח פכים קטנים וחזר עליהם**[35]. **ויאבק איש**, **מנחם**[36] **פי'**: **ויתעפר איש**, לשון: אבק, שהיו מעלים עפר ברגליהם ע"י נענועם. ולי נראה שהוא לשון: ויתקשר ולשון ארמי הוא: בתר דאביקו ביה[37], ואביק ליה מיבק[38], לשון: עניבה, שכן דרך שנים שמתעצמים להפיל איש את רעהו שחובקו ואובקו בזרועותיו. ופירשו רז"ל[38]* שהוא שרו של עשו.

35 חולין צא א. 36 מחברת מנחם אבק. 37 סנהדרין סג, ב. אחר שנתקשרו בה (בע"ז) מעצמן (רש"י). 38 מנחות מב, א. ענבן את חוטי הציצית התלויין בעניבה בטלית. 38* ב"ר עז ג.

ראב"ע (כה) **ויאבק**, מגזרת אבק, עד שעלה אבק ביניהם. **עד עלות השחר**, עד סור שחרות הלילה, וי"א כי שחר דמות אור והוא הנראה בעבים טרם זרוח השמש[24], וכן אשר אין לו שחר (ישעי' ח כ)[25].

24 האור הבא עם הסתלקות שחור הלילה לפני זריחת השמש. 25 אין לו אור כנרדף לאמת.

רד"ק (כד) **ויקחם ויעברם**, אחר שעבר הוא ונסה המים שב אל שפת הנחל ולקחם והעבירם, מי שראוי שישאם על כתפו היה נושא מי שהיו ראוים שיוליכם בידו היה מוליך ומעביר זה אחר זה עד שעברו כולם. בבראשית רבה[40] ר' הונא בשם רבי אידי עשה עצמו כמין גשר נסיב מן הכא ויהיב הכא. **ויעבר את אשר לו**, ואחר שהעביר האנשים והנשים העביר את אשר לו והוא המטלטלין, ועברו הבהמות והעבדים ואחר שהעביר הכל נשאר הוא עדיין לפקוד ולחפש אם נשאר דבר משלו. ואמרו רבותי' ז"ל[41] שחזר על פכים קטנים כי הצדיקים חביב עליהם ממונם, כדי שלא יפשטו ידיהם בגזל.
(כה) **ויאבק איש עמו**, נתאבק עמו עד שהעלה אבק[42]. איש, מלאך, וכן: והנה איש עומד לנגדו (יהושע ה יג), והאיש גבריאל (דניאל ט כא). נקראו אישים המלאכים שמדברים עם אדם ונראים להם בצורת איש כמוהם במראה או בהקיץ, ושלח האל זה המלאך ליעקב לחזק לבו שלא יירא מעשו, כי לא יוכל לו, לפיכך נאבק עמו רמז לו כי כמו שהוא נאבק עמו ולא יכול להפילו, כן עשו לא יוכל להרע לו, ונאבק עמו עד עלות השחר

40 עוט. 41 חולין צא א. 42 וכן בספר השרשים (אבק).

ספורנו (כה) **ויותר יעקב לבדו**, אחרון לכולם לנסוע מן המחנה כדי להדריך את כל עמו שילכו עם כל קנינו ולא ישאר[14] דבר במחנה[12]. **ויאבק איש עמו**, היה זה פועל מלאך[15] במצות בוראו בלי ספק, על דרך "ירה ויור" (מ"ב יג יז), שיהיה נושע בה', יעקב וזרעו[16], מעשו, אף־על־פי שיהיה עם היזק בממון שהוא היקום אשר ברגליהם[17], ועם זה תהיה התשועה בסוף עם ברכה ושררה בעליונים ובתחתונים.

14 רי"א. 15 מעשה מלאך ה'. אף שנקרא "איש", זה על דרך "והאיש גבריאל" (ראה פר"א לח). 16 השוה רמב"ן. 17 (ע"פ עקב יא ו). "זה ממונו של אדם שמעמידו על רגליו" (רש"י שם ע"פ פסחים קיט א).

17. And he gave into the hands of his servants each herd individually, and he said to his servants, "Pass on ahead of me and make a space between one herd and another herd." 18. And he commanded the first one, saying, "When my brother Esau meets you, and asks you, saying, 'To whom do you belong, and where are you going, and for whom are these before you?' 19. You shall say, '[I belong] to your servant Jacob; it is a gift sent to my master, to Esau, and behold, he himself is behind us.'" 20. And he commanded also the second one, also the third one, also all those who followed the herds, saying, "In this manner shall you speak to Esau when you meet him. 21. And you shall say, 'Also, behold, your servant Jacob is behind us.'" For he said, "I will appease his anger with the gift that is going before me, and afterwards I will see his face, perhaps he will favor me." 22. So the gift passed on

17. **each herd individually**—*Each species by itself.*—[*Rashi*]

Pass on ahead of me—*a day's journey or less, and I will come after you.*—[*Rashi*]

He surely did not mean that he would follow immediately behind them, because we see that he stayed overnight in the camp. We know that he was planning to follow his servants, because he instructed them to tell Esau, "and behold, he himself is behind us" (verse 19).—[*Sifthei Chachamim*]

and make a space—*One herd before the next* (within) *the distance the eye can see, in order to satisfy the eye of the wicked man and bewilder him with the enormity of the gift.*—[*Rashi* from *Gen. Rabbah* 76:8]

The Rabbis in *Genesis Rabbah* (75:13) understood this as an allusion to future generations: Said Jacob before the Holy One, blessed be He: "Master of the Universe, if troubles are to befall my children, do not bring them one immediately after the other, but let them have a breathing-space between their troubles." The Rabbis consider this verse a hint that the tributes and taxes the sons of Esau will collect from Jacob's children will not be imposed one after the other, but there will be a respite between them.—[*Ramban*]

18. **To whom do you belong**—Heb. לְמִי. *To whom do you belong? Who is sending you? The Targum, therefore, renders:* דְּמָאן אַתְּ, *whose are you?*—[*Rashi*] *Rashbam* words it: Whose servant are you?

and for whom are these before you—*To whom is this gift being sent? The "lammed" serves at the beginning of the word in lieu of* שֶׁל, *of, like* (above, 31:43) *"and all that you see is mine* (שֶׁלִּי)*"; it is mine* (שֶׁלִּי). [Similarly, we find,] (Ps. 24:1):

עֶשְׂרֵה׃ יז וַיִּתֵּן בְּיַד־עֲבָדָיו עֵדֶר עֵדֶר לְבַדּוֹ וַיֹּאמֶר אֶל־עֲבָדָיו עִבְרוּ לְפָנַי וְרֶוַח תָּשִׂימוּ בֵּין עֵדֶר וּבֵין עֵדֶר׃ יח וַיְצַו אֶת־הָרִאשׁוֹן לֵאמֹר כִּי יִפְגָּשְׁךָ עֵשָׂו אָחִי וּשְׁאָלְךָ לֵאמֹר לְמִי־אַתָּה וְאָנָה תֵלֵךְ וּלְמִי אֵלֶּה לְפָנֶיךָ׃ יט וְאָמַרְתָּ לְעַבְדְּךָ לְיַעֲקֹב מִנְחָה הִוא שְׁלוּחָה לַאדֹנִי לְעֵשָׂו וְהִנֵּה גַם־הוּא אַחֲרֵינוּ׃ כ וַיְצַו גַּם אֶת־הַשֵּׁנִי גַּם אֶת־הַשְּׁלִישִׁי גַּם אֶת־כָּל־הַהֹלְכִים אַחֲרֵי הָעֲדָרִים לֵאמֹר כַּדָּבָר הַזֶּה תְּדַבְּרוּן אֶל־עֵשָׂו בְּמֹצַאֲכֶם אֹתוֹ׃ כא וַאֲמַרְתֶּם גַּם הִנֵּה עַבְדְּךָ יַעֲקֹב אַחֲרֵינוּ כִּי־אָמַר אֲכַפְּרָה פָנָיו בַּמִּנְחָה הַהֹלֶכֶת לְפָנַי וְאַחֲרֵי־כֵן אֶרְאֶה פָּנָיו אוּלַי יִשָּׂא פָנָי׃ כב וַתַּעֲבֹר

יז וְיָהַב בִּידָא דְעַבְדּוֹהִי עֶדְרָא עֶדְרָא בִּלְחוֹדוֹהִי וַאֲמַר לְעַבְדּוֹהִי עִבְרוּ קֳדָמַי וְרַוְחָא תְּשַׁוּוֹן בֵּין עֶדְרָא וּבֵין עֶדְרָא׃ יח וּפַקֵּיד יַת קַדְמָאָה לְמֵימַר אֲרֵי יְעָרְעָנָךְ עֵשָׂו אָחִי וְיִשְׁאֲלָנָךְ לְמֵימַר לְמָן אַתְּ וּלְאָן אַתְּ אָזֵיל וּדְמָאן אִלֵּין דְּקֳדָמָךְ׃ יט וְתֵימַר דְּעַבְדָּךְ דְּיַעֲקֹב תְּקָרוֹבְתָּא הִיא דְּמְשַׁלַּחְתָּא לְרַבּוֹנִי לְעֵשָׂו וְהָא אַף הוּא אָתֵי בַּתְרָנָא׃ כ וּפַקֵּיד אַף יַת תִּנְיָנָא אַף יַת תְּלִיתָאָה אַף יַת כָּל דְּאָזְלִין בָּתַר עֶדְרַיָּא לְמֵימַר כִּפְתְגָמָא הָדֵין תְּמַלְלוּן עִם עֵשָׂו כַּד תַּשְׁכְּחוּן יָתֵיהּ׃ כא וְתֵימְרוּן אַף הָא עַבְדָּךְ יַעֲקֹב אָתֵי בַּתְרָנָא אֲרֵי אָמַר אֲנָחִינֵיהּ לְרוּגְזֵיהּ בְּתִקְרוֹבְתָּא דְאָזְלָא קֳדָמַי וּבָתַר כֵּן אֶחֱזֵי אַפּוֹהִי מָאִים יְסַב אַפָּי׃ כב וַעֲבָרַת תִּקְרוֹבְתָּא עַל

שפתי חכמים

רש"י

רמב"ן

הוֹרְיָהּ אַרְבְּעִין וְתוֹרֵי עֲשָׂרָה אַתְנַיִי עֶשְׂרִין וְיַלְדִין דְּכַר עֲשָׂרָה: יז וְיַמִּין בְּיַד עַבְדּוֹי עֶדְרָא עֶדְרָא בְּלְחוֹדוֹי
וְאָמַר לְעַבְדּוֹי עִבְרוּ קֳדָמַי וְנַיְפֵּשׁ הְשׁוּחָן בֵּינֵי עֶדְרָא וּבֵינֵי עֶדְרָא: יח וּפְקִיד יַת קַמָּא לְמֵימַר אֲרוּם
יֵעֲרַעֲנָךְ עֵשָׂו אָחִי וְיִבְעֵי מִינָךְ לְמֵימַר דְּמַאן אַנְתְּ וּלְאָן אָזְלַת וּלְמַאן אִילֵין דְּקֳדָמָךְ: יט וְתֵימַר
לְעַבְדָךְ לְיַעֲקֹב דּוֹרוֹן הוּא דְּמְשַׁהְלְחָא לְרִבּוֹנִי לְעֵשָׂו וְהָא אוֹף הוּא אָתֵי בָּתְרָן: כ וּפְקִיד אוֹף יַת תִּנְיָן
אוֹף יַת תְּלִיתָאֵי אוֹף יַת כָּל דְּאָזְלִין בָּתַר עֶדְרַיָּא לְמֵימַר כְּפִיתְגָמָא הָדֵין תְּמַלְּלוּן עִם עֵשָׂו כַּד תַּשְׁכְּחוּן יָתֵיהּ:
כא וְתֵימְרוּן אוֹף הָא עַבְדָךְ יַעֲקֹב אָתֵי בָּתְרָנָא אֲרוּם אָמַר נָרֵעֵי יַת כַּפְרָא אֲפוֹי בְּדוֹרָנָא דְּמָהַלְכָא קֳדָמָי
וּמִכְּתַר כֵּן נְחֵמֵי אַפּוֹי הֲלָוַאי יְקַבֵּל לְיָ אַפָּיִן: כב וְעָבְרַת דּוֹרוֹנָא עַל אַנְפּוֹהִי וְהוּא בָּת בְּלֵילְיָא הַהוּא

פי' יונתן

(כא) וגרעי כנר צירנ"ר, זה כמה פעמים שכתוב נ' רבותא פי' נתלה פניו בדורון:

בעל הטורים

שמל הכתובות שנאמר לו סיו בכולי מומיים שלא יקריב מהם קרבן: ורוח ד' הלכה ופירך רוח והלכה יעמוד ליקודים למד לדורות שלמים שיהו דורון לכהנים: ולפי ג' כתם. דין ופירך ולפי כל המדת שכחל. ולפי מי מעל. לומר כל המדת שכחל ושמלכ שנאמר כי עשו וזכו ולפי כל המדת שכחל ולפי מי מעל ולפי מלא לפניך ד"פ כך אמר יעקב לפי מי מעל לפי מלא לפניך: שלומי. ג' כתם כתם ופירך ולפי מלא שלומי וכתם יד שלומי גבי דוידל פי' עם כתם ממני שפר לף כמן שם"י ממנה נתן לו ממני שפר וכהוך ול"ל מנחה פיו שלומי לתדוני לעשו כה אמר עבדך יעקב וכמו כתם יד שלומי לף כמן שתשם"י שלא נלפס בפיו לקבלה כתם ידיו שלומי לקבלה:

רשב"ם

פשוטו כניהם שמלח לו סיו בכולי מומים שלא יקריב מהם קרבן: (יז) ורוח תשימו. דרך כבוד הוא למחנות הרבה זה אחר זה: (יח) למי אתה. עבר. והם השיבו לעבדך ליעקב: (יט) מנחה. כמו שפירשתי בס' בראשית: (כא) כי אמר אכפרה פניו. כן תשב יעקב בלבו ואין זה מדברי השלוחים: ונם הנה הוא אחרינו. ולפי שרצה יעקב לכרות בלילה דרך אחרת אם לא מפני שעכבו המלאך לכן

אבן עזרא

ולעיירים שניס. כי ידע תולדתס: (יז) ורוח תשימו. הפרש וקרוב ממנו כי היתה הרוחה. הפרשה בין מכה למכה. כמו ורוח לשמול: (יח) ואמלך לאמר. כמו כי להכך: (כ) גם את כל ההולכים. כי המנ היו שם: כמולמכס. כפתה הלד"ש בעבור חות הגרון ואין כמוהו: (כא) כי אמר. יעקב בלבו אלה דברי משה. ופי' אכפרה פניו אכסה ואסתירה. ופניו בעשו וכן ופניה לא היו לה:

רמב"ן

כפרה. ונראה בעיני שכל כפרה שאצל חטא ועון ואצל פנים כלם לשון קנוח והעברה הן ולשון ארמית הוא בהרבה מקומות בעיבורי יריה ונם בלשון מקרא נקראים המזרקים כפורי זהב על שם שבהם מקנח ידיו בשפת המזרק לשון רבינו שלמה. וכן אמר אונקלוס אנחניה לרוגזיה. וא"כ יהיה פי' כי חשב בלבו אכפרה פניו והכתוב מניד לנוזה כי איננו ראוי שיאמרו השלוחים לעשו ככה וכך פי' ר"א ואיננו ישר בעיני שיצטרך הכתוב להניד לנו עתה מחשבתו ואת והיא ידועה בכל שולחי מנחה ועוד שאם כן היה ראוי שיזכיר הכתוב זה בתחלה והנה גם הוא אחרינו כי חשב אכפרה פניו כי עתה לא תוסיף על הצוואה והיא אבל הנכון כי עתה הוסיף לפרש להם שיאמרו הנה גם הוא אחרינו בלשון כבוד כלשון הזה נם הנה עבדך יעקב אחרינו והקדים אותנו לפניו לתת כופר נפשו על ראותו פני בבודך במנחה הזאת כאשר יתנו העבדים בפרס בתת להם רשות לראות פני המלך ואחרי כן אראה פניו כי אולי ישא פני ויכבדני. להיותי פרואי פני המלך. וזה דרך מעלה מיראתו ממנו. ובא אכפרה פניו בדרך ואיש הכם יכפרנה יתן כפר אל החטה ולשון קנוח בכופר איננו לשון קודש רק לשון ארמית וכן בפורי זהב שם המזרקים בבבל כי לעולם לא תבא כפרה בחטא אבל יאמר לכפר על נפשותיכם ונפלח לו לכפר עליו על נפשו

אור החיים

עם כניסים הס שמים הרי ת"ק פרות ופרים ממאים תחומות ועיריס שלשים הרי תק"ף לשכר תוקפו:

ויצו את וגו' לאמר. לומר לאמר ללא צורך פי' הנס שלח יעקב כעומק זה שלא יאמר השמלאך בלשון שיהיה מוכן ממנו שמואל כן. או יאמר שיתחייבו להשיב הנס שלח תהיה השמלאה מפה אל פה שליחם שלח שיעקב הוא לוזול והזולת יעקל לותם והוא חומרו ושמלך הוא או שיאמר לשמול תוכך או עז"ה ושמלך ותהיה השמלאה לוזלת לאמר לך:

ואמרתם לעבדך וגו'. פי' כנגד אומרו למי אתה תשובה על עבדך יעקב כנגד ואתה תלך להוליך מנחה והוא אומרו מנחה שלוחה וכנגד ולמי לתדויי לעשו:

ואמרתם וגו'. פי' טעם שהנה הוא אחריהן ולא קודם ולא עמנו כי אמר אכפרה וגו' קודם ואמר כך תראה פניו:

כלי יקר

על שמלח למי אתה אמרינו היה תשובה על שמלוטין נם כן קבלת המנחה אלא כאן כך כי כיון שהוא שלוח לתדויי ואמרתם נם הנה עבדך יעקב אחרינו. יש לתן שלח נדולה מאחר שאמר לכם שניה ושלישית כדבר הזה תדכיון משמע מזה שכל מה שדכרו הכתובים תדכרו נם אתם וא"כ למה סיו כיכר אומר זה לנם להשוותה שיאמרו כן. וכשאמר לנם שניה ושלישית כדבר הזה תדכיון וגו' כוללי כלל כזה כל מה שאמרה כת לשמוה וגם זה בכלל ונמה מזר לאמר לשניה ואמרתם נם הנה וגו' משמה לנדכר כי אמר יעקב כי יפנשך עשו אחי ושאלך שנאה למי אתה ואנה אתה הולך ולמי אלה לפניך. אתה תשיב לו על לשמון לשמון כי אמר יעקב לעשו אחי אלה לפניך ולמי אתה הולך לשליך שנאה כי מנחה שלוחה ולמי אלה לפניך אמר לו עשו אלה שלוחים לתדויי לעשו ונוסף על שלשה שלוחים אלו אף הוא עצמו מ"מ לא אמר עמי או מעשיו נם כזה הוא אחריהן ידי שלא יכא כמיניו על מה שאמר מכבדו ע"י לויים שלוחים ואין אחי כולך כעצמי להקביל פניו. ושאמר יעקב לשניה ושלישית כדבר הזה תדכיון שניטת שסם לויכיון לשניה על שלשה שלוחיו הן מלד אחד מהם מלוה אלה לא יעיב בעל כל הפלוחים על תוחו הנדול: (כא) ואמרתם נם הנה עבדך יעקב אחרינו. צוה שכל אחד מהם יאמר זה הדבור מלבד הדבור המיוחד לו כדי שימצא עשו דברי כולם מכוונים בזה שהיה יעקב הולך אחריהם לשעיר להקביל פני אחיו: כי אמר אכפרה פניו במנחה. ואלה הדברים שם בפי עבדיו כדי שימעע רינונו של עשו בדבור התכנעה עם המנחה: אראה פניו. דרך הבקיר הראוי לשרים כענין יראה כל זכורך את פני האדון. ולא יראו פני ריקם. וכן אמר לעשו אחר כך כי על כן ראיתי פניך כראות פני אלה"ם. כי המנהג לפקיד את השרים במנחה עם ראיית פניהם: (כב) ותעבור המנחה על פניו. לראות שתהיה על סדר ראוי

להבלית

אבי עזר

(כ) [כמולמכס נפתח סלדיק וכו'] והוא מקור מכנין הקל. ודיו כמלפס על פלם כמשמעם לו כמסבלם לת סטיר. לולוס בעבור הפל"ף נפתח:

שהיא תוספת טובה: ורוח תשימו בין עדר ובין עדר. שלא יקבצו הבהמות מעדר לעדר ויתערבו ולא יבין הרואה חכמת המנחה וברכתה: (יט) ואמרת לעבדך ליעקב. צוה שלא יראה השליח את עצמו כטכיר את עשו ושלוח אליו מן יהשוב עשו שידע אחיו שהוא הלך לקראתו ושלח לו דורון מחמת יראה אבל יראה השליח את עצמו כשליח לשעיר וכבלתי טכיר את עשו: (כ)כדבר הזה תדברון אל עשו. לכל אחד צוה מה ישיב לעשו ויודיע שהוא עם שאר כל העדרים והם כולם של יעקב מנחה לעשו אחיו הגדול: (כא) ואמרתם נם הנה עבדך יעקב אחרינו. צוה שכל אחד מהם יאמר זה הדבור מלבד הדבור המיוחד לו כדי שימצא עשו דברי כולם מכוונים בזה שהיה יעקב הולך אחריהם לשעיר להקביל פני אחיו: כי אמר אכפרה פניו במנחה. ואלה הדברים שם בפי עבדיו כדי שימעע רינונו של עשו בדבור התכנעה עם המנחה: אראה פניו. דרך הבקיר הראוי לשרים כענין יראה כל זכורך את פני האדון. ולא יראו פני ריקם. וכן אמר לעשו אחר כך כי על כן ראיתי פניך כראות פני אלה"ם. כי המנהג לפקיד את השרים במנחה עם ראיית פניהם: (כב) ותעבור המנחה על פניו. לראות שתהיה על סדר ראוי

ספורנו

עשה למען שמך: (יז) ערר ערר לבדו. כדי שיראה שיש בכל מין מנין זכרים ונקבות בכל הראוי למלאכת המקנה שיוכל לפרות ולרבות כאמרו קח נא את ברכתי שהיתה מנחה מוכנת לברכה

"The land and the fullness thereof are the Lord's (לַה'), *" of the Lord* (שֶׁל ה').—[*Rashi*]

Rashi here is referring to לְמִי-אַתָּה, in which he interpreted the "lammed" as "of." He tells us that, although the "lammed" in לְמִי אֵלֶּה לְפָנֶיךָ is rendered "to" according to its usual meaning, the "lammed" in לְמִי אַתָּה should be rendered "of."—[*Sefer Hazikkaron*]

19. **You shall say, '[I belong] to your servant Jacob…'**—*He replied first to the first question and last to the last question.* [In reference to] *what you asked, "To whom do you belong?"* [the answer is:] *I belong to your servant Jacob, and the Targum renders:* דְּעַבְדָּךְ דְּיַעֲקֹב, *of your servant, of Jacob, and* [in reference to] *what you asked, "and for whom are these before you?" it is a gift sent, etc.*—[*Rashi* from *Avoth d'Rabbi Nathan*, ch. 37]

and behold, he himself—*Jacob.*—[*Rashi*]

and behold, he himself is behind us—Since Jacob wished to flee at night by a different road, had he (Jacob) not been detained by the angel, he intended to deceive Esau [by saying that Jacob followed not far behind the messengers,] so that he would not encounter him.—[*Rashbam*]

20. **also all those who followed**—Judging from the number of species he sent, there were five servants.—[*Ibn Ezra*]

21. **I will appease his anger**—Heb. אֲכַפְּרָה פָנָיו, *I will do away with his anger* (*Targum Onkelos*). *Similarly* (Isa. 28:18): *"And your treaty with death shall be nullified* (וְכֻפַּר)*"*; (ibid., 47:11) *"you shall not be able to rid yourself of it* (כְּפָרָהּ)*." This is Aramaic, and there are many instances of it in the Talmud, e.g.* (*B.M.* 24a): *"and he wiped* (וְכָפַר) *his hands"*; (*Gittin* 56a): *"He wishes to wipe* (לְכַפּוֹרֵי) *His hands on this person." In biblical Hebrew also, the sacred sprinkling basins are called* כִּפּוֹרֵי זָהָב (Ezra 1:10) *because the priest wipes his hands on them at the edge of the sprinkling basin.*—[*Rashi*]

According to *Rashi*'s interpretation, this clause was not to be verbalized by the messengers. But Scripture is telling us Jacob's motive in sending this gift—he thought, "I will appease his anger with the gift that is going before me, and afterwards when I see his face, perhaps he will favor me." Indeed, this is *Ibn Ezra*'s and *Rashbam*'s rendering. *Ramban* objects to this interpretation noting that it is too obvious, for that is why anyone sends a gift. Moreover, when Scripture relates that he told the first messenger to say, "and behold, he himself is behind us" it should have said, "because he said, I want to appease, etc." *Ramban* therefore explains that Jacob instructed all his messengers to speak to Esau respectfully, and to say, "Also, behold, your servant Jacob is behind us," and he sent us ahead to present a ransom for his life, using this gift as a means of seeing your honor's face, just as servants give their ransom when they are permitted to see their master's face.

before him, and he lodged that night in the camp. 23. And he arose during that night, and he took his two wives and his two maidservants and his eleven children, and he crossed the ford of [the] Jabbok. 24. And he took them and brought them across the stream, and he took across what was his. 25. And Jacob was left alone, and a man wrestled with him until the break of dawn. 26. When he saw that he could not prevail against him, he touched the socket of his hip, and the socket of Jacob's hip became dislocated as he wrestled with him. 27. And he (the angel) said,

"Let me go, for dawn is breaking,"

22. **before him**—Heb. עַל-פָּנָיו, lit. on his face, *like* לְפָנָיו, *before him, and similarly* (Jer. 6:7): *"violence and spoil is heard therein before Me* (עַל-פָּנַי) *continually," and so* (Isa. 65:3): *"who vex Me to My face* (עַל פָּנַי-)." *He* (Jacob) *too was in an angry mood that he required all this.*—[*Rashi* from *Gen. Rabbah* 75:8]

and he lodged that night in the camp—He did not enter his tent the entire night but lodged with his servants, armed for battle, lest his brother Esau attack at night.—[*Ramban*]

23. **And he arose during that night**—He intended to flee a different way. Therefore, he forded the stream at night, as we find that when David fled from Absalom on these roads of the Jordan and Mahanaim, which Jacob passed, David also fled at night, as Scripture states (II Sam. 17:21-24): "and they told King David, 'Arise and cross the water quickly...'And David arose, and all the people that were with him, and they crossed the Jordan. By the morning light, not one of them was missing, that had not crossed the Jordan....David came to Mahanaim, and Absalom passed over the Jordan."—[*Rashbam*]

and his eleven children—*But where was Dinah?* [Benjamin was not yet born, but Dinah should have been counted.] *He put her into a chest and locked her in, so that Esau should not set eyes on her. Therefore, Jacob was punished for withholding her from his brother*—[because had he married her,] *perhaps she would cause him to improve his ways—and she fell into the hands of Shechem.*—[*Rashi* from *Gen. Rabbah* 75:9]

Jabbok—*The name of the river.*—[*Rashi*] This is based on Deut. 2:37, 3:16. *Chizkuni* quotes exegetes who identify the Jabbok as the Jordan. [However, today it isbelieved to be a tributary of the Jordan, flowing into it on its eastern side. This was the northern boundary of the ancient kingdom of Ammon after Sihon had conquered the western part toward the Jordan. It is known to the Arabs as Wadi Zerka. See *Gevuloth Eretz Israel* by Isaac

הַמִּנְחָה עַל־פָּנָיו וְהוּא לָן בַּלַּיְלָה־
הַהוּא בַּמַּחֲנֶה׃ כג וַיָּקָם בַּלַּיְלָה הוּא
וַיִּקַּח אֶת־שְׁתֵּי נָשָׁיו וְאֶת־שְׁתֵּי
שִׁפְחֹתָיו וְאֶת־אַחַד עָשָׂר יְלָדָיו
וַיַּעֲבֹר אֵת מַעֲבַר יַבֹּק׃ כד וַיִּקָּחֵם
וַיַּעֲבִרֵם אֶת־הַנָּחַל וַיַּעֲבֵר אֶת־
אֲשֶׁר־לוֹ׃ כה וַיִּוָּתֵר יַעֲקֹב לְבַדּוֹ
וַיֵּאָבֵק אִישׁ עִמּוֹ עַד עֲלוֹת הַשָּׁחַר׃
כו וַיַּרְא כִּי לֹא יָכֹל לוֹ וַיִּגַּע בְּכַף־
יְרֵכוֹ וַתֵּקַע כַּף־יֶרֶךְ יַעֲקֹב בְּהֵאָבְקוֹ
עִמּוֹ׃ כז וַיֹּאמֶר שַׁלְּחֵנִי כִּי עָלָה

אַפּוֹהִי וְהוּא בָּת בְּלֵילְיָא
הַהוּא בְּמַשְׁרְיָתָא׃ כג וְקָם
בְּלֵילְיָא הוּא וּדְבַר יַת
תַּרְתֵּין נְשׁוֹהִי וְיַת תַּרְתֵּין
לְחַיְנָתַיהּ וְיַת חַד עֲשַׂר
בְּנוֹהִי וְעָבַר יַת מַעֲבַר
יוּבָקָא׃ כד וְדַבְּרִינוּן
וְאַעְבְּרִינוּן יַת נַחֲלָא
וְעָבַר יַת דִּי לֵיהּ׃
כה וְאִשְׁתְּאַר יַעֲקֹב
בְּלְחוֹדוֹהִי וְאִשְׁתַּדַּל
גַּבְרָא עִמֵּיהּ עַד דְּסָלֵיק
צַפְרָא׃ כו וַחֲזָא אֲרֵי לָא
יָכִיל לֵיהּ וּקְרֵיב בְּפִתְיֵי
יַרְכֵיהּ וְזָע פִּתְיֵי יַרְכָא
דְיַעֲקֹב בְּאִשְׁתַּדָּלוּתֵיהּ
עִמֵּיהּ׃ כז וַאֲמַר שַׁלַּחֲנִי

הו"א ויותר יעקב עם גד : ויתקע עם גד : ויזע כי גד . פ' כיוצא בו בתחלת עמו . ותלון עם גד . ויאמר שלחני . עם רש"י גד וכל פ' כיוצא פ' פרש :

שפתי חכמים

וגו' כלומר שתכיכו לו כעבדום: ו [ג"ת] מדכתיב על פניו משום כמו על ממו ולא כתיב לפניו : ז וס"ת מ"ל לרש"י דלמא דיוסי סיפה מלמחר עבר ירדן ומחר מעכבינו היום הסכר . וי"ל מדכתיב כפ' מקן מלהכים יחוק כני פי' יוסף ממר כן לכניעין ופיקים"י עם דכתיב ר"ת מכעיס בעמנו לשון מניכה דכתיב ממר מקן מלכים וגו' וכניעין עדיין לא כי' מלך לכך כתכו יוסף כתניכה ס"כ ס"ת כהדיא דר"ת ילדים קלי מי"ס שכעיס מון מדיכה דמל"כ כדכת קושיא לדוכמא : ח כלומר לכך מלו לניהן לפרס שדיכה היכה מפכה ושם משם כתיב, מפני עמו דשם לא כן לעם עמנם יעקב כדיכה ס"ו מפני זה עמנם שפי' מפרילם עפני עמו ושם משם כתיכה וק"ל ובזה יתוכן קושית דלעיל : ם וס"ת וכיי לקמן כתיב קום עלה בית אל ופיקים"י שם לפי שמיכתם כדרך עמנם וכו' וי"ל דזה וזה גרמו וק"ל : י דמל"כ הול"ל ממר ויעכל אח מעכר יבק עוד ס"ת ויעכור שמור אלל כעיו ופמ"כ ויקחם וגו' . עוד י"ל דכתי' דייק מדכתיב ויקחם ויעכירם דלא כל"ל אלא ויעכירם אלא ולפי עמה אלמו כעבר וכו' : כ [קל"ע] לפי שכל הכלי משוכים ככר כשביר דכתיב ויעכור אח כל אשר לו . ואלו דוקא פכים אלא כלים שאין משוכים ונקלפים פכים וככר אלמרו כזה דכתיב ויכם כב"פ וכסל"ן שכל כם"י פי' כן בכ"ק דף ס"ו: ל כלשוניה רב"י לקמן נמי שם שם אלמה מן בעיניך וגו' . וכתב מהרי"ל ושם פקפה לשם לניך כם"י לדמוק ולפכים שהוא אלה מרמים ואל פי' כפי' משם י"ל לפי שפי' רז"ל שהוא שרו של עשו של לפיכך פי' פירוש אחר התקוע בקלוטת קרוי כף ע"ש שהכשר שעליה כמין כף של קדירה : ותקע . נתקעקע ממקום חברתה ודומה לו (ירמיה ו) פן תקע נפשי ממך לשון הסרה וכמשנה לקעקע ביתאת לשרש פרשיהן : (כז) כי עלה השחר . ונריך אני

רמב"ן

בלשון חכמים חביקה שמשו בה הרבה אבקתא אית בה דרנש עילוי ואשוקי באבקתא וכן אבוקה בלשונם בעבור היותה מעצים דקים חתרים וקשורים יחד כי החי"ת תחתך בלשונם והקלו אותה לאל"ף ופעמים רבים יבליעו החי"ת תוחך במקום תחותך ממש במקום ממחתא אשיתה תשירתא ואשר שיהיה ויאבק ויחבק כמו ויחבקהו כי אולי כן הלשון ומצינו ברודים אמוצים כמו חמוצים מלשון חמוץ בגדים . ואמרו המפרשים כי ארוחים במרכולתך כמו וחרוזים מן צוארך בחרוזים וכן אמרו במלת ותאלצהו שהוא כמו ותחלצהו מהופך מן ותלחצהו ושכא הוא דעת אונקלוס שאמר ואשתדל וכך הרגום וכי יפתה ארי ישראל יהבק וינשק שהוא דרך הפתוי או שלא נודמן לו לשון ושאר ענין התכולה כי כל השתדלות תחבול' וברור ענין . ובב"ר מי נתפלא אבקת האיש שהיה עמו כדברי מנחם והוא הנכון : (כז) וירא כי לא יכול לו . מלאכיו גבורי כח עושי דברו ולא כן לא יכול לו המלאך

ויאמר אכפרה בעד חפאתכם וכולן בלשון ונתנו איש כופר נפשו שהוא פדיון:(כב) והוא לן בליל' ההוא במחנ'. יאמר שלא בא לאהלו בלילה ההוא אבל לן במחנה עם עבדיו ועם הרועים בצאן ערוך כאיש מלחמה מן יבא אחיו בלילה ויכה בו: (כג) ויקח את שתי נשיו ואת שתי שפחותיו . אין מוקדם ומאחר בפסוק הזה להצלה אבל אמר שאסף נשיו ושפחותיו וילדיו אל שפת הנחל ועבר הוא לבדו את מעבר יבק לראות אם נבהו הסים ושב ולקחם עמו כלם כאחר ויעבירם את הנחל ואחרי כן ויעבר את אשר לו מחנהו ורכושו : (כה) ויותר יעקב לבדו . ששכח פכים קפנים וחזר עליהן לשון רש"י . ועל דרך השפש ויקחם ויעבירם את הנחל העבירם עמו ויעבר את אשר לו בצווי כי חזר ועוה שיעברו לפניו ונשאר הוא אחריהם : ויאבק איש עמו . ויתעפר כך פירשו מנחם ל' אבק שפעלין אבק ברגליהם.ול"נ ל' ויתקשר ול' ארמי הוא בתר דאביקו ביה ואבק ליה פיבק זה לשון רש"י ואביקה

בְּמִשְׁרִיקְתָא׃ כג וְקָם בְּלֵילְיָא הוּא וּדְבַר יָת תַּרְתֵּין נְשׁוֹהִי וְיָת תַּרְתֵּין לְחֵינָתוֹהִי וְיָת חַדְסְרֵי רְבוֹי וְעַבַר יָת
מְעָיַת יוּבְקָא׃ כד וְדַבְּרִינוּן וַעֲבְרִינוּן יָת נַחֲלָא וַעֲבַר יָת דְּיָלֵיהּ׃ כה וְאִשְׁתְּאַר יַעֲקֹב בְּלָחוֹדוֹי סַעֲיְרָא
לֵיהּ וְאִתְבַּשַׁח מַלְאָכָא עִמֵּיהּ כְּדִמּוּת גְּבַר וְאָמַר הָלָא אֲמַרְתָּ לְעַשְׁרָא כָּל דִּילָךְ וְהָא אִית לָךְ תְּרֵיסַר
בְּנִין וּבְרוּהָא חָדָא וְלָא עֲשַׁרְתִּינוּן טַן יַר אִפְרַשׁ אַרְבָּע בּוּכְרִין לְאַרְבַּע אִימָהָתָא וְאִשְׁתַּיְרוּ תְּמַנְיָא וְתִנְיָא
לְסַנְאֵי מִשְׁתְּעוֹן וְסָלִיק לַוִי בְּמִשְׁרָא עֲנִי מִיכָאֵל וַאֲמַר רְבוֹנֵיהּ דְּעָלְמָא דִּין הוּא עַרְבָךְ וְעַל עֵיסַק פִּתְגָמַיָּא
הָאִילֵּין אִשְׁתְּהִי טַן הָאֵל לְנַחֲלָא עַד מִיסַק עַמּוּד קְרִיצְתָא׃ כו וַחֲמָא אֲרֵי לָא הֲנָה לֵיהּ רְשׁוּ לְאַבְאָשָׁא
לֵיהּ וְקָרֵיב בְּפִתְיֵי יַרְכֵיהּ וְזָעְוָא פִּתְיֵי יַרְכָא דְיַעֲקֹב בְּאִיתְבַּחְשׁוּתֵיהּ עִמֵּיהּ׃ כז וַאֲמַר שַׁדַּרְנִי אֲרוּם סַלִּיק
עַמּוּד קְרִיצְתָא וּמָטֵא שַׁעְתָּא דְמַלְאֲכֵי מְרוֹמָא לְמִשְׁבְּחָא וַאֲמַר לָא אֲשַׁלַּח יָתָךְ אֶלָּא תֵּן בְּרִיכַת יָתִי׃

פי׳ יונתן

(כג) וגו׳ לשון רבית כמו כרובים: (כה) ואשתאר בכו״ף נרשימין לפי פירש״י ק״ק התוליו כוח פנין כפלר: וזקנו לשמני. כל זה כפנין כשרבי דל״ח ופיוק שכפירש מרגש כנוויש לר׳ כפין לפי שכתוב קדוש בכתוב ואין נכנס כפנין ר׳ ונשאר שמנה זכרים עם נפיתין שיהיה מעוברת שמנו ונשנה בחשבון ותת״כ כתחיל לשנות שם זכי משמעון עד לוי ולכך תשבון על ר׳ לוי ושנה פיוקו. ירון דשלמת זה שלוק ונשאר לוי קודש פשיוי לפי׳:

פי׳ ירושלמי

(כו) וקבת פי׳ פנין מקיש. מפקוש.כתלוי וכן פרנוש יונפן חמוש פי׳ ל׳ לשניהם:

רשב״ם

היה מתכוון להשחותו לישנו שלא יפגענו: (כב) ויקם בלילה הוא. נתכוין לברוח דרך אחרת למיכך עבר המחל בלילה. כמו שמוצינו בדוד בברחו מפני אבשלום בדרכים הללו של ירדן וחמנים שעבר יעקב בלילה כמו כן ויאמרו אל דוד קומו ועברו את המים וגו׳ ויקם דוד וכל העם אשר אתו ויעברו את הירדן עד אור הבקר עד אחר לא נשאר אשר לא עבר את הירדן וגו׳ ודוד בא מחנים ואבשלום עבר את הירדן וגו׳: סעבר יבק. מעברות המים כדי לברוח: (כה) ויותר יעקב לבדו. כלומר שהעביר כל אשר לו שלא היה עוד לעבור אלא הוא לבדו וירצה לעבור אחריהם כדי לברוח דרך אחרת שלא ימצאוהו עשו ואנשיו ויאבק שלאך עמו שלא יוכל לברוח ויראה קיום דברו של הקב״ה שלא יוכלו עשו: (כו) כי לא יכול לו. המלאך וירצה לעבור ולברוח כדי לרוץ: ותקע. נשברה מן הירך כמו מן תקע נפשי מסך: (כז) כי עלה השחר. וכיון שתאיר היום מעטה יש לילך לדרכך: כי אם ברכתני. שתשלחני

דעת זקנים מבעלי התוספות

(כה) ויותר יעקב לבדו. פיכש״י מלמד שנשאר על פכים קטנים ושכך לדכר מדכתיב לבדו, על מקיני לבדו פלס לבדו. ד״פ לשון כיס כלי

אבן עזרא

(כג) ויעבר את מעבר יבק. הוא עבר בתחילה ואחר כך
לקח כניו וכניו והעבירם. והכה פירוש ויעבר כבר עבר.
וכב כתחרושה לנקש חם נשחר כלום: (כה) ויאבק. מנזרת
אבק עד שעלה אבק כיניהם: עד עלות השחר. עד סוף
שחרות הלילה. וי״ת כי שחר דמות אור והוא הנראה כשכים
ערש ורוח השמש. וכן שחר אין לו אור: (כו) כי לא יכל לו המלאך: ויגע בכף ירכו. על יעקב: ותקע. כמו אן

רמב״ן

המלאך להוציקו כי לא הורשה רק במה שעשה עמו להקע כף
ירכו. ואמרו בב״ר גגע בבל הצדיקים שעתידין להיות מהנו זה
דורו של שמד והעונין הם המאורע כלו רמז לדורותיו שיהיה דור
בורעו של יעקב יתגבר עשו עליהם עד שיהיה קרוב לקעקע
ביצתן והיה זה דור אחר בימי חכמי המשנה ברור של רבי
יהודה בן בבא וחביריו כמו שאמרו אמר רבי חייא בר אבא אם

כלי יקר

כי שמם זכות שיש כיהן בשכר שנשם שנמדם כי אין כמו כפיו לשמוע
שמח מדם בשכר שנם ע״כ הזכות כיהן אין מהשמחים במקום שמוצא
שמח שמוח קלם אם יכיל להזמיק שמח שמכם כך שילר שכא שיש
מזווג לל שמדם שנשם שמר לם שכן נדלו כלל ולא שמח לו שמח
למשמח ועל: ושם שיש שנשם כלל שמציאו אין לו שום שמחו: ושמק כי לם
יכול לו כלל. לך כזמן שנשמדם שנשמו שמח לו שמח קלם ושהן גדלו שם
כשכיכים קלם לא מיד מזווג לו שילר שכיש ומומר לו לך עשמי וכשרי
שמח ולא ישלטו מן שכיכים שקלות לל שמחוכות ומשמדל לשרמיך
שנשלם עד שלוח מ״ם גבר לאין מבשל ושכן גדילו ושי למרפם. קך
זה שמלאך שמשל שכו של עשו כלשמחו שיעי יעקב עם עשו שכן מלויין
בשמיכים שמוכים כמ״ש ושי כשבר שניך וגו׳ והשם כל זמן שלא שכיש
שיעקב שכך נדלו לם מזווג לנו לשמח שם שיעי שכלו מכל וכל לך
שם כל ושוב שובר ושכשיך שכוד ויעקב יפה מנדל שכשמשקום קלם
ויותר יעקב לבדו וי״ת לבדו שמקום שכשנה כי כלילה זמן קשלם לכל
שמיקים שיש ושוא שבשר כלילה יהידי שכוד שכים קשיש שמכלים
לשים ושבשים ושעכור דבר מושם שלחוו שהכלי כוה שוכר לשמוק שכשם
לבדו לו שמר שמשל השם שלשמי לון לי משמר שיעקב שכלקום
ושעם שם שלמו קלם עור שעיניו כי מי פור כמו לוסבי שמעון שבר
עליכם שמר ושילי כשדם לם שבשעה לו שמר שמשל שנם שם לקרב
ושם לשבק שלין ושכני שוסיף לו שומשם למלחמ שיעי שבק ושעבר
כדי שיכים שומש שבל וכל גם שעין שבשלי וזה״ם ויותר יעקב לבדו
כשבר שכר שק שבשבשקום ויותר לבדו לבדו וכבי שוא לבדו כי

אבי עזר

(כה) [עד עלות השחר וכו׳]. וכמושו כשלום גדים כשמו:

ספורנו

לתכלית המכוון מאתו: (כד) ויעבר את אשר לו. צוה לכלם
שיקדימוהו ללכת לפניו להאחז מן הנחל כמו ויעבור את הכרשי:
(כה) ויותר יעקב לבדו. אחרון לכלם לנסות מן המחנה כדי לחדריך את כל עמו שילכו עם כל קניניו ולא ישאר דבר במחנה:
ויאבק איש עמו. היה זה פועל מלאך במצות בוראו בלי ספק על דרך ירח ויור שיהיה נושע בה׳ יעקב ודעתו אף על פי שיהיה עם
היוק בממון שדאה היקום אשר ברגליהם ועם זה תהיה התשועה בסוף עם ברכה: (כו) לא יכול לו. לרוב דבקותו תמיד באל ית׳
בתחשבה ובדבור: ויגע. הודיעו החטא העתיד בסדריכי עמו ובדאגתו בזה פסק הדבור ותקע כף ירכו בהאבקו:

Goldhar, p. 73, *also Carta's Atlas of the Bible.*]

He forded the river in order to flee.—[*Rashbam*]

24. **what was his**—*The animals and the movables. He made himself like a ferry-man, כְּבַשָּׁר, taking from here and depositing there.*—[*Rashi* from *Gen. Rabbah* 75:9]

Ibn Ezra also writes that Jacob had first crossed the ford of the Jabbok. He later returned to see if he had left anything behind.

25. **And Jacob was left**—*He had forgotten small bottles and returned for them.*—[*Rashi* from *Gen. Rabbah* 77:2, *Chullin* 91a]

Da'ath Zekenim and others base this *derash* on the similarity between וַיִּוָּתֵר, *alone*, and לְבַדּוֹ, *for his pitcher. Da'ath Zekenim* suggests that the word may be derived from בֵּית הַבַּד, *oil press*, for after oil is pressed out of olives, it is stored in pitchers.

and a man wrestled—Heb. וַיֵּאָבֵק. *Menachem* (p. 14) *explains: And a man became covered with dust, derived from* אָבָק, *dust, for they were raising dust with their feet through their movements. I believe, however, that it is a term meaning that he attached himself, and it is an Aramaic expression* [found in the Talmud] (*Sanh.* 63b): *"After they became attached* (דְּאֶבְּיקוּ) *to it," "and he would tie it* (וְאָבֵיק לֵיהּ)*," for so is the habit of two people who make strong efforts to throw each other down, that one embraces the other and attaches himself to him with his arms. Our Rabbis explained* (*Gen. Rabbah* 77:3, 78:3) *that this was the prince* (guardian angel) *of Esau.*—[*Rashi*]

Note that both *Menachem's* and *Rashi's* definitions are already found in *Chullin* 91a.—[*Maharsha, Chiddushei Aggadoth*] *Menachem's* definition is also found in *Gen. Rabbah* 77:3.

In the Rödelheim edition of *Rashi*, the following appears in parentheses: *I heard from Rabbenu Klonomos:* וַיֵּאָבֵק, *an expression of* אֲבוּקָה, *torch. They wished to burn each other, the angel with his fire and Jacob with his fire.*

26. **he could not prevail against him**—I.e. the angel could not prevail against Jacob.—[*Rashbam, Ibn Ezra*]

he touched the socket of his hip—Of Jacob's hip.—[*Ibn Ezra*]

The upper thigh bone that is thrust into the hip bone is called the כַּף, lit. ladle, *because the flesh on it is like a sort of pot ladle.*—[*Rashi*]

became dislocated—Heb. וַתֵּקַע. *It became dislocated from its joint, and similar to this* (Jer. 6:8): *"lest My soul be alienated* (תֵּקַע) *from you," and in the Mishnah:* לְקַעֲקֵעַ בֵּיצָתָן, *to tear out their roots.*—[*Rashi* from *Gen. Rabbah* 77:3] *Berliner* and others point out that in extant editions of the Mishnah, this expression does not appear. It does, however, appear in *Lev. Rabbah* 26:8.

27. **for dawn is breaking**—*and I must recite a song* [of praise] (*Gen. Rabbah* 78:1, *Chullin* 91a).—[*Rashi*]

Rashbam explains: Since daylight has come, it is time for you to get on your way.

but he (Jacob) said, "I will not let you go unless you have blessed me." 28. So he said to him, "What is your name?" and he said, "Jacob." 29. And he said, "Your name shall no longer be called Jacob, but Israel, because you have commanding power with [an angel of] God and with men, and you have prevailed." 30. And Jacob asked and said, "Now tell me *your* name," and he said, "Why is it that you ask for my name?" And he blessed him there. 31. And Jacob named the place Peniel, for [he said,] I saw an angel face to face, and my soul was saved." 32. And the sun rose for him when he passed Penuel, and he was limping on his thigh.

33. Therefore, the children of Israel may not

unless you have blessed me—*Acknowledge for me the blessings* [with] *which my father blessed me, which Esau is contesting.*—[*Rashi*] *Sifthei Chachamim* explains that the following dialogue between the angel and Jacob do not relate to any future blessing, but to the validity of the previous blessing. *Zohar* (vol. 1 144a, vol. 3, 45a) explains that בֵּרַכְתָּנִי, which is in the past tense, rather than תְּבָרְכֵנִי, in the future tense, indicates that Jacob was referring to a past blessing, not to a future one.

Rashbam explains that Jacob demanded of the angel that he bless him that he should not suffer any permanent injuries from wrestling with him.

29. **no... Jacob**—*It shall no longer be said that the blessings came to you through trickery* (עָקְבָה) *and deceit, but with nobility and openness, and ultimately, the Holy One, blessed be He, will reveal Himself to you in Bethel and change your name, and there He will bless you, and I will be there.*

and with men—*Esau and Laban.*—[*Rashi*]

and you have prevailed—*over them.*—[*Rashi* from *Targum Jonathan*] [According to *Rashi's* interpretation of עִם־אֱלֹהִים, as "with an angel of God," this means that Jacob strove with an angel and *He then acknowledged them* (the blessings) *as being his* (Jacob's). *This is* [the meaning of] *what is written* (Hos. 12:5): *"He strove with an angel and prevailed over him; he wept and supplicated him,"* [meaning that] *the angel wept and supplicated him. With what did he supplicate him? "In Bethel he will find Him, and there He will speak with us"* (ibid). *Wait for me until He speaks with us there. Jacob, however, did not consent,* [to release the angel] *and, against his* (the angel's) *will, he* (the angel) *acknowledged them* (the blessings) *as being his* (Jacob's). *This is* [the meaning of] *"And he blessed him there," that he entreated him to wait, but he did not wish* [to do so].—[*Rashi* from *Zohar*, vol. 3, 45a]

הַשָּׁחַר וַיֹּאמֶר לֹא אֲשַׁלֵּחֲךָ כִּי אִם־
בֵּרַכְתָּנִי׃ כח וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלָיו מַה־שְּׁמֶךָ
וַיֹּאמֶר יַעֲקֹב׃ כט וַיֹּאמֶר לֹא יַעֲקֹב
יֵאָמֵר עוֹד שִׁמְךָ כִּי אִם־יִשְׂרָאֵל כִּי־
שָׂרִיתָ עִם־אֱלֹהִים וְעִם־אֲנָשִׁים
וַתּוּכָל׃ ל וַיִּשְׁאַל יַעֲקֹב וַיֹּאמֶר
הַגִּידָה־נָּא שְׁמֶךָ וַיֹּאמֶר לָמָּה זֶּה
תִּשְׁאַל לִשְׁמִי וַיְבָרֶךְ אֹתוֹ שָׁם׃
שלישי לא וַיִּקְרָא יַעֲקֹב שֵׁם הַמָּקוֹם
פְּנִיאֵל כִּי־רָאִיתִי אֱלֹהִים פָּנִים אֶל־
פָּנִים וַתִּנָּצֵל נַפְשִׁי׃ לב וַיִּזְרַח־לוֹ
הַשֶּׁמֶשׁ כַּאֲשֶׁר עָבַר אֶת־פְּנוּאֵל
וְהוּא צֹלֵעַ עַל־יְרֵכוֹ׃ לג עַל־כֵּן לֹא־

אֲרֵי סָלִיק צַפְרָא וַאֲמַר
לָא אֲשַׁלְּחִינָךְ אֱלָהַיִן
בָּרַכְתְּ לִי׃ כח וַאֲמַר לֵיהּ
מָה שְׁמָךְ וַאֲמַר יַעֲקֹב׃
כט וַאֲמַר לָא יַעֲקֹב יִתְאֲמַר
עוֹד שְׁמָךְ אֱלָהַיִן יִשְׂרָאֵל
אֲרֵי רַב אַתְּ קֳדָם יְיָ וְעִם
גּוּבְרַיָּא וּיכָלְתָּא׃ ל וּשְׁאֵיל
יַעֲקֹב וַאֲמַר חֲוִי כְּעַן
שְׁמָךְ וַאֲמַר לְמָה דְנָן אַתְּ
שָׁאֵיל לִשְׁמִי וּבְרִיךְ יָתֵיהּ
תַּמָּן׃ לא וּקְרָא יַעֲקֹב
שְׁמָא דַּאֲתְרָא פְּנִיאֵל אֲרֵי
חֲזֵיתִי מַלְאָכָא דְיְיָ אַפִּין
בְּאַפִּין וְאִשְׁתְּזִבַת נַפְשִׁי׃
לב וּדְנַח לֵיהּ שִׁמְשָׁא כַּד
עֲבַר יָת פְּנוּאֵל וְהוּא
מַטְעֵי עַל יַרְכֵיהּ׃ לג עַל

תו"א כי שרית עם לג : ויזרח סנהדרין
לה מולין לח : על כן לח . פסחים כב
חולין ה :

כלי יקר

כמלה דשמו מגל כל מדם כי מי מתי יסור הנה נסכן עלמו כעכור דכר מומם כזה מין זה כ"ם לב כוחל נסמו מני מולם ישכיס נמכך כל כך המנוך כגוכם שכמם מלוה מממל כמ"ם וכמף וזכך יכיזון לך וכם נככך וכמכם מם ס'. מיך ויאמר מים שמו מזוזג מלין מממל נגרום לו שכמם מלוה מכל וכל ומלם ויאמר הוא כמו ויאמר כי מלוה ממס"ם מממלמום. וכתב ויאמר מלמך הלוך לדי לדכום ממנו כ' מכך כי לכם נממך עין שכלו מכך זה מלוה ומממך מיני מהדם כך מלם כדשמו נממך עין שכלו כדי נהכילמו לידי שכמשם מלוה ממממל וחמ שמרא"ל שכיש המכך עולה עד כמף שככוך כי זכו ממני מיניו על לדקים כמוצע כמלמים ממוצה שכוכים ים', ומלימת כמף כבודו ים', ומה שממרו כיש מצע כמכף שככוך נמדו זה ממכם שכ' עד מלוה שכמר ממממע עד ולא עד שכלל כי מלוה ממממר היה ממשכ על ידו נמלה היה יכול לנהילמו לידי שכמשם מלוה לפי שעל ידי מלוה ממתר שכיל נממך כי ים לשולם כוכף ומעכיו כמו שפ' כעקידה שכמם כרמשים על ממוס וידעת היום וכמצוה על נככך כי ס' הוא מהלמי שממוך ידיעת מלכך הגעל היומי דהיים ממשם יוכל ממשכיל להסתוק כי ס' הוא מהלמים וכן שכרכם לה שכיל כוללו כ"ש מתוך קלילות ממשע ומהמלה עלייהם כמלות ממתר כמ"ם מי מהיל מלמכת נדק ומסוק זה נדרש על שכרכם וזכו המרגליות הסתוכה שהים' תלויה צלולמו של שכרכם שהיא מפרסם לכל מליהת כחל ים', וכשומו חלה ידיעה זו כגעל ממם ופי' שכיל שעל זה ממרו לשלמה נגעל ממם כמלכיו מליהת כחל ים', היה ממשע קולם על רומם המכתם', מליהמו ים'. לכן נאמר עד עלות השחר ולא עד שכלל כי על ידי ידיעת ממשע ממשם ידע יעקב כי ס' הוא מהלמים. ומפשם זה מפשם כרשעים לנקריים ולהים מפדום וכמ"ם לנקריים למשים כל רשעי מרץ נפי שהא לקמו לימות משלות השחר ולא ילמו עם ס'. וכמאר לפה ממגל כי לם יכול לו לממל מין שכלו מכל וכל. מז ממשכל מחמכול' מחנים לממל קלם מין שכלו לכל המחות לשלם יוכל לרחום כמכרי כמויה וכדכרים מעלמים המכוונים ניכך כמ"ם ממוקי יכיזך מם יכך כמכר לף דכרי תורה כמכר וזה"ם ויעב שכף יכלו ולין לילוני נהולים מקרלם זה מידי פשוטו כי ולפי מעב ניכרו ממעם לך שלמי מוקן ממעם כדכל לממ מעב דוקא שכף יכלו שלמו לו שעל ידי שממשה תוסב כסף מה כלי מפקן יהיה עול מעיני שכלו ומם יפה כמו על יעקב שלא נא ליהי כפיל' מכל וכל מכל מקום יהיה הדכר מעב כסף יכיזכו

אור החיים

לא תשלחך וגו' . זה הוא שאמר כי שרית וגו' ותוכל כי מצל כו ולא היה המלאך יכול להלוך זולת רצונו ותומר כי אם ברכתני פי' שלא ויזק מתקיעת ירכו אז לעד שהכיר כו היותו מלאך השתדל שיכרכהו :

הגידה נא שמך . להיות שיעקב יודע הוא שאין אם קטוע למלאך ושאל למלאך שמו ופי' כי אולאו על שמו אז בלותה שעה והוא אומר הגידה נא שמך פי' עתה מה שאל שמו למה זה תשאל וגו' . פי' כשלמת מה שאל המלאך שמו על יעקב הוא לעשם מה שאמר לו לא יעקב וגו' כי אם ישראל מעת"כ שלשה זו על יעקב למה אם לומר לו דבר יאמר אלינו בלא סיבת שאלת עניו זה . או ירצה למה פי' לחזק עניו אתה שואל דבר זה שתודיעך שמי שאני נקרא כו עתה כיון שאין זה אם קטוע ובעת אחר יעשרך נשאל בשמי :

פנים אל פניס וגו' . עשם התמיה לא שרשה מלאך והלא נגלה אליו קודם התלטים אלא שלחם עם המלאך והוא אר' פנים אל פניס ל' מלחמה ע"ד תומרו נתרא' פניס : כאשר עבר את פטואל . תולי כי לא קרא אם המקום פניאל אלא יעקב לכד אבל כל הון ממנו ואפי' לשאל בשמי :

דבר תורה תקרא פטואל וכן נקרא בשופטים :

על כן לא יאכלו וגו' . פי' לעד שבודעות הניד ממקור הקדוש' ואלא כו הקליפה בחי' זו בכ"מ שהיא נשמאה וחסרה הכורת כי הוא היודע ותמלת סוד זאת כי ניד זה אין בו מעם והוא פי' לבחי' הקליפה כי אין בה מעם כיון שנעקרה קדושה ממנו ויש זאת פסעים לומר אלא שהעיקר כמ"ש :

מִשְׁתַּחֲוִין לְמֵרֵי עֲלְמָא וַאֲנָא חַד מִן מַלְאָכַיָּא מְשַׁבְּחַנַיָּא וּמְיוֹמָא דְּאִיתְבְּרֵי עָלְמָא לָא כְּטָא וְכְנֵי לְמִשְׁבָּחָא
אֱלָהָן הָרָא וְאָמָא וַאֲמַר לַיִת אֲנָא מְשַׁרַּר יְקָרָךְ אֱלָהָן בִּירַבְתָּ יָתִי : כח וַאֲמַר לַיהּ מָה שְׁמָךְ וַאֲמַר יַעֲקֹב :
כט וַאֲמַר לָא יַעֲקֹב אִיתְאֲמַר עוֹד שְׁמָךְ אֱלָהָן יִשְׂרָאֵל אֲרוּם אִתְרַבְרַבְתְּ עִם מַלְאָכַיָּא דֵיי וְעִם גּוּבְרַיָּא
וְיָכָלְתְּ לְהוֹם : ל וּשְׁאִיל יַעֲקֹב וַאֲמַר חֲוִי כְּדוּן שְׁמָךְ וַאֲמַר לְמָה דְנַן אַנְתְּ שָׁאֵל לְשָׁמִי וּבְרִיךְ יָתֵיהּ יַעֲקֹב
תַּמָּן : לא וּקְרָא יַעֲקֹב שְׁמָא דְאַתְרָא פְּנִיאֵל אֲרוּם אָמַר חֲמֵיתִי מַלְאָכַיָּא דֵיי אַפִּין בְּאַפִּין וְאִישְׁתֵּיזִבַת
נַפְשִׁי : לב וּנְהַר לֵיהּ שִׁמְשָׁא קֳדָם זְמָנֵיהּ דְטָמַע בְּגִינֵיהּ קֳדָם זְמָנֵיהּ בְּמֵיפְקֵיהּ מִבֵּירָא דְשָׁבַע כַּד עָבַר
יָת פְּנוּאֵל וּשְׁרֵי לְטַיָּיעָא וְהוּא מְטַלַּע עַל יַרְכֵיהּ : לג בְּגִין כֵּן לָא אָכְלִין בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל יָת גִּידָא דְנַשְׁיָא דְעַל

פי' יונתן

(לב) קדם ומני' פיין נגי"י : ושרי לטייל . פי' שלח כרגים כד כי כשמיל (שמ"ל) :

ויישר וירון ומה שלקה יעקב ונצלע לפי שהקב"ה הבטיחו והוא היה בורח . וכן מצינו בכל ההולכים בדרך שלא ברצון הקב"ה או כשאינם הולכת שנעשה בסופה כתיב שלח נא ביד תשלח ויחר אף ה' בסופה . ולפי הדרש אע"פ שאמרו חכמים בב"ם הרון אף עושה רושם ובאן מה רושם יש הלא אהרן אחיך הלוי עתיר הוא להיות לוי ואהוה כהן ונבשיו הוא יהיה כהן ואתה לוי . אך לפי הפשט לפי שהיה מתעצל ללכת בתר ויהי בדרך במלון וישכמהו ה' ויבקש המיתו . וכן ביונה שנבלע בפני הדגה . וכן בבלעם ויחר אף אלהים כי הולך הוא ונעשתה הגיר כרכתיב והלחץ רגל בלעם . וילך שפי חיבר בסן ושבו עכשותיו :
(לב) יהוא צולע על יריכו . עתה בשחיה הששם ראשון צולע על יריכו בסן ויהי בבוקר והנה היא לאה כי עד עכשיו לא נודע שהיא לאה : (לג) על כן לא

רש"י

לומר שיהיה כיוס (כ"ר הולין נח) : ברכתני . הודה לי על הברכות ס שברכני תכי שעמו מערער עליהן (וכתן קצה לרש"י תברכני הל"ל . נלח הודה וכו' וכן פיתח בהדיח בזוהר פרשת תזריע עמוד מ"ח ודוק) : (כט) לא יעקב . לח יתמר עוד שהברכות בתו לך בעקבה ורמיה כי תם בערמה וגלוי פניס ומופך שהקב"ה נגלה עליך בבית אל ומתליף שמך נ ושם הוח מברכך ואני שם לחיה ולהודה לך עליהן וזהו שכתוב (הושע יב) ויבר אל מלאך ויוכל בכה ויתחנן לו בכה המלאך ויתחנן לו ומה מתחנן לו בית אל ונלח רלה יעקב ושל כרתו הודה לו עליהן וזהו ויכרך חותו שם שהיה מתחנן להמתין לו ונלח רלה : ועם אנשים . עמו ולבן : והובל . להם : (ל) למה זה תשאל . (כ"ר) אין לנו שם קטוע משתנין ס שמותיו (הכל) לפי מלות עבודת השליחות שלחו משלחים : (לב) ויזרח לו השמש . לשון בני חדם הוח כשהגעגו למקום פלוני החיר לנו השחר זהו פשוטו . ומ"ח ויזרס לו לזרלות לרפלות חת עלעתו כמה דחיתמי (מלחכי נ) שמש לדקה ומרפח בכנפיה ואותן שעות שמיהרה לשקוע בשבילו ע בשילת מבחר שבע מיהרה לזרוח בשבילו : והוא צולע

דעת זקנים מבעלי התוספות

שמוכיחין ממנו שמן זית והיכן הוח להלניע שמן בכיכים קטנים : (לג) על כן לח יחכלו בני ישרחל . ע"כ נזכרון שהם שבילו יעקב מן המלחך שלח מע שלח בכף יריכו ולח הכינו משל למדם שהוח חמיד לו בלבו ומקבל עליו שלח לחכול עוד מן בהמה לו מן הלב כדי שיסיס לו כשופר . ד"ח ע"כ שעשו בני ישרחל שלח להזון שהרוח שיחיה ושיחיו נפשותיהן מהן ויש דורות חחרים שעשו עכשו כוה ויותר רע מזה והכל שבלנו

גיד הנשה כדי שיסיו זכיכין בשעות לויה משם ואילך ולכך כותבה יעקב לנוח שם יוסף כנו כשבלנו על שמיו :

רמב"ן

יאמר לי אדם הן נפשך על קדושת שמו של הקב"ה אני נותן ובלבד שיהרגוני מיד אבל בדורו של שמד איני יכול לסבול ומה היו עושים בדורו של שמד היו מביאין כדוריות של ברזל ומלבנין אותן באור ונותנין אותן תחת שיחיהן ומשיאין נפשותיהן מהן ויש דורות אחרים שעשו עכשו כזה ויותר רע מזה והכל סבלנו

כלי יקר

ויכיכו כי על ידי זה לח יוכל לרפות בכפתי כתוכה והכמכם . ותקע כף ירך יעקב לתוכות לו כי שני קיצים סלו כתוכה והכמכון סס לגלות זו וזו ותקע טיינו שבתקה כאחד משני מבינו בס"ם טוב לי כי מיתי למען למד מקין . ויאמר שלחני כי עלה השחר כי לח סוכל עוד להסיקך ליתי כהסתא לגוס לאחר שהתא משני בקר ודשתך בעליות השחר כאמור . ויאמר לח חשלחך ב"ל כרכתני אסחים עודס לי שתין שתה יכול לי בעניו לסיים והסתכלות מלאות השל ית' כדי שהשלחך לע יעשה למען כעל כלחו ושקטיגור יהיה לשיגוד כמו שעשה שמשל ביו"ב :

ויאמר לא יעקב יאמר שמך כי אם ישראל . לי יאר של כי יפר סוח לשון לסייה מל' סלאומו ולח קרוב וכוח' לו כוח כי יעקב רומה שי שלח ולח עלתה בידו למעה סוהו כמלאות השל ית' וכשמלו כי עניית עם שלטים עקב שם יעקב ממנו כי יעקב מורה על עקוב הלב ושטה מכל . ויכרחל לי מישול כמ"ם לעתיד וכי' שעקוב לעשוך ולח מישר שלכם יאר כעיני בכליות כ"ף שלכלה יאר כעיני שלטים ושדה ע"ב שמר כי שרית עם שלטים ועם שלטים ועם שמשים כי ע"י כוחר מפעלך שיס שר ועיד עם שלטים ושמשים ותוכל וזכו ישרחל יאר של מישול שנעלם גם כעיני שהל יאכל :

ספורנו

(כו) לא אשלחך . שגדולים צדיקים יותר מפ"ה : (כח) כי אם ישראל כי שרית . אבל יקראו לך בשם ישראל בלבד להורות שאו כבר שרית עם אלהים כו' כענין יעקוד ה' על צבא המרום בסרום : (ל) הגידה נא שמך . המורה על צורתך ועל הפעל הנמשך ממנו כדי שאתבונן על מה קמת לשמן ואשוב בתשובה ואתפלל :

רשב"ם

מאחר בשלום שלא אהיה נזוק כמה שנתאכזתי עמך כי עתה עלה השחר או ידע יעקב שהוא מלאך : (כח) כי שרית . מגזרת שרה את אלהים בכח קנית . עשה עשית . אכל ושר אל מלאך ויוכל מגזרת שב קם רץ שיאשר ויקם

שפתי חכמים

אמין שייך לומר שהמלו שפר פד כמה שכתוב כיון שהיה שרו של עמו מכ"ל : ם וח"ם דלמח ניקם ממנו ביכרכו ממש . ו"ל מדמסיק לו המלחך לח יעקב וגו' היאך כתה תקוסכ זו לזה שלח ולפי ה"ם כדמסקים בס"י לח יאמר עליך וכו' ס"ל ס"ע שיעקב היה מנקם ממנו דכר זה מ"ד לו על הכרכות וזהו היה מפילו שפיר . ל"ה : נ ר"ל לח שהמלוף המלחך כאן שמו שלח מ' לומר לו שהקב"ה עמיד להמליף לח שמו ולאמר לו שלחתו מילוף מי מע' לוחו עליך על הכרכות : וכו' : ם לח שכתם כשהלל זה ממנו שהרי נם כוח שלל לזה משיקב : ע דק"ל מפי' לח זהמה כשבילו מ"ש מה זה לו ויה לו לכדו זהמה וכו' :

רמב"ן

ועבר עלינו כמו שרמז ויבא יעקב שלם : (ל) למה זה תשאל לשמי . אמר אין לך ביידיעת שמי תועלת כי אין הבח והיכולת בלחי לה' לבדו אם תקראני לא אענך וגם מצדרכך לא אושיעך אבל עתה אברך אותך כי כן צוותי ולא פ' הכתוב הברכה והקרוב מה שאמרו רבותינו שהוודה לו על כל הברכות שם במקום ההוא

ויקרא יעקב

ויקרא יעקב שם המקום ההוא פניאל כי ראיתי אלהים פנים אל פנים . הוח לדכר מסר דכרתי שלמה ממלל למעמ מיני שכנו בתכת ל' הכיע עד שיכתים מליתתו ית' ולח יהיה פני ס' וכתשכ תגלו נפני ע"י שלות השחר מז דמיתי שלטים פנים אל פנים להעיד מליתתו ית' ע"י זיהות השמש בשלות השחר כפך מדעת שמלל המקום והשמשת ושמדמע קודש בחול . וה"ם ויזרח לו השמש וכיינו לכשופתו ומ"ש למר וכוח שלוע על יריכו קיימין מהדדי שלח שר"ל שעל ידי זיהות השמש נתה לו הרשופה על המקה שנר רנה שמלל לכשופתו וכוח לעזר מיני שכלו להכישתו לידי כהסתא שלוה לכך נמצר לו נלרכו כי זהות עליו השמש לרפה ומרפח בנפיים מעוף כמלו להכישתו לידי כהסתא שלוה לכך על כן לא יאכלו בני ישראל את גיד הנשה וגו' . מלינו לר"ל שדכריס שמוקים שהשמש קפה כשבלו לנידין כמו שהיכ"ו ס' יתכו על פסוק ותניד לכני ישרחל והשמש שקלפה

prevailed over him. According to *Targum Onkelos*, however, the word אֱלֹהִים refers to the Deity Himself. Consequently, Onkelos renders: because you are great before God and with men, and you have prevailed. Accordingly, we interpret וְתוּכָל to mean that Jacob prevailed over Esau and Laban.]

30. **Why is it that you ask**—*(Gen. Rabbah 78:4) We have no permanent name. Our names change, (all) according to the service we are commanded* [to do] *in the mission upon which we are sent.*—[*Rashi*]

Ramban explains: There is no use knowing my name because no one has any power or ability to do anything except God Himself. If you call me, I will not answer. Neither will I save you from your trouble. Now, however, I will bless you because I have been commanded to do so. Scripture does not elaborate on the blessing, but the most probable meaning is that he acknowledged all the blessings at that place (by the banks of the Jabbok) because Jacob did not consent to wait until they went to Beth-el.

Although angels are infinitely more powerful than mortals, the angel was unable to injure Jacob more than he was permitted. The Rabbis in *Genesis Rabbah* see this as a portent of the future, that at some time, Esau's descendants will persecute Jacob's descendants to the extent that they will almost annihilate them. This was the generation of Rabbi Judah ben Baba and his colleagues, of the sages of the Mishnah, when the Romans issued a decree against granting *semichah*, ordination, to perpetuate the power of the judges to adjudicate certain laws. Rabbi Judah ben Baba sacrificed his life to sanctify God's name. This is referred to by the Midrash as the generation of religious persecution (the time of Hadrian), when the pagans heated iron balls and placed them under their victim's armpits until they died. In *Song Rabbah* 2:18, Rabbi Chiya bar Abba declares: If a person says to me, "Give up your life for the sanctity of the name of the Holy One, blessed be He, I would do so, as long as they would kill me instantly, but in the generation of religious persecution [the generation of the Hadrianic persecutions], I would not be able to endure it [and I would be forced to yield to them]." *Ramban* adds: There have been other generations in which they inflicted similar or even worse tortures upon us, and we have endured, and it has passed over us, as the Torah states further (33:18): "And Jacob came safely."

32. **And the sun rose for him**—*This is a common expression: When we arrived at such-and-such a place, the dawn broke for us. This is the simple explanation. The Midrashic Aggadah (Tanchuma Buber, Vayishlach 10; Gen. Rabbah 68:10)* [explains]: *And the sun rose for him—to heal his limp, as it is said*: (Mal. 3:20): "*the sun of mercy, with healing in its wings;*" *and those hours that it hastened to set for him when he left Beer-sheba, it hastened to rise for him.*—[*Rashi*]

when he passed Penuel—Perhaps only Jacob called it Peniel, elsewhere, even in the Torah, it is

eat the displaced tendon, which is on the socket of the hip, until this day, for he touched the socket of Jacob's hip, in the hip sinew.

33

1. Jacob lifted his eyes and saw, and behold, Esau was coming, and with him were four hundred men; so he divided the children with Leah and with Rachel and with the two maidservants. 2. And he placed the maidservants and their children first and Leah and her children after, and Rachel and her Joseph last. 3. And he went ahead of them and prostrated himself to the ground seven times, until he came close to his brother. 4. And Esau ran toward him and embraced him, and he fell on his neck and kissed him, and they wept. 5. And he lifted his eyes and saw the women and the children, and he said, "Who are these to you?" And he said, "The children with whom God has favored your servant." 6. And the maidservants and their children drew near and prostrated themselves. 7. And Leah and her children drew near and prostrated themselves, and after [them], Joseph and Rachel drew near and prostrated themselves. 8. And he said, "What is to you [the purpose of] all this camp

called Penuel, as in Jud. 8:8-17 [and I Kings 12:25].—[*Ohr Hachayim*]

and he was limping on his thigh—*He was limping on his thigh when the sun rose.*—[*Rashi*] When the sun began rising, he was limping, but immediately afterwards, he was healed.—[*Sifthei Chachamim*]

Rashbam explains that Jacob was punished for his plan to flee [the house of Laban] thus not relying implicitly on God, Who had promised to bring him home safely.

33. **the hip sinew**—Heb. גִּיד הַנָּשֶׁה. *Now why was it named* גִּיד הַנָּשֶׁה? *Because it sprang* (נָשָׁה) *out of its place and rose, and that* [root] *is a term for springing. Similarly* (Jer. 51:30): *"their might has failed* (נָשְׁתָה)," *and similarly* (below 41:51): *"for God has caused me to forget* (נַשַּׁנִי) *all my toil."*—[*Rashi* from *Chullin* 91a]

may not eat the displaced tendon—*Da'ath Zekenim* and *Riva* rationalize this commandment as follows: In commemoration of Jacob's rescue from the angel, who touched only the socket of his hip and did not kill him, [we may not eat the displaced tendon]. This can be compared to a person who constantly

יֹאכְלוּ בְנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶת־גִּיד הַנָּשֶׁה
אֲשֶׁר עַל־כַּף הַיָּרֵךְ עַד הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה כִּי
נָגַע בְּכַף־יֶרֶךְ יַעֲקֹב בְּגִיד הַנָּשֶׁה׃
לג א וַיִּשָּׂא יַעֲקֹב עֵינָיו וַיַּרְא וְהִנֵּה
עֵשָׂו בָּא וְעִמּוֹ אַרְבַּע מֵאוֹת אִישׁ
וַיַּחַץ אֶת־הַיְלָדִים עַל־לֵאָה וְעַל־
רָחֵל וְעַל שְׁתֵּי הַשְּׁפָחוֹת׃ ב וַיָּשֶׂם
אֶת־הַשְּׁפָחוֹת וְאֶת־יַלְדֵיהֶן רִאשֹׁנָה
וְאֶת־לֵאָה וְיַלְדֶיהָ אַחֲרֹנִים וְאֶת־
רָחֵל וְאֶת־יוֹסֵף אַחֲרֹנִים׃ ג וְהוּא
עָבַר לִפְנֵיהֶם וַיִּשְׁתַּחוּ אַרְצָה שֶׁבַע
פְּעָמִים עַד־גִּשְׁתּוֹ עַד־אָחִיו׃ ד וַיָּרָץ
עֵשָׂו לִקְרָאתוֹ וַיְחַבְּקֵהוּ וַיִּפֹּל עַל־
צַוָּארָו וַיִּשָּׁקֵהוּ וַיִּבְכּוּ׃ ה וַיִּשָּׂא אֶת־
עֵינָיו וַיַּרְא אֶת־הַנָּשִׁים וְאֶת־הַיְלָדִים
וַיֹּאמֶר מִי־אֵלֶּה לָךְ וַיֹּאמֶר הַיְלָדִים
אֲשֶׁר־חָנַן אֱלֹהִים אֶת־עַבְדֶּךָ׃ רביעי
ו וַתִּגַּשְׁן הַשְּׁפָחוֹת הֵנָּה וְיַלְדֵיהֶן
וַתִּשְׁתַּחֲוֶיןָ׃ ז וַתִּגַּשׁ גַּם־לֵאָה וְיַלְדֶיהָ
וַיִּשְׁתַּחֲווּ וְאַחַר נִגַּשׁ יוֹסֵף וְרָחֵל
וַיִּשְׁתַּחֲווּ׃ ח וַיֹּאמֶר מִי לְךָ כָּל־הַמַּחֲנֶה

תו"א מכאן ואילך כך. תולין זו בזרועו של יעקב וקלך: וכוונו עכשו שפחים ו' קודם לפ' פנילה כת נגיה פנ: וילחם עם מלאכים: פ' הוסיף פרשת גלגל:

כלי יקר

שלא יאכילו עם שאכלם דכיים קדיש כעידן כי עם בכף ירך יעקב ופס ליעקב הכלם קדיש מכאן זה לפי שעה כשנו' קלת מדלך משוני עם ישנו מאוני קיל' לפני כוכ עשקיהם כהכלי הטפ"ו ומצודותיו פ"ל לא יסיה לפס עפק כעפקנות כ"פ ימידי פעולי הדוכ לכ"פ כן יומפי ודומעתו מפר לקו ומפסו כהכלי הטפ"ו ליעקב כ"פ לפי שעה קדש זה ליעקב של שמוכר לכדו לנדנו כלי פפק שפחר קדש לו עיין כהפלקות של פעמלי כהנים כמפסו וכפ' מן פדלך פסוק ולפי' לדכר כל ויצא יעקב

רשב"ם

יאכלו. לזכרון גבורתו של יעקב וגם שעשה לו הקב"ה שלא סת: היכך. פעמו למפה ברי"ם כי כן עשה וכן גדר סוה וכן גגל ובשיכך דבוק נהפכים לחיות פתח קכן ופעמו באות ראשונה. ירך יעקב. ירך המשכן: (ז) נגש יוסף ורחל. לפי השעם דרך לחזור את האיש תחלה אבל למעלה מתוך שאמר לאה וילדיה אמר כמו כן רחל ויוסף: (ח) מי לך כל המחנה. של עדרים ששלחת: חנני (פ"א חננני) חנני:

פְּתַי יַרְכָא דִבְעִירָא וְחַיְוָתָא עַד יוֹמָא הָדֵין אֲרוּם קָרִיב מַלְאָכָא וְאָחַד בְּפִתַי יַרְכֵי יַעֲקֹב בְּאָתַר
גְּיָרָא דְנָשְׁיָא: א וּזְקִיף יַעֲקֹב יָת עֵינוֹי וַחֲמָא וְהָא עֶשָׂו אָחֵי אָתֵי וְעִמֵּיהּ מְאָה גּוּבְרִין פּוּלְטוּרְכִין וּפַלֵּיג
יָת בְּנַיָּא עַל לֵאָה וְעַל רָחֵל וְעַל תַּרְתֵּין לְחֵינָתָא: ב וְשַׁוִּי יָת לְחֵינָתָא הֵינֵן וּבְנֵיהֶן בְּקֻדְמֵיתָא אֲרוּם אָמַר
אִלּוּ אָחֵי עֶשָׂו לְחַבָּלָא בְּרַבְיָא לְמֶעְבַּד זְנוּ בְּנָשָׁיָא יַעֲבִיד בְּיֵאיְלִין וּבְנוֹ פִּתְגָמָא הָדֵין נְקוּם וְנֶגַח עִמֵּיהּ
קְרָבָא וְיָת לֵאָה וְיָרְבָהָא בְּתַרְתֵּין וְיָת רָחֵל וְיָת יוֹסֵף בְּתָרְאִין: ג וְאִיהוּ עָבַר לְקֻדְמֵיהוֹן מַצְלֵי רַחֲמִין
מִן קֳדָם יְיָ וְנָחַת עַל אַרְעָא שְׁבַע זִמְנִין עַד מֵיקְרֵבֵיהּ עַד אָחוֹי: ד וּרְהַט עֵשָׂו לְקֻדְמוֹתֵיהּ וְנָפַק לֵיהּ ד וּרְהַט עֵשָׂו לְקֻדְמוֹתֵיהּ וְנָפַק לֵיהּ
וְאִתְרְכִין עַל צַוְּרֵיהּ וּנְשַׁקֵיהּ לֵיהּ וּבְכוֹן עֵשָׂו בְּכָא עַל וְאִתְרְכִין עַל צַוְּרֵיהּ וּנְשַׁקֵיהּ לֵיהּ וּבְכוֹן עֵשָׂו בְּכָא עַל
צַעֲרָא דְשִׁינּוּי דְאִיתְמְזִמִיו וְיַעֲקֹב בְּכָא עַל צַעֲרָא דְצַוְּרֵיהּ: ה וּזְקַף יָת עֵינוֹי וַחֲמָא יָת נָשַׁיָּא וְיָת רַבְיָא
וְאָמַר מַאן אִלֵּין לָךְ וְאָמַר בְּנֵי הֵינוֹן דְאִתְיְהִיבוּ לִי בְּמֵיחוּס מִן קֳדָם יְיָ עַל עַבְדָּךְ: ו וּקְרֵיבָן לְחֵינָתָא הֵינוֹן
וּבְנֵיהֶן וּגְחִינָן: ז וּקְרִיבַת אוּף לֵאָה וּבְנָהָא וּגְחִינָן וּבָתַר כֵּן קָרִיב יוֹסֵף וְאִתְעַכַּר קָמֵי רָחֵל וְכַסְיָה בְּקוּטְרָהּ
וּגְחִינָן: ח וַאֲמַר מַן לָךְ כָּל מַשְׁרֵי הֵדֵין דְּאַרְעַיְתָא וַאֲמַר דּוּרוֹן הוּא דְשַׁדְרֵית לְאַשְׁפָּחָא רַחֲמִין בְּעֵינֵי רִבּוֹנִי:

פי׳ יונתן

(לג) בפני יכלת פי׳ נרתוק סיכוי: דמפיר׳ ואיתוי כתולין נ״ב טוכב בין נכסתא וחיה: (ב) בהוני׳ כנר פי׳ שנות כנפרים כמו הכרובים: (ד) ואתרכין פי׳ נשם עליו וכן פי׳ לשון נשפוק ורוח ושפול פעל קבמל: לפיפמאניו פי׳ נתנכנו לשון נפרת פי׳ תלו שרשות נשמותו כשר וכן כרשה נקב נשמו קלו שינוי ונשפה נותרו ביה ויכנו זה בכה על נותרו חם בכה על שינוי:

פי׳ ירושלמי

(ד) שפשפם נוהיה תרגום של תלקח נותרו וכי׳ שנשפם נותרו כאן זה שלח יכול לפשום נותרו בשינוי פרוש תלקחו כדפרש״י כשיר בשירים בשפוק עבד אין וכשרשם כדלתים כמדבש:

בעל הטורים

כרכתי. כני׳ סודם לכרכתי שכרו של עשו סיס: וישתחו מלשון ז׳ פעמים. פ״ם כי שכש יפול לדיק וקס ולמעניך ז׳ תוטבות מלכו: ויפקהו. נקוד למעלה שכיון לשכו: ויפקהו. כנים׳ לשכתו דוד מלכות ביש״ו כנר׳ עשו: מי לך. ג׳ כמם׳ כפם ופירך מי לך פה כי מלכת לך פה קבל עיד מי לך פה מתן ומכיך זהו סיס כמדבש שכיו כשוש

רש״י

סיה גולע פ כשורמה השמש: (לג) גיד הנשה. ולמה נקרא שמו גיד הנשה לפי שנשה ממקומו ועלה והוא לשון קפילה וכן (ירמיה נ) נשתה גבורתם וכן (לקמן מז) כי נשני אלהים את כל עמלי: (על כף הירך. פולפ״ח בלעז (גרוחבע דיקע) כל כשר גבוה ומגול וענול קרוי כף כמו עד שתתמרך הכף כשמני בגרות): (כ) ואת לאה וילדיה אחרונים. לחרון אפו יכא לפניהם. אמר שם יבא אותו רשע להלחם עלהם כי תחילה: (ד) ויחבקהו. נתגלגלו רחמיו כשראהו משתחוה כל השתחוואות הללו: וישקהו. נקוד עליו ויש מולקין בדכר הוה כברייתא דספרי יש שדרשו שלא נשקו בכל לבו (כ״ר). תר״ם בן יומתי הלכה היא בידוע שעשו שונא ליעקב אלא שכשראו רחמיו כאותה שעה ונשקו בכל לבו (כ״ר): (ה) מי אלה לך. מי אלה להיות ק שלך: (ז) נגש יוסף ורחל. ככלן החמהות נגשות לפני הכנים אבל כראשל יוסף נגש לפניה אמר אמי יפת תואר שמא יתלה בה עיניו אותו רשע לעמוד כנגדה ותעכבנו מלהסתכל בה מכאן זכה יוסף לכרכת עלי עין: (ח) מי לך כל המחנה. מי כל המחנה אשר פגשתי ר שהוא שלך כלומר למה הוא לך. ופשוטו של מקרא

דעת זקנים מבעלי התוספות

(ו) ומגשן השמות וגו׳ ותשתחוין השמות אבל ילדיהן לא השתחוו שאמרו אמותיו אין משוכות כשהו אבל כני לאה כשראו לאמן שהשתחוו

אבן עזרא

תקע נפשי ממך. סרה כף הירך ממקומה: (לג) כגיד הנשה. ידוע כאמר העתיקו קדמונינו ז״ל ואין זו אפס כי אם לאחרי הדעת. ותולדת שמפרשים שהוא האכר ויפרשו הנשה מנזרת נשים. לדעת זה המלאך שנראה ליעקב שהוא נוף יתנאר לך אם השם יפקח את לבבך כפרשת כי שמי בקרבו. ושם רמז ויוסף כאחרונה לולי ימלטו כעוכר אהבתו אותם. והדרש על נקודות ויפקהו עוד הוא לעתידי מעדים כי על דרך השפע לא אחבו עשו לעשות רע לאחיו ועשך ויבכו כאשר עשה יוסף עם אחיו: (ה) מי אלה לך. מי אלה עמך או מי אלה שלך הס: הגן. כמו נתן וכמוהו אשר הורע בגניעת כף הירך היוק כדבר בלתי נחשב אצלנו: (א) ועשו ארבע מאות איש. שלא האכשרו אנשי במנחה: (ד) וירץ עשו. נתפך לבו כמו רגע בהכנעותיו של יעקב כאמרם ז״ל שאותיות השילוני קלל ישראל בקנה הנכנע לכל הרוחות הן לו עשו כן בריוני בית שני לא היה נוהרב בית מקדשנו כמו שהעיד רבי יוחנן בן זכאי באמרו (נמין פרק הנזקין) בריוני דבן לא שבקונן: (ה) מי אלה לך. שאל אם הם בניו או עבדיו ובני ביתו: (ח) מי לך כל

אבי עזר

(ה) [מה כמו מתן וכו׳]. כיון דמסיפה הוא פעל עומד לא שייך כה מלא פה כמוכה על הפעול. לכן קאמר כהך דכלן הולפחו כמו נתיכה. שמתן לי מתנת חנם ליתן לי כיכים. ומלפנו כמקבלת יולא כמו לא תמלא יתן מותם: (ח) [מי לך. מי לעולם ימלא על מדם וכו׳]. ולא תוכל לומר דקאי על הפוסי עניה וכסמוך מאי כמו. כי היכו מדלן לאחר מלא מי קלא על מי מדבר. ולו מי כמשמעתך מאי מלכה לאחוה מותו. ומייך שפיר מלא לך:

המחנה. הכוונה שאמר אלי כמנחה היא שלוחה לאדוני מי הוא אצלך אם הוא למנחת כבוד או למנחת חסד שתשבח שאצטרך:

יש

ספורנו

כן לא יאכלו בני ישראל. כדי שיהיה התיוק אשר הורע בגניעת כף הירך היוק בדבר בלתי נחשב אצלנו: (א) ועשו ארבע מאות איש. שלא האכשרו אנשי במנחה: (ד) וירץ עשו. נתפך לבו כמו רגע בהכנעותיו של יעקב כאמרם ז״ל שאותיות השילוני קלל ישראל בקנה הנכנע לכל הרוחות הן לו עשו כן בריוני בית שני לא היה נוהרב בית מקדשנו כמו שהעיד רבי יוחנן בן זכאי באמרו (נמין פרק הנזקין) בריוני דבן לא שבקונן: (ה) מי אלה לך. שאל אם הם בניו או עבדיו ובני ביתו: (ח) מי לך כל

רמב״ן

על כרחו כי לא רצה יעקב להמתין לו עד בית אל: (ה) מי אלה לך. שאל על הנשים ועל הילדים ועונה הילדים אשר חנן אלהים את עבדך דרך מוסר כי לא רצה לוסר שהם נשיו והבין עשו שהן אמות הילדים: (ח) מי לך כל המחנה הזה אשר פגשתי. הנה עברי יעקב עשו כאשר צוה אותם ולא רצה לקבל מהם. או שהוא בגאותו ועברתו לא דבר עמם ולא שאלם למי אתה ואנה תלך והם יראו מנשות אליו יאמר עתה מי לך כל המחנה הזה כי חשב

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suffers from a headache or a heartache, and resolves to no longer eat the head or the heart [of an animal or fowl], to cure himself of that ailment. Another explanation: Therefore, since the sons of Israel behaved improperly, viz. they allowed their father to walk alone and did not escort him, because of this, he was wounded on the hip sinew; therefore, the Holy One, blessed be He, prohibited them from eating the displaced tendon, so that they should be conscientious in the observance of the commandment of escorting travelers.

33

1. **and with him were four hundred men**—for he had not been appeased by the gift.—[*Sforno*]

2. **and Leah and her children after**—*The further back the more beloved.*—[*Rashi* from *Gen. Rabbah* 78:8]

3. **went ahead of them**—*He said, "If that scoundrel comes to fight, let him fight with me first."*—[*Rashi* from *Gen. Rabbah* 78:8]

And he went ahead of them and prostrated himself to the ground seven times—The *Zohar* states: Rabbi Eleazar said: It is written: "For you shall not prostrate yourself to another god, for the Lord, Whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God" (Exod. 34:14). Jacob, who was the most perfect of the Patriarchs, selected as the choicest portion of the Almighty, and brought specially near Him, perfected above and below, how did he prostrate himself to that wicked Esau? Esau was allied to another god, thus bowing to him was tantamount to bowing to another god. It is true that the proverb says, "When a fox enjoys honor, bow down to him," but this does not apply to Esau, who was like another god, belonging to that side and that portion, to whom Jacob could in no way bow down....So, in this passage, the words: "And He went ahead of them," refer to the Shechinah, which went before Jacob, etc. As soon as Jacob saw this, he said, "Now is the time to bow down to the Holy One, blessed be He," Who was going before him. So he kneeled and prostrated himself seven times....It does not say: "And he prostrated himself to Esau," but, when he saw that behold, the Holy One, blessed be He, was going before him, he immediately prostrated himself before Him.

4. **and embraced him**—*His compassion was moved when he saw him prostrate himself all those times.*—[*Rashi* from *Gen. Rabbah* 78:8]

and kissed him—Heb. וַיִּשָּׁקֵהוּ. *There are dots over the word. There is controversy concerning this matter in a Baraitha of Sifré (Beha'alothecha 69). Some interpret the dots to mean that he did not kiss him wholeheartedly. Rabbi Simeon ben Yochai said: It is a well known tradition that Esau hated Jacob, but his compassion was moved at that time, and he kissed him wholeheartedly.*—[*Rashi*]

A dot over a letter, in a sense, erases that letter. In this case, since the entire word is dotted, it is as

Bibl Genesis. Hebrew. 1913

מקראות גדולות

בראשית

חלק ב'

חיי שרה
תולדות
ויצא
וישלח

תורגם מחדש לאנגלית

מתורגם ומבואר עם כל דבורי רש"י
ולקט המפרשים על ידי
הרב אברהם י. ראזענברג

הוצאת יודאיקא פרעסס
ניו יורק • תשנ"ד

GENESIS

-Title

VOLUME TWO

CHAYEI SARAH
TOLEDOTH
VAYETZE
VAYISHLACH

A NEW ENGLISH TRANSLATION

TRANSLATION OF TEXT, RASHI,

AND OTHER COMMENTARIES BY

Rabbi A. J. Rosenberg

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Studies in Bereshit (Genesis)

In the Context of Ancient and Modern Jewish Bible Commentary

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עיונים בספר בראשית

בעקבות פרשנינו הראשונים והאחרונים

מאת

נחמה ליבוביץ

מהדורה אנגלית תורגמה ועובדה ע"י אריה ניומן

ספרית אלינר
הרשות המשותפת לחינוך יהודי ציוני
המחלקה לחינוך ולתרבות תורניים בגולה

A MAN WRESTLED WITH HIM

This is one of the most puzzling chapters in the Torah. Artificial rationalisation of things essentially non-rational will certainly not help us to penetrate this mystery-shrouded narrative. We shall decline to follow that non-Jewish commentator, who endeavoured to trace Jacob's limp, after the wrestling bout with the angel, to an attack of rheumatism, caused by sleeping in the open, all night, in the damp atmosphere of the brook. Such a mechanical approach to supernatural mystical events must be ruled out in favour of the primary demand of interpretation —response to the spirit, tone and intention of the narrative. We shall likewise refrain from entering into the controversy between Rambam and Ramban as to whether this wrestling constituted an external event taking place in the world of the senses, or whether a wholly, inner, prophetic experience in Jacob's soul projected through the medium of a dream. In what way will the authenticity or significance of the event be affected by the question of whether the man was sent to him in a vision of the night, "a prophetic vision," or whether he came to him awake, and wrestled with him "in full possession of his physical senses?" We have merely to try to understand the significance of the struggle, and what the Torah wished to teach us through it.

Who was this man? All the commentators agree that he was no ordinary mortal, no armed brigand waylaying a harmless traveller. The text itself bears ample witness to this. Who introduced him into the intimate counsels of the Almighty, so that he knew what message He intended to transmit to Jacob?—

וַיֹּאמֶר לֹא יַעֲקֹב יֵאָמֵר עוֹד שִׁמְךָ כִּי אִם־יִשְׂרָאֵל.

No more shall Jacob be called thy name but Israel shall be thy name. (32, 29)

Moreover, Jacob said, after all that had happened to him: "for I have seen God face to face" (32, 30). Evidently then, the wrestler was no ordinary man.

Rashbam's view, which we quote herewith, is similarly unacceptable. He states that Jacob wished to flee from Esau his brother and the Almighty sent the angel—

> from whom he could not flee, that he might see the fulfillment of the Almighty's promise that Esau would do him no hurt. "When he saw that he could not prevail against him" i.e. the angel saw that Jacob wished to extricate himself and flee in spite of him—"and the hollow of Jacob's thigh became out of joint." Jacob was hurt and lamed, because the Almighty had promised him safety and yet he had run away. We find the same thing happened to all those who journeyed against the will of the Holy One blessed be He or refused to journey, that they were punished, as with Moses... Jonah... Balaam.

Rashbam's approach which is distinguished by a studious avoidance of the allegoric, in favour of the plain, literal sense is untenable, from the point of view advanced earlier. In any case, does it sound reasonable to maintain that the phrase "he could not prevail against him" implies that the angel could not bring Jacob to obedience to the will of God and trust in Him and that, consequently the "thou hast prevailed" describing, three verses later, Jacob's victory over the angel implies that his weakness, his wish to flee from the Lord, his natural physical fears triumphed over his faith and trust? Such an interpretation is inconceivable. It was as a mark of honour for this "prevailing," that Jacob was crowned with the name of Israel. The Midrash seems much closer to the real meaning:

> ר' חמא חנינא אמר: שרו של עשו היה, דהוה אמר ליה (לג, י): "כי על כן ראיתי פניך כראות פני אלהים ותרצני".

R. Ḥama bar Ḥanina said: It was the prince (tutelary angel) of Esau, for he said to him: "for therefore I have seen thy face, as

though I had seen the face of God, and thou wast pleased with me" (Gen. 33, 10). (Bereshit Rabbah, 77, 3)

This explanation is accepted by Rashi: "Our Sages explained that he was the prince of Esau." But we still need to understand what the term "prince of Esau" connotes, and what, in general, the phrase "prince of a nation" (*sar shel uma*) implies. According to the Midrash, the angels who went up and down the ladder, beheld by Jacob, in his dream, were the princes of the nations, whose rise and fall he was symbolically shown. What is the character of this supernal representative of each nation on earth? Krochmal in his *Moreh Nevukhei Hazeman* ("Guide of the Perplexed of This Age") translates the Midrashic imagery into modern abstract concepts:

> The essence of a nation is not synonymous with its physical existence but with its spiritual character... No nation disappears completely until the spirit animating it, is destroyed and disappears. What we call the genius of a people is what is termed in the Bible, in the language of the dawn of thought (the figurative, tangible expressions of the Bible) "the gods of the nation," and by the early visionaries (Daniel) and Talmudic Sages, "the prince of the nation." The spiritual essence animating and distinguishing each people was personified. Just as the king of a nation represents its visible, external linking and unifying factor, so its god represents its unifying and coherent inner essence. This helps us to understand the meaning of the following passages: "and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment" (Exodus 12, 12); "Behold I will punish the multitudes of No, and Pharaoh, and Egypt, with their gods" (Jeremiah 46, 25) and: "and Chemosh shall go forth in captivity" (ibid. 48, 7). In this same sense, we may understand, too, the rabbinic dictum "The Holy One blessed be He does not exact retribution from a nation until He has first exacted retribution from its gods."[1]

If it is true to say that the patriarch Jacob fought with the "prince of Esau," we may now understand why this particular spot and hour was chosen. Before Jacob actually encountered Esau in the flesh, his spirit struggled with that of Esau's, with his national genius. Only after the prince of Esau had acknowledged his title to the paternal blessing ("And he blessed him there") was Jacob, injured and limping, able to go forth to meet his brother and become reconciled with him.

If Jacob's opponent was the "prince of Esau," how are we to understand the significance of the struggle, of Jacob's victory and the injury inflicted on his thigh joint by his adversary? Our Sages regarded the whole incident as illustrative of the principle that the "deeds of the patriarchs are a sign to their descendants" (prefiguring similar events in the nation's future history). In his introduction to the sidra, Ramban elaborates on this idea. Midrash *Lekaḥ Tov* explains our text in the light of this symbolic struggle taking place between Jacob and Esau:

> "ויאבק איש עמו עד עלות השחר" (לב, כה) — עד שיעלה שחר לישראל. ישועת ישראל, שהוא דומה לשחר, כי הגלות דומה ללילה; אומות העולם ומלכות אדום הרשעה הם נאבקים עם ישראל כדי להטעותם מדרך ה', שנאמר (שיר השירים ז, א): "שובי שובי השולמית. שובי שובי ונחזה בך".
> "וירא כי לא יכול לו" (שם, כו) — לא יכול להוציא את ישראל מייחודו של מקום. "ויגע בכף ירכו" (שם, שם) — זה המילה, וכן גזרה מלכות הרשעה שמד, שלא ימולו את בניהם.
> "ותקע כף ירך יעקב בהאבקו עמו" (שם, שם) — אלה שטמאו בימי השמד.
>
> "And there wrestled a man with him until the breaking of the day"—until the breaking of the day for Israel, the Salvation of Israel. For the exile is like the night. The nations of the world and the wicked kingdom of Edom wrestle with Israel to lead them astray from the path of the Lord, as it is written (Canticles 7, 1): "Return, return, O Shulamite, that we may look upon thee." "And when he saw that he could not prevail against him"—that he could not dissuade Israel from acknowledging the unity of the Omnipotent, "he touched the hollow of his thigh"—that is the circumcision. Indeed the wicked government instituted religious persecution and forbade the circumcision of their children. "And the hollow of Jacob's thigh was out of joint"—referring to those defiled during the days of persecution.

Ramban alludes to even crueller times, evidently drawn from his own personal experience, as well of those of his predecessors, in interpreting Jacob's wrestling with the angel:

> The whole matter represents an allusion to our future history, that there would come a time when the descendants of Esau

would overcome Jacob almost to the point of total destruction. This happened during the days of the Sages of the Mishnah in the generation of R. Judah ben Baba and his colleagues, in accordance with their statement: "Said R. Ḥiyya bar Abba: If a man will say to me, Give your life for the sanctification of the name of the Holy One blessed be He, I give it, so long as he will slay me forthwith, but a generation of persecution (*shemad* —forced apostasy), I cannot bear. What did they do in a generation of persecution? They would bring iron balls, make them white hot in the flame and place them under the armpits and drive their souls from them. There were other generations who did such things to us and *worse than this*. But we endured all and it passed us by, as is intimated in the text: "And Jacob came to Shalem" (*Shalem* means "whole" or "perfect" in Hebrew, so that the text may be read, homiletically: "And Jacob came through unscathed").

Both commentators emphasise that Jacob emerged safely out of his ordeal, and that no evil could succeed against him, and both note the heavy price he had to pay for his struggle. The difference between them, lies in the fact that the author of *Lekaḥ Tov* regards the disjointed thigh as a symbol of those myriads, lost to us by their defilement amongst the nations, by their failure to stand the test. Ramban regards the text as alluding to the righteous, the martyrs who sanctified the name of God and were slain, depriving the nation of its most precious manhood. But "we endured all and it passed us by," as intimated in the text: "And Jacob came to Shalem."

But the text promises more than that. Not only will Jacob emerge "whole" from the ordeal. But he will enjoy his adversary's blessing. The breaking of the dawn involves not merely the victory over every adversary, but also his blessing with which he will bless us. The same message of blessing was vouchsafed Abraham, first of the Patriarchs, in the course of the first Divine revelation to him, calling on him to leave his country and kindred and place a barrier between him and the rest of the world. Nevertheless, Abraham was informed:

אדם אומר לבנו : תהא כאברהם.

"And all the families of the earth shall be blessed in thee"—A father will say to his son: Be like Abraham!
(Rashi on Gen. 12, 3)

Questions for Further Study

"ברכתני : הודה לי על הברכות שעשו מערער עליהן.

1. "And he said, I will not let thee go, except thou bless me" (Gen. 32, 27)—Acknowledge my title to the blessings which Esau claims. (Rashi)

What warrant can you find in the text for Rashi's interpretation, that the blessing mentioned here did not mean an actual blessing by the angel, but merely recognition of his title to his father's blessing?

2. אמר לו יעקב: כיון שאתה שרו של עשו לא אניחך עד שתמחול לי מן הברכה שברכני אבא! אמר לו: ומי מתרעם עליך? אמר לו: שאמר לי עשו (כז, לו): "הכי קרא שמו יעקב ויעקבני זה פעמים". "ויברך אותו שם" (לב ל) — וזאת הברכה שברכו, שמחל לו על הברכות.

"Thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel"—Said Jacob to him: Since you are the prince of Esau, I shall not let you go until you forgive me for the blessing, with which Father blessed me! He replied: Who bears a grievance against thee? Jacob answered: Forasmuch as Esau said to me: "Is he not rightly named Jacob, for he hath supplanted me these two times?" (Gen. 27, 36). "And he blessed him there"—this is the blessing with which he blessed him, that he forgave him for the matter of the blessings. (Midrash Aggada)

(a) In what light according to this Midrash did Jacob himself view his deed in taking away the blessings from Esau, as related in *Toldot?*

(b) What warrant in the text did the Midrash find for its attitude?

[1] Buber supplies an illuminating commentary to this passage from Krochmal in his essay: "The Gods of the Nations and God" in *Israel and the World*, essays in a time of crisis, pp. 195–213, Schocken New York 1963.

Unit 10: Literary Criticism

The Central Concept of the Lesson

This lesson will focus on literary criticism and how to analyze a text utilizing this methodology. Robert Alter's book *The Art of Biblical Narrative* will be used to explain the mechanics of literary criticism.

Goal: Participants will be able to analyze the Biblical text utilizing literary criticism.

Objectives:

1. Participants will be able to define the methodology of literary criticism.
2. Participants will be able to list six elements found in the Biblical narrative as defined by Robert Alter.
3. Participants will explore three Biblical texts: Lot and his daughters; Judah and Tamar; and the Book of Ruth. They will be able to list eight common elements which are found in each of these passages.
4. Participants will be able to demonstrate how each of the three Biblical texts follows in chronological order.
5. Participants will recognize that literary criticism is not exclusive to the Five Books of Moses and will be able to identify texts in Genesis which are similar to the Book of Ruth.
6. Participants will be able to summarize two different stories wherein the characters transgress the sexual taboo by having forbidden sexual relations within the family.
7. Participants will be able to cite three situations where a woman used her body in order to ensure her future.

Texts:

Genesis 13:1-13
Genesis 19:30-38
Genesis 38
Mimesis
Ruth
"Ruth and the Structure of Covenant History" by Harold Fisch
The Art of Biblical Narrative by Robert Alter

I. Introduction to Literary Criticism

A. Lecture on the history of Literary Criticism[1]

1. Prior to the 20th century scholarly analysis of the Bible proceeded in an "excavative" way - either literally, with an archeologist's spade and reference to its findings, or with a variety of analytic tools intended to uncover the original meanings of Biblical words, and the life situations in which specific texts appeared.
2. One reason why there was an absence of scholarly literary interest in the Bible for so long is that the Bible was regarded for so many centuries by both Jews and Christians as the primary, unitary source of divinely revealed truth.
3. Modern Biblical criticism began in the 19th century and was mostly an attempt to show that the Bible was not written by one author. Julius Wellhausen and other

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[1]Robert Alter, *The Art of Biblical Narrative,* (Basic Books: USA, 1981), pp. 13-22.

scholars were concerned with breaking up the Bible into pieces, thus taking away it's unitary structure. They then linked these pieces to different authors.

4. In 1953 Erich Auerbach discussed the literary structure of the Bible in his book *Mimesis*. He explains that "the externalization of only so much of the phenomena as is necessary for the purpose of the narrative, all else left in obscurity; the decisive points of the narrative alone are emphasized, what lies between is nonexistent; time and place are undefined and call for interpretation; thoughts and feeling remain unexpressed, are only suggested by the silence and the fragmentary speeches; the whole, permeated with the most unrelieved suspense and directed towards a single goal, remains mysterious and 'fraught with background.'"[2]

5. In 1968 Meir Sternberg and Menakhem Perry, Israeli scholars, each published an article discussing the literary aspect of the Bible. There were many protests after the publication, stating that the Biblical story was religious and moral in intent and that it would not have indulged in the "fancy footwork" of multiple ironies which we moderns love.[3]

6. In 1975 Joel Rosenberg wrote the following concerning the Torah: "It may actually improve our understanding of the Torah to remember that it is quoting documents, that there is, in other words, a purposeful documentary montage that must be perceived as a unity, regardless of the number and types of smaller units that form the building blocks of its composition. Here, the weight of literary interest falls upon the activity of the final redactor, whose artistry requires far more careful attention than has hitherto been accorded."[4]

7. Robert Alter was one of the first scholars to publish extensively utilizing this method of analysis. His book *The Art of Biblical Narrative* was published in 1981.

B. Prose fiction is the best way to describe the Biblical narrative.

1. The Patriarchal narratives may be composite fictions based on national traditions.

2. "The Bible was a new type of historicized fiction that moved away from the motives and habits of the world of legend and myth."[5]

3. Prose narration gave the Biblical writers a large range and flexibility in their means of presentation.

4. "The ancient Hebrew writers seek through the process of narrative realization to reveal the enactment of God's purposes in historical events"[6]. . . There are tensions that exist. "One is the divine promise and its failure to be fulfilled and

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[2] Erich Auerbach, *Mimesis: The Representation of Reality in Western Literature*, translated by William Trask, (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1953), pp. 11-12.

[3] Alter, p. 18.

[4] Ibid., p. 20.

[5] Ibid., p. 25.

[6] Ibid, p. 33.

the other is a tension between God's will, His providential guidance, and human freedom."[7]

C. Definition of literary criticism

1. Alter states: "by literary analysis I mean the manifold varieties of minutely discriminating attention to the artful use of language, to the shifting play of ideas, conventions, tone, sound, imagery, syntax, narrative viewpoint, compositional units, and much else."[8]

D. Elements of Biblical Narrative according to Alter

1. Biblical type-scenes and the uses of convention[9]

a. Convention is an elaborate set of agreements between the audience and the artist about the fixed order of the art work which is the context in which the art work occurs and is communicated.

1) A problem that we modern readers encounter with the Biblical narrative is that we have lost an understanding of the conventions that shaped the Bible which the original audience understood.

b. There is a series of recurrent narrative episodes attached to the lives of Biblical heroes that are dependent on the manipulation of predetermined motifs.

c. These Biblical type-scenes occur at the crucial junctures in the lives of these heroes, such as birth or betrothal.

d. The following are some of the repeated Biblical type-scenes

1) The annunciation of the birth of the hero to his mother.
2) The encounter of the future betrothed at a well.
3) The epiphany in the field.
4) The initiatory trial.
5) Danger in the desert and the discovery of a well or other source of sustenance.
6) The testament of the dying hero.

2. Narration and dialogue - the text is a combination of them both[10]

a. There are a number of elements that make up a proper narrative.

1) The narrative tempo slows down enough for us to discriminate a particular scene.
2) It has the illusion of the scene's presence as it unfolds.
3) We are able to imagine the interaction of personages or sometimes personages and groups, together with the freight of motivations, ulterior aims, character traits, political, social or religious constraints, moral and theological meanings, borne by their speech, gestures, and acts.

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[7]Ibid, p. 33.

[8]Ibid., p. 12.

[9]Ibid., pp. 47-62.

[10]Ibid., pp. 63-112.

b. Frequently we find narration as a bridge between much larger units of direct speech.
c. In regard to the perspective of the narrative, there is a third-person restatement of what has been said in dialogue which directs our attention back to the speakers, to the emphases they choose, the ways their statements may diverge from the narrator's authoritative report of what occurs.
d. The narrative is used as an analogy where one part of the story provides a commentary on another.
1) An example of this is in the Jacob story. We do not find out about how the text feels about him getting the first born's blessing through deception until several chapters later in an analogy with a reversal - when he is deceived in the dark and given Leah instead of Rachel. We then learn that it is not the law of the land to marry the younger sister before the firstborn.
e. Indirect speech is avoided by the Biblical author.
f. Everything in the Bible gravitates toward dialogue.
g. Often something will be stated by the narrator and its full significance will not be realized until it is repeated in direct speech.

3. Repetition[11]
a. Material is restated which causes the modern reader problems as the text, on a whole, appears to adhere to a strict economy of means.
b. Repetition appears to look most primitive to the casual modern eye. Scholars have a number of assumptions for the repetition.
1) There was some sort of "Oriental" sense of intrinsic enjoyment of repetition.
2) It has some sort of cultic-historical function - each group needing to hear the individual items on their tribe.
a) This is found in Native American healing services. The same phrases are repeated over and over.
3) Repetition points to its oral origins, with the composite nature of the text
4) There is a notion that it is folklore.
c. An example of this is Number 7:12-83, the bearing of gifts to the sanctuary by the princes of the 12 tribes. Each tribe offers the same gifts and we read it 12 times.
d. There are a number of repetitive devises used in the Biblical text:
1) *Leitwort* - Through abundant repetition, the semantic range of the word-root is explored. Different forms of the root are deployed, branching into phonetic relatives (word-play). In Ruth we will find the words "go" and "return" used.
2) Motif - A concrete image, sensory quality, action or object that recurs through a particular narrative. It has no meaning in itself without the defining context of the narrative. In the Jacob story, the "stone" reappears.

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[11]Ibid., pp. 88-113.

3) Theme - This is an idea which is part of the value system of the narrative. It can be moral, moral-psychological, legal, political, historiosophical, or theological. An example is obedience versus rebellion in the wilderness stories.
4) Sequence of actions – We usually find 3 consecutive repetitions which is often found in folktales. An example is Balaam's failure to direct the ass three times.
5) Type-scene - This is an episode occurring at a portentous moment in the career of the hero which is composed of a fixed sequence of motifs. An example is the betrothal by the well.

4. Characterization and reticence[12]
   a. The way information is conveyed about the motives, attitudes and the moral nature of characters is as follows in ascending order of explicitness and certainty:
      1) The report of actions - leaves us in the realm of inference.
      2) Through appearance, gestures, posture, and costume.
      3) Through one character's comments about another.
      4) Through direct speech by the character - leads us from inference to a weighing of claims. We are not always sure that what a person says to another is truth.
      5) Through inward speech, either summarized or quoted as interior monologue. A reader will enter the realm of certainty about a character.
      6) Through statements by the narrator about the attitudes and intentions of another which may come as either assertions or motivated explanations. This is the most reliable information about a person.
5. Composite artistry[13]
   a. The Bible is not the work of one hand.
      1) Ask students to define the multiple authors of the Bible that they learned in Unit 3.
   b. Alter suggests that the Biblical authors and redactor had a different notion of unity than we do.
   c. He believes that it may have been a purposeful pattern.
   d. Examples of this are the Noah story which we studied or the two creation stories.
   e. Alter believes that the redactor could have used only one version but chose to use both and have the apparent seams show because he was focusing in on two different dimensions of his subject. In the case of the creation stories, they are complementary rather than overlapping and each gives a different kind of information about how the world came into being.
6. Narration and knowledge[14]

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[12]Ibid., pp. 114-130.

[13]Ibid., pp. 131-154.

[14]Ibid., pp. 157-158.

a. The Biblical authors were among the pioneers of prose fiction in the Western tradition.
b. The narrator of the Biblical stories is omniscient. The Biblical narrator is presumed to know what God knows.
c. The Biblical narrator has nothing that would identify his personal history or identity in order to assume for the scope of his narrative a godlike comprehensiveness of knowledge that can encompass even God Himself.
d. The reader never doubts that the Biblical narrator knows all there is to know about the motives and feelings, the moral nature and spiritual condition of his characters. He is selective in sharing this knowledge with his readers.

II. Text - Lot and his daughters *Genesis* 13:1-13, 19:30-38

A. Read *Genesis* 13:1-13 together. Have each person read 4 verses.
   1. Establish the relationship between Abraham and Lot and discuss the reasons why they need to separate.

B. Lot and his daughters. Read *Genesis* 19:30-38 together.
   1. Discuss the events that occurred after the destruction of Sodom and Gemorrah.
   2. Have participants identify possible reasons why the daughters seduced their father.

C. Instructor will have the participants help her/him fill in the following information on a white board:
   1. Descent - Lot and Abraham separate. Lot descends to Sodom.
   2. Disaster - Destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah.
   3. *"Agunah-theme"* Abandonment - Lot's two daughters are left without the prospect of acquiring men.
   4. Redemption - The *go'el* is Lot himself.
   5. The Bed-trick - Lot is deceived into cohabiting with his daughters.
   6. The Celebration - Lot is made drunk with wine.
   7. The Levirate Union - Lot's two daughters conceive from their father.
   8. The Issue - Moab and Ammon - the former is the ancestor of Ruth.

III. Text - Judah and Tamar *Genesis* 38

A. Judah and Tamar. Read *Genesis* 38 together.
   1. Have participants break down the events in this story.
      a. Ask the participants whether they felt that Tamar was justified in doing what she had done.
   2. Have participants identify similarities with the previous story.

B. Instructor will have the participants help her/him fill in the following information on a white board:
   1. Descent - Judah "descends from his brothers."
   2. Disaster - Deaths of Judah's wife and his two sons, Er and Onan.
   3. *"Agunah-theme"* Abandonment - Tamar is bidden to remain a widow in her father's house.
   4. Redemption - The *go'el* is Judah.
   5. The Bed-trick - Tamar disguises herself as a prostitute.
   6. The Celebration - The sheep-shearing festival.

5. The Bed-trick - Tamar disguises herself as a prostitute.
6. The Celebration - The sheep-shearing festival.
7. The Levirate Union - Judah recognizes the justice of Tamar's claim.
8. The Issue - Peres and Zerah, the former is the ancestor of Boaz.

IV. Text - Ruth

A. Prior to the session, participants are to read the Book of Ruth.
   1. Together we will read Ruth 1:1-19. We will establish the setting for the story and the disaster that happened to the family.
   2. Participants will read Ruth 3:1-14 and 4:13-16 together. Discuss the events that occurred on the threshing floor and Boaz's eventual redemption.
   3. Have participants identify similarities with the previous two stories.

B. Instructor will have the participants help her/him fill in the following information on a white board:
   1. Descent - Elimelech leaves for Bethlehem for Moab.
   2. Disaster - Deaths of all of the males in the family.
   3. "*Agunah-theme*" Abandonment - Naomi's two daughters-in-law are left widowed.
   4. Redemption - The *go'el* is Boaz.
   5. The Bed-trick - Ruth comes secretly to the threshing floor.
   6. The Celebration - The merry-making in the connection with the barley feast.
   7. The Levirate Union - Boaz formally acquires the title to the property of his dead kinsman - including the possession of Ruth.
   8. The Issue - Birth of Obed the grandfather of King David.

V. Trace the Davidic line showing how the family originated from these stories.

A. Have the participants look at the last column, column 8. Show them how the issues from each of these unions were part of the Davidic line.

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10 There was a famine in the land, and Abram went down to Egypt to sojourn there, for the famine was severe in the land. 11 As he was about to enter Egypt, he said to his wife Sarai, "I know[b] what a beautiful woman you are. 12 If the Egyptians see you, and think, 'She is his wife,' they will kill me and let you live. 13 Please say that you are my sister, that it may go well with me because of you, and that I may remain alive thanks to you."

14 When Abram entered Egypt, the Egyptians saw how very beautiful the woman was. 15 Pharaoh's courtiers saw her and praised her to Pharaoh, and the woman was taken into Pharaoh's palace. 16 And because of her, it went well with Abram; he acquired sheep, oxen, asses, male and female slaves, she-asses, and camels.

17 But the LORD afflicted Pharaoh and his household with mighty plagues on account of Sarai, the wife of Abram. 18 Pharaoh sent for Abram and said, "What is this you have done to me! Why did you not tell me that she was your wife? 19 Why did you say, 'She is my sister,' so that I took her as my wife? Now, here is your wife; take her and begone!" 20 And Pharaoh put men in charge of him, and they sent him off with his wife and all that he possessed.

10 וַיְהִי רָעָב בָּאָרֶץ וַיֵּרֶד אַבְרָם מִצְרַיְמָה
לָגוּר שָׁם כִּי־כָבֵד הָרָעָב בָּאָרֶץ׃ 11 וַיְהִי
כַּאֲשֶׁר הִקְרִיב לָבוֹא מִצְרָיְמָה וַיֹּאמֶר
אֶל־שָׂרַי אִשְׁתּוֹ הִנֵּה־נָא יָדַעְתִּי כִּי אִשָּׁה
יְפַת־מַרְאֶה אָתְּ׃ 12 וְהָיָה כִּי־יִרְאוּ אֹתָךְ
הַמִּצְרִים וְאָמְרוּ אִשְׁתּוֹ זֹאת וְהָרְגוּ אֹתִי
וְאֹתָךְ יְחַיּוּ׃ 13 אִמְרִי־נָא אֲחֹתִי אָתְּ לְמַעַן
יִיטַב־לִי בַעֲבוּרֵךְ וְחָיְתָה נַפְשִׁי בִּגְלָלֵךְ׃
14 וַיְהִי כְּבוֹא אַבְרָם מִצְרַיְמָה וַיִּרְאוּ
הַמִּצְרִים אֶת־הָאִשָּׁה כִּי־יָפָה הִוא מְאֹד׃
15 וַיִּרְאוּ אֹתָהּ שָׂרֵי פַרְעֹה וַיְהַלְלוּ אֹתָהּ
אֶל־פַּרְעֹה וַתֻּקַּח הָאִשָּׁה בֵּית פַּרְעֹה׃
16 וּלְאַבְרָם הֵיטִיב בַּעֲבוּרָהּ וַיְהִי־לוֹ צֹאן־
וּבָקָר וַחֲמֹרִים וַעֲבָדִים וּשְׁפָחֹת וַאֲתֹנֹת
וּגְמַלִּים׃
17 וַיְנַגַּע יְהוָה | אֶת־פַּרְעֹה נְגָעִים גְּדֹלִים
וְאֶת־בֵּיתוֹ עַל־דְּבַר שָׂרַי אֵשֶׁת אַבְרָם׃
18 וַיִּקְרָא פַרְעֹה לְאַבְרָם וַיֹּאמֶר מַה־זֹּאת
עָשִׂיתָ לִּי לָמָּה לֹא־הִגַּדְתָּ לִּי כִּי אִשְׁתְּךָ
הִוא׃ 19 לָמָּה אָמַרְתְּ אֲחֹתִי הִוא וָאֶקַּח
אֹתָהּ לִי לְאִשָּׁה וְעַתָּה הִנֵּה אִשְׁתְּךָ קַח
וָלֵךְ׃ 20 וַיְצַו עָלָיו פַּרְעֹה אֲנָשִׁים וַיְשַׁלְּחוּ
אֹתוֹ וְאֶת־אִשְׁתּוֹ וְאֶת־כָּל־אֲשֶׁר־לוֹ׃

13 From Egypt, Abram went up into the Negeb, with his wife and all that he possessed, together with Lot. 2 Now Abram was very rich in cattle, silver, and gold. 3 And he proceeded by stages from the Negeb as far as Bethel, to the place where his tent had been formerly, between Bethel and Ai, 4 the site of the altar that he had built there at first; and there Abram invoked the LORD by name.

5 Lot, who went with Abram, also had flocks and herds and tents, 6 so that the land could not

יג וַיַּעַל אַבְרָם מִמִּצְרַיִם הוּא וְאִשְׁתּוֹ
וְכָל־אֲשֶׁר־לוֹ וְלוֹט עִמּוֹ הַנֶּגְבָּה׃ 2 וְאַבְרָם
כָּבֵד מְאֹד בַּמִּקְנֶה בַּכֶּסֶף וּבַזָּהָב׃ 3 וַיֵּלֶךְ
לְמַסָּעָיו מִנֶּגֶב וְעַד־בֵּית־אֵל עַד־הַמָּקוֹם
אֲשֶׁר־הָיָה שָׁם אהלה אָהֳלֹה בַּתְּחִלָּה בֵּין
בֵּית־אֵל וּבֵין הָעָי׃ 4 אֶל־מְקוֹם הַמִּזְבֵּחַ
אֲשֶׁר־עָשָׂה שָׁם בָּרִאשֹׁנָה וַיִּקְרָא שָׁם
אַבְרָם בְּשֵׁם יְהוָה׃
5 וְגַם־לְלוֹט הַהֹלֵךְ אֶת־אַבְרָם הָיָה צֹאן־
וּבָקָר וְאֹהָלִים׃ 6 וְלֹא־נָשָׂא אֹתָם הָאָרֶץ

b *Or "You"; cf. the second person feminine form* -ti *in Judg. 5.7; Jer. 2.20; Mic. 4.13, etc.*

support them staying together; for their possessions were so great that they could not remain together. 7And there was quarreling between the herdsmen of Abram's cattle and those of Lot's cattle.—The Canaanites and Perizzites were then dwelling in the land.—8Abram said to Lot, "Let there be no strife between you and me, between my herdsmen and yours, for we are kinsmen. 9Is not the whole land before you? Let us separate:[a] if you go north, I will go south; and if you go south, I will go north." 10Lot looked about him and saw how well watered was the whole plain of the Jordan, all of it—this was before the LORD had destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah—all the way to Zoar, like the garden of the LORD, like the land of Egypt. 11So Lot chose for himself the whole plain of the Jordan, and Lot journeyed eastward. Thus they parted from each other; 12Abram remained in the land of Canaan, while Lot settled in the cities of the Plain, pitching his tents near Sodom. 13Now the inhabitants of Sodom were very wicked sinners against the LORD.

14And the LORD said to Abram, after Lot had parted from him, "Raise your eyes and look out from where you are, to the north and south, to the east and west, 15for I give all the land that you see to you and your offspring forever. 16I will make your offspring as the dust of the earth, so that if one can count the dust of the earth, then your offspring too can be counted. 17Up, walk about the land, through its length and its breadth, for I give it to you." 18And Abram moved his tent, and came to dwell at the terebinths of Mamre, which are in Hebron; and he built an altar there to the LORD.

לָשֶׁבֶת יַחְדָּו כִּי־הָיָה רְכוּשָׁם רָב וְלֹא
יָכְלוּ לָשֶׁבֶת יַחְדָּו׃ 7 וַיְהִי־רִיב בֵּין רֹעֵי
מִקְנֵה־אַבְרָם וּבֵין רֹעֵי מִקְנֵה־לוֹט
וְהַכְּנַעֲנִי וְהַפְּרִזִּי אָז יֹשֵׁב בָּאָרֶץ׃ 8 וַיֹּאמֶר
אַבְרָם אֶל־לוֹט אַל־נָא תְהִי מְרִיבָה בֵּינִי
וּבֵינֶיךָ וּבֵין רֹעַי וּבֵין רֹעֶיךָ כִּי־אֲנָשִׁים
אַחִים אֲנָחְנוּ׃ 9 הֲלֹא כָל־הָאָרֶץ לְפָנֶיךָ
הִפָּרֶד נָא מֵעָלָי אִם־הַשְּׂמֹאל וְאֵימְנָה
וְאִם־הַיָּמִין וְאַשְׂמְאִילָה׃ 10 וַיִּשָּׂא־לוֹט
אֶת־עֵינָיו וַיַּרְא אֶת־כָּל־כִּכַּר הַיַּרְדֵּן כִּי
כֻלָּהּ מַשְׁקֶה לִפְנֵי ׀ שַׁחֵת יְהוָה אֶת־סְדֹם
וְאֶת־עֲמֹרָה כְּגַן־יְהוָה כְּאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם
בֹּאֲכָה צֹעַר׃ 11 וַיִּבְחַר־לוֹ לוֹט אֵת כָּל־
כִּכַּר הַיַּרְדֵּן וַיִּסַּע לוֹט מִקֶּדֶם וַיִּפָּרְדוּ אִישׁ
מֵעַל אָחִיו׃ 12 אַבְרָם יָשַׁב בְּאֶרֶץ־כְּנָעַן
וְלוֹט יָשַׁב בְּעָרֵי הַכִּכָּר וַיֶּאֱהַל עַד־סְדֹם׃
13 וְאַנְשֵׁי סְדֹם רָעִים וְחַטָּאִים לַיהוָה
מְאֹד׃
14 וַיהוָה אָמַר אֶל־אַבְרָם אַחֲרֵי הִפָּרֶד־
לוֹט מֵעִמּוֹ שָׂא נָא עֵינֶיךָ וּרְאֵה מִן־
הַמָּקוֹם אֲשֶׁר־אַתָּה שָׁם צָפֹנָה וָנֶגְבָּה
וָקֵדְמָה וָיָמָּה׃ 15 כִּי אֶת־כָּל־הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר־
אַתָּה רֹאֶה לְךָ אֶתְּנֶנָּה וּלְזַרְעֲךָ עַד־עוֹלָם׃
16 וְשַׂמְתִּי אֶת־זַרְעֲךָ כַּעֲפַר הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר ׀
אִם־יוּכַל אִישׁ לִמְנוֹת אֶת־עֲפַר הָאָרֶץ
גַּם־זַרְעֲךָ יִמָּנֶה׃ 17 קוּם הִתְהַלֵּךְ בָּאָרֶץ
לְאָרְכָּהּ וּלְרָחְבָּהּ כִּי לְךָ אֶתְּנֶנָּה׃ 18 וַיֶּאֱהַל
אַבְרָם וַיָּבֹא וַיֵּשֶׁב בְּאֵלֹנֵי מַמְרֵא אֲשֶׁר
בְּחֶבְרוֹן וַיִּבֶן־שָׁם מִזְבֵּחַ לַיהוָה׃ פ

14

Now, when King Amraphel of Shinar, King Arioch of Ellasar, King Chedorlaomer of Elam, and King Tidal of Goiim 2made war on

יד
וַיְהִי בִּימֵי אַמְרָפֶל מֶלֶךְ־שִׁנְעָר
אַרְיוֹךְ מֶלֶךְ אֶלָּסָר כְּדָרְלָעֹמֶר מֶלֶךְ עֵילָם
וְתִדְעָל מֶלֶךְ גּוֹיִם׃ 2 עָשׂוּ מִלְחָמָה אֶת־

a *Lit. "Please separate from me."*

where Lot dwelt, God was mindful of Abraham and removed Lot from the midst of the upheaval.

30Lot went up from Zoar and settled in the hill country with his two daughters, for he was afraid to dwell in Zoar; and he and his two daughters lived in a cave. 31And the older one said to the younger, "Our father is old, and there is not a man on earth to consort with us in the way of all the world. 32Come, let us make our father drink wine, and let us lie with him, that we may maintain life through our father." 33That night they made their father drink wine, and the older one went in and lay with her father; he did not know when she lay down or when she rose. 34The next day the older one said to the younger, "See, I lay with Father last night; let us make him drink wine tonight also, and you go and lie with him, that we may maintain life through our father." 35That night also they made their father drink wine, and the younger one went and lay with him; he did not know when she lay down or when she rose.

36Thus the two daughters of Lot came to be with child by their father. 37The older one bore a son and named him Moab;[d] he is the father of the Moabites of today. 38And the younger also bore a son, and she called him Ben-ammi;[e] he is the father of the Ammonites of today.

וַיִּזְכֹּר אֱלֹהִים אֶת־אַבְרָהָם וַיְשַׁלַּח אֶת־
לוֹט מִתּוֹךְ הַהֲפֵכָה בַּהֲפֹךְ אֶת־הֶעָרִים
אֲשֶׁר־יָשַׁב בָּהֶן לוֹט׃
30 וַיַּעַל לוֹט מִצֹּעַר וַיֵּשֶׁב בָּהָר וּשְׁתֵּי
בְנֹתָיו עִמּוֹ כִּי יָרֵא לָשֶׁבֶת בְּצֹעַר וַיֵּשֶׁב
בַּמְּעָרָה הוּא וּשְׁתֵּי בְנֹתָיו׃ 31 וַתֹּאמֶר
הַבְּכִירָה אֶל־הַצְּעִירָה אָבִינוּ זָקֵן וְאִישׁ
אֵין בָּאָרֶץ לָבוֹא עָלֵינוּ כְּדֶרֶךְ כָּל־הָאָרֶץ׃
32 לְכָה נַשְׁקֶה אֶת־אָבִינוּ יַיִן וְנִשְׁכְּבָה עִמּוֹ
וּנְחַיֶּה מֵאָבִינוּ זָרַע׃ 33 וַתַּשְׁקֶיןָ אֶת־
אֲבִיהֶן יַיִן בַּלַּיְלָה הוּא וַתָּבֹא הַבְּכִירָה
וַתִּשְׁכַּב אֶת־אָבִיהָ וְלֹא־יָדַע בְּשִׁכְבָהּ
וּבְקוּמָהּ׃ 34 וַיְהִי מִמָּחֳרָת וַתֹּאמֶר
הַבְּכִירָה אֶל־הַצְּעִירָה הֵן־שָׁכַבְתִּי אֶמֶשׁ
אֶת־אָבִי נַשְׁקֶנּוּ יַיִן גַּם־הַלַּיְלָה וּבֹאִי
שִׁכְבִי עִמּוֹ וּנְחַיֶּה מֵאָבִינוּ זָרַע׃ 35 וַתַּשְׁקֶיןָ
גַּם בַּלַּיְלָה הַהוּא אֶת־אֲבִיהֶן יָיִן וַתָּקָם
הַצְּעִירָה וַתִּשְׁכַּב עִמּוֹ וְלֹא־יָדַע בְּשִׁכְבָהּ
וּבְקוּמָהּ׃
36 וַתַּהֲרֶיןָ שְׁתֵּי בְנוֹת־לוֹט מֵאֲבִיהֶן׃
37 וַתֵּלֶד הַבְּכִירָה בֵּן וַתִּקְרָא שְׁמוֹ מוֹאָב
הוּא אֲבִי־מוֹאָב עַד־הַיּוֹם׃ 38 וְהַצְּעִירָה
גַּם־הִוא יָלְדָה בֵּן וַתִּקְרָא שְׁמוֹ בֶּן־עַמִּי
הוּא אֲבִי בְנֵי־עַמּוֹן עַד־הַיּוֹם׃ ס

20 Abraham journeyed from there to the region of the Negeb and settled between Kadesh and Shur. While he was sojourning in Gerar, 2Abraham said of Sarah his wife, "She is my sister." So King Abimelech of Gerar had Sarah brought to him. 3But God came to Abimelech in a dream by night and said to him, "You are to die because of the woman that you have taken, for she is a married woman." 4Now

כ וַיִּסַּע מִשָּׁם אַבְרָהָם אַרְצָה הַנֶּגֶב
וַיֵּשֶׁב בֵּין־קָדֵשׁ וּבֵין שׁוּר וַיָּגָר בִּגְרָר׃
2 וַיֹּאמֶר אַבְרָהָם אֶל־שָׂרָה אִשְׁתּוֹ אֲחֹתִי
הִוא וַיִּשְׁלַח אֲבִימֶלֶךְ מֶלֶךְ גְּרָר וַיִּקַּח
אֶת־שָׂרָה׃ 3 וַיָּבֹא אֱלֹהִים אֶל־אֲבִימֶלֶךְ
בַּחֲלוֹם הַלָּיְלָה וַיֹּאמֶר לוֹ הִנְּךָ מֵת עַל־
הָאִשָּׁה אֲשֶׁר־לָקַחְתָּ וְהִוא בְּעֻלַת בָּעַל׃
4 וַאֲבִימֶלֶךְ לֹא קָרַב אֵלֶיהָ וַיֹּאמַר אֲדֹנָי

d *As though* me-'ab *"from (my) father."*
e *As though "son of my (paternal) kindred."*

v. 33. נקד על ו׳

לח

וַיְהִי בָּעֵת הַהִוא וַיֵּרֶד יְהוּדָה
מֵאֵת אֶחָיו וַיֵּט עַד־אִישׁ עֲדֻלָּמִי וּשְׁמוֹ
חִירָה: 2 וַיַּרְא־שָׁם יְהוּדָה בַּת־אִישׁ כְּנַעֲנִי
וּשְׁמוֹ שׁוּעַ וַיִּקָּחֶהָ וַיָּבֹא אֵלֶיהָ: 3 וַתַּהַר
וַתֵּלֶד בֵּן וַיִּקְרָא אֶת־שְׁמוֹ עֵר: 4 וַתַּהַר
עוֹד וַתֵּלֶד בֵּן וַתִּקְרָא אֶת־שְׁמוֹ אוֹנָן:
5 וַתֹּסֶף עוֹד וַתֵּלֶד בֵּן וַתִּקְרָא אֶת־שְׁמוֹ
שֵׁלָה וְהָיָה בְכְזִיב בְּלִדְתָּהּ אֹתוֹ:
6 וַיִּקַּח יְהוּדָה אִשָּׁה לְעֵר בְּכוֹרוֹ וּשְׁמָהּ
תָּמָר: 7 וַיְהִי עֵר בְּכוֹר יְהוּדָה רַע בְּעֵינֵי
יְהוָה וַיְמִתֵהוּ יְהוָה: 8 וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוּדָה
לְאוֹנָן בֹּא אֶל־אֵשֶׁת אָחִיךָ וְיַבֵּם אֹתָהּ
וְהָקֵם זֶרַע לְאָחִיךָ: 9 וַיֵּדַע אוֹנָן כִּי לֹא
לוֹ יִהְיֶה הַזֶּרַע וְהָיָה אִם־בָּא אֶל־אֵשֶׁת
אָחִיו וְשִׁחֵת אַרְצָה לְבִלְתִּי נְתָן־זֶרַע
לְאָחִיו: 10 וַיֵּרַע בְּעֵינֵי יְהוָה אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה
וַיָּמֶת גַּם־אֹתוֹ: 11 וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוּדָה לְתָמָר
כַּלָּתוֹ שְׁבִי אַלְמָנָה בֵּית־אָבִיךְ עַד־יִגְדַּל
שֵׁלָה בְנִי כִּי אָמַר פֶּן־יָמוּת גַּם־הוּא
כְּאֶחָיו וַתֵּלֶךְ תָּמָר וַתֵּשֶׁב בֵּית אָבִיהָ:
12 וַיִּרְבּוּ הַיָּמִים וַתָּמָת בַּת־שׁוּעַ אֵשֶׁת
יְהוּדָה וַיִּנָּחֶם יְהוּדָה וַיַּעַל עַל־גֹּזְזֵי צֹאנוֹ
הוּא וְחִירָה רֵעֵהוּ הָעֲדֻלָּמִי תִּמְנָתָה:
13 וַיֻּגַּד לְתָמָר לֵאמֹר הִנֵּה חָמִיךְ עֹלֶה
תִמְנָתָה לָגֹז צֹאנוֹ: 14 וַתָּסַר בִּגְדֵי
אַלְמְנוּתָהּ מֵעָלֶיהָ וַתְּכַס בַּצָּעִיף וַתִּתְעַלָּף
וַתֵּשֶׁב בְּפֶתַח עֵינַיִם אֲשֶׁר עַל־דֶּרֶךְ
תִּמְנָתָה כִּי רָאָתָה כִּי־גָדַל שֵׁלָה וְהוּא

38 About that time Judah left his brothers and camped near a certain Adullamite whose name was Hirah. 2There Judah saw the daughter of a certain Canaanite whose name was Shua, and he married her and cohabited with her. 3She conceived and bore a son, and he named him Er. 4She conceived again and bore a son, and named him Onan. 5Once again she bore a son, and named him Shelah; he was at Chezib when she bore him.

6Judah got a wife for Er his first-born; her name was Tamar. 7But Er, Judah's first-born, was displeasing to the LORD, and the LORD took his life. 8Then Judah said to Onan, "Join with your brother's wife and do your duty by her as a brother-in-law,[a] and provide offspring for your brother." 9But Onan, knowing that the seed would not count as his, let it go to waste[b] whenever he joined with his brother's wife, so as not to provide offspring for his brother. 10What he did was displeasing to the LORD, and He took his life also. 11Then Judah said to his daughter-in-law Tamar, "Stay as a widow in your father's house until my son Shelah grows up"—for he thought, "He too might die like his brothers." So Tamar went to live in her father's house.

12A long time afterward, Shua's daughter, the wife of Judah, died. When [c]his period of mourning was over,[c] Judah went up to Timnah to his sheepshearers, together with his friend Hirah the Adullamite. 13And Tamar was told, "Your father-in-law is coming up to Timnah for the sheepshearing." 14So she took off her widow's garb, covered her face with a veil, and, wrapping herself up, sat down at the entrance to Enaim,[d] which is on the road to Timnah; for

a *Cf. Deut. 25.5.*
b *Lit. "spoil on the ground."*
c-c *Lit. "he was comforted."*
d *Cf. Enam, Josh. 15.34. Others "in an open place" or "at the crossroad."*

she saw that Shelah was grown up, yet she had not been given to him as wife. 15When Judah saw her, he took her for a harlot; for she had covered her face. 16So he turned aside to her by the road and said, "Here, let me sleep with you"—for he did not know that she was his daughter-in-law. "What," she asked, "will you pay for sleeping with me?" 17He replied, "I will send a kid from my flock." But she said, "You must leave a pledge until you have sent it." 18And he said, "What pledge shall I give you?" She replied, "Your seal and cord, and the staff which you carry." So he gave them to her and slept with her, and she conceived by him. 19Then she went on her way. She took off her veil and again put on her widow's garb.

20Judah sent the kid by his friend the Adullamite, to redeem the pledge from the woman; but he could not find her. 21He inquired of the people of that town, "Where is the cult prostitute, the one at Enaim, by the road?" But they said, "There has been no prostitute here." 22So he returned to Judah and said, "I could not find her; moreover, the townspeople said: There has been no prostitute here." 23Judah said, "Let her keep them, lest we become a laughingstock. I did send her this kid, but you did not find her."

24About three months later, Judah was told, "Your daughter-in-law Tamar has played the harlot; in fact, she is with child by harlotry." "Bring her out," said Judah, "and let her be burned." 25As she was being brought out, she sent this message to her father-in-law, "I am with child by the man to whom these belong." And she added, "Examine these: whose seal and cord and staff are these?" 26Judah recognized them, and said, "She is more in the right than I, inasmuch as I did not give her to my son Shelah." And he was not intimate with her again.

לֹא־נִתְּנָה לוֹ לְאִשָּׁה׃ 15 וַיִּרְאֶהָ יְהוּדָה
וַיַּחְשְׁבֶהָ לְזוֹנָה כִּי כִסְּתָה פָּנֶיהָ׃ 16 וַיֵּט
אֵלֶיהָ אֶל־הַדֶּרֶךְ וַיֹּאמֶר הֲבָה־נָּא אָבוֹא
אֵלַיִךְ כִּי לֹא יָדַע כִּי כַלָּתוֹ הִוא וַתֹּאמֶר
מַה־תִּתֶּן־לִי כִּי תָבוֹא אֵלָי׃ 17 וַיֹּאמֶר
אָנֹכִי אֲשַׁלַּח גְּדִי־עִזִּים מִן־הַצֹּאן וַתֹּאמֶר
אִם־תִּתֵּן עֵרָבוֹן עַד שָׁלְחֶךָ׃ 18 וַיֹּאמֶר מָה
הָעֵרָבוֹן אֲשֶׁר אֶתֶּן־לָךְ וַתֹּאמֶר חֹתָמְךָ
וּפְתִילֶךָ וּמַטְּךָ אֲשֶׁר בְּיָדֶךָ וַיִּתֶּן־לָהּ וַיָּבֹא
אֵלֶיהָ וַתַּהַר לוֹ׃ 19 וַתָּקָם וַתֵּלֶךְ וַתָּסַר
צְעִיפָהּ מֵעָלֶיהָ וַתִּלְבַּשׁ בִּגְדֵי אַלְמְנוּתָהּ׃
20 וַיִּשְׁלַח יְהוּדָה אֶת־גְּדִי הָעִזִּים בְּיַד
רֵעֵהוּ הָעֲדֻלָּמִי לָקַחַת הָעֵרָבוֹן מִיַּד
הָאִשָּׁה וְלֹא מְצָאָהּ׃ 21 וַיִּשְׁאַל אֶת־אַנְשֵׁי
מְקֹמָהּ לֵאמֹר אַיֵּה הַקְּדֵשָׁה הִוא בָּעֵינַיִם
עַל־הַדָּרֶךְ וַיֹּאמְרוּ לֹא־הָיְתָה בָזֶה קְדֵשָׁה׃
22 וַיָּשָׁב אֶל־יְהוּדָה וַיֹּאמֶר לֹא מְצָאתִיהָ
וְגַם אַנְשֵׁי הַמָּקוֹם אָמְרוּ לֹא־הָיְתָה בָזֶה
קְדֵשָׁה׃ 23 וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוּדָה תִּקַּח־לָהּ פֶּן
נִהְיֶה לָבוּז הִנֵּה שָׁלַחְתִּי הַגְּדִי הַזֶּה וְאַתָּה
לֹא מְצָאתָהּ׃
24 וַיְהִי ׀ כְּמִשְׁלֹשׁ חֳדָשִׁים וַיֻּגַּד לִיהוּדָה
לֵאמֹר זָנְתָה תָּמָר כַּלָּתֶךָ וְגַם הִנֵּה
הָרָה לִזְנוּנִים וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוּדָה הוֹצִיאוּהָ
וְתִשָּׂרֵף׃ 25 הִוא מוּצֵאת וְהִיא שָׁלְחָה
אֶל־חָמִיהָ לֵאמֹר לְאִישׁ אֲשֶׁר־אֵלֶּה לּוֹ
אָנֹכִי הָרָה וַתֹּאמֶר הַכֶּר־נָא לְמִי הַחֹתָמֶת
וְהַפְּתִילִים וְהַמַּטֶּה הָאֵלֶּה׃ 26 וַיַּכֶּר יְהוּדָה
וַיֹּאמֶר צָדְקָה מִמֶּנִּי כִּי־עַל־כֵּן לֹא־נְתַתִּיהָ
לְשֵׁלָה בְנִי וְלֹא־יָסַף עוֹד לְדַעְתָּהּ׃

27When the time came for her to give birth, there were twins in her womb! 28While she was in labor, one of them put out his hand, and the midwife tied a crimson thread on that hand, to signify: This one came out first. 29But just then he drew back his hand, and out came his brother; and she said, "What a breach[e] you have made for yourself!" So he was named Perez. 30Afterward his brother came out, on whose hand was the crimson thread; he was named Zerah.[f]

27 וַיְהִי בְּעֵת לִדְתָּהּ וְהִנֵּה תְאוֹמִים
בְּבִטְנָהּ׃ 28 וַיְהִי בְלִדְתָּהּ וַיִּתֵּן־יָד וַתִּקַּח
הַמְיַלֶּדֶת וַתִּקְשֹׁר עַל־יָדוֹ שָׁנִי לֵאמֹר זֶה
יָצָא רִאשֹׁנָה׃ 29 וַיְהִי | כְּמֵשִׁיב יָדוֹ וְהִנֵּה
יָצָא אָחִיו וַתֹּאמֶר מַה־פָּרַצְתָּ עָלֶיךָ
פָּרֶץ וַיִּקְרָא שְׁמוֹ פָּרֶץ׃ 30 וְאַחַר יָצָא
אָחִיו אֲשֶׁר עַל־יָדוֹ הַשָּׁנִי וַיִּקְרָא שְׁמוֹ
זָרַח׃ ס

39

When Joseph was taken down to Egypt, a certain Egyptian, Potiphar, a courtier of Pharaoh and his chief steward, bought him from the Ishmaelites who had brought him there. 2The LORD was with Joseph, and he was a successful man; and he stayed in the house of his Egyptian master. 3And when his master saw that the LORD was with him and that the LORD lent success to everything he undertook, 4he took a liking to Joseph. He made him his personal attendant and put him in charge of his household, placing in his hands all that he owned. 5And from the time that the Egyptian put him in charge of his household and of all that he owned, the LORD blessed his house for Joseph's sake, so that the blessing of the LORD was upon everything that he owned, in the house and outside. 6He left all that he had in Joseph's hands and, with him there, he paid attention to nothing save the food that he ate. Now Joseph was well built and handsome.

7After a time, his master's wife cast her eyes upon Joseph and said, "Lie with me." 8But he refused. He said to his master's wife, "Look, with me here, my master gives no thought to anything in this house, and all that he owns he has placed in my hands. 9He wields no more authority in this house than I, and he has withheld

לט

וְיוֹסֵף הוּרַד מִצְרַיְמָה וַיִּקְנֵהוּ
פּוֹטִיפַר סְרִיס פַּרְעֹה שַׂר הַטַּבָּחִים אִישׁ
מִצְרִי מִיַּד הַיִּשְׁמְעֵאלִים אֲשֶׁר הוֹרְדֻהוּ
שָׁמָּה׃ 2 וַיְהִי יְהוָה אֶת־יוֹסֵף וַיְהִי אִישׁ
מַצְלִיחַ וַיְהִי בְּבֵית אֲדֹנָיו הַמִּצְרִי׃ 3 וַיַּרְא
אֲדֹנָיו כִּי יְהוָה אִתּוֹ וְכֹל אֲשֶׁר־הוּא עֹשֶׂה
יְהוָה מַצְלִיחַ בְּיָדוֹ׃ 4 וַיִּמְצָא יוֹסֵף חֵן
בְּעֵינָיו וַיְשָׁרֶת אֹתוֹ וַיַּפְקִדֵהוּ עַל־בֵּיתוֹ
וְכָל־יֶשׁ־לוֹ נָתַן בְּיָדוֹ׃ 5 וַיְהִי מֵאָז הִפְקִיד
אֹתוֹ בְּבֵיתוֹ וְעַל כָּל־אֲשֶׁר יֶשׁ־לוֹ וַיְבָרֶךְ
יְהוָה אֶת־בֵּית הַמִּצְרִי בִּגְלַל יוֹסֵף וַיְהִי
בִּרְכַּת יְהוָה בְּכָל־אֲשֶׁר יֶשׁ־לוֹ בַּבַּיִת
וּבַשָּׂדֶה׃ 6 וַיַּעֲזֹב כָּל־אֲשֶׁר־לוֹ בְּיַד־יוֹסֵף
וְלֹא־יָדַע אִתּוֹ מְאוּמָה כִּי אִם־הַלֶּחֶם
אֲשֶׁר־הוּא אוֹכֵל וַיְהִי יוֹסֵף יְפֵה־תֹאַר
וִיפֵה מַרְאֶה׃
7 וַיְהִי אַחַר הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה וַתִּשָּׂא אֵשֶׁת־
אֲדֹנָיו אֶת־עֵינֶיהָ אֶל־יוֹסֵף וַתֹּאמֶר שִׁכְבָה
עִמִּי׃ 8 וַיְמָאֵן | וַיֹּאמֶר אֶל־אֵשֶׁת אֲדֹנָיו
הֵן אֲדֹנִי לֹא־יָדַע אִתִּי מַה־בַּבַּיִת וְכֹל
אֲשֶׁר־יֶשׁ־לוֹ נָתַן בְּיָדִי׃ 9 אֵינֶנּוּ גָדוֹל בַּבַּיִת
הַזֶּה מִמֶּנִּי וְלֹא־חָשַׂךְ מִמֶּנִּי מְאוּמָה כִּי
אִם־אוֹתָךְ בַּאֲשֶׁר אַתְּ־אִשְׁתּוֹ וְאֵיךְ אֶעֱשֶׂה

e *Heb.* pereṣ
f *I.e., "brightness," perhaps alluding to the crimson thread.*

רות

RUTH

א וַיְהִי בִּימֵי שְׁפֹט הַשֹּׁפְטִים וַיְהִי רָעָב
בָּאָרֶץ וַיֵּלֶךְ אִישׁ מִבֵּית לֶחֶם יְהוּדָה לָגוּר
בִּשְׂדֵי מוֹאָב הוּא וְאִשְׁתּוֹ וּשְׁנֵי בָנָיו׃
2 וְשֵׁם הָאִישׁ אֱלִימֶלֶךְ וְשֵׁם אִשְׁתּוֹ נָעֳמִי
וְשֵׁם שְׁנֵי־בָנָיו ׀ מַחְלוֹן וְכִלְיוֹן אֶפְרָתִים
מִבֵּית לֶחֶם יְהוּדָה וַיָּבֹאוּ שְׂדֵי־מוֹאָב
וַיִּהְיוּ־שָׁם׃
3 וַיָּמָת אֱלִימֶלֶךְ אִישׁ נָעֳמִי וַתִּשָּׁאֵר הִיא
וּשְׁנֵי בָנֶיהָ׃ 4 וַיִּשְׂאוּ לָהֶם נָשִׁים מֹאֲבִיּוֹת
שֵׁם הָאַחַת עָרְפָּה וְשֵׁם הַשֵּׁנִית רוּת
וַיֵּשְׁבוּ שָׁם כְּעֶשֶׂר שָׁנִים׃ 5 וַיָּמֻתוּ גַם־
שְׁנֵיהֶם מַחְלוֹן וְכִלְיוֹן וַתִּשָּׁאֵר הָאִשָּׁה
מִשְּׁנֵי יְלָדֶיהָ וּמֵאִישָׁהּ׃
6 וַתָּקָם הִיא וְכַלֹּתֶיהָ וַתָּשָׁב מִשְּׂדֵי מוֹאָב
כִּי שָׁמְעָה בִשְׂדֵה מוֹאָב כִּי־פָקַד יְהוָה
אֶת־עַמּוֹ לָתֵת לָהֶם לָחֶם׃ 7 וַתֵּצֵא מִן־
הַמָּקוֹם אֲשֶׁר הָיְתָה־שָּׁמָּה וּשְׁתֵּי כַלֹּתֶיהָ
עִמָּהּ וַתֵּלַכְנָה בַּדֶּרֶךְ לָשׁוּב אֶל־אֶרֶץ
יְהוּדָה׃
8 וַתֹּאמֶר נָעֳמִי לִשְׁתֵּי כַלֹּתֶיהָ לֵכְנָה
שֹּׁבְנָה אִשָּׁה לְבֵית אִמָּהּ יעשה יַעַשׂ יְהוָה
עִמָּכֶם חֶסֶד כַּאֲשֶׁר עֲשִׂיתֶם עִם־הַמֵּתִים
וְעִמָּדִי׃ 9 יִתֵּן יְהוָה לָכֶם וּמְצֶאןָ מְנוּחָה
אִשָּׁה בֵּית אִישָׁהּ וַתִּשַּׁק לָהֶן וַתִּשֶּׂאנָה
קוֹלָן וַתִּבְכֶּינָה׃ 10 וַתֹּאמַרְנָה־לָּהּ כִּי־אִתָּךְ
נָשׁוּב לְעַמֵּךְ׃
11 וַתֹּאמֶר נָעֳמִי שֹׁבְנָה בְנֹתַי לָמָּה תֵלַכְנָה

1 In the days when the chieftains[a] ruled, there was a famine in the land; and a man of Bethlehem in Judah, with his wife and two sons, went to reside in the country of Moab. 2The man's name was Elimelech, his wife's name was Naomi, and his two sons were named Mahlon and Chilion—Ephrathites of Bethlehem in Judah. They came to the country of Moab and remained there.

3Elimelech, Naomi's husband, died; and she was left with her two sons. 4They married Moabite women, one named Orpah and the other Ruth, and they lived there about ten years. 5Then those two—Mahlon and Chilion—also died; so the woman was left without her two sons and without her husband.

6She started out with her daughters-in-law to return from the country of Moab; for in the country of Moab she had heard that the LORD had taken note of His people and given them food. 7Accompanied by her two daughters-in-law, she left the place where she had been living; and they set out on the road back to the land of Judah.

8But Naomi said to her two daughters-in-law, "Turn back, each of you to her mother's house. May the LORD deal kindly with you, as you have dealt with the dead and with me! 9May the LORD grant that each of you find security in the house of a husband!" And she kissed them farewell. They broke into weeping 10and said to her, "No, we will return with you to your people."

11But Naomi replied, "Turn back, my daugh-

a I.e., the leaders who arose in the period before the monarchy; others "judges."

ters! Why should you go with me? Have I any more sons in my body who might be husbands for you? 12Turn back, my daughters, for I am too old to be married. Even if I thought there was hope for me, even if I were married tonight and I also bore sons, 13should you wait for them to grow up? Should you on their account debar yourselves from marriage? Oh no, my daughters! My lot is far more bitter than yours, for the hand of the LORD has struck out against me."

14They broke into weeping again, and Orpah kissed her mother-in-law farewell. But Ruth clung to her. 15So she said, "See, your sister-in-law has returned to her people and her gods. Go follow your sister-in-law." 16But Ruth replied, "Do not urge me to leave you, to turn back and not follow you. For wherever you go, I will go; wherever you lodge, I will lodge; your people shall be my people, and your God my God. 17Where you die, I will die, and there I will be buried. *b*-Thus and more may the LORD do to me-*b* if anything but death parts me from you." 18When [Naomi] saw how determined she was to go with her, she ceased to argue with her; 19and the two went on until they reached Bethlehem.

When they arrived in Bethlehem, the whole city buzzed with excitement over them. The women said, "Can this be Naomi?" 20"Do not call me Naomi,"*c* she replied. "Call me Mara,*d* for Shaddai*e* has made my lot very bitter. 21I went away full, and the LORD has brought me back empty. How can you call me Naomi, when the LORD has *f*-dealt harshly with-*f* me, when Shaddai has brought misfortune upon me!"

22Thus Naomi returned from the country of Moab; she returned with her daughter-in-law Ruth the Moabite. They arrived in Bethlehem at the beginning of the barley harvest.

עִמִּי הַעוֹד־לִי בָנִים בְּמֵעַי וְהָיוּ לָכֶם
לַאֲנָשִׁים׃ 12 שֹׁבְנָה בְנֹתַי לֵכֶן כִּי זָקַנְתִּי
מִהְיוֹת לְאִישׁ כִּי אָמַרְתִּי יֶשׁ־לִי תִקְוָה
גַּם הָיִיתִי הַלַּיְלָה לְאִישׁ וְגַם יָלַדְתִּי בָנִים׃
13 הֲלָהֵן | תְּשַׂבֵּרְנָה עַד אֲשֶׁר יִגְדָּלוּ הֲלָהֵן
תֵּעָגֵנָה לְבִלְתִּי הֱיוֹת לְאִישׁ אַל בְּנֹתַי
כִּי־מַר־לִי מְאֹד מִכֶּם כִּי־יְצָאָה בִי יַד־
יְהוָה׃
14 וַתִּשֶּׂנָה* קוֹלָן וַתִּבְכֶּינָה עוֹד וַתִּשַּׁק
עָרְפָּה לַחֲמוֹתָהּ וְרוּת דָּבְקָה בָּהּ׃
15 וַתֹּאמֶר הִנֵּה שָׁבָה יְבִמְתֵּךְ אֶל־עַמָּהּ
וְאֶל־אֱלֹהֶיהָ שׁוּבִי אַחֲרֵי יְבִמְתֵּךְ׃
16 וַתֹּאמֶר רוּת אַל־תִּפְגְּעִי־בִי לְעָזְבֵךְ
לָשׁוּב מֵאַחֲרָיִךְ כִּי אֶל־אֲשֶׁר תֵּלְכִי אֵלֵךְ
וּבַאֲשֶׁר תָּלִינִי אָלִין עַמֵּךְ עַמִּי וֵאלֹהַיִךְ
אֱלֹהָי׃ 17 בַּאֲשֶׁר תָּמוּתִי אָמוּת וְשָׁם
אֶקָּבֵר כֹּה יַעֲשֶׂה יְהוָה לִי וְכֹה יֹסִיף כִּי
הַמָּוֶת יַפְרִיד בֵּינִי וּבֵינָךְ׃ 18 וַתֵּרֶא כִּי־
מִתְאַמֶּצֶת הִיא לָלֶכֶת אִתָּהּ וַתֶּחְדַּל
לְדַבֵּר אֵלֶיהָ׃ 19 וַתֵּלַכְנָה שְׁתֵּיהֶם עַד־
בֹּאָנָה בֵּית לָחֶם
וַיְהִי כְּבֹאָנָה בֵּית לֶחֶם וַתֵּהֹם כָּל־הָעִיר
עֲלֵיהֶן וַתֹּאמַרְנָה הֲזֹאת נָעֳמִי׃ 20 וַתֹּאמֶר
אֲלֵיהֶן אַל־תִּקְרֶאנָה לִי נָעֳמִי קְרֶאןָ לִי
מָרָא* כִּי־הֵמַר שַׁדַּי לִי מְאֹד׃ 21 אֲנִי
מְלֵאָה הָלַכְתִּי וְרֵיקָם הֱשִׁיבַנִי יְהוָה לָמָּה
תִקְרֶאנָה לִי נָעֳמִי וַיהוָה עָנָה בִּי וְשַׁדַּי
הֵרַע לִי׃
22 וַתָּשָׁב נָעֳמִי וְרוּת הַמּוֹאֲבִיָּה כַלָּתָהּ
עִמָּהּ הַשָּׁבָה מִשְּׂדֵי מוֹאָב וְהֵמָּה בָּאוּ
בֵּית לֶחֶם בִּתְחִלַּת קְצִיר שְׂעֹרִים׃

b-b *A formula of imprecation.*
c *I.e., "Pleasantness."*
d *I.e., "Bitterness."*
e *Usually rendered "the Almighty."*
f-f *Others "testified against."*

v. 14. חסר א׳
v. 20. א׳ במקום ה׳

2 Now Naomi had a kinsman on her husband's side, a man of substance, of the family of Elimelech, whose name was Boaz.

2Ruth the Moabite said to Naomi, "I would like to go to the fields and glean among the ears of grain, behind someone who may show me kindness." "Yes, daughter, go," she replied; 3and off she went. She came and gleaned in a field, behind the reapers; and, as luck would have it, it was the piece of land belonging to Boaz, who was of Elimelech's family.

4Presently Boaz arrived from Bethlehem. He greeted the reapers, "The LORD be with you!" And they responded, "The LORD bless you!" 5Boaz said to the servant who was in charge of the reapers, "Whose girl is that?" 6The servant in charge of the reapers replied, "She is a Moabite girl who came back with Naomi from the country of Moab. 7She said, 'Please let me glean and gather among the sheaves behind the reapers.' She has been on her feet ever since she came this morning. *a*-She has rested but little in the hut."-*a*

8Boaz said to Ruth, *b*-"Listen to me, daughter.-*b* Don't go to glean in another field. Don't go elsewhere, but stay here close to my girls. 9Keep your eyes on the field they are reaping, and follow them. I have ordered the men not to molest you. And when you are thirsty, go to the jars and drink some of [the water] that the men have drawn."

10She prostrated herself with her face to the ground, and said to him, "Why are you so kind as to single me out, when I am a foreigner?"

11Boaz said in reply, "I have been told of all that you did for your mother-in-law after the death of your husband, how you left your father and mother and the land of your birth and came to a people you had not known before. 12May

ב וְלִנָעֳמִי מידע מוֹדָע לְאִישָׁהּ אִישׁ גִּבּוֹר חַיִל מִמִּשְׁפַּחַת אֱלִימֶלֶךְ וּשְׁמוֹ בֹּעַז׃
2 וַתֹּאמֶר רוּת הַמּוֹאֲבִיָּה אֶל־נָעֳמִי אֵלְכָה־נָּא הַשָּׂדֶה וַאֲלַקְטָה בַשִּׁבֳּלִים אַחַר אֲשֶׁר אֶמְצָא־חֵן בְּעֵינָיו וַתֹּאמֶר לָהּ לְכִי בִתִּי׃ 3 וַתֵּלֶךְ וַתָּבוֹא וַתְּלַקֵּט בַּשָּׂדֶה אַחֲרֵי הַקֹּצְרִים וַיִּקֶר מִקְרֶהָ חֶלְקַת הַשָּׂדֶה לְבֹעַז אֲשֶׁר מִמִּשְׁפַּחַת אֱלִימֶלֶךְ׃
4 וְהִנֵּה־בֹעַז בָּא מִבֵּית לֶחֶם וַיֹּאמֶר לַקּוֹצְרִים יְהוָה עִמָּכֶם וַיֹּאמְרוּ לוֹ יְבָרֶכְךָ יְהוָה׃ 5 וַיֹּאמֶר בֹּעַז לְנַעֲרוֹ הַנִּצָּב עַל־הַקּוֹצְרִים לְמִי הַנַּעֲרָה הַזֹּאת׃ 6 וַיַּעַן הַנַּעַר הַנִּצָּב עַל־הַקּוֹצְרִים וַיֹּאמֶר נַעֲרָה מוֹאֲבִיָּה הִיא הַשָּׁבָה עִם־נָעֳמִי מִשְּׂדֵה מוֹאָב׃ 7 וַתֹּאמֶר אֲלַקֳטָה־נָּא וְאָסַפְתִּי בָעֳמָרִים אַחֲרֵי הַקּוֹצְרִים וַתָּבוֹא וַתַּעֲמֹד מֵאָז הַבֹּקֶר וְעַד־עַתָּה זֶה שִׁבְתָּהּ הַבַּיִת מְעָט׃
8 וַיֹּאמֶר בֹּעַז אֶל־רוּת הֲלוֹא שָׁמַעַתְּ בִּתִּי אַל־תֵּלְכִי לְלַקֵּט בְּשָׂדֶה אַחֵר וְגַם לֹא תַעֲבוּרִי מִזֶּה וְכֹה תִדְבָּקִין עִם־נַעֲרֹתָי׃
9 עֵינַיִךְ בַּשָּׂדֶה אֲשֶׁר־יִקְצֹרוּן וְהָלַכְתְּ אַחֲרֵיהֶן הֲלוֹא צִוִּיתִי אֶת־הַנְּעָרִים לְבִלְתִּי נָגְעֵךְ וְצָמִת וְהָלַכְתְּ אֶל־הַכֵּלִים וְשָׁתִּית מֵאֲשֶׁר יִשְׁאֲבוּן הַנְּעָרִים׃
10 וַתִּפֹּל עַל־פָּנֶיהָ וַתִּשְׁתַּחוּ אָרְצָה וַתֹּאמֶר אֵלָיו מַדּוּעַ מָצָאתִי חֵן בְּעֵינֶיךָ לְהַכִּירֵנִי וְאָנֹכִי נָכְרִיָּה׃
11 וַיַּעַן בֹּעַז וַיֹּאמֶר לָהּ הֻגֶּד הֻגַּד לִי כֹּל אֲשֶׁר־עָשִׂית אֶת־חֲמוֹתֵךְ אַחֲרֵי מוֹת אִישֵׁךְ וַתַּעַזְבִּי אָבִיךְ וְאִמֵּךְ וְאֶרֶץ מוֹלַדְתֵּךְ וַתֵּלְכִי אֶל־עַם אֲשֶׁר לֹא־יָדַעַתְּ תְּמוֹל שִׁלְשׁוֹם׃ 12 יְשַׁלֵּם יְהוָה פָּעֳלֵךְ וּתְהִי

a-a *Meaning of Heb. uncertain.*
b-b *Lit. "Have you not heard, daughter?"*

the LORD reward your deeds. May you have a full recompense from the LORD, the God of Israel, under whose wings you have sought refuge!"

13She answered, "You are most kind, my lord, to comfort me and to speak gently to your maidservant—though I am not so much as one of your maidservants."

14At mealtime, Boaz said to her, "Come over here and partake of the meal, and dip your morsel in the vinegar." So she sat down beside the reapers. He handed her roasted grain, and she ate her fill and had some left over.

15When she got up again to glean, Boaz gave orders to his workers, "You are not only to let her glean among the sheaves, without interference, 16but you must also pull some [stalks] out of the heaps and leave them for her to glean, and not scold her."

17She gleaned in the field until evening. Then she beat out what she had gleaned—it was about an *'ephah* of barley—18and carried it back with her to the town. When her mother-in-law saw what she had gleaned, and when she also took out and gave her what she had left over after eating her fill, 19her mother-in-law asked her, "Where did you glean today? Where did you work? Blessed be he who took such generous notice of you!" So she told her mother-in-law whom she had worked with, saying, "The name of the man with whom I worked today is Boaz."

20Naomi said to her daughter-in-law, "Blessed be he of the LORD, who has not failed in His kindness to the living or to the dead! For," Naomi explained to her daughter-in-law, "the man is related to us; he is one of our redeeming kinsmen."[c] 21Ruth the Moabite said, "He even told me, 'Stay close by my workers until all my harvest is finished.'" 22And Naomi answered her daughter-in-law Ruth, "It is best, daughter, that

מַשְׂכֻּרְתֵּךְ שְׁלֵמָה מֵעִם יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי
יִשְׂרָאֵל אֲשֶׁר־בָּאת לַחֲסוֹת תַּחַת־כְּנָפָיו׃
13 וַתֹּאמֶר אֶמְצָא־חֵן בְּעֵינֶיךָ אֲדֹנִי כִּי
נִחַמְתָּנִי וְכִי דִבַּרְתָּ עַל־לֵב שִׁפְחָתֶךָ וְאָנֹכִי
לֹא אֶהְיֶה כְּאַחַת שִׁפְחֹתֶיךָ׃
14 וַיֹּאמֶר לָהּ* בֹּעַז לְעֵת הָאֹכֶל גְּשִׁי הֲלֹם
וְאָכַלְתְּ מִן־הַלֶּחֶם וְטָבַלְתְּ פִּתֵּךְ בַּחֹמֶץ
וַתֵּשֶׁב מִצַּד הַקֹּצְרִים וַיִּצְבָּט־לָהּ קָלִי
וַתֹּאכַל וַתִּשְׂבַּע וַתֹּתַר׃
15 וַתָּקָם לְלַקֵּט וַיְצַו בֹּעַז אֶת־נְעָרָיו לֵאמֹר
גַּם בֵּין הָעֳמָרִים תְּלַקֵּט וְלֹא תַכְלִימוּהָ׃
16 וְגַם שֹׁל־תָּשְׁלוּ לָהּ מִן־הַצְּבָתִים
וַעֲזַבְתֶּם וְלִקְּטָה וְלֹא תִגְעֲרוּ־בָהּ׃
17 וַתְּלַקֵּט בַּשָּׂדֶה עַד־הָעָרֶב וַתַּחְבֹּט אֵת
אֲשֶׁר־לִקָּטָה וַיְהִי כְּאֵיפָה שְׂעֹרִים׃
18 וַתִּשָּׂא וַתָּבוֹא הָעִיר וַתֵּרֶא חֲמוֹתָהּ אֵת
אֲשֶׁר־לִקֵּטָה וַתּוֹצֵא וַתִּתֶּן־לָהּ אֵת אֲשֶׁר־
הוֹתְרָה מִשָּׂבְעָהּ׃ 19 וַתֹּאמֶר לָהּ חֲמוֹתָהּ
אֵיפֹה לָקַטְתְּ הַיּוֹם וְאָנָה עָשִׂית יְהִי
מַכִּירֵךְ בָּרוּךְ וַתַּגֶּד לַחֲמוֹתָהּ אֵת אֲשֶׁר־
עָשְׂתָה עִמּוֹ וַתֹּאמֶר שֵׁם הָאִישׁ אֲשֶׁר
עָשִׂיתִי עִמּוֹ הַיּוֹם בֹּעַז׃
20 וַתֹּאמֶר נָעֳמִי לְכַלָּתָהּ בָּרוּךְ הוּא לַיהוָה
אֲשֶׁר לֹא־עָזַב חַסְדּוֹ אֶת־הַחַיִּים וְאֶת־
הַמֵּתִים וַתֹּאמֶר לָהּ נָעֳמִי קָרוֹב לָנוּ
הָאִישׁ מִגֹּאֲלֵנוּ הוּא׃ 21* וַתֹּאמֶר רוּת
הַמּוֹאֲבִיָּה גַּם | כִּי־אָמַר אֵלַי עִם־הַנְּעָרִים
אֲשֶׁר־לִי תִּדְבָּקִין עַד אִם־כִּלּוּ אֵת כָּל־
הַקָּצִיר אֲשֶׁר־לִי׃ 22 וַתֹּאמֶר נָעֳמִי אֶל־רוּת

c *Cf. Lev. 25.25 and note and Deut. 25.5–6. The fact that Boaz was a kinsman of Ruth's dead husband opened up the possibility of providing an heir for the latter.*

v. 14. ה' רפה
v. 21. חצי הספר בפסוקים

you go out with his girls, and not be annoyed in some other field." 23So she stayed close to the maidservants of Boaz, and gleaned until the barley harvest and the wheat harvest were finished. Then she stayed at home with her mother-in-law.

כַּלָּתֶהָ טוֹב בִּתִּי כִּי תֵצְאִי עִם־נַעֲרוֹתָיו
וְלֹא יִפְגְּעוּ־בָךְ בְּשָׂדֶה אַחֵר׃ 23 וַתִּדְבַּק
בִּנַעֲרוֹת בֹּעַז לְלַקֵּט עַד־כְּלוֹת קְצִיר־
הַשְּׂעֹרִים וּקְצִיר הַחִטִּים וַתֵּשֶׁב אֶת־
חֲמוֹתָהּ׃

3 Naomi, her mother-in-law, said to her, "Daughter, I must seek a home for you, where you may be happy. 2Now there is our kinsman Boaz, whose girls you were close to. He will be winnowing barley on the threshing floor tonight. 3So bathe, anoint yourself, dress up, and go down to the threshing floor. But do not disclose yourself to the man until he has finished eating and drinking. 4When he lies down, note the place where he lies down, and go over and uncover his feet and lie down. He will tell you what you are to do." 5She replied, "I will do everything you tell me."

6She went down to the threshing floor and did just as her mother-in-law had instructed her. 7Boaz ate and drank, and in a cheerful mood went to lie down beside the grainpile. Then she went over stealthily and uncovered his feet and lay down. 8In the middle of the night, the man gave a start and pulled back—there was a woman lying at his feet!

9"Who are you?" he asked. And she replied, "I am your handmaid Ruth. [a]Spread your robe over your handmaid,[a] for you are a redeeming kinsman."

10He exclaimed, "Be blessed of the LORD, daughter! Your latest deed of loyalty is greater than the first, in that you have not turned to younger men, whether poor or rich.[b] 11And now, daughter, have no fear. I will do in your behalf whatever you ask, for all the [c]elders of

ג וַתֹּאמֶר לָהּ נָעֳמִי חֲמוֹתָהּ בִּתִּי הֲלֹא
אְבַקֶּשׁ־לָךְ מָנוֹחַ אֲשֶׁר יִיטַב־לָךְ׃ 2 וְעַתָּה
הֲלֹא בֹעַז מֹדַעְתָּנוּ אֲשֶׁר הָיִית אֶת־
נַעֲרוֹתָיו הִנֵּה־הוּא זֹרֶה אֶת־גֹּרֶן הַשְּׂעֹרִים
הַלָּיְלָה׃ 3 וְרָחַצְתְּ | וָסַכְתְּ וְשַׂמְתְּ שִׂמְלֹתַיִךְ עָלַיִךְ וירדתי וְיָרַדְתְּ הַגֹּרֶן אַל־
תִּוָּדְעִי לָאִישׁ עַד כַּלֹּתוֹ לֶאֱכֹל וְלִשְׁתּוֹת׃
4 וִיהִי בְשָׁכְבוֹ וְיָדַעַתְּ אֶת־הַמָּקוֹם אֲשֶׁר
יִשְׁכַּב־שָׁם וּבָאת וְגִלִּית מַרְגְּלֹתָיו ושכבתי
וְשָׁכַבְתְּ וְהוּא יַגִּיד לָךְ אֵת אֲשֶׁר תַּעֲשִׂין׃
5 וַתֹּאמֶר אֵלֶיהָ כֹּל אֲשֶׁר־תֹּאמְרִי [אֵלַי*]
אֶעֱשֶׂה׃
6 וַתֵּרֶד הַגֹּרֶן וַתַּעַשׂ כְּכֹל אֲשֶׁר־צִוַּתָּה
חֲמוֹתָהּ׃ 7 וַיֹּאכַל בֹּעַז וַיֵּשְׁתְּ וַיִּיטַב לִבּוֹ
וַיָּבֹא לִשְׁכַּב בִּקְצֵה הָעֲרֵמָה וַתָּבֹא בַלָּט
וַתְּגַל מַרְגְּלֹתָיו וַתִּשְׁכָּב׃ 8 וַיְהִי בַּחֲצִי
הַלַּיְלָה וַיֶּחֱרַד הָאִישׁ וַיִּלָּפֵת וְהִנֵּה אִשָּׁה
שֹׁכֶבֶת מַרְגְּלֹתָיו׃
9 וַיֹּאמֶר מִי־אָתְּ וַתֹּאמֶר אָנֹכִי רוּת אֲמָתֶךָ
וּפָרַשְׂתָּ כְנָפֶךָ עַל־אֲמָתְךָ כִּי גֹאֵל אָתָּה׃
10 וַיֹּאמֶר בְּרוּכָה אַתְּ לַיהוָה בִּתִּי הֵיטַבְתְּ
חַסְדֵּךְ הָאַחֲרוֹן מִן־הָרִאשׁוֹן לְבִלְתִּי־לֶכֶת
אַחֲרֵי הַבַּחוּרִים אִם־דַּל וְאִם־עָשִׁיר׃
11 וְעַתָּה בִּתִּי אַל־תִּירְאִי כֹּל אֲשֶׁר־תֹּאמְרִי
אֶעֱשֶׂה־לָּךְ כִּי יוֹדֵעַ כָּל־שַׁעַר עַמִּי כִּי
אֵשֶׁת חַיִל אָתְּ׃ 12 וְעַתָּה כִּי אָמְנָם כִּי

v. 5. קריא ולא כתיב

a-a A formal act of espousal; cf. Ezek. 16.8.

b I.e., she sought out a kinsman of her dead husband; see note at 2.20 above. Her first act of loyalty had been to return with Naomi.

c-c Lit. "gate of my people."

אם* גֹּאֵל אָנֹכִי וְגַם יֵשׁ גֹּאֵל קָרוֹב מִמֶּנִּי׃
13 לִינִי | הַלַּיְלָה וְהָיָה בַבֹּקֶר אִם־יִגְאָלֵךְ
טוֹב יִגְאָל וְאִם־לֹא יַחְפֹּץ לְגָאֳלֵךְ וּגְאַלְתִּיךְ
אָנֹכִי חַי־יְהוָה שִׁכְבִי עַד־הַבֹּקֶר׃
14 וַתִּשְׁכַּב מרגלתו מַרְגְּלֹתָיו עַד־הַבֹּקֶר
וַתָּקָם בטרום בְּטֶרֶם יַכִּיר אִישׁ אֶת־רֵעֵהוּ
וַיֹּאמֶר אַל־יִוָּדַע כִּי־בָאָה הָאִשָּׁה הַגֹּרֶן׃
15 וַיֹּאמֶר הָבִי הַמִּטְפַּחַת אֲשֶׁר־עָלַיִךְ
וְאֶחֱזִי־בָהּ וַתֹּאחֶז בָּהּ וַיָּמָד שֵׁשׁ־שְׂעֹרִים
וַיָּשֶׁת עָלֶיהָ
וַיָּבֹא* הָעִיר׃ 16 וַתָּבוֹא אֶל־חֲמוֹתָהּ
וַתֹּאמֶר מִי־אַתְּ בִּתִּי וַתַּגֶּד־לָהּ אֵת כָּל־
אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה־לָהּ הָאִישׁ׃ 17 וַתֹּאמֶר שֵׁשׁ־
הַשְּׂעֹרִים הָאֵלֶּה נָתַן לִי כִּי אָמַר [אֵלַי*]
אַל־תָּבוֹאִי רֵיקָם אֶל־חֲמוֹתֵךְ׃ 18 וַתֹּאמֶר
שְׁבִי בִתִּי עַד אֲשֶׁר תֵּדְעִין אֵיךְ יִפֹּל דָּבָר
כִּי לֹא יִשְׁקֹט הָאִישׁ כִּי־אִם־כִּלָּה הַדָּבָר
הַיּוֹם׃

my town-c know what a fine woman you are. 12But while it is true I am a redeeming kinsman, there is another redeemer closer than I. 13Stay for the night. Then in the morning, if he will act as a redeemer, good! let him redeem. But if he does not want to act as redeemer for you, I will do so myself, as the LORD lives! Lie down until morning."

14So she lay at his feet until dawn. She rose before one person could distinguish another, for he thought, "Let it not be known that the woman came to the threshing floor." 15And he said, "Hold out the shawl you are wearing." She held it while he measured out six measures of barley, and he put it on her back.

When she[d] got back to the town, 16she came to her mother-in-law, who asked, "How is it with you, daughter?" She told her all that the man had done for her; 17and she added, "He gave me these six measures of barley, saying to me, 'Do not go back to your mother-in-law empty-handed.'" 18And Naomi said, "Stay here, daughter, till you learn how the matter turns out. For the man will not rest, but will settle the matter today."

ד וּבֹעַז עָלָה הַשַּׁעַר וַיֵּשֶׁב שָׁם וְהִנֵּה
הַגֹּאֵל עֹבֵר אֲשֶׁר דִּבֶּר־בֹּעַז וַיֹּאמֶר סוּרָה
שְׁבָה־פֹּה פְּלֹנִי אַלְמֹנִי וַיָּסַר וַיֵּשֵׁב׃ 2 וַיִּקַּח
עֲשָׂרָה אֲנָשִׁים מִזִּקְנֵי הָעִיר וַיֹּאמֶר שְׁבוּ־
פֹה וַיֵּשֵׁבוּ׃
3 וַיֹּאמֶר לַגֹּאֵל חֶלְקַת הַשָּׂדֶה אֲשֶׁר
לְאָחִינוּ לֶאֱלִימֶלֶךְ מָכְרָה נָעֳמִי הַשָּׁבָה
מִשְּׂדֵה מוֹאָב׃ 4 וַאֲנִי אָמַרְתִּי אֶגְלֶה אָזְנְךָ
לֵאמֹר קְנֵה נֶגֶד הַיֹּשְׁבִים וְנֶגֶד זִקְנֵי עַמִּי

4 Meanwhile, Boaz had gone to the gate and sat down there. And now the redeemer whom Boaz had mentioned passed by. He called, "Come over and sit down here, So-and-so!" And he came over and sat down. 2Then [Boaz] took ten elders of the town and said, "Be seated here"; and they sat down.

3He said to the redeemer, "Naomi, now returned from the country of Moab, must sell the piece of land which belonged to our kinsman Elimelech. 4I thought I should disclose the matter to you and say: Acquire it in the presence of those seated here and in the presence of the

v. 12. כתיב ולא קריא
v. 15. בנוסח אחר "ותבא"
v. 17. קריא ולא כתיב

d *So in many Heb. mss; most mss. read "he."*

elders of my people. If you are willing to redeem it, redeem! But if you[a] will not redeem, tell me, that I may know. For there is no one to redeem but you, and I come after you." "I am willing to redeem it," he replied. 5Boaz continued, "When you acquire the property from Naomi [b]-and from Ruth the Moabite, you must also acquire the wife of the deceased,-[b] so as to perpetuate the name of the deceased upon his estate." 6The redeemer replied, "Then I cannot redeem it for myself, lest I impair my own estate.[c] You take over my right of redemption, for I am unable to exercise it."

7Now this was formerly done in Israel in cases of redemption or exchange: to validate any transaction, one man would take off his sandal and hand it to the other. Such was the practice[d] in Israel. 8So when the redeemer said to Boaz, "Acquire for yourself," he drew off his sandal. 9And Boaz said to the elders and to the rest of the people, "You are witnesses today that I am acquiring from Naomi all that belonged to Elimelech and all that belonged to Chilion and Mahlon. 10I am also acquiring Ruth the Moabite, the wife of Mahlon, as my wife, so as to perpetuate the name of the deceased upon his estate, that the name of the deceased may not disappear from among his kinsmen and from the gate of his home town. You are witnesses today."

11All the people at the gate and the elders answered, "We are. May the LORD make the woman who is coming into your house like Rachel and Leah, both of whom built up the House of Israel! Prosper in Ephrathah[e] and perpetuate your name in Bethlehem! 12And may

אִם־תִּגְאַל֙ גְּאָ֔ל וְאִם־לֹ֥א יִגְאַ֖ל* הַגִּ֣ידָה
לִּ֑י ואדע וְאֵדְעָ֔ה כִּ֣י אֵ֥ין זוּלָתְךָ֖ לִגְאֹ֑ול
וְאָנֹכִ֥י אַחֲרֶ֖יךָ וַיֹּ֣אמֶר אָנֹכִ֔י אֶגְאָֽל׃
5 וַיֹּ֣אמֶר בֹּ֣עַז בְּיֹום־קְנֹותְךָ֩ הַשָּׂדֶ֨ה מִיַּ֜ד
נָעֳמִ֗י וּמֵאֵ֤ת רוּת֙ הַמֹּואֲבִיָּ֣ה אֵֽשֶׁת־הַמֵּ֔ת
קָנִ֖יתִי לְהָקִ֣ים שֵׁם־הַמֵּ֑ת עַל־
נַחֲלָתֹֽו׃ 6 וַיֹּ֣אמֶר הַגֹּאֵ֔ל לֹ֥א אוּכַ֖ל לגאול
לִגְאָ֣לִי־לִ֑י פֶּן־אַשְׁחִ֥ית אֶת־נַחֲלָתִ֖י גְּאַל־לְךָ֥
אַתָּ֛ה אֶת־גְּאֻלָּתִ֖י כִּ֥י לֹא־אוּכַ֖ל לִגְאָֽל׃
7 וְזֹאת֙ לְפָנִ֔ים בְּיִשְׂרָאֵ֖ל עַל־הַגְּאוּלָ֣ה וְעַל־
הַתְּמוּרָ֑ה לְקַיֵּ֣ם כָּל־דָּבָ֗ר שָׁלַ֤ף אִישׁ֙ נַעֲלֹ֔ו
וְנָתַ֖ן לְרֵעֵ֑הוּ וְזֹ֥את הַתְּעוּדָ֖ה בְּיִשְׂרָאֵֽל׃
8 וַיֹּ֣אמֶר הַגֹּאֵ֔ל לְבֹ֖עַז קְנֵה־לָ֑ךְ וַיִּשְׁלֹ֖ף
נַעֲלֹֽו׃ 9 וַיֹּ֨אמֶר֙ בֹּ֣עַז לַזְּקֵנִ֔ים וְכָל־הָעָ֖ם
עֵדִ֣ים אַתֶּ֗ם הַיֹּום֙ כִּ֣י קָנִ֔יתִי אֶת־כָּל־אֲשֶׁ֖ר
לֶאֱלִימֶ֑לֶךְ וְאֵת֙ כָּל־אֲשֶׁ֣ר לְכִלְיֹ֔ון וּמַחְלֹ֖ון
מִיַּ֥ד נָעֳמִֽי׃ 10 וְגַם֩ אֶת־רוּת֨ הַמֹּואֲבִיָּ֜ה
אֵ֣שֶׁת מַחְלֹ֗ון קָנִ֤יתִי לִי֙ לְאִשָּׁ֔ה לְהָקִ֥ים
שֵׁם־הַמֵּ֖ת עַל־נַחֲלָתֹ֑ו וְלֹא־יִכָּרֵ֤ת שֵׁם־
הַמֵּת֙ מֵעִ֣ם אֶחָ֔יו וּמִשַּׁ֖עַר מְקֹומֹ֑ו עֵדִ֥ים
אַתֶּ֖ם הַיֹּֽום׃
11 וַיֹּ֣אמְרוּ֩ כָּל־הָעָ֨ם אֲשֶׁר־בַּשַּׁ֜עַר וְהַזְּקֵנִ֗ים
עֵדִ֔ים יִתֵּ֣ן יְהוָ֔ה אֶת־הָאִשָּׁ֥ה הַבָּאָ֖ה אֶל־
בֵּיתֶ֑ךָ כְּרָחֵ֣ל ׀ וּכְלֵאָ֗ה אֲשֶׁ֤ר בָּנ֙וּ שְׁתֵּיהֶ֔ם
אֶת־בֵּ֖ית יִשְׂרָאֵ֑ל וַעֲשֵׂה־חַ֥יִל בְּאֶפְרָ֖תָה
וּקְרָא־שֵׁ֥ם בְּבֵֽית לָֽחֶם׃ 12 וִיהִ֤י בֵֽיתְךָ֙

a *So many Heb. mss., Septuagint, and Targum; most mss. read "he."*

b-b *Emendation yields "you must also acquire Ruth the Moabite, the wife of the deceased"; cf. v. 10.*

c *I.e., by expending capital for property which will go to the son legally regarded as Mahlon's; see Deut. 25.5–6.*

d *Understanding Heb.* te'udah *in the sense of the Arabic* 'adah *and Syriac* 'yadā. *Cf. Ibn Ezra.*

e *Ephrathah is another name applied to Bethlehem; cf. 1.2; Gen. 35.16, 19; 48.7; Mic. 5.1.*

* בנוסח אחר "תגאל" v. 4.

your house be like the house of Perez whom Tamar bore to Judah—through the offspring which the LORD will give you by this young woman."

13So Boaz married Ruth; she became his wife, and he cohabited with her. The LORD let her conceive, and she bore a son. 14And the women said to Naomi, "Blessed be the LORD, who has not withheld a redeemer from you today! May his name be perpetuated in Israel! 15He will renew your life and sustain your old age; for he is born of your daughter-in-law, who loves you and is better to you than seven sons."

16Naomi took the child and held it to her bosom. She became its foster mother, 17and the women neighbors gave him a name, saying, "A son is born to Naomi!" They named him Obed; he was the father of Jesse, father of David.

18This is the line of Perez: Perez begot Hezron, 19Hezron begot Ram, Ram begot Amminadab, 20Amminadab begot Nahshon, Nahshon begot Salmon,*f* 21Salmon begot Boaz, Boaz begot Obed, 22Obed begot Jesse, and Jesse begot David.

בְּבֵית פֶּרֶץ אֲשֶׁר־יָלְדָה תָּמָר לִיהוּדָה
מִן־הַזֶּרַע אֲשֶׁר יִתֵּן יְהוָה לְךָ מִן־הַנַּעֲרָה
הַזֹּאת׃
13 וַיִּקַּח בֹּעַז אֶת־רוּת וַתְּהִי־לוֹ לְאִשָּׁה
וַיָּבֹא אֵלֶיהָ וַיִּתֵּן יְהוָה לָהּ הֵרָיון וַתֵּלֶד
בֵּן׃ 14 וַתֹּאמַרְנָה הַנָּשִׁים אֶל־נָעֳמִי בָּרוּךְ
יְהוָה אֲשֶׁר לֹא הִשְׁבִּית לָךְ גֹּאֵל הַיּוֹם
וְיִקָּרֵא שְׁמוֹ בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל׃ 15 וְהָיָה לָךְ לְמֵשִׁיב
נֶפֶשׁ וּלְכַלְכֵּל אֶת־שֵׂיבָתֵךְ כִּי כַלָּתֵךְ
אֲשֶׁר־אֲהֵבַתְךְ יְלָדַתּוּ אֲשֶׁר־הִיא טוֹבָה לָךְ
מִשִּׁבְעָה בָּנִים׃
16 וַתִּקַּח נָעֳמִי אֶת־הַיֶּלֶד וַתְּשִׁתֵהוּ
בְחֵיקָהּ וַתְּהִי־לוֹ לְאֹמֶנֶת׃ 17 וַתִּקְרֶאנָה
לוֹ הַשְּׁכֵנוֹת שֵׁם לֵאמֹר יֶלֶד־בֵּן לְנָעֳמִי
וַתִּקְרֶאנָה שְׁמוֹ עוֹבֵד הוּא אֲבִי־יִשַׁי אֲבִי
דָוִד׃ פ
18 וְאֵלֶּה תּוֹלְדוֹת פֶּרֶץ פֶּרֶץ הוֹלִיד אֶת־
חֶצְרוֹן׃ 19 וְחֶצְרוֹן הוֹלִיד אֶת־רָם וְרָם
הוֹלִיד אֶת־עַמִּינָדָב׃ 20 וְעַמִּינָדָב הוֹלִיד
אֶת־נַחְשׁוֹן וְנַחְשׁוֹן הוֹלִיד אֶת־שַׂלְמָה׃
21 וְשַׂלְמוֹן הוֹלִיד אֶת־בֹּעַז וּבֹעַז הוֹלִיד
אֶת־עוֹבֵד׃ 22 וְעוֹבֵד הוֹלִיד אֶת־יִשָׁי וְיִשַׁי
הוֹלִיד אֶת־דָּוִד׃*

תם ונשלם תהילה לאל בורא עולם

f *Heb. "Salmah."*

v. 22. סכום הפסוקים של הספר 85 וחציו 2.21

Synchronic Analysis of the Ruth Corpus

I Descent	II Disaster	III *"Agunah-theme"* Abandonment	IV Redemption	V The Bed-trick	VI The Celebration	VII The Levirate Union	VIII The Issue
1. Lot and Abraham separate. Lot descends to Sodom. (Gen. 8)	1. Destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah.	1. Lot's two daughters are left without the prospect of acquiring men.	1. The *go'el* is Lot himself.	1. Lot is deceived into cohabiting with his daughters.	1. Lot is made drunk with wine.	1. Lot's two daughters conceive from their father.	1. Moab and Ammon - the former is the ancestor of Ruth.
2. Judah "descends from his brothers." (Gen. 38)	2. Deaths of Judah's wife and his two sons, Er and Onan.	2. Tamar bidden to remain a widow in her father's house.	2. The *go'el* is Judah.	2. Tamar disguises herself as a prostitute.	2. The sheep-shearing festivity. (Gen. 38:12)	2. Judah recognizes the justice of Tamar's claim.	2. Perez and Zerah, the former is the ancestor of Boaz.
3. Elimelech leaves Bethlehem for Moab. (Ruth 1:1)	3. All the male members of the family die in Moab.	3. Naomi's two daughters-in-law left widowed.	3. The *go'el* is Boaz.	3. Ruth comes secretly to the threshing floor.	3. The merry-making in the connection with the barley feast. (Ruth 3:7)	3. Boaz formally acquires the title to the property of his dead kinsman-including the possession of Ruth.	3. Birth of Obed the grandfather of King David.
This column expresses the tragic separation of families	This column expresses the resultant tragedy.	This column expresses how the hope of the family is preserved in a woman/women.	A near kinsman is made to accept responsibility for the continuation of the family.	The woman takes the initiative.	Temporary loss of order and self-control. (Emphasis on drunkenness).	The "Yibbum" is a legal structure which represents the special inter-relationship of families.	All are in a sense "from the father."

Chart from "Ruth and the Structure of Covenant History" by Harold Fisch pp. 430-431.

Who Wrote the Bible?



Richard Elliott Friedman



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CHAPTER 2

J and E

Two Clues Converge

Two and a half thousand years after the events that I described in the last chapter took place, three investigators of who wrote the Bible each independently made the same discovery. One was a minister, one was a physician, and one was a professor. The discovery that they all made ultimately came down to the combination of two pieces of evidence: doublets and the names of God. They saw that there were apparently two versions each of a large number of biblical stories: two accounts of the creation, two accounts of each of several stories about the patriarchs Abraham and Jacob, and so on. Then they noticed that, quite often, one of the two versions of a story would refer to God by one name and the other version would refer to God by a different name.

In the case of the creation, for example, the first chapter of the Bible tells one version of how the world came to be created, and the second chapter of the Bible starts over with a different version of what happened.[1] In many ways they duplicate each other, and on several points they contradict each other. For example, they de-

scribe the same events in different order. In the first version, God creates plants first, then animals, then man and woman. In the second version, God creates *man* first. Then he creates plants. Then, so that the man should not be alone, God creates animals. And last, after the man does not find a satisfactory mate among the animals, God creates woman. And so we have:

Genesis 1	Genesis 2
plants	man
animals	plants
man & woman	animals
	woman

The two stories have two different pictures of what happened. Now, the three investigators noticed that the first version of the creation story always refers to the creator as *God*—thirty-five times. The second version always refers to him by his name, *Yahweh God*—eleven times. The first version never calls him Yahweh; the second version never calls him God.

Later comes the story of the great flood and Noah's ark, and it, too, can be separated into two complete versions that sometimes duplicate each other and sometimes contradict each other.[2] And, again, one version always calls the deity God, and the other version always calls him Yahweh. There are two versions of the story of the convenant between the deity and Abraham.[3] And, once again, in one the deity introduces himself as Yahweh, and in one he introduces himself as God. And so on. The investigators saw that they were not simply dealing with a book that repeated itself a great deal, and they were not dealing with a loose collection of somewhat similar stories. They had discovered two separate works that *someone* had cut up and combined into one.

The Discovery of the Sources

The first of the three persons who made this discovery was a German minister, Henning Bernhard Witter, in 1711. His book made very little impact and was in fact forgotten until it was rediscovered two centuries later, in 1924.

The second person to see it was Jean Astruc, a French professor of medicine and court physician to Louis XV. He published his findings at the age of seventy, anonymously in Brussels and secretly in Paris in 1753. His book, too, made very little impression on anyone. Some belittled it, perhaps partly because it was by a medical doctor and not by a scholar.

But when a third person, who was a scholar, made the same discovery and published it in 1780, the world could no longer ignore it. The third person was Johann Gottfried Eichhorn, a known and respected scholar in Germany and the son of a pastor. He called the group of biblical stories that referred to the deity as God "E," because the Hebrew word for God is El or Elohim. He called the group of stories that referred to the deity as Yahweh "J" (which in German is pronounced like English Y).

The idea that the Bible's early history was a combination of two originally separate works by two different people lasted only eighteen years. Practically before anyone had a chance to consider the implications of this idea for the Bible and religion, investigators discovered that the first five books of the Bible were not, in fact, even by *two* writers—they were by *four*.

They discovered that E was not one but two sources. The two had looked like only one because they both called the deity Elohim, not Yahweh. But the investigators now noticed that within the group of stories that called the deity Elohim there were still doublets. There were also differences of style, differences of language, and differences of interests. In short, the same kinds of evidence that had led to the discovery of J and E now led to the discovery of a third source that had been hidden within E. The differences of interests were intriguing. This third set of stories seemed to be particularly intersted in *priests*. It contained stories about priests, laws about priests, matters

of ritual, sacrifice, incense-burning, and purity, and concern with dates, numbers, and measurements. This source therefore came to be known as the Priestly source—for short, P.

The sources J, E, and P were found to flow through the first four of the five Books of Moses: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, and Numbers. However, there was hardly a trace of them in the fifth book, Deuteronomy, except for a few lines in the last chapters. Deuteronomy is written in an entirely different style from those of the other four books. The differences are obvious even in translation. The vocabulary is different. There are different recurring expressions and favorite phrases. There are doublets of whole sections of the first four books. There are blatant contradictions of detail between it and the others. Even part of the wording of the Ten Commandments is different. Deuteronomy appeared to be independent, a fourth source. It was called D.

The discovery that the Torah of Moses was really four works that had once been separate was not necessarily a crisis in itself. After all, the New Testament also began with four Gospels—Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John—each of which told the story in its own way. Why then was there such a hostile reaction, among Christians and Jews, to the idea that the Old Testament (or Hebrew Bible) might begin with four "gospels" as well? The difference was that the Hebrew Bible's four sources had been combined so intricately and accepted as Moses' own writing for so long, about two thousand years; the new discoveries were flying in the face of an old, accepted, sacred tradition. The biblical investigators were unraveling a finely woven garment, and no one knew where these new investigations would lead.

The Story of Noah—Twice

These first books of the Bible had as extraordinary a manner of composition as any book on earth. Imagine assigning four different people to write a book on the same subject, then taking their four different versions and cutting them up and combining them into one long, continuous account, then claiming that the account was all by

one person. Then imagine giving the book to detectives and leaving them to figure out (1) that the book was not by one person, (2) that it was by four, (3) who the four were, and (4) who combined them.

For those readers who want to get a better sense of how this looks, I have translated the biblical story of Noah's ark, as it appears in Genesis, with its two sources printed in two different kinds of type. The flood story is a combination of the J source and the P source. J is printed here in regular type, and P is printed in boldface capitals. If you read either source from beginning to end, and then go back and read the other one, you will be able to see for yourself two complete, continuous accounts, each with its own vocabulary and concerns:

The Flood—Genesis 6:5–8:22

(Priestly text in boldface capitals, J text in regular type)

GENESIS 6:

5 And Yahweh saw that the evil of humans was great in the earth, and all the inclination of the thoughts of their heart was only evil all the day.

6 And Yahweh regretted that he had made humans in the earth, and he was grieved to his heart.

7 And Yahweh said, "I shall wipe out the humans which I have created from the face of the earth, from human to beast to creeping thing to bird of the heavens, for I regret that I have made them."

8 But Noah found favor in Yahweh's eyes.

9 **THESE ARE THE GENERATIONS OF NOAH: NOAH WAS A RIGHTEOUS MAN, PERFECT IN HIS GENERATIONS. NOAH WALKED WITH GOD.**

10 **AND NOAH SIRED THREE SONS: SHEM, HAM, AND JAPHETH.**

11 **AND THE EARTH WAS CORRUPTED BEFORE GOD, AND THE EARTH WAS FILLED WITH VIOLENCE.**

12 **AND GOD SAW THE EARTH, AND HERE IT WAS CORRUPTED, FOR ALL FLESH HAD CORRUPTED ITS WAY ON THE EARTH.**

13 **AND GOD SAID TO NOAH, "THE END OF ALL FLESH HAS COME BEFORE ME, FOR THE EARTH IS FILLED WITH VIOLENCE BECAUSE OF THEM, AND HERE I AM GOING TO DESTROY THEM WITH THE EARTH.**

14 **MAKE YOURSELF AN ARK OF GOPHER WOOD, MAKE ROOMS WITH THE ARK, AND PITCH IT OUTSIDE AND INSIDE WITH PITCH.**

15 **AND THIS IS HOW YOU SHALL MAKE IT: THREE HUNDRED CUBITS THE LENGTH OF THE ARK, FIFTY CUBITS ITS WIDTH, AND THIRTY CUBITS ITS HEIGHT.**

16 **YOU SHALL MAKE A WINDOW FOR THE ARK, AND YOU SHALL FINISH IT TO A CUBIT FROM THE TOP, AND YOU SHALL MAKE AN ENTRANCE TO THE ARK IN ITS SIDE. YOU SHALL MAKE LOWER, SECOND, AND THIRD STORIES FOR IT.**

17 **AND HERE I AM BRINGING THE FLOOD, WATER OVER THE EARTH, TO DESTROY ALL FLESH IN WHICH IS THE BREATH OF LIFE FROM UNDER THE HEAVENS. EVERYTHING WHICH IS ON THE LAND WILL DIE.**

18 **AND I SHALL ESTABLISH MY COVENANT WITH YOU. AND YOU SHALL COME TO THE ARK, YOU AND YOUR SONS AND YOUR WIFE AND YOUR SONS' WIVES WITH YOU.**

19 **AND OF ALL THE LIVING, OF ALL FLESH, YOU SHALL BRING TWO TO THE ARK TO KEEP ALIVE WITH YOU, THEY SHALL BE MALE AND FEMALE.**

20 **OF THE BIRDS ACCORDING TO THEIR KIND, AND OF THE BEASTS ACCORDING TO THEIR KIND, AND OF ALL THE CREEPING THINGS OF THE EARTH ACCORDING TO THEIR KIND, TWO OF EACH WILL COME TO YOU TO KEEP ALIVE.**

21 **AND YOU, TAKE FOR YOURSELF OF ALL FOOD WHICH WILL BE EATEN AND GATHER IT TO YOU, AND IT WILL BE FOR YOU AND FOR THEM FOR FOOD."**

22 **AND NOAH DID ACCORDING TO ALL THAT GOD COMMANDED HIM—SO HE DID.**

GENESIS 7:

1 And Yahweh said to Noah, "Come, you and all your household, to the ark, for I have seen you as righteous before me in this generation.

2 Of all the clean beasts, take yourself seven pairs, man and his

woman; and of the beasts which are not clean, two, man and his woman.

3 Also of the birds of the heavens seven pairs, male and female, to keep alive seed on the face of the earth.

4 For in seven more days I shall rain on the earth forty days and forty nights, and I shall wipe out all the substance that I have made from upon the face of the earth."

5 And Noah did according to all that Yahweh had commanded him.

6 AND NOAH WAS SIX HUNDRED YEARS OLD, AND THE FLOOD WAS ON THE EARTH.

7 And Noah and his sons and his wife and his sons' wives with him came to the ark from before the waters of the flood.

8 OF THE CLEAN BEASTS AND OF THE BEASTS WHICH WERE NOT CLEAN, AND OF THE BIRDS AND OF ALL THOSE WHICH CREEP UPON THE EARTH,

9 TWO OF EACH CAME TO NOAH TO THE ARK, MALE AND FEMALE, AS GOD HAD COMMANDED NOAH.

10 And seven days later the waters of the flood were on the earth.

11 IN THE SIX HUNDREDTH YEAR OF NOAH'S LIFE, IN THE SECOND MONTH, IN THE SEVENTEENTH DAY OF THE MONTH, ON THIS DAY ALL THE FOUNTAINS OF THE GREAT DEEP WERE BROKEN UP, AND THE WINDOWS OF THE HEAVENS WERE OPENED.

12 And there was rain on the earth, forty days and forty nights.

13 IN THIS VERY DAY, NOAH AND SHEM, HAM, AND JAPHETH, THE SONS OF NOAH, AND NOAH'S WIFE AND HIS SONS' THREE WIVES WITH THEM CAME TO THE ARK,

14 THEY AND ALL THE LIVING THINGS ACCORDING TO THEIR KIND, AND ALL THE BEASTS ACCORDING TO THEIR KIND, AND ALL THE CREEPING THINGS THAT CREEP ON THE EARTH ACCORDING TO THEIR KIND, AND ALL THE BIRDS ACCORDING TO THEIR KIND, AND EVERY WINGED BIRD.

15 AND THEY CAME TO NOAH TO THE ARK, TWO OF EACH, OF ALL FLESH IN WHICH IS THE BREATH OF LIFE.

16 AND THOSE WHICH CAME WERE MALE AND FEMALE, SOME OF ALL FLESH CAME, AS GOD HAD COMMANDED HIM. And Yahweh closed it for him.

17 And the flood was on the earth for forty days and forty nights, and the waters multiplied and raised the ark, and it was lifted from the earth.

18 And the waters grew strong and multiplied greatly on the earth, and the ark went on the surface of the waters.

19 And the waters grew very very strong on the earth, and they covered all the high mountains that are under all the heavens.

20 Fifteen cubits above, the waters grew stronger, and they covered the mountains.

21 AND ALL FLESH, THOSE THAT CREEP ON THE EARTH, THE BIRDS, THE BEASTS, AND THE WILD ANIMALS, AND ALL THE SWARMING THINGS THAT SWARM ON THE EARTH, AND ALL THE HUMANS EXPIRED.

22 Everything that had the breathing spirit of life in its nostrils, everything that was on the dry ground, died.

23 And he wiped out all the substance that was on the face of the earth, from human to beast, to creeping thing, and to bird of the heavens, and they were wiped out from the earth, and only Noah and those who were with him in the ark were left.

24 AND THE WATERS GREW STRONG ON THE EARTH A HUNDRED FIFTY DAYS.

GENESIS 8:

1 AND GOD REMEMBERED NOAH AND ALL THE LIVING, AND ALL THE BEASTS THAT WERE WITH HIM IN THE ARK, AND GOD PASSED A WIND OVER THE EARTH, AND THE WATERS WERE DECREASED.

2 AND THE FOUNTAINS OF THE DEEP AND THE WINDOWS OF THE HEAVENS WERE SHUT, and the rain was restrained from the heavens.

3 And the waters receded from the earth continually, AND THE WATERS WERE ABATED AT THE END OF A HUNDRED FIFTY DAYS.

4 AND THE ARK RESTED, IN THE SEVENTH MONTH, IN THE SEVENTEENTH DAY OF THE MONTH, ON THE MOUNTAINS OF ARARAT.

5 AND THE WATERS CONTINUED RECEDING UNTIL THE TENTH MONTH; IN THE TENTH MONTH, ON THE FIRST OF THE MONTH, THE TOPS OF THE MOUNTAINS APPEARED.

6 And it was at the end of forty days, and Noah opened the window of the ark which he had made.

7 AND HE SENT OUT A RAVEN, AND IT WENT BACK AND FORTH UNTIL THE WATERS DRIED UP FROM THE EARTH.

8 And he sent out a dove from him to see whether the waters had eased from the face of the earth.

9 And the dove did not find a resting place for its foot, and it returned to him to the ark, for waters were on the face of the earth, and he put out his hand and took it and brought it to him to the ark.

10 And he waited seven more days, and he again sent out a dove from the ark.

11 And the dove came to him at evening time, and here was an olive leaf torn off in its mouth, and Noah knew that the waters had eased from the earth.

12 And he waited seven more days, and he sent out a dove, and it did not return to him ever again.

13 AND IT WAS IN THE SIX HUNDRED AND FIRST YEAR, IN THE FIRST MONTH, ON THE FIRST OF THE MONTH, THE WATERS DRIED FROM THE EARTH. And Noah turned back the covering of the ark and looked, and here the face of the earth had dried.

14 AND IN THE SECOND MONTH, ON THE TWENTY-SEVENTH DAY OF THE MONTH, THE EARTH DRIED UP.

15 AND GOD SPOKE TO NOAH, SAYING,

16 "GO OUT FROM THE ARK, YOU AND YOUR WIFE AND YOUR SONS' WIVES WITH YOU.

17 ALL THE LIVING THINGS THAT ARE WITH YOU, OF ALL FLESH, OF THE BIRDS, AND OF THE BEASTS, AND OF ALL THE CREEPING THINGS THAT CREEP ON THE EARTH, THAT GO OUT WITH YOU, SHALL SWARM IN THE EARTH AND BE FRUITFUL AND MULTIPLY IN THE EARTH."

18 AND NOAH AND HIS SONS AND HIS WIFE AND HIS SONS' WIVES WENT OUT.

19 ALL THE LIVING THINGS, ALL THE CREEPING THINGS AND ALL THE BIRDS, ALL THAT CREEP ON THE EARTH, BY THEIR FAMILIES, THEY WENT OUT OF THE ARK.

20 And Noah built an altar to Yahweh, and he took some of each of the clean beasts and of each of the clean birds, and he offered sacrifices on the altar.

21 And Yahweh smelled the pleasant smell, and Yahweh said to his heart, "I shall not again curse the ground on man's account, for the inclination of the human heart is evil from their youth, and I shall not again strike all the living as I have done.

22 All the rest of the days of the earth, seed and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease."

Each in Its Own Words

The very fact that it is possible to separate out two continuous stories like this is remarkable itself, and it is strong evidence for the hypothesis. One need only try to do the same thing with any other book to see how impressive this phenomenon is.

But it is not only that it is possible to carve out two stories. What makes the case so powerful is that each story consistently uses its own language. The P story (the one in boldface) consistently refers to the deity as God. The J story always uses the name Yahweh. P refers to the sex of the animals with the words "male and female" (Gen 6:19; 7:9,16). J uses the terms "man and his woman" (7:2) as well as male and female. P says that everything "expired" (6:17; 7:21). J says that everything "died" (7:22).

The two versions do not just differ on terminology. They differ on actual details of the story. P has one pair of each kind of animal. J has seven pairs of clean animals and one pair of unclean animals. ("Clean" means fit for sacrifice. Sheep are clean; lions are unclean.) P pictures the flood as lasting a year (370 days). J says it was forty days and forty nights. P has Noah send out a raven. J says a dove. P obviously has a concern for ages, dates, and measurements in cubits. J does not.

Probably the most remarkable difference of all between the two is their different ways of picturing God. It is not just that they call the deity by different names. J pictures a deity who can regret things that he has done (6:6,7), which raises interesting theological questions, such as whether an all-powerful, all-knowing being would ever regret past actions. It pictures a deity who can be "grieved to his

heart" (6:6), who personally closes the ark (7:16) and smells Noah's sacrifice (8:21). This anthropomorphic quality of J is virtually entirely lacking in P. There God is regarded more as a transcendent controller of the universe.

The two flood stories are separable and complete. Each has its own language, its own details, and even its own conception of God. And even that is not the whole picture. The J flood story's language, details, and conception of God are consistent with the language, details, and conception of God in other J stories. The P flood story is consistent with other P stories. And so on. The investigators found each of the sources to be a consistent collection of stories, poems, and laws.

The Doorstep

The discovery that there were four separate, internally consistent documents came to be known as the Documentary Hypothesis. The process was also called "Higher Criticism."[4] What had begun as an idea by three men of the eighteenth century came to dominate investigations of the Bible by the end of the nineteenth century.

It had taken centuries of collecting clues to arrive at this stage which one could regard as fairly advanced or really quite minimal, depending on one's point of view. On the one hand, for centuries no one could easily challenge the accepted tradition that Moses was the author of the Five Books, and now people of acknowledged piety could say and write openly that he was not. They were able to identify at least four hands writing in the first five books of the Bible. Also, there was the hand of an extremely skillful collector known as a redactor, someone who was capable of combining and organizing these separate documents into a single work that was united enough to be readable as a continuous narrative.

On the other hand, what these detectives of biblical origins had arrived at was only the doorstep. They were able to see that a puzzle existed, and they were able to begin to get an idea of how complex the puzzle was going to be. True, they could identify four documents and a redactor, but who wrote those documents? When did they

live? What was their purpose? Did they know each other's work? Did any of them know that they were writing a *Bible*, a work to be held as sacred and authoritative? And the mysterious redactor: was it one person, or were there several? Who were they? Why did they combine the documents in this complex way? The answers were buried in the pages of the Bible and in the soil of the Middle East. By digging into both, my predecessors and I found out how the stories in those pages were connected with that world.

Two Countries, Two Writers

The first two sources, J and E, were written by two persons who lived during the period that I described in the last chapter. They were tied to the life of that period, its major events, its politics, its religion, and its catastrophes. In this chapter I intend to demonstrate this and to identify the persons who wrote them.

First, the author of J came from Judah and the author of E came from Israel. A number of biblical scholars before me have suggested this, but what is new here is that I mean to present a stronger collection of evidence for this than has been made known before, I mean to be more specific about who the two writers were, and I mean to show more specifically how the biblical stories actually related to these two men and to the events of their world.

The mere fact that different stories in the first books of the Bible call God by different names of course proves nothing in itself. Someone could write about the queen of England and sometimes call her the queen and sometimes call her Elizabeth II. But, as I have said, there was something more suspicious about the way the different names of the deity lined up in the first few books of the Bible. The two different names, Yahweh and Elohim, seemed to line up consistently in each of the two versions of the same stories in the doublets. If we separate the Elohim (E) stories from the Yahweh (J) stories, we get a consistent series of clues that the E stories were written by someone concerned with Israel and the J stories by someone concerned with Judah.[5]

Unit 11: Review and Evaluation

The Central Concept for this Lesson

This class serves as a review for the participants. *Peshat*, *derash*, feminist criticism and multiple authors/texts will be explained by both the participants and the instructor. A text will be looked at together in multiple ways. Participants will then be asked to analyze a text themselves utilizing a form provided by the instructor. This will serve as a tool for the instructor to evaluate the participants understanding of the material that has been presented in the course.

Goal: Participants will demonstrate through discussion and writing their knowledge of Biblical methodology.

Texts:
Genesis 18:1-8
Genesis 24
Genesis 29:1-28

I. Review of methodologies

A. Review with the participants the concept of *peshat.*
   1. Ask the participants what constitutes *peshat.*
   2. Review what we have learned about *peshat.*
      a. It is often defined as the plain, literal meaning of a text.
      b. Edward Greenstein, in *Back to the Sources*, believes that this definition is misleading. He states: "the *peshat* method should perhaps be glossed in English as the direct, contextual mode of exegesis, not 'plain' or 'literal'.[1] Greenstein explains that *peshat* "sought to understand the Biblical text within the parameters of its historical, literary, and linguistic context."[2]
      c. The value of *peshat* is that you get to the meaning of the text outside of the lenses of interpreters of the text.
      d. *Peshat* is a meaning of the text which needs to be found in and supported by the text.

B. Review with the participants *derash.*
   1. Ask the participants what constitutes *derash.*
   2. Review with the participants what we have learned about d*rash.*
      a. *Derash* is a homiletical method of interpretation of Biblical verses. It "endeavors to decipher and spell out the latent meanings of the text."[3]

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[1] Greenstein, p. 220.

[2] Ibid., p. 217.

[3] Ibid., p. 216.

b. The *derash* method is acontextual because it disregards the historical, literary and linguistic context of the text.
c. This methodology goes back to at least the Second Temple Period.
d. There are some scholars who believe that there are some parts of the Bible which are a *derash* on other earlier parts of the text.

C. Review with the participants Feminist Criticism.
1. Ask the participants what constitutes Feminist Criticism.
2. Review with the participants some aspects of Feminist Criticism.
a. Phyllis Trible's definition of feminism is that it is "not a narrow focus upon women, but rather a critique of culture in light of misogyny. The critique affects the issues of race and class, psychology, ecology, and human sexuality."[4]
b. Feminist Criticism may include: retrieving voices and images of women in the Bible, analyzing the way women are portrayed or are absent in the text, reconstructing the lives of women during the Biblical time period, analyzing the Bible in terms of patriarchy, and developing responses to these findings.
c. Feminism attempts to take away years of Biblical criticism, to look at the text with new eyes, and to see what really happened.
d. Feminist Criticism can be *peshat* or *derash*.

D. Review with the participants multiple authors/texts
1. Ask the participants to discuss the Documentary Hypothesis.
2. Review with the participants the Documentary Hypothesis.
a. Multiple authors
1) "J" or Yahwest author
2) "E" or Elohist author
3) "P" or Priestly author
4) "D" or Deuteronomist
5) "R" or Redactor
3. Ask the participants to discuss Form Criticism.
4. Review with the participants Form Criticism.
a. There are texts which repeat themselves with a similar theme or genre.
b. Utilizes the multiple author theory of analysis.
5. Ask the participants to discuss Literary Criticism.
6. Review with the participants Literary Criticism.
a. Discuss the different aspects of the Bible that one should look at.
1) Words
a) There is often a repetition of a single word or group of words which one should be aware of.

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[4] Trible, p. 7.

b) This is called *Leitwort* which is the use of a thematic key-word as a way of enunciating and developing the moral, historical, psychological, or theological meanings of the story.

2) Actions

a) Recurrence, parallels, analogy are the hallmarks of reported action.

b) The use of narrative analogy, where one part of the story provides a commentary on another.

c) Type-scenes - the repetition of narrative motifs.

3) Dialogue

a) Everything in the Bible gravitates toward dialogue.

b) Often something will be stated by the narrator and it will not have its full significance until it is repeated in direct speech.

4) Narration

a) Perhaps the most distinctive feature of the role played by the narrator is the way in which omniscience and unobtrusiveness are combined.

b) The narrator knows what God knows and also what all of the characters are thinking and feeling.

II. Text *Genesis* 24

A. Read *Genesis* 24

1. Have participants take turns reading the text.

B. Ask the participants to interpret the text together looking at the above methodologies.

1. Have the participants discuss the *peshat* of the text.
2. Ask the participants if they can identify who the author/s may have been.
3. Does this belong to a particular genre/type-scene?

a. Discuss the betrothal at the well type-scene.

1) It takes place with a future bridegroom or his surrogate.

2) He has journey to a foreign land.

3) He encounters a girl - *na'arah* or she is identified as someone's daughter.

4) Either the man or woman draws water from the well.

5) Afterwards the girl/girls "rush" home to bring news of the stranger's arrival.

6) A betrothal is concluded between the stranger and the girl, usually after he has eaten a meal.

b. This is also found in Exodus with Moses and Jethro's/Reuel's daughters *Exodus* 2:15-22.

4. Have the participants discuss what the feminists might say about Rebecca.

a. What might they have to say about the fact that she is given the ability to decide whether she would go with Abraham's servant to marry Isaac.
b. Discuss Rebecca's independence and strength.
c. Discuss the fact that this is setting the stage for the future story where she ensures that her son Jacob will receive the blessing.

5. Discuss Laban. Is there anything in his behavior that might be a foretelling of the future in his relationship with Jacob?

III. Text *Genesis* 29:1-28

A. Read *Genesis* 29:1-28
   1. Have participants take turns reading the text.

B. Ask the participants to interpret the text together looking at the above methodologies.
   1. Have the participants discuss the *peshat* of the text.
   2. Does this belong to a particular genre/type-scene? Using the criteria or a betrothal scene mentioned above.
   3. Discuss the similarity and differences between this text and *Genesis* 24.

IV. Evaluation

A. Read together *Genesis* 18:1-8.

B. The instructor will explain to the participants that she/he would like them to work on this text by themselves so that the instructor will be able to ascertain how well the students can apply the material that they have been taught. Explain that this is not a test or quiz but will be valuable to assist the instructor in the future planning of this course.

C. Inform the participants that they do not have to sign their name to the form.

D. Pass out the evaluation forms. Provide them with a sheet with the following questions which will they can use as they go through the process of analyzing the text.
   1. Discuss the *peshat* of the story.
   2. Does this story belong to a particular type scene? Describe.
   3. Are these two versions of the same story?
   4. Discuss the similarity between Abraham and Rachel?
   5. What type of methodology would you utilize in analyzing this text?

of him a great nation. 21But My covenant I will maintain with Isaac, whom Sarah shall bear to you at this season next year." 22And when He was done speaking with him, God was gone from Abraham.

23Then Abraham took his son Ishmael, and all his homeborn slaves and all those he had bought, every male in Abraham's household, and he circumcised the flesh of their foreskins on that very day, as God had spoken to him. 24Abraham was ninety-nine years old when he circumcised the flesh of his foreskin, 25and his son Ishmael was thirteen years old when he was circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin. 26Thus Abraham and his son Ishmael were circumcised on that very day; 27and all his household, his homeborn slaves and those that had been bought from outsiders, were circumcised with him.

לְגוֹי גָּדוֹל׃ 21 וְאֶת־בְּרִיתִי אָקִים אֶת־
יִצְחָק אֲשֶׁר תֵּלֵד לְךָ שָׂרָה לַמּוֹעֵד הַזֶּה
בַּשָּׁנָה הָאַחֶרֶת׃ 22 וַיְכַל לְדַבֵּר אִתּוֹ וַיַּעַל
אֱלֹהִים מֵעַל אַבְרָהָם׃
23 וַיִּקַּח אַבְרָהָם אֶת־יִשְׁמָעֵאל בְּנוֹ וְאֵת
כָּל־יְלִידֵי בֵיתוֹ וְאֵת כָּל־מִקְנַת כַּסְפּוֹ
כָּל־זָכָר בְּאַנְשֵׁי בֵּית אַבְרָהָם וַיָּמָל אֶת־
בְּשַׂר עָרְלָתָם בְּעֶצֶם הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה כַּאֲשֶׁר
דִּבֶּר אִתּוֹ אֱלֹהִים׃ 24 וְאַבְרָהָם בֶּן־תִּשְׁעִים
וָתֵשַׁע שָׁנָה בְּהִמֹּלוֹ בְּשַׂר עָרְלָתוֹ׃
25 וְיִשְׁמָעֵאל בְּנוֹ בֶּן־שְׁלֹשׁ עֶשְׂרֵה שָׁנָה
בְּהִמֹּלוֹ אֵת בְּשַׂר עָרְלָתוֹ׃ 26 בְּעֶצֶם הַיּוֹם
הַזֶּה נִמּוֹל אַבְרָהָם וְיִשְׁמָעֵאל בְּנוֹ׃ 27 וְכָל־
אַנְשֵׁי בֵיתוֹ יְלִיד בָּיִת וּמִקְנַת־כֶּסֶף מֵאֵת
בֶּן־נֵכָר נִמֹּלוּ אִתּוֹ׃ פ

18 VA-YERA'

The LORD appeared to him by the terebinths of Mamre; he was sitting at the entrance of the tent as the day grew hot. 2Looking up, he saw three men standing near him. As soon as he saw them, he ran from the entrance of the tent to greet them and, bowing to the ground, 3he said, "My lords,[a] if it please you, do not go on past your servant. 4Let a little water be brought; bathe your feet and recline under the tree. 5And 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."

6Abraham hastened into the tent to Sarah, and said, "Quick, three *seah*s of choice flour! Knead and make cakes!" 7Then Abraham ran to the herd, took a calf, tender and choice, and gave it to a servant-boy, who hastened to prepare it. 8He took curds and milk and the calf that had been prepared and set these before

יח וירא

וַיֵּרָא אֵלָיו יְהוָה בְּאֵלֹנֵי מַמְרֵא
וְהוּא יֹשֵׁב פֶּתַח־הָאֹהֶל כְּחֹם הַיּוֹם׃
2 וַיִּשָּׂא עֵינָיו וַיַּרְא וְהִנֵּה שְׁלֹשָׁה אֲנָשִׁים
נִצָּבִים עָלָיו וַיַּרְא וַיָּרָץ לִקְרָאתָם מִפֶּתַח
הָאֹהֶל וַיִּשְׁתַּחוּ אָרְצָה׃ 3 וַיֹּאמַר אֲדֹנָי
אִם־נָא מָצָאתִי חֵן בְּעֵינֶיךָ אַל־נָא תַעֲבֹר
מֵעַל עַבְדֶּךָ׃ 4 יֻקַּח־נָא מְעַט־מַיִם וְרַחֲצוּ
רַגְלֵיכֶם וְהִשָּׁעֲנוּ תַּחַת הָעֵץ׃ 5 וְאֶקְחָה
פַת־לֶחֶם וְסַעֲדוּ לִבְּכֶם אַחַר תַּעֲבֹרוּ
כִּי־עַל־כֵּן עֲבַרְתֶּם עַל־עַבְדְּכֶם וַיֹּאמְרוּ כֵּן
תַּעֲשֶׂה כַּאֲשֶׁר דִּבַּרְתָּ׃
6 וַיְמַהֵר אַבְרָהָם הָאֹהֱלָה אֶל־שָׂרָה
וַיֹּאמֶר מַהֲרִי שְׁלֹשׁ סְאִים קֶמַח סֹלֶת
לוּשִׁי וַעֲשִׂי עֻגוֹת׃ 7 וְאֶל־הַבָּקָר רָץ
אַבְרָהָם וַיִּקַּח בֶּן־בָּקָר רַךְ וְטוֹב וַיִּתֵּן
אֶל־הַנַּעַר וַיְמַהֵר לַעֲשׂוֹת אֹתוֹ׃ 8 וַיִּקַּח
חֶמְאָה וְחָלָב וּבֶן־הַבָּקָר אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה וַיִּתֵּן

a Or "My Lord."

them; and he waited on them under the tree as they ate.

9They said to him, "Where is your wife Sarah?" And he replied, "There, in the tent." 10Then one said, "I will return to you next year,[b] and your wife Sarah shall have a son!" Sarah was listening at the entrance of the tent, which was behind him. 11Now Abraham and Sarah were old, advanced in years; Sarah had stopped having the periods of women. 12And Sarah laughed to herself, saying, "Now that I am withered, am I to have enjoyment—with my husband so old?" 13Then the LORD said to Abraham, "Why did Sarah laugh, saying, 'Shall I in truth bear a child, old as I am?' 14Is anything too wondrous for the LORD? I will return to you at the same season next year, and Sarah shall have a son." 15Sarah lied, saying, "I did not laugh," for she was frightened. But He replied, "You did laugh."

16The men set out from there and looked down toward Sodom, Abraham walking with them to see them off. 17Now the LORD had said, "Shall I hide from Abraham what I am about to do, 18since Abraham is to become a great and populous nation and all the nations of the earth are to bless themselves by him? 19For I have singled him out, that he may instruct his children and his posterity to keep the way of the LORD by doing what is just and right, in order that the LORD may bring about for Abraham what He has promised him." 20Then the LORD said, "The outrage of Sodom and Gomorrah is so great, and their sin so grave! 21I will go down to see whether they have acted altogether according to the outcry that has reached Me; if not, I will take note."

22The men went on from there to Sodom, while Abraham remained standing before the LORD. 23Abraham came forward and said, "Will You sweep away the innocent along with the

לִפְנֵיהֶם וְהוּא־עֹמֵד עֲלֵיהֶם תַּחַת הָעֵץ וַיֹּאכֵלוּ׃

9 וַיֹּאמְרוּ אֵלָיו* אַיֵּה שָׂרָה אִשְׁתֶּךָ וַיֹּאמֶר הִנֵּה בָאֹהֶל׃ 10 וַיֹּאמֶר שׁוֹב אָשׁוּב אֵלֶיךָ כָּעֵת חַיָּה וְהִנֵּה־בֵן לְשָׂרָה אִשְׁתֶּךָ וְשָׂרָה שֹׁמַעַת פֶּתַח הָאֹהֶל וְהוּא אַחֲרָיו׃ 11 וְאַבְרָהָם וְשָׂרָה זְקֵנִים בָּאִים בַּיָּמִים חָדַל לִהְיוֹת לְשָׂרָה אֹרַח כַּנָּשִׁים׃ 12 וַתִּצְחַק שָׂרָה בְּקִרְבָּהּ לֵאמֹר אַחֲרֵי בְלֹתִי הָיְתָה־לִּי עֶדְנָה וַאדֹנִי זָקֵן׃ 13 וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל־אַבְרָהָם לָמָּה זֶּה צָחֲקָה שָׂרָה לֵאמֹר הַאַף אָמְנָם אֵלֵד וַאֲנִי זָקַנְתִּי׃ 14 הֲיִפָּלֵא מֵיְהוָה דָּבָר לַמּוֹעֵד אָשׁוּב אֵלֶיךָ כָּעֵת חַיָּה וּלְשָׂרָה בֵּן׃ 15 וַתְּכַחֵשׁ שָׂרָה | לֵאמֹר לֹא צָחַקְתִּי כִּי | יָרֵאָה וַיֹּאמֶר | לֹא כִּי צָחָקְתְּ׃

16 וַיָּקֻמוּ מִשָּׁם הָאֲנָשִׁים וַיַּשְׁקִפוּ עַל־פְּנֵי סְדֹם וְאַבְרָהָם הֹלֵךְ עִמָּם לְשַׁלְּחָם׃ 17 וַיהוָה אָמַר הַמְכַסֶּה אֲנִי מֵאַבְרָהָם אֲשֶׁר אֲנִי עֹשֶׂה׃ 18 וְאַבְרָהָם הָיוֹ יִהְיֶה לְגוֹי גָּדוֹל וְעָצוּם וְנִבְרְכוּ בוֹ כֹּל גּוֹיֵי הָאָרֶץ׃ 19 כִּי יְדַעְתִּיו לְמַעַן אֲשֶׁר יְצַוֶּה אֶת־בָּנָיו וְאֶת־בֵּיתוֹ אַחֲרָיו וְשָׁמְרוּ דֶּרֶךְ יְהוָה לַעֲשׂוֹת צְדָקָה וּמִשְׁפָּט לְמַעַן הָבִיא יְהוָה עַל־אַבְרָהָם אֵת אֲשֶׁר־דִּבֶּר עָלָיו׃ 20 וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה זַעֲקַת סְדֹם וַעֲמֹרָה כִּי־רָבָּה וְחַטָּאתָם כִּי כָבְדָה מְאֹד׃ 21 אֵרְדָה־נָּא וְאֶרְאֶה הַכְּצַעֲקָתָהּ הַבָּאָה אֵלַי עָשׂוּ | כָּלָה וְאִם־לֹא אֵדָעָה׃

22 וַיִּפְנוּ מִשָּׁם הָאֲנָשִׁים וַיֵּלְכוּ סְדֹמָה וְאַבְרָהָם עוֹדֶנּוּ עֹמֵד לִפְנֵי יְהוָה׃ 23 וַיִּגַּשׁ אַבְרָהָם וַיֹּאמַר הַאַף תִּסְפֶּה צַדִּיק עִם־רָשָׁע׃ 24 אוּלַי יֵשׁ חֲמִשִּׁים צַדִּיקִם בְּתוֹךְ

ν. 9. נקוד על א׳ י׳ ו׳, ולפי נוסחים המקובלים אין נקוד על ל׳

b *Cf. Gen. 17.21; 2 Kings 4.16–17.*

spoke to Ephron in the hearing of the people of the land, saying, "If only you would hear me out! Let me pay the price of the land; accept it from me, that I may bury my dead there." 14And Ephron replied to Abraham, saying to him, 15"My lord, do hear me! A piece of land worth four hundred shekels of silver—what is that between you and me? Go and bury your dead." 16Abraham accepted Ephron's terms. Abraham paid out to Ephron the money that he had named in the hearing of the Hittites—four hundred shekels of silver at the going merchants' rate.

17So Ephron's land in Machpelah, near Mamre—the field with its cave and all the trees anywhere within the confines of that field—passed 18to Abraham as his possession, in the presence of the Hittites, of all who entered the gate of his town.[a] 19And then Abraham buried his wife Sarah in the cave of the field of Machpelah, facing Mamre—now Hebron—in the land of Canaan. 20Thus the field with its cave passed from the Hittites to Abraham, as a burial site.

הָאָרֶץ לֵאמֹר אַךְ אִם־אַתָּה לוּ שְׁמָעֵנִי
נָתַתִּי כֶּסֶף הַשָּׂדֶה קַח מִמֶּנִּי וְאֶקְבְּרָה
אֶת־מֵתִי שָׁמָּה׃ 14 וַיַּעַן עֶפְרֹן אֶת־
אַבְרָהָם לֵאמֹר לוֹ׃ 15 אֲדֹנִי שְׁמָעֵנִי אֶרֶץ
אַרְבַּע מֵאֹת שֶׁקֶל־כֶּסֶף בֵּינִי וּבֵינְךָ מַה־
הִוא וְאֶת־מֵתְךָ קְבֹר׃ 16 וַיִּשְׁמַע אַבְרָהָם
אֶל־עֶפְרוֹן וַיִּשְׁקֹל אַבְרָהָם לְעֶפְרֹן אֶת־
הַכֶּסֶף אֲשֶׁר דִּבֶּר בְּאָזְנֵי בְנֵי־חֵת אַרְבַּע
מֵאוֹת שֶׁקֶל כֶּסֶף עֹבֵר לַסֹּחֵר׃
17 וַיָּקָם ׀ שְׂדֵה עֶפְרוֹן אֲשֶׁר בַּמַּכְפֵּלָה אֲשֶׁר
לִפְנֵי מַמְרֵא הַשָּׂדֶה וְהַמְּעָרָה אֲשֶׁר־בּוֹ
וְכָל־הָעֵץ אֲשֶׁר בַּשָּׂדֶה אֲשֶׁר בְּכָל־גְּבֻלוֹ
סָבִיב׃ 18 לְאַבְרָהָם לְמִקְנָה לְעֵינֵי בְנֵי־חֵת
בְּכֹל בָּאֵי שַׁעַר־עִירוֹ׃ 19 וְאַחֲרֵי־כֵן קָבַר
אַבְרָהָם אֶת־שָׂרָה אִשְׁתּוֹ אֶל־מְעָרַת שְׂדֵה
הַמַּכְפֵּלָה עַל־פְּנֵי מַמְרֵא הִוא חֶבְרוֹן
בְּאֶרֶץ כְּנָעַן׃ 20 וַיָּקָם הַשָּׂדֶה וְהַמְּעָרָה
אֲשֶׁר־בּוֹ לְאַבְרָהָם לַאֲחֻזַּת־קָבֶר מֵאֵת
בְּנֵי־חֵת׃ ס

24

Abraham was now old, advanced in years, and the LORD had blessed Abraham in all things. 2And Abraham said to the senior servant of his household, who had charge of all that he owned, "Put your hand under my thigh 3and I will make you swear by the LORD, the God of heaven and the God of the earth, that you will not take a wife for my son from the daughters of the Canaanites among whom I dwell, 4but will go to the land of my birth and get a wife for my son Isaac." 5And the servant said to him, "What if the woman does not consent to follow me to this land, shall I then take your son back to the land from which you came?" 6Abraham answered him, "On no account must you take

כד

וְאַבְרָהָם זָקֵן בָּא בַּיָּמִים וַיהוָה
בֵּרַךְ אֶת־אַבְרָהָם בַּכֹּל׃ 2 וַיֹּאמֶר אַבְרָהָם
אֶל־עַבְדּוֹ זְקַן בֵּיתוֹ הַמֹּשֵׁל בְּכָל־אֲשֶׁר־לוֹ
שִׂים־נָא יָדְךָ תַּחַת יְרֵכִי׃ 3 וְאַשְׁבִּיעֲךָ
בַּיהוָה אֱלֹהֵי הַשָּׁמַיִם וֵאלֹהֵי הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר
לֹא־תִקַּח אִשָּׁה לִבְנִי מִבְּנוֹת הַכְּנַעֲנִי אֲשֶׁר
אָנֹכִי יוֹשֵׁב בְּקִרְבּוֹ׃ 4 כִּי אֶל־אַרְצִי וְאֶל־
מוֹלַדְתִּי תֵּלֵךְ וְלָקַחְתָּ אִשָּׁה לִבְנִי לְיִצְחָק׃
5 וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלָיו הָעֶבֶד אוּלַי לֹא־תאבֶה
הָאִשָּׁה לָלֶכֶת אַחֲרַי אֶל־הָאָרֶץ הַזֹּאת
הֲהָשֵׁב אָשִׁיב אֶת־בִּנְךָ אֶל־הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר־
יָצָאתָ מִשָּׁם׃ 6 וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלָיו אַבְרָהָם
הִשָּׁמֶר לְךָ פֶּן־תָּשֵׁיב אֶת־בְּנִי שָׁמָּה׃

a *I.e., all his fellow townsmen.*

my son back there! 7The LORD, the God of heaven, who took me from my father's house and from my native land, who promised me on oath, saying, 'I will assign this land to your offspring'—He will send His angel before you, and you will get a wife for my son from there. 8And if the woman does not consent to follow you, you shall then be clear of this oath to me; but do not take my son back there." 9So the servant put his hand under the thigh of his master Abraham and swore to him as bidden.[a]

10Then the servant took ten of his master's camels and set out, taking with him all the bounty of his master; and he made his way to Aram-naharaim, to the city of Nahor. 11He made the camels kneel down by the well outside the city, at evening time, the time when women come out to draw water. 12And he said, "O LORD, God of my master Abraham, grant me good fortune this day, and deal graciously with my master Abraham: 13Here I stand by the spring as the daughters of the townsmen come out to draw water; 14let 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."

15He had scarcely finished speaking, when Rebekah, who was born to Bethuel, the son of Milcah the wife of Abraham's brother Nahor, came out with her jar on her shoulder. 16The maiden was very beautiful, a virgin whom no man had known. She went down to the spring, filled her jar, and came up. 17The 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. 19When she had let him drink his fill, she said, "I will also draw for your

7 יְהוָה ׀ אֱלֹהֵי הַשָּׁמַיִם אֲשֶׁר לָקָחַנִי מִבֵּית
אָבִי וּמֵאֶרֶץ מוֹלַדְתִּי וַאֲשֶׁר דִּבֶּר־לִי וַאֲשֶׁר
נִשְׁבַּע־לִי לֵאמֹר לְזַרְעֲךָ אֶתֵּן אֶת־הָאָרֶץ
הַזֹּאת הוּא יִשְׁלַח מַלְאָכוֹ לְפָנֶיךָ וְלָקַחְתָּ
אִשָּׁה לִבְנִי מִשָּׁם׃ 8 וְאִם־לֹא תֹאבֶה
הָאִשָּׁה לָלֶכֶת אַחֲרֶיךָ וְנִקֵּיתָ מִשְּׁבֻעָתִי
זֹאת רַק אֶת־בְּנִי לֹא תָשֵׁב שָׁמָּה׃ 9 וַיָּשֶׂם
הָעֶבֶד אֶת־יָדוֹ תַּחַת יֶרֶךְ אַבְרָהָם אֲדֹנָיו
וַיִּשָּׁבַע לוֹ עַל־הַדָּבָר הַזֶּה׃
10 וַיִּקַּח הָעֶבֶד עֲשָׂרָה גְמַלִּים מִגְּמַלֵּי
אֲדֹנָיו וַיֵּלֶךְ וְכָל־טוּב אֲדֹנָיו בְּיָדוֹ וַיָּקָם
וַיֵּלֶךְ אֶל־אֲרַם נַהֲרַיִם אֶל־עִיר נָחוֹר׃
11 וַיַּבְרֶךְ הַגְמַלִּים מִחוּץ לָעִיר אֶל־בְּאֵר
הַמַּיִם לְעֵת עֶרֶב לְעֵת צֵאת הַשֹּׁאֲבֹת׃
12 וַיֹּאמַר ׀ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי אֲדֹנִי אַבְרָהָם
הַקְרֵה־נָא לְפָנַי הַיּוֹם וַעֲשֵׂה־חֶסֶד עִם
אֲדֹנִי אַבְרָהָם׃ 13 הִנֵּה אָנֹכִי נִצָּב עַל־עֵין
הַמָּיִם וּבְנוֹת אַנְשֵׁי הָעִיר יֹצְאֹת לִשְׁאֹב
מָיִם׃ 14 וְהָיָה הנער הַנַּעֲרָה אֲשֶׁר אֹמַר
אֵלֶיהָ הַטִּי־נָא כַדֵּךְ וְאֶשְׁתֶּה וְאָמְרָה שְׁתֵה
וְגַם־גְּמַלֶּיךָ אַשְׁקֶה אֹתָהּ הֹכַחְתָּ לְעַבְדְּךָ
לְיִצְחָק וּבָהּ אֵדַע כִּי־עָשִׂיתָ חֶסֶד עִם־
אֲדֹנִי׃
15 וַיְהִי־הוּא טֶרֶם כִּלָּה לְדַבֵּר וְהִנֵּה רִבְקָה
יֹצֵאת אֲשֶׁר יָלְדָה לִבְתוּאֵל בֶּן־מִלְכָּה
אֵשֶׁת נָחוֹר אֲחִי אַבְרָהָם וְכַדָּהּ עַל־
שִׁכְמָהּ׃ 16 והנער וְהַנַּעֲרָה טֹבַת מַרְאֶה
מְאֹד בְּתוּלָה וְאִישׁ לֹא יְדָעָהּ וַתֵּרֶד
הָעַיְנָה וַתְּמַלֵּא כַדָּהּ וַתָּעַל׃ 17 וַיָּרָץ הָעֶבֶד
לִקְרָאתָהּ וַיֹּאמֶר הַגְמִיאִינִי נָא מְעַט־מַיִם
מִכַּדֵּךְ׃ 18 וַתֹּאמֶר שְׁתֵה אֲדֹנִי וַתְּמַהֵר
וַתֹּרֶד כַּדָּהּ עַל־יָדָהּ וַתַּשְׁקֵהוּ׃ 19 וַתְּכַל
לְהַשְׁקֹתוֹ וַתֹּאמֶר גַּם לִגְמַלֶּיךָ אֶשְׁאָב עַד

a *Lit. "about this matter."*

camels, until they finish drinking." 20Quickly emptying her jar into the trough, she ran back to the well to draw, and she drew for all his camels.

21The man, meanwhile, stood gazing at her, silently wondering whether the LORD had made his errand successful or not. 22When the camels had finished drinking, the man took a gold nose-ring weighing a half-shekel,[b] and two gold bands for her arms, ten shekels in weight. 23"Pray tell me," he said, "whose daughter are you? Is there room in your father's house for us to spend the night?" 24She replied, "I am the daughter of Bethuel the son of Milcah, whom she bore to Nahor." 25And she went on, "There is plenty of straw[c] and feed at home, and also room to spend the night." 26The man bowed low in homage to the LORD 27and said, "Blessed be the LORD, the God of my master Abraham, who has not withheld His steadfast faithfulness from my master. For I have been guided on my errand by the LORD, to the house of my master's kinsmen."

28The maiden ran and told all this to her mother's household. 29Now Rebekah had a brother whose name was Laban. Laban ran out to the man at the spring—30when he saw the nose-ring and the bands on his sister's arms, and when he heard his sister Rebekah say, "Thus the man spoke to me." He went up to the man, who was still standing beside the camels at the spring. 31"Come in, O blessed of the LORD," he said, "why do you remain outside, when I have made ready the house and a place for the camels?" 32So the man entered the house, and the camels were unloaded. The camels were given straw and feed, and water was brought to bathe his feet and the feet of the men with him. 33But when food was set before him, he said, "I will not eat

אִם־כִּלּוּ לִשְׁתֹּת׃ 20 וַתְּמַהֵר וַתְּעַר כַּדָּהּ
אֶל־הַשֹּׁקֶת וַתָּרָץ עוֹד אֶל־הַבְּאֵר לִשְׁאֹב
וַתִּשְׁאַב לְכָל־גְּמַלָּיו׃
21 וְהָאִישׁ מִשְׁתָּאֵה לָהּ מַחֲרִישׁ לָדַעַת
הַהִצְלִיחַ יְהוָה דַּרְכּוֹ אִם־לֹא׃ 22 וַיְהִי
כַּאֲשֶׁר כִּלּוּ הַגְּמַלִּים לִשְׁתּוֹת וַיִּקַּח הָאִישׁ
נֶזֶם זָהָב בֶּקַע מִשְׁקָלוֹ וּשְׁנֵי צְמִידִים
עַל־יָדֶיהָ עֲשָׂרָה זָהָב מִשְׁקָלָם׃ 23 וַיֹּאמֶר
בַּת־מִי אַתְּ הַגִּידִי נָא לִי הֲיֵשׁ בֵּית־אָבִיךְ
מָקוֹם לָנוּ לָלִין׃ 24 וַתֹּאמֶר אֵלָיו בַּת־
בְּתוּאֵל אָנֹכִי בֶּן־מִלְכָּה אֲשֶׁר יָלְדָה
לְנָחוֹר׃ 25 וַתֹּאמֶר אֵלָיו גַּם־תֶּבֶן גַּם־
מִסְפּוֹא רַב עִמָּנוּ גַּם־מָקוֹם לָלוּן׃ 26 וַיִּקֹּד
הָאִישׁ וַיִּשְׁתַּחוּ לַיהוָה׃ 27 וַיֹּאמֶר בָּרוּךְ
יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי אֲדֹנִי אַבְרָהָם אֲשֶׁר לֹא־עָזַב
חַסְדּוֹ וַאֲמִתּוֹ מֵעִם אֲדֹנִי אָנֹכִי בַּדֶּרֶךְ נָחַנִי
יְהוָה בֵּית אֲחֵי אֲדֹנִי׃
28 וַתָּרָץ הַנַּעֲרָה וַתַּגֶּד לְבֵית אִמָּהּ
כַּדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה׃ 29 וּלְרִבְקָה אָח וּשְׁמוֹ
לָבָן וַיָּרָץ לָבָן אֶל־הָאִישׁ הַחוּצָה אֶל־
הָעָיִן׃ 30 וַיְהִי | כִּרְאֹת אֶת־הַנֶּזֶם וְאֶת־
הַצְּמִדִים עַל־יְדֵי אֲחֹתוֹ וּכְשָׁמְעוֹ אֶת־
דִּבְרֵי רִבְקָה אֲחֹתוֹ לֵאמֹר כֹּה־דִבֶּר אֵלַי
הָאִישׁ וַיָּבֹא אֶל־הָאִישׁ וְהִנֵּה עֹמֵד עַל־
הַגְּמַלִּים עַל־הָעָיִן׃ 31 וַיֹּאמֶר בּוֹא בְרוּךְ
יְהוָה לָמָּה תַעֲמֹד בַּחוּץ וְאָנֹכִי פִּנִּיתִי
הַבַּיִת וּמָקוֹם לַגְּמַלִּים׃ 32 וַיָּבֵא הָאִישׁ
הַבַּיְתָה וַיְפַתַּח הַגְּמַלִּים וַיִּתֵּן תֶּבֶן
וּמִסְפּוֹא לַגְּמַלִּים וּמַיִם לִרְחֹץ רַגְלָיו
וְרַגְלֵי הָאֲנָשִׁים אֲשֶׁר אִתּוֹ׃ 33 ויישם וַיּוּשַׂם
לְפָנָיו לֶאֱכֹל וַיֹּאמֶר לֹא אֹכַל עַד אִם־
דִּבַּרְתִּי דְבָרָי וַיֹּאמֶר דַּבֵּר׃

b *Heb.* beqa'.
c *Heb.* teben, *shredded straw, which in the East is mixed with feed; cf. v. 32.*

until I have told my tale." He said, "Speak, then."

34"I am Abraham's servant," he began. 35"The LORD has greatly blessed my master, and he has become rich: He has given him sheep and cattle, silver and gold, male and female slaves, camels and asses. 36And Sarah, my master's wife, bore my master a son in her old age, and he has assigned to him everything he owns. 37Now my master made me swear, saying, 'You shall not get a wife for my son from the daughters of the Canaanites in whose land I dwell; 38but you shall go to my father's house, to my kindred, and get a wife for my son.' 39And I said to my master, 'What if the woman does not follow me?' 40He replied to me, 'The LORD, whose ways I have followed, will send His angel with you and make your errand successful; and you will get a wife for my son from my kindred, from my father's house. 41Thus only shall you be freed from my adjuration: if, when you come to my kindred, they refuse you—only then shall you be freed from my adjuration.'

42"I came today to the spring, and I said: O LORD, God of my master Abraham, if You would indeed grant success to the errand on which I am engaged! 43As I stand by the spring of water, let the young woman who comes out to draw and to whom I say, 'Please, let me drink a little water from your jar,' 44and who answers, 'You may drink, and I will also draw for your camels'—let her be the wife whom the LORD has decreed for my master's son.' 45I had scarcely finished praying in my heart, when Rebekah came out with her jar on her shoulder, and went down to the spring and drew. And I said to her, 'Please give me a drink.' 46She quickly lowered her jar and said, 'Drink, and I will also water your camels.' So I drank, and she also watered the camels. 47I inquired of her, 'Whose daughter are you?' And she said, 'The daughter of

34 וַיֹּאמֶר עֶבֶד אַבְרָהָם אָנֹכִי׃ 35 וַיהוָה
בֵּרַךְ אֶת־אֲדֹנִי מְאֹד וַיִּגְדָּל וַיִּתֶּן־לוֹ צֹאן
וּבָקָר וְכֶסֶף וְזָהָב וַעֲבָדִם וּשְׁפָחֹת וּגְמַלִּים
וַחֲמֹרִים׃ 36 וַתֵּלֶד שָׂרָה אֵשֶׁת אֲדֹנִי בֵן
לַאדֹנִי אַחֲרֵי זִקְנָתָהּ וַיִּתֶּן־לוֹ אֶת־כָּל־
אֲשֶׁר־לוֹ׃ 37 וַיַּשְׁבִּעֵנִי אֲדֹנִי לֵאמֹר לֹא־
תִקַּח אִשָּׁה לִבְנִי מִבְּנוֹת הַכְּנַעֲנִי אֲשֶׁר
אָנֹכִי יֹשֵׁב בְּאַרְצוֹ׃ 38 אִם־לֹא אֶל־בֵּית־
אָבִי תֵּלֵךְ וְאֶל־מִשְׁפַּחְתִּי וְלָקַחְתָּ אִשָּׁה
לִבְנִי׃ 39 וָאֹמַר אֶל־אֲדֹנִי אֻלַי לֹא־תֵלֵךְ
הָאִשָּׁה אַחֲרָי׃ 40 וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלַי יְהוָה אֲשֶׁר־
הִתְהַלַּכְתִּי לְפָנָיו יִשְׁלַח מַלְאָכוֹ אִתָּךְ
וְהִצְלִיחַ דַּרְכֶּךָ וְלָקַחְתָּ אִשָּׁה לִבְנִי
מִמִּשְׁפַּחְתִּי וּמִבֵּית אָבִי׃ 41 אָז תִּנָּקֶה
מֵאָלָתִי כִּי תָבוֹא אֶל־מִשְׁפַּחְתִּי וְאִם־לֹא
יִתְּנוּ לָךְ וְהָיִיתָ נָקִי מֵאָלָתִי׃
42 וָאָבֹא הַיּוֹם אֶל־הָעַיִן וָאֹמַר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי
אֲדֹנִי אַבְרָהָם אִם־יֶשְׁךָ־נָא מַצְלִיחַ דַּרְכִּי
אֲשֶׁר אָנֹכִי הֹלֵךְ עָלֶיהָ׃ 43 הִנֵּה אָנֹכִי נִצָּב
עַל־עֵין הַמָּיִם וְהָיָה הָעַלְמָה הַיֹּצֵאת
לִשְׁאֹב וְאָמַרְתִּי אֵלֶיהָ הַשְׁקִינִי־נָא מְעַט־
מַיִם מִכַּדֵּךְ׃ 44 וְאָמְרָה אֵלַי גַּם־אַתָּה
שְׁתֵה וְגַם לִגְמַלֶּיךָ אֶשְׁאָב הִוא הָאִשָּׁה
אֲשֶׁר־הֹכִיחַ יְהוָה לְבֶן־אֲדֹנִי׃ 45 אֲנִי טֶרֶם
אֲכַלֶּה לְדַבֵּר אֶל־לִבִּי וְהִנֵּה רִבְקָה יֹצֵאת
וְכַדָּהּ עַל־שִׁכְמָהּ וַתֵּרֶד הָעֵינָה וַתִּשְׁאָב
וָאֹמַר אֵלֶיהָ הַשְׁקִינִי נָא׃ 46 וַתְּמַהֵר וַתּוֹרֶד
כַּדָּהּ מֵעָלֶיהָ וַתֹּאמֶר שְׁתֵה וְגַם־גְּמַלֶּיךָ
אַשְׁקֶה וָאֶשְׁתְּ וְגַם הַגְּמַלִּים הִשְׁקָתָה׃
47 וָאֶשְׁאַל אֹתָהּ וָאֹמַר בַּת־מִי אָתְּ וַתֹּאמֶר
בַּת־בְּתוּאֵל בֶּן־נָחוֹר אֲשֶׁר יָלְדָה־לוֹ

Bethuel, son of Nahor, whom Milcah bore to him.' And I put the ring on her nose and the bands on her arms. 48Then I bowed low in homage to the LORD and blessed the LORD, the God of my master Abraham, who led me on the right way to get the daughter of my master's brother for his son. 49And now, if you mean to treat my master with true kindness, tell me; and if not, tell me also, that I may turn right or left."

50Then Laban and Bethuel answered, "The matter was decreed by the LORD; we cannot speak to you bad or good. 51Here is Rebekah before you; take her and go, and let her be a wife to your master's son, as the LORD has spoken." 52When Abraham's servant heard their words, he bowed low to the ground before the LORD. 53The servant brought out objects of silver and gold, and garments, and gave them to Rebekah; and he gave presents to her brother and her mother. 54Then he and the men with him ate and drank, and they spent the night. When they arose next morning, he said, "Give me leave to go to my master." 55But her brother and her mother said, "Let the maiden remain with us [d]-some ten days;-[d] then you may go." 56He said to them, "Do not delay me, now that the LORD has made my errand successful. Give me leave that I may go to my master." 57And they said, "Let us call the girl and ask for her reply." 58They called Rebekah and said to her, "Will you go with this man?" And she said, "I will." 59So they sent off their sister Rebekah and her nurse along with Abraham's servant and his men. 60And they blessed Rebekah and said to her,

"O sister!
May you grow
Into thousands of myriads;
May your offspring seize
The gates of their foes."

61Then Rebekah and her maids arose, mounted

d-d Lit. "days or ten."

מִלְכָּה וְאָשֵׁם הַנָּזֶם עַל־אַפָּהּ וְהַצְּמִידִים
עַל־יָדֶיהָ׃ 48 וָאֶקֹּד וָאֶשְׁתַּחֲוֶה לַיהוָה
וָאֲבָרֵךְ אֶת־יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי אֲדֹנִי אַבְרָהָם
אֲשֶׁר הִנְחַנִי בְּדֶרֶךְ אֱמֶת לָקַחַת אֶת־בַּת־
אֲחִי אֲדֹנִי לִבְנוֹ׃ 49 וְעַתָּה אִם־יֶשְׁכֶם
עֹשִׂים חֶסֶד וֶאֱמֶת אֶת־אֲדֹנִי הַגִּידוּ לִי
וְאִם־לֹא הַגִּידוּ לִי וְאֶפְנֶה עַל־יָמִין אוֹ
עַל־שְׂמֹאל׃
50 וַיַּעַן לָבָן וּבְתוּאֵל וַיֹּאמְרוּ מֵיְהוָה יָצָא
הַדָּבָר לֹא נוּכַל דַּבֵּר אֵלֶיךָ רַע אוֹ־טוֹב׃
51 הִנֵּה־רִבְקָה לְפָנֶיךָ קַח וָלֵךְ וּתְהִי אִשָּׁה
לְבֶן־אֲדֹנֶיךָ כַּאֲשֶׁר דִּבֶּר יְהוָה׃ 52 וַיְהִי
כַּאֲשֶׁר שָׁמַע עֶבֶד אַבְרָהָם אֶת־דִּבְרֵיהֶם
וַיִּשְׁתַּחוּ אַרְצָה לַיהוָה׃ 53 וַיּוֹצֵא הָעֶבֶד
כְּלֵי־כֶסֶף וּכְלֵי זָהָב וּבְגָדִים וַיִּתֵּן לְרִבְקָה
וּמִגְדָּנֹת נָתַן לְאָחִיהָ וּלְאִמָּהּ׃ 54 וַיֹּאכְלוּ
וַיִּשְׁתּוּ הוּא וְהָאֲנָשִׁים אֲשֶׁר־עִמּוֹ וַיָּלִינוּ
וַיָּקוּמוּ בַבֹּקֶר וַיֹּאמֶר שַׁלְּחֵנִי לַאדֹנִי׃
55 וַיֹּאמֶר אָחִיהָ וְאִמָּהּ תֵּשֶׁב הַנַּעֲרָה
אִתָּנוּ יָמִים אוֹ עָשׂוֹר אַחַר תֵּלֵךְ׃ 56 וַיֹּאמֶר
אֲלֵהֶם אַל־תְּאַחֲרוּ אֹתִי וַיהוָה הִצְלִיחַ
דַּרְכִּי שַׁלְּחוּנִי וְאֵלְכָה לַאדֹנִי׃ 57 וַיֹּאמְרוּ
נִקְרָא לנער לַנַּעֲרָה וְנִשְׁאֲלָה אֶת־פִּיהָ׃
58 וַיִּקְרְאוּ לְרִבְקָה וַיֹּאמְרוּ אֵלֶיהָ הֲתֵלְכִי
עִם־הָאִישׁ הַזֶּה וַתֹּאמֶר אֵלֵךְ׃ 59 וַיְשַׁלְּחוּ
אֶת־רִבְקָה אֲחֹתָם וְאֶת־מֵנִקְתָּהּ וְאֶת־
עֶבֶד אַבְרָהָם וְאֶת־אֲנָשָׁיו׃ 60 וַיְבָרְכוּ אֶת־
רִבְקָה וַיֹּאמְרוּ לָהּ
אֲחֹתֵנוּ
אַתְּ הֲיִי
לְאַלְפֵי רְבָבָה
וְיִירַשׁ זַרְעֵךְ
אֵת שַׁעַר שֹׂנְאָיו׃
61 וַתָּקָם רִבְקָה וְנַעֲרֹתֶיהָ וַתִּרְכַּבְנָה עַל־
הַגְּמַלִּים וַתֵּלַכְנָה אַחֲרֵי הָאִישׁ וַיִּקַּח
הָעֶבֶד אֶת־רִבְקָה וַיֵּלֶךְ׃

62 וְיִצְחָק֙ בָּ֣א מִבּ֔וֹא בְּאֵ֖ר לַחַ֣י רֹאִ֑י וְה֥וּא
יוֹשֵׁ֖ב בְּאֶ֥רֶץ הַנֶּֽגֶב׃ 63 וַיֵּצֵ֥א יִצְחָ֛ק לָשׂ֥וּחַ
בַּשָּׂדֶ֖ה לִפְנ֣וֹת עָרֶ֑ב וַיִּשָּׂ֤א עֵינָיו֙ וַיַּ֔רְא וְהִנֵּ֥ה
גְמַלִּ֖ים בָּאִֽים׃ 64 וַתִּשָּׂ֤א רִבְקָה֙ אֶת־עֵינֶ֔יהָ
וַתֵּ֖רֶא אֶת־יִצְחָ֑ק וַתִּפֹּ֖ל מֵעַ֥ל הַגָּמָֽל׃
65 וַתֹּ֣אמֶר אֶל־הָעֶ֗בֶד מִי־הָאִ֤ישׁ הַלָּזֶה֙
הַהֹלֵ֣ךְ בַּשָּׂדֶ֔ה לִקְרָאתֵ֑נוּ וַיֹּ֥אמֶר הָעֶ֖בֶד
הוּא֙ אֲדֹנִ֔י וַתִּקַּ֥ח הַצָּעִ֖יף וַתִּתְכָּֽס׃
66 וַיְסַפֵּ֥ר הָעֶ֖בֶד לְיִצְחָ֑ק אֵ֥ת כָּל־הַדְּבָרִ֖ים
אֲשֶׁר־עָשָֽׂה׃ 67 וַיְבִאֶ֣הָ יִצְחָ֗ק הָאֹהֱלָה֙
שָׂרָ֣ה אִמּ֔וֹ וַיִּקַּ֤ח אֶת־רִבְקָה֙ וַתְּהִי־ל֣וֹ
לְאִשָּׁ֔ה וַיֶּאֱהָבֶ֖הָ וַיִּנָּ֣חֶם יִצְחָ֑ק אַחֲרֵ֖י
אִמּֽוֹ׃ פ

62Isaac had just come back from the vicinity of Beer-lahai-roi, for he was settled in the region of the Negeb. 63And Isaac went out walking[e] in the field toward evening and, looking up, he saw camels approaching. 64Raising her eyes, Rebekah saw Isaac. She alighted from the camel 65and said to the servant, "Who is that man walking in the field toward us?" And the servant said, "That is my master." So she took her veil and covered herself. 66The servant told Isaac all the things that he had done. 67Isaac then brought her into the tent of his mother Sarah, and he took Rebekah as his wife. Isaac loved her, and thus found comfort after his mother's death.

כה

וַיֹּ֣סֶף אַבְרָהָ֔ם וַיִּקַּ֥ח אִשָּׁ֖ה
וּשְׁמָ֥הּ קְטוּרָֽה׃ 2 וַתֵּ֥לֶד לוֹ֙ אֶת־זִמְרָ֣ן וְאֶת־
יָקְשָׁ֔ן וְאֶת־מְדָ֖ן וְאֶת־מִדְיָ֑ן וְאֶת־יִשְׁבָּ֖ק
וְאֶת־שֽׁוּחַ׃ 3 וְיָקְשָׁ֖ן יָלַ֣ד אֶת־שְׁבָ֑א וְאֶת־
דְּדָ֖ן וּבְנֵ֣י דְדָ֔ן הָי֥וּ אַשּׁוּרִ֖ם וּלְטוּשִׁ֥ים
וּלְאֻמִּֽים׃ 4 וּבְנֵ֣י מִדְיָ֔ן עֵיפָ֥ה וָעֵפֶ֖ר וַחֲנֹ֑ךְ
וַאֲבִידָ֥ע וְאֶלְדָּעָ֖ה כָּל־אֵ֥לֶּה בְּנֵ֖י קְטוּרָֽה׃
5 וַיִּתֵּ֥ן אַבְרָהָ֖ם אֶת־כָּל־אֲשֶׁר־ל֑וֹ לְיִצְחָֽק׃
6 וְלִבְנֵ֣י הַפִּילַגְשִׁ֗ים אֲשֶׁ֤ר לְאַבְרָהָם֙ נָתַ֣ן
אַבְרָהָ֔ם מַתָּנֹ֖ת וַיְשַׁלְּחֵ֑ם מֵעַ֗ל יִצְחָק֙ בְּנ֣וֹ
בְּעוֹדֶ֔נּוּ חַ֖י קֵ֣דְמָה אֶל־אֶ֥רֶץ קֶֽדֶם׃
7 וְאֵ֣לֶּה יְמֵ֔י שְׁנֵ֥י חַיֵּ֖י אַבְרָהָ֑ם אֲשֶׁר־חָ֣י
מֵאָ֥ת שָׁנָ֛ה וְשִׁבְעִ֥ים שָׁנָ֖ה וְחָמֵ֥שׁ שָׁנִֽים׃
8 וַיִּגְוַ֣ע וַיָּ֣מָת אַבְרָהָ֔ם בְּשֵׂיבָ֥ה טוֹבָ֖ה זָקֵ֣ן
וְשָׂבֵ֑עַ וַיֵּאָ֖סֶף אֶל־עַמָּֽיו׃ 9 וַיִּקְבְּרוּ֙ אֹת֔וֹ
יִצְחָ֖ק וְיִשְׁמָעֵ֣אל בָּנָ֑יו אֶל־מְעָרַ֤ת
הַמַּכְפֵּלָה֙ אֶל־שְׂדֵ֣ה עֶפְרֹ֔ן בֶּן־צֹ֖חַר הַחִתִּ֑י
אֲשֶׁ֖ר עַל־פְּנֵ֥י מַמְרֵֽא׃ 10 הַשָּׂדֶ֗ה אֲשֶׁר־קָנָ֤ה

25 Abraham took another wife, whose name was Keturah. 2She bore him Zimran, Jokshan, Medan, Midian, Ishbak, and Shuah. 3Jokshan begot Sheba and Dedan. The descendants of Dedan were the Asshurim, the Letushim, and the Leummim. 4The descendants of Midian were Ephah, Epher, Enoch,[a] Abida, and Eldaah. All these were descendants of Keturah. 5Abraham willed all that he owned to Isaac; 6but to Abraham's sons by concubines Abraham gave gifts while he was still living, and he sent them away from his son Isaac eastward, to the land of the East.

7This was the total span of Abraham's life: one hundred and seventy-five years. 8And Abraham breathed his last, dying at a good ripe age, old and contented; and he was gathered to his kin. 9His sons Isaac and Ishmael buried him in the cave of Machpelah, in the field of Ephron son of Zohar the Hittite, facing Mamre, 10the field

e Others "to meditate"; meaning of Heb. uncertain.

a Or "Hanoch."

20 וַיִּדַּר יַעֲקֹב נֶדֶר לֵאמֹר אִם־יִהְיֶה
אֱלֹהִים עִמָּדִי וּשְׁמָרַנִי בַּדֶּרֶךְ הַזֶּה אֲשֶׁר
אָנֹכִי הוֹלֵךְ וְנָתַן־לִי לֶחֶם לֶאֱכֹל וּבֶגֶד
לִלְבֹּשׁ׃ 21 וְשַׁבְתִּי בְשָׁלוֹם אֶל־בֵּית אָבִי
וְהָיָה יְהוָה לִי לֵאלֹהִים׃ 22 וְהָאֶבֶן הַזֹּאת
אֲשֶׁר־שַׂמְתִּי מַצֵּבָה יִהְיֶה בֵּית אֱלֹהִים
וְכֹל אֲשֶׁר תִּתֶּן־לִי עַשֵּׂר אֲעַשְּׂרֶנּוּ לָךְ׃

20Jacob then made a vow, saying, "If God remains with me, if He protects me on this journey that I am making, and gives me bread to eat and clothing to wear, 21and if I return safe to my father's house—the LORD shall be my God. 22And this stone, which I have set up as a pillar, shall be God's abode; and of all that You give me, I will set aside a tithe for You."

כט

29 וַיִּשָּׂא יַעֲקֹב רַגְלָיו וַיֵּלֶךְ אַרְצָה
בְּנֵי־קֶדֶם׃ 2 וַיַּרְא וְהִנֵּה בְאֵר בַּשָּׂדֶה וְהִנֵּה־
שָׁם שְׁלֹשָׁה עֲדְרֵי־צֹאן רֹבְצִים עָלֶיהָ כִּי
מִן־הַבְּאֵר הַהִוא יַשְׁקוּ הָעֲדָרִים וְהָאֶבֶן
גְּדֹלָה עַל־פִּי הַבְּאֵר׃ 3 וְנֶאֶסְפוּ־שָׁמָּה כָּל־
הָעֲדָרִים וְגָלְלוּ אֶת־הָאֶבֶן מֵעַל פִּי הַבְּאֵר
וְהִשְׁקוּ אֶת־הַצֹּאן וְהֵשִׁיבוּ אֶת־הָאֶבֶן
עַל־פִּי הַבְּאֵר לִמְקֹמָהּ׃
4 וַיֹּאמֶר לָהֶם יַעֲקֹב אַחַי מֵאַיִן אַתֶּם
וַיֹּאמְרוּ מֵחָרָן אֲנָחְנוּ׃ 5 וַיֹּאמֶר לָהֶם
הֲיְדַעְתֶּם אֶת־לָבָן בֶּן־נָחוֹר וַיֹּאמְרוּ
יָדָעְנוּ׃ 6 וַיֹּאמֶר לָהֶם הֲשָׁלוֹם לוֹ וַיֹּאמְרוּ
שָׁלוֹם וְהִנֵּה רָחֵל בִּתּוֹ בָּאָה עִם־הַצֹּאן׃
7 וַיֹּאמֶר הֵן עוֹד הַיּוֹם גָּדוֹל לֹא־עֵת הֵאָסֵף
הַמִּקְנֶה הַשְׁקוּ הַצֹּאן וּלְכוּ רְעוּ׃ 8 וַיֹּאמְרוּ
לֹא נוּכַל עַד אֲשֶׁר יֵאָסְפוּ כָּל־הָעֲדָרִים
וְגָלֲלוּ אֶת־הָאֶבֶן מֵעַל פִּי הַבְּאֵר וְהִשְׁקִינוּ
הַצֹּאן׃
9 עוֹדֶנּוּ מְדַבֵּר עִמָּם וְרָחֵל | בָּאָה עִם־
הַצֹּאן אֲשֶׁר לְאָבִיהָ כִּי רֹעָה הִוא׃ 10 וַיְהִי
כַּאֲשֶׁר רָאָה יַעֲקֹב אֶת־רָחֵל בַּת־לָבָן אֲחִי
אִמּוֹ וְאֶת־צֹאן לָבָן אֲחִי אִמּוֹ וַיִּגַּשׁ יַעֲקֹב
וַיְגַל אֶת־הָאֶבֶן מֵעַל פִּי הַבְּאֵר וַיַּשְׁקְ
אֶת־צֹאן לָבָן אֲחִי אִמּוֹ׃ 11 וַיִּשַּׁק יַעֲקֹב
לְרָחֵל וַיִּשָּׂא אֶת־קֹלוֹ וַיֵּבְךְ׃ 12 וַיַּגֶּד יַעֲקֹב

29 Jacob *a*-resumed his journey-*a* and came to the land of the Easterners. 2There before his eyes was a well in the open. Three flocks of sheep were lying there beside it, for the flocks were watered from that well. The stone on the mouth of the well was large. 3When all the flocks were gathered there, the stone would be rolled from the mouth of the well and the sheep watered; then the stone would be put back in its place on the mouth of the well.

4Jacob said to them, "My friends, where are you from?" And they said, "We are from Haran." 5He said to them, "Do you know Laban the son of Nahor?" And they said, "Yes, we do." 6He continued, "Is he well?" They answered, "Yes, he is; and there is his daughter Rachel, coming with the flock." 7He said, "It is still broad daylight, too early to round up the animals; water the flock and take them to pasture." 8But they said, "We cannot, until all the flocks are rounded up; then the stone is rolled off the mouth of the well and we water the sheep."

9While he was still speaking with them, Rachel came with her father's flock; for she was a shepherdess. 10And when Jacob saw Rachel, the daughter of his uncle*b* Laban, and the flock of his uncle Laban, Jacob went up and rolled the stone off the mouth of the well, and watered the flock of his uncle Laban. 11Then Jacob kissed Rachel, and broke into tears. 12Jacob told Rachel

a-a *Lit. "lifted up his feet."*
b *Lit. "his mother's brother."*

that he was her father's kinsman, that he was Rebekah's son; and she ran and told her father. 13On hearing the news of his sister's son Jacob, Laban ran to greet him; he embraced him and kissed him, and took him into his house. He told Laban all that had happened, 14and Laban said to him, "You are truly my bone and flesh."

When he had stayed with him a month's time, 15Laban said to Jacob, "Just because you are a kinsman, should you serve me for nothing? Tell me, what shall your wages be?" 16Now Laban had two daughters; the name of the older one was Leah, and the name of the younger was Rachel. 17Leah had weak eyes; Rachel was shapely and beautiful. 18Jacob loved Rachel; so he answered, "I will serve you seven years for your younger daughter Rachel." 19Laban said, "Better that I give her to you than that I should give her to an outsider. Stay with me." 20So Jacob served seven years for Rachel and they seemed to him but a few days because of his love for her.

21Then Jacob said to Laban, "Give me my wife, for my time is fulfilled, that I may cohabit with her." 22And Laban gathered all the people of the place and made a feast. 23When evening came, he took his daughter Leah and brought her to him; and he cohabited with her.— 24Laban had given his maidservant Zilpah to his daughter Leah as her maid.—25When morning came, there was Leah! So he said to Laban, "What is this you have done to me? I was in your service for Rachel! Why did you deceive me?" 26Laban said, "It is not the practice in our place to marry off the younger before the older. 27Wait until the bridal week of this one is over and we will give you that one too, provided you serve me another seven years." 28Jacob did so; he waited out the bridal week of the one, and then he gave him his daughter Rachel as wife.— 29Laban had given his maidservant Bilhah to his

לְרָחֵל כִּי אֲחִי אָבִיהָ הוּא וְכִי בֶן־רִבְקָה
הִוא וַתָּרָץ וַתַּגֶּד לְאָבִיהָ׃ 13 וַיְהִי כִּשְׁמֹעַ
לָבָן אֶת־שֵׁמַע | יַעֲקֹב בֶּן־אֲחֹתוֹ וַיָּרָץ
לִקְרָאתוֹ וַיְחַבֵּק־לוֹ וַיְנַשֵּׁק־לוֹ וַיְבִיאֵהוּ
אֶל־בֵּיתוֹ וַיְסַפֵּר לְלָבָן אֵת כָּל־הַדְּבָרִים
הָאֵלֶּה׃ 14 וַיֹּאמֶר לוֹ לָבָן אַךְ עַצְמִי וּבְשָׂרִי
אָתָּה
וַיֵּשֶׁב עִמּוֹ חֹדֶשׁ יָמִים׃ 15 וַיֹּאמֶר לָבָן
לְיַעֲקֹב הֲכִי־אָחִי אַתָּה וַעֲבַדְתַּנִי חִנָּם
הַגִּידָה לִּי מַה־מַּשְׂכֻּרְתֶּךָ׃ 16 וּלְלָבָן שְׁתֵּי
בָנוֹת שֵׁם הַגְּדֹלָה לֵאָה וְשֵׁם הַקְּטַנָּה
רָחֵל׃ 17 וְעֵינֵי לֵאָה רַכּוֹת וְרָחֵל הָיְתָה
יְפַת־תֹּאַר וִיפַת מַרְאֶה׃ 18 וַיֶּאֱהַב יַעֲקֹב
אֶת־רָחֵל וַיֹּאמֶר אֶעֱבָדְךָ שֶׁבַע שָׁנִים
בְּרָחֵל בִּתְּךָ הַקְּטַנָּה׃ 19 וַיֹּאמֶר לָבָן טוֹב
תִּתִּי אֹתָהּ לָךְ מִתִּתִּי אֹתָהּ לְאִישׁ אַחֵר
שְׁבָה עִמָּדִי׃ 20 וַיַּעֲבֹד יַעֲקֹב בְּרָחֵל שֶׁבַע
שָׁנִים וַיִּהְיוּ בְעֵינָיו כְּיָמִים אֲחָדִים
בְּאַהֲבָתוֹ אֹתָהּ׃
21 וַיֹּאמֶר יַעֲקֹב אֶל־לָבָן הָבָה אֶת־אִשְׁתִּי
כִּי מָלְאוּ יָמָי וְאָבו�ֹאָה אֵלֶיהָ׃ 22 וַיֶּאֱסֹף
לָבָן אֶת־כָּל־אַנְשֵׁי הַמָּקוֹם וַיַּעַשׂ מִשְׁתֶּה׃
23 וַיְהִי בָעֶרֶב וַיִּקַּח אֶת־לֵאָה בִתּוֹ וַיָּבֵא
אֹתָהּ אֵלָיו וַיָּבֹא אֵלֶיהָ׃ 24 וַיִּתֵּן לָבָן לָהּ
אֶת־זִלְפָּה שִׁפְחָתוֹ לְלֵאָה בִתּוֹ שִׁפְחָה׃
25 וַיְהִי בַבֹּקֶר וְהִנֵּה־הִוא לֵאָה וַיֹּאמֶר
אֶל־לָבָן מַה־זֹּאת עָשִׂיתָ לִּי הֲלֹא בְרָחֵל
עָבַדְתִּי עִמָּךְ וְלָמָּה רִמִּיתָנִי׃ 26 וַיֹּאמֶר לָבָן
לֹא־יֵעָשֶׂה כֵן בִּמְקוֹמֵנוּ לָתֵת הַצְּעִירָה
לִפְנֵי הַבְּכִירָה׃ 27 מַלֵּא שְׁבֻעַ זֹאת וְנִתְּנָה
לְךָ גַּם־אֶת־זֹאת בַּעֲבֹדָה אֲשֶׁר תַּעֲבֹד
עִמָּדִי עוֹד שֶׁבַע־שָׁנִים אֲחֵרוֹת׃ 28 וַיַּעַשׂ
יַעֲקֹב כֵּן וַיְמַלֵּא שְׁבֻעַ זֹאת וַיִּתֶּן־לוֹ
אֶת־רָחֵל בִּתּוֹ לוֹ לְאִשָּׁה׃ 29 וַיִּתֵּן לָבָן

Genesis 18:1-8 and *Genesis* 24

1. **Discuss the *peshat* of the story.**
2. **Does this story belong to a particular type scenes? Describe.**
3. **Are these two versions of the same story?**
4. **Discuss the similarity between Abraham and Rachel?**
5. **What type of methodology would you utilize in analyzing this text?**

Genesis Worksheet

Peshat/drash	Form Criticism	Literary Criticism