

חיי שרה
Chayei Sara

Genesis 23:1-25:18
Haftarah I Kings 1:1-31
Shabbat, November 7, 2026
כ״ז בְּחֶשְׁוָן תשפ״ז

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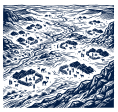

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This week's parsha, Chayei Sara, opens with Abraham mourning Sarah and purchasing the cave of Machpelah at full price, establishing the first lasting Israelite claim to the land. He then sends Eliezer to find a wife for Isaac, and the servant's prayer at the well brings him to Rivkah, whose chesed (kindness) in watering the camels marks her as the right match. Her swift decision to leave home, her marriage to Isaac, and the restoration of Sarah's blessings to the tent close out Abraham's life, which ends in peace with Isaac and Ishmael burying him together. The haftarah turns to David's old age, as Nathan and Bathsheba secure Solomon's succession.

The midrash and classical commentaries linger over small details: the miracles that returned with Rivkah, the nature of Keturah, the meaning of Isaac's love, and the deeper layers hidden in words like "ba-kol" and "la-su'ach." Together they show how the sages read ordinary verses as windows into Sarah's merit, Abraham's blessing, and the refinement of Rivkah's character.

The Chassidic teachings find in Isaac's prayer and Rivkah's veil a picture of sweetening judgment through song and devotion, and in Sarah's death an act of advocacy for Israel. The modern commentaries close with notes of reconciliation —between Isaac and Ishmael, and in Rivkah's first glimpse of Isaac at prayer.



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THE READING · GENESIS 23:1–16

ראשון
First Aliyah

Abraham, mourning Sarah's death, negotiates with the Hittites and Ephron to purchase the cave of Machpelah as a burial site, insisting on paying the full price rather than accepting it as a gift, so that the land would be legally and permanently his. This careful, public transaction establishes the first permanent Israelite foothold in the land of Canaan. AI SUMMARY

א וַיִּהְיוּ חַיֵּי שָׂרָה מֵאָה שָׁנָה וְעֶשְׂרִים שָׁנָה
וְשֶׁבַע שָׁנִים שְׁנֵי חַיֵּי שָׂרָה:

[1] Sarah's lifetime—the span of Sarah's life—came to one hundred and twenty-seven years.

BERESHIT RABBAH 58:2 ONLINE AT TORAHFORM.COM God never leaves the world without a righteous leader

ב וַתָּמָת שָׂרָה בְּקִרְיַת אַרְבַּע הִוא חֶבְרוֹן
בְּאֶרֶץ כְּנָעַן וַיָּבֹא אַבְרָהָם לִסְפֹּד לְשָׂרָה
וְלִבְכֹּתָהּ:

[2] Sarah died in Kiriath-arba—now Hebron—in the land of Canaan; and Abraham proceeded to mourn for Sarah and to bewail her.

THE STEINSALTZ TANAKH

[1] **The lifetime of Sarah was one hundred and twenty-seven years, the years of the life of Sarah.** A literal rendition of the verse would read: The lifetime of Sarah was one hundred years and twenty years, and seven years, the years of the life of Sarah. Some commentaries explain that the repetition of "years" in the verse teaches that at each stage of her life, whether she was seven, twenty-seven, or one hundred, Sarah exhibited the same good qualities.1 The concluding phrase, "the years of the life of Sarah," indicates that in each of those stages she lived a full and complete life. [2] **Sarah died in Kiryat Arba, which is Hebron, in the land of Canaan; Abraham came** from Beersheba, where he lived before and after the binding of Isaac, **to lament Sarah,** as is customary when mourning someone, **and to weep** and move others to weep **for her.**

SELECTED RASHI

23:1 AND THE LIFE OF SARAH WAS 127 YEARS (literally, 100 years, 20 years and 7 years) — The reason the word שנה is written at every term is to tell you that each term must be explained by itself as a complete number: at the age of one hundred she was as a woman of twenty as regards sin — for just as at the age of twenty one may regard her as having never sinned, since she had not then reached the age when she was subject to punishment, so, too, when she was one hundred years old she was sinless — and when she was twenty she was as beautiful as when she was seven (Genesis Rabbah 58:1).

23:1 THE YEARS OF SARAH'S LIFE — The word years is repeated and without a number to indicate that they were all equally good.

23:2 בקרית ארבע literally, the city of the Four, and it was so called because of the four giants who lived there: Ahiman, Sheshai, Talmai and their father (Numbers 13:22). Another explanation is that it was so called because of the four couples who were buried there, man and wife — Adam and Eve, Abraham and Sarah, Isaac and Rebecca, Jacob and Leah (Genesis Rabbah 58:4).

23:2 AND ABRAHAM CAME from Beer-Sheba

23:2 TO BEWAIL SARAH AND TO WEEP FOR HER — The narrative of the death of Sarah follows immediately on that of the Binding of Isaac, because through the announcement of the Binding — that her son had been made ready for sacrifice and had almost been sacrificed — she received a great shock (literally, her soul flew from her) and she died (Pirkei DeRabbi Eliezer 32).

ג וַיָּקָם֙ אַבְרָהָ֔ם מֵעַ֖ל פְּנֵ֣י מֵתֹ֑ו וַיְדַבֵּ֖ר
אֶל־בְּנֵי־חֵ֥ת לֵאמֹֽר׃

[3] Then Abraham rose from beside his dead, and spoke to the Hittites, saying,

ד גֵּר־וְתוֹשָׁ֥ב אָנֹכִ֖י עִמָּכֶ֑ם תְּנ֨וּ לִ֜י אֲחֻזַּת־קֶ֗בֶר
עִמָּכֶם֙ וְאֶקְבְּרָ֣ה מֵתִ֔י מִלְּפָנָֽי׃

[4] "I am a resident alien among you; sell me a burial site among you, that I may remove my dead for burial."

ה וַיַּעֲנ֥וּ בְנֵי־חֵ֖ת אֶת־אַבְרָהָ֥ם לֵאמֹ֖ר לֹֽו׃

[5] And the Hittites replied to Abraham, saying to him,

ו שְׁמָעֵ֣נוּ | אֲדֹנִ֔י נְשִׂ֥יא אֱלֹהִ֛ים אַתָּ֖ה בְּתוֹכֵ֑נוּ
בְּמִבְחַ֤ר קְבָרֵ֙ינוּ֙ קְבֹ֣ר אֶת־מֵתֶ֔ךָ אִ֥ישׁ מִמֶּ֖נּוּ
אֶת־קִבְרֹ֥ו לְא־יִכְלֶ֛ה מִמְּךָ֖ מִקְבֹּ֥ר מֵתֶֽךָ׃

[6] "Hear us, my lord: you are the elect of God among us. Bury your dead in the choicest of our burial places; none of us will withhold his burial place from you for burying your dead."

ז וַיָּ֥קָם אַבְרָהָ֖ם וַיִּשְׁתַּ֣חוּ לְעַם־הָאָ֑רֶץ לִבְנֵי־חֵֽת׃

[7] Thereupon Abraham bowed low to the people of the land, the Hittites,

ח וַיְדַבֵּ֥ר אִתָּ֖ם לֵאמֹ֑ר אִם־יֵ֨שׁ אֶת־נַפְשְׁכֶ֜ם
לִקְבֹּ֤ר אֶת־מֵתִי֙ מִלְּפָנַ֔י שְׁמָע֥וּנִי וּפִגְעוּ־לִ֖י
בְּעֶפְרֹ֣ון בֶּן־צֹֽחַר׃

[8] and he said to them, "If it is your wish that I remove my dead for burial, you must agree to intercede for me with Ephron son of Zohar.

THE STEINSALTZ TANAKH

[3] After mourning for Sarah, her husband must find a place to bury her. **Abraham arose from before his dead, and he spoke to the children of Het,** their leaders and elders, who sat at the entrance to the city of Hebron, **saying:** [4] Although **I am a foreigner** here, my family and I have lived here for many years. **And** in addition, I am **a resident alien with you:** I do not have rights in this place, but I am an old acquaintance of yours. Therefore, **give me** a portion of your land that can serve as **a burial portion with you, and I will bury my dead from before me.** [5] **The children of Het answered Abraham, saying to him.** It is possible that they discussed the matter among themselves first, before providing him with an official response. [6] **Hear us, my lord:** Although you say that you are a foreigner and a resident alien, you are not merely an ordinary person. Rather, **you are a prince of God in our midst,** as your status is greater than that of the head of a small tribe. Therefore, **in the choicest of our graves bury your dead; none of us shall withhold his grave from you, from burying your dead,** as you may choose a burial plot in any place that you desire. The local residents thereby declared that they have given Abraham informal rights to their land. [7] **Abraham arose, and prostrated himself,** or bowed his head, in a formal gesture of respect and gratitude, **before the people of the land, before the children of Het.** [8] Despite his expression of gratitude, Abraham did not wish to bury his wife in the land of the children of Het. Rather, he wanted to purchase a separate piece of property. **He spoke with them, saying: If you are** truly **willing to** fulfill my request and **bury my dead from before me, heed me, and intercede for me with** a specific individual, **Efron son of Tzohar,**

SELECTED RASHI

23:4 I AM A STRANGER AND A SETTLER WITH YOU — A stranger having come from another land, but I have settled down amongst you. A Midrashic explanation is: if you agree to sell me the land then I will regard myself as a stranger and will pay for it, but if not, I shall claim it as a settler and will take it as my legal right, because the Holy One, blessed be He, said to me, (12:7) "Unto thy seed I give this land" (Genesis Rabbah 58:6).

23:4 A POSSESSION OF A BURYING PLACE — means possession of land to serve as a burying place.

[9] Let him sell me the cave of Machpelah that he owns, which is at the edge of his land. Let him sell it to me, at the full price, for a burial site in your midst."

ט וְיִתֶּן־לִי אֶת־מְעָרַת הַמַּכְפֵּלָה אֲשֶׁר־לוֹ אֲשֶׁר בִּקְצֵה שָׂדֵהוּ בְּכֶסֶף מָלֵא יִתְּנֶנָּה לִי בְּתוֹכְכֶם לַאֲחֻזַּת־קָבֶר׃

[10] Ephron was present among the Hittites; so Ephron the Hittite answered Abraham in the hearing of the Hittites, all who entered the gate of his town, saying,

י וְעֶפְרוֹן יֹשֵׁב בְּתוֹךְ בְּנֵי־חֵת וַיַּעַן עֶפְרוֹן הַחִתִּי אֶת־אַבְרָהָם בְּאָזְנֵי בְנֵי־חֵת לְכֹל בָּאֵי שַׁעַר־עִירוֹ לֵאמֹר׃

[11] "No, my lord, hear me: I give you the field and I give you the cave that is in it; I give it to you in the presence of my people. Bury your dead."

יא לֹא־אֲדֹנִי שְׁמָעֵנִי הַשָּׂדֶה נָתַתִּי לָךְ וְהַמְּעָרָה אֲשֶׁר־בּוֹ לְךָ נְתַתִּיהָ לְעֵינֵי בְנֵי־עַמִּי נְתַתִּיהָ לָךְ קְבֹר מֵתֶךָ׃

[12] Then Abraham bowed low before the people of the land,

יב וַיִּשְׁתַּחוּ אַבְרָהָם לִפְנֵי עַם הָאָרֶץ׃

[13] and 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."

יג וַיְדַבֵּר אֶל־עֶפְרוֹן בְּאָזְנֵי עַם־הָאָרֶץ לֵאמֹר אַךְ אִם־אַתָּה לוּ שְׁמָעֵנִי נָתַתִּי כֶּסֶף הַשָּׂדֶה קַח מִמֶּנִּי וְאֶקְבְּרָה אֶת־מֵתִי שָׁמָּה׃

[14] And Ephron replied to Abraham, saying to him,

יד וַיַּעַן עֶפְרוֹן אֶת־אַבְרָהָם לֵאמֹר לוֹ׃

THE STEINSALTZ TANAKH

[9] **that he will give me the Cave of Makhpela,** which was so called because it is a double [kefula] cave, **that is his, which is at the edge of his field; he shall give it to me for a full price in your midst for a burial portion.** Despite their offer to allow him to use any property he chose, Abraham insisted on purchasing a plot at full price, as he wanted it to be property held by the family in perpetuity. With regard to the retention of an ancestral inheritance, see, e.g., I Kings 21:1–3 and Nehemiah 2:2–5. [10] **And Efron,** who was not necessarily an important member of the city, **was living** at that time **among the children of Het; and Efron the Hitite answered Abraham in hearing of the children of Het, of all those coming to his city gate.** He too conducted himself ceremoniously, as he approached the city council and issued a public declaration, **saying:** [11] **No, my lord,** you offered to purchase a portion of my field, but I cannot accept that proposal. Rather, **heed me: The** entire **field I have given to you, and the cave that is in it, I have given it to you; in the eyes of my people,** who are all listening to my declaration, **I have given it to you** and will not deter you from taking it. I will clear the land for such a distinguished man as yourself, and the entire plot will belong to you; go **bury your dead.** [12] **Abraham prostrated himself** a second time **before the people of the land,** thereby formally expressing his gratitude for Efron's generous offer. [13] Despite the offer, **he,** Abraham, **spoke to Efron in the hearing of the people of the land, saying: Rather, if only you will heed me,** when you originally said: No, my lord, heed me, I indeed listened to you. Now it is my turn to request that you listen to me: **I have given you,** that is, I am giving you, **the silver for the field** in order to purchase it; please **take it from me, and I will bury my dead there.** [14] Until this point, Efron had spoken generally about the matter; now he must set a price. Therefore, **Efron responded to Abraham, saying to him:**

SELECTED RASHI

23:9 MACHPELAH (the root, כפל, means double) — it had a lower and an upper cavern. Another explanation of why it was so called is, because it has the characteristic of being doubled on account of the couples who are buried there (see Rashi in verse 2) (Eruvin 53a).

23:9 FOR ITS FULL VALUE IN SILVER — מלא means שלם so that the phrase means all that it is worth. Thus, too, did David say to Ornan, (1 Chronicles 21:22) "for full money".

23:11 I HAVE GIVEN IT TO THEE (a perfect tense) — See, it is as though I have already given it to you.

טו אֲדֹנִי שְׁמָעֵנִי אֶרֶץ אַרְבַּע מֵאֹת שֶׁקֶל־כֶּסֶף
בֵּינִי וּבֵינְךָ מַה־הִוא וְאֶת־מֵתְךָ קְבֹר׃

טז וַיִּשְׁמַע אַבְרָהָם אֶל־עֶפְרוֹן וַיִּשְׁקֹל אַבְרָהָם
לְעֶפְרֹן אֶת־הַכֶּסֶף אֲשֶׁר דִּבֶּר בְּאָזְנֵי בְנֵי־חֵת
אַרְבַּע מֵאוֹת שֶׁקֶל כֶּסֶף עֹבֵר לַסֹּחֵר׃

[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."

[16] Abraham 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.

THE STEINSALTZ TANAKH

[15] **My lord, heed me.** This **land** is **worth four hundred shekels of silver, between me and you what is it?** We are close friends, and consequently such a small plot of land should not concern us; **and** therefore **bury your dead,** and let us not suffer delays over the price. [16] **Abraham heeded Efron; and Abraham weighed for Efron the silver that he spoke in the hearing of the children of Het.** It is almost certain that this silver was not in the form of minted coins; it was more likely a collection of metal pieces whose value was determined by weight. Abraham surprised Efron, who expected him to suggest a much lower price, after which the negotiations would continue until the two sides agreed upon a compromise sum. However, Abraham chose to refrain from the formal method of purchase, and instead immediately paid the entire sum, which was **four hundred shekels of** pure, choice **silver, ready currency** that would be accepted by anyone in the world.

SELECTED RASHI

23:15 BETWEEN ME AND THEE — Between two such friends as we are, of what importance is that? Nothing at all! Leave business alone and bury your dead!

23:16 AND ABRAHAM WEIGHED TO EPHRON [THE SILVER] — The name Ephron is written defectively (without the ו) to indicate that there was something missing in Ephron viz, sincerity — because he promised much but did not do even the very least (Bava Metzia 87a): He took from him big Shekels, viz., centenaria (worth a full 100 smaller units) as it is said, "money current with the merchant" which means, such coins as were everywhere accepted as worth a full Shekel — for there are places where their Shekels are of large size, centenaria; old French Centenars (cf. Ruth R. 7).



THE READING · GENESIS 23:17–24:9

שני

Second Aliyah

Abraham formally acquires the Machpelah field and cave as a burial site for Sarah, establishing a permanent foothold in the land of Canaan despite having no other possession there. He then charges his servant under oath to find a wife for Isaac from his own kin rather than the local Canaanites, trusting that God's angel will guide the mission while insisting that Isaac himself must never leave the Promised Land. AI SUMMARY

17 So Ephron's land in Machpelah, near Mamre —the field with its cave and all the trees anywhere within the confines of that field—passed

יזוַיָּקָם | שְׂדֵה עֶפְרוֹן אֲשֶׁר בַּמַּכְפֵּלָה אֲשֶׁר לִפְנֵי מַמְרֵא הַשָּׂדֶה וְהַמְּעָרָה אֲשֶׁר־בּוֹ וְכָל־הָעֵץ אֲשֶׁר בַּשָּׂדֶה אֲשֶׁר בְּכָל־גְּבֻלוֹ סָבִיב׃

18 to Abraham as his possession, in the presence of the Hittites, of all who entered the gate of his town.

יחלְאַבְרָהָם לְמִקְנָה לְעֵינֵי בְנֵי־חֵת בְּכֹל בָּאֵי שַׁעַר־עִירוֹ׃

19 And then Abraham buried his wife Sarah in the cave of the field of Machpelah, facing Mamre —now Hebron—in the land of Canaan.

יטוְאַחֲרֵי־כֵן קָבַר אַבְרָהָם אֶת־שָׂרָה אִשְׁתּוֹ אֶל־מְעָרַת שְׂדֵה הַמַּכְפֵּלָה עַל־פְּנֵי מַמְרֵא הִוא חֶבְרוֹן בְּאֶרֶץ כְּנָעַן׃

20 Thus the field with its cave passed from the Hittites to Abraham, as a burial site.

כוַיָּקָם הַשָּׂדֶה וְהַמְּעָרָה אֲשֶׁר־בּוֹ לְאַבְרָהָם לַאֲחֻזַּת־קֶבֶר מֵאֵת בְּנֵי־חֵת׃

THE STEINSALTZ TANAKH

17 **The field of Efron that was in Makhpela,** the field that surrounded the Cave of Makhpela, **that was before Mamre, the field and the cave that was in it, and every tree that was in the field, that was within its border all around, were established** as Abraham's property. Abraham was not satisfied in purchasing the cave alone; he also acquired the surrounding area and an access path to the cave. 18 All of this was transferred **as** a **possession for Abraham in the eyes of the children of Het, of all coming to his city gate.** 19 **And thereafter,** after the property was transferred to his ownership, **Abraham buried Sarah his wife in the cave of the field of Makhpela opposite Mamre, which is Hebron, in the land of Canaan.** 20 **The field and the cave that was in it were established as a burial portion for Abraham,** for his family, which he had purchased from **the children of Het.**

[1] Abraham was now old, advanced in years, and the LORD had blessed Abraham in all things.

א וְאַבְרָהָם זָקֵן בָּא בַּיָּמִים וַיהוָה בֵּרַךְ אֶת־אַבְרָהָם בַּכֹּל׃

RAMBAN & IBN EZRA P. 39 Did Abraham lack anything, and why swear the servant in?

[2] And Abraham said to the senior servant of his household, who had charge of all that he owned, "Put your hand under my thigh

ב וַיֹּאמֶר אַבְרָהָם אֶל־עַבְדּוֹ זְקַן בֵּיתוֹ הַמֹּשֵׁל בְּכָל־אֲשֶׁר־לוֹ שִׂים־נָא יָדְךָ תַּחַת יָרֵכִי׃

[3] and 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,

ג וְאַשְׁבִּיעֲךָ בַּיהוָה אֱלֹהֵי הַשָּׁמַיִם וֵאלֹהֵי הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר לֹא־תִקַּח אִשָּׁה לִבְנִי מִבְּנוֹת הַכְּנַעֲנִי אֲשֶׁר אָנֹכִי יוֹשֵׁב בְּקִרְבּוֹ׃

[4] but will go to the land of my birth and get a wife for my son Isaac."

ד כִּי אֶל־אַרְצִי וְאֶל־מוֹלַדְתִּי תֵּלֵךְ וְלָקַחְתָּ אִשָּׁה לִבְנִי לְיִצְחָק׃

[5] And 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?"

ה וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלָיו הָעֶבֶד אוּלַי לֹא־תֹאבֶה הָאִשָּׁה לָלֶכֶת אַחֲרַי אֶל־הָאָרֶץ הַזֹּאת הָהָשֵׁב אָשִׁיב אֶת־בִּנְךָ אֶל־הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר־יָצָאתָ מִשָּׁם׃

THE STEINSALTZ TANAKH

[1] **And Abraham was old, advanced in years.** Isaac at that time was thirty-seven or thirty-eight years old; Abraham was therefore one hundred and thirty-seven or slightly older. It is possible that this introductory phrase reflects Abraham's perception of himself. **And the Lord blessed Abraham with everything,** including rest and tranquility from troubles and from his nomadic travels. [2] **Abraham said to his servant, the elder of his household.** This individual was not necessarily elderly, but was the senior and most distinguished attendant, **who oversaw everything that he had,** the general administrator of finances in Abraham's household. Abraham said to him: **Please, place your hand under my thigh,** which was an ancient manner of taking an oath. In contrast to grasping or shaking hands, which expresses a commitment between two individuals of similar social status, an oath accepted by placing one's hand under the thigh of a seated person was typically used in the case of an agreement between an individual with a senior status and someone under his jurisdiction. By this action, the taker of the vow expresses his commitment to perform the bidding of the one administering the oath. [3] **And I will administer an oath to you by the Lord, God of the heavens and the God of the earth,** who is all-powerful, **that you shall not take a wife for my son from the daughters of the Canaanites, in whose midst I live.** Abraham did not know how many years he had left, and whether he would succeed in marrying off Isaac himself. He therefore requested that his servant promise not to marry off his son to one of the daughters of the Canaanites after his death. [4] **Rather, you shall go to my land,** Aram Naharayim, **and to my birthplace,** Haran, where my extended family is located, the tribe into which I was born, **and take** from there **a wife for my son, for Isaac.** [5] **The servant said to him: Perhaps the woman will not wish to follow me to this land,** as it is a long journey to Canaan from Haran, which is located on the southern border of modern-day Turkey. What should I do if she refuses to leave her home to come here? **Shall I return your son to the land from which you departed?**

SELECTED RASHI

24:1 [THE LORD HAD] BLESSED ABRAHAM IN ALL THINGS — The numerical value of the word בכל is equal to that of בן (a son) — suggesting that God had blessed Abraham with a son and since he had a son he had to find him a wife.

24:2 UNDER MY THIGH — because whoever takes an oath must take in his hand some sacred object. such as a Scroll of the Law or Tefillin (Shevuot 38b). As circumcision was the first commandment given to him and became his only through much pain it was consequently dear to him and therefore he selected this as the object upon which to take the oath (Genesis Rabbah 59:8).

6 Abraham answered him, "On no account must you take my son back there!

וַיֹּ֤אמֶר אֵלָיו֙ אַבְרָהָ֔ם הִשָּׁ֥מֶר לְךָ֖ פֶּן־תָּשִׁ֣יב אֶת־בְּנִ֑י שָׁמָּֽה׃

7 The 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.

ז יְהוָ֣ה | אֱלֹהֵ֣י הַשָּׁמַ֗יִם אֲשֶׁ֤ר לְקָחַ֙נִי֙ מִבֵּ֣ית אָבִ֔י וּמֵאֶ֖רֶץ מוֹלַדְתִּ֑י וַאֲשֶׁ֨ר דִּבֶּר־לִ֜י וַאֲשֶׁ֣ר נִשְׁבַּע־לִ֗י לֵאמֹר֙ לְזַרְעֲךָ֣ אֶתֵּ֔ן אֶת־הָאָ֖רֶץ הַזֹּ֑את הוּא֙ יִשְׁלַ֣ח מַלְאָכ֔וֹ לְפָנֶ֔יךָ וְלָקַחְתָּ֥ אִשָּׁ֛ה לִבְנִ֖י מִשָּֽׁם׃

8 And 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."

ח וְאִם־לֹ֨א תֹאבֶ֤ה הָאִשָּׁה֙ לָלֶ֣כֶת אַחֲרֶ֔יךָ וְנִקֵּ֖יתָ מִשְּׁבֻעָתִ֣י זֹ֑את רַ֛ק אֶת־בְּנִ֥י לֹא־תָשֵׁ֖ב שָׁמָּֽה׃

9 So the servant put his hand under the thigh of his master Abraham and swore to him as bidden.

ט וַיָּ֤שֶׂם הָעֶ֙בֶד֙ אֶת־יָד֔וֹ תַּ֖חַת יֶ֣רֶךְ אַבְרָהָ֣ם אֲדֹנָ֑יו וַיִּשָּׁבַ֥ע לוֹ֙ עַל־הַדָּבָ֣ר הַזֶּֽה׃

THE STEINSALTZ TANAKH

6 **Abraham said to him: Beware lest you return my son there.** It was not my choice to distance myself from the land of my birth. Therefore, 7 **the Lord, God of the heavens, who took me from my father's house, and from my birthplace, and who spoke to me** in a prophecy, **and who took an oath to me, saying: To your descendants I will give this land; He will send His angel before you** to assist you, **and you will** successfully find and **take a wife for my son from there.** 8 **And if the woman will not wish to follow you, you shall be absolved from this oath of mine,** and you need not continue searching for a wife for Isaac; **only you shall not return my son there,** as he must remain in this land. God gave me this land, and He commanded me to dwell here; therefore, my son may not leave it either. 9 **The servant placed his hand under the thigh of Abraham his master, and took an oath to him with regard to this matter.**

SELECTED RASHI

24:7 THE LORD, GOD OF HEAVEN, WHO TOOK ME FROM MY FATHER'S HOUSE — Here he did not say "[The God of heaven] and the God of the earth", whereas above (v. 3) he said, "And I will make thee swear etc. ... [and the God of the earth]''. But, in effect, Abraham said to him: Now He is the God of heaven and the God of the earth, because I have made him (i. e. His Name) a familiar one in peoples' mouths: but at the time when He took me from my father's house He was God of heaven only and not God of the earth for people did not acknowledge Him and His Name was not commonly known on earth (Genesis Rabbah 59:7).



THE READING · GENESIS 24:10–26

שלישי

Third Aliyah

Eliezer, Abraham's servant, devises a sign to identify the proper wife for Yitzchak: she will be the maiden who offers water not only to him but to his camels as well, demonstrating chesed (kindness) beyond what is asked. When Rivkah fulfills this sign precisely, Eliezer recognizes the hand of God in his mission and bows in gratitude, acknowledging that the Lord had guided his errand to success. AI SUMMARY

10 Then 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.

וַיִּקַּח הָעֶבֶד עֲשָׂרָה גְמַלִּים מִגְּמַלֵּי אֲדֹנָיו וַיֵּלֶךְ וְכָל־טוּב אֲדֹנָיו בְּיָדוֹ וַיָּקָם וַיֵּלֶךְ אֶל־אֲרַם נַהֲרַיִם אֶל־עִיר נָחוֹר׃

11 He made the camels kneel down by the well outside the city, at evening time, the time when women come out to draw water.

יאוַיַּבְרֵךְ הַגְמַלִּים מִחוּץ לָעִיר אֶל־בְּאֵר הַמָּיִם לְעֵת עֶרֶב לְעֵת צֵאת הַשֹּׁאֲבֹת׃

12 And he said, "O LORD, God of my master Abraham, grant me good fortune this day, and deal graciously with my master Abraham:

יבוַיֹּאמַר | יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי אֲדֹנִי אַבְרָהָם הַקְרֵה־נָא לְפָנַי הַיּוֹם וַעֲשֵׂה־חֶסֶד עִם אֲדֹנִי אַבְרָהָם׃

13 Here I stand by the spring as the daughters of the townsmen come out to draw water;

יגהִנֵּה אָנֹכִי נִצָּב עַל־עֵין הַמָּיִם וּבְנוֹת אַנְשֵׁי הָעִיר יֹצְאוֹת לִשְׁאֹב מָיִם׃

THE STEINSALTZ TANAKH

10 **The servant took ten of his master's camels** for the extended journey from the south of Canaan to Haran, **and he went with all of his master's goods in his hand.** He took gifts and other unique articles that would convey Abraham's status and power, as well as various items he would need during the journey. **He arose and went to Aram Naharayim, to the city of Nahor.** 11 At the end of his journey, **he had the camels kneel,** in contrast to horses and donkeys that generally drink while standing, **outside the city by the well of water at evening time, at the time the women who draw water come out.** Since the servant could not knock on every door searching for an appropriate wife for his master, he thought that visiting the well at this time of day would give him a good opportunity to see the local girls. 12 **He said** in prayer: **Lord, God of my master Abraham, please arrange it for me today, and perform kindness with my master Abraham,** on his behalf and in his honor. 13 **Behold, I stand by the spring of water; and the daughters of the men of the city come out to draw water.**

SELECTED RASHI

24:10 OF HIS MASTER'S CAMELS — These were distinguished from other camels by going out muzzled to avoid robbery — i.e. that they should not graze in other peoples' fields (Genesis Rabbah 59:11).

יד וְהָיָה הַנַּעֲרָ֗ אֲשֶׁר֩ אֹמַ֨ר אֵלֶ֜יהָ הַטִּי־נָ֤א כַדֵּךְ֙ וְאֶשְׁתֶּ֔ה וְאָמְרָ֥ה שְׁתֵ֖ה וְגַ֣ם־גְּמַלֶּ֑יךָ אֹתָ֣הּ הֹכַ֔חְתָּ לְעַבְדְּךָ֖ לְיִצְחָ֑ק וּבָ֣הּ אֵדַ֔ע כִּֽי־עָשִׂ֥יתָ חֶ֖סֶד עִם־אֲדֹנִֽי׃

14 let the maiden to whom I say, 'Please, lower your jar that I may drink,' and who replies, 'Drink, and I will also water your camels'—let her be the one whom You have decreed for Your servant Isaac. Thereby shall I know that You have dealt graciously with my master."

SFORNO P. 38 Why true kindness means giving more than asked

טו וַיְהִי־הוּא֩ טֶ֨רֶם כִּלָּ֜ה לְדַבֵּ֗ר וְהִנֵּ֤ה רִבְקָה֙ יֹצֵ֣את אֲשֶׁר־יֻלְּדָ֣ה לִבְתוּאֵ֗ל בֶּן־מִלְכָּה֙ אֵ֣שֶׁת נָח֔וֹר אֲחִ֖י אַבְרָהָ֑ם וְכַדָּ֖הּ עַל־שִׁכְמָֽהּ׃

15 He 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.

טז וְהַנַּעֲרָ֞ טֹבַ֤ת מַרְאֶה֙ מְאֹ֔ד בְּתוּלָ֖ה וְאִ֣ישׁ לֹ֣א יְדָעָ֑הּ וַתֵּ֣רֶד הָעַ֔יְנָה וַתְּמַלֵּ֥א כַדָּ֖הּ וַתָּֽעַל׃

16 The maiden was very beautiful, a virgin whom no man had known. She went down to the spring, filled her jar, and came up.

יז וַיָּ֥רָץ הָעֶ֖בֶד לִקְרָאתָ֑הּ וַיֹּ֗אמֶר הַגְמִיאִ֤ינִי נָא֙ מְעַט־מַ֔יִם מִכַּדֵּֽךְ׃

17 The servant ran toward her and said, "Please, let me sip a little water from your jar."

יח וַתֹּ֕אמֶר שְׁתֵ֖ה אֲדֹנִ֑י וַתְּמַהֵ֣ר וַתֹּ֤רֶד כַּדָּהּ֙ עַל־יָ֔דָהּ וַתַּשְׁקֵֽהוּ׃

18 "Drink, my lord," she said, and she quickly lowered her jar upon her hand and let him drink.

THE STEINSALTZ TANAKH

14 It shall be that the girl to whom I shall say: Tilt your jug please, while it is still on your shoulder, which was the accepted method of giving another to drink, **that I may drink, and she,** that girl, **shall say: Drink, and I will also give your camels to drink;** I will know that **it is she You have** thereby **confirmed** to be a wife **for Your servant, for Isaac; and through her,** if I find such a girl, **I shall know that You have shown kindness to my master. 15 It was before he concluded to speak,** while he was still praying; **behold, Rebecca,** who was mentioned earlier (22:23), **was coming out.** Either she arrived first, before the other girls, or she stood out in some manner. The verse proceeds to restate her lineage: It was Rebecca **who was born to Betuel, son of Milka,** the primary **wife,** rather than a concubine, **of Nahor, brother of Abraham.** This is Abraham's closest family (see 22:24). **And her jug was on her shoulder** as she came. **16 And the girl was good-looking, a virgin, and a man had not been intimate with her,** which indicates that she was modest. Naturally, the servant became aware of these facts only later. **She descended to the spring, she filled her jug, and ascended** from the spring, which was slightly lower than the area surrounding it. **17** The girl, whose dress likely indicated that she was unmarried, and who appeared to him to be the appropriate age for Isaac, impressed Abraham's servant. Therefore, **the servant ran toward her, and he said: Please allow me to sip a little water from your jug. 18 She said: Drink, my lord, and she hurried and lowered her jug on her hand, and gave him to drink.** Instead of tilting the jug while it was still on her shoulder, Rebecca took the extra effort of removing the heavy container from her shoulder, so that it would be easier for the servant to drink.

SELECTED RASHI

24:14 HER THOU HAST APPOINTED — She is fit for him since she will be charitable and will therefore be worthy of admission into the house of Abraham. The word הכחת means selected; old French approuvest; English thou hast selected.

24:14 ובה אדע This is a petition: "Let me know through her".

24:14 THAT THOU HAST SHOWN KINDNESS — if she is of his family and a fit companion for him I shall know that thou hast shown kindness to my master.

יט וַתְּכַל לְהַשְׁקֹתוֹ וַתֹּאמֶר גַּם לִגְמַלֶּיךָ אֶשְׁאָב
עַד אִם־כִּלּוּ לִשְׁתֹּת:

כ וַתְּמַהֵר וַתְּעַר כַּדָּהּ אֶל־הַשֹּׁקֶת וַתָּרָץ עוֹד
אֶל־הַבְּאֵר לִשְׁאֹב וַתִּשְׁאַב לְכָל־גְּמַלָּיו:

כא וְהָאִישׁ מִשְׁתָּאֵה לָהּ מַחֲרִישׁ לָדַעַת
הַהִצְלִיחַ יְהוָה דַּרְכּוֹ אִם־לֹא:

כב וַיְהִי כַּאֲשֶׁר כִּלּוּ הַגְּמַלִּים לִשְׁתּוֹת וַיִּקַּח
הָאִישׁ נֶזֶם זָהָב בֶּקַע מִשְׁקָלוֹ וּשְׁנֵי צְמִידִים
עַל־יָדֶיהָ עֲשָׂרָה זָהָב מִשְׁקָלָם:

כג וַיֹּאמֶר בַּת־מִי אָתְּ הַגִּידִי נָא לִי הֲיֵשׁ
בֵּית־אָבִיךְ מָקוֹם לָנוּ לָלִין:

כד וַתֹּאמֶר אֵלָיו בַּת־בְּתוּאֵל אָנֹכִי בֶּן־מִלְכָּה
אֲשֶׁר יָלְדָה לְנָחוֹר:

כה וַתֹּאמֶר אֵלָיו גַּם־תֶּבֶן גַּם־מִסְפּוֹא רַב עִמָּנוּ
גַּם־מָקוֹם לָלוּן:

[19] When she had let him drink his fill, she said, "I will also draw for your camels, until they finish drinking."

[20] Quickly emptying her jar into the trough, she ran back to the well to draw, and she drew for all his camels.

[21] The man, meanwhile, stood gazing at her, silently wondering whether the LORD had made his errand successful or not.

[22] When the camels had finished drinking, the man took a gold nose-ring weighing a half-shekel, 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?"

[24] She replied, "I am the daughter of Bethuel the son of Milcah, whom she bore to Nahor."

[25] And she went on, "There is plenty of straw and feed at home, and also room to spend the night."

THE STEINSALTZ TANAKH

[19] **She concluded giving him to drink, and** after he had drunk his fill **she said:** It is not enough for you alone to drink; **I will draw for your camels** and give them to drink **as well, until they conclude to drink** and their thirst is satiated. [20] **She hurried, emptied** the water that remained in **her jug into the trough, ran again to the well to draw, and drew for all his camels.** It is no simple matter to give ten camels all the water they require; even a single camel that has traveled a long distance will consume a tremendous amount of water.

[21] Therefore, **the man** stared at her as she ran back and forth from the well to the trough and **was astonished at her. He was** still **silent,** waiting **to know whether the Lord had made his journey successful or not.** In light of her actions, he was certainly wondering about her identity and her family background, and thinking how he could learn more about her.

[22] **It was when the camels concluded to drink; the man took a gold nose ring,** a kind of medallion placed on one's nose or forehead, **whose weight was one half shekel, and two bracelets** that were to be strapped **on her hands, whose weight was ten gold shekels.** Based on comparisons with other sources, these were large and expensive pieces of jewelry. The servant initially removed the ornaments from his bag, then asked her for her identity, and only upon receiving a satisfactory answer did he give her the ring and bracelets. This is the interpretation of the Rashbam and the Ramban, although Rashi (verse 23) explains the sequence of events differently.

[23] The servant then asked Rebecca two questions: First, **he said: Whose daughter are you; please tell me.** It was not considered proper etiquette for a stranger to ask a girl's name; therefore he inquired into the identity of her family. Second, he asked: **Is there room in your father's house for us to stay the night,** as it is evident from your behavior that you come from a family that is hospitable to guests. [24] **She said to him: I am the daughter of Betuel, son of Milka, whom she bore to Nahor.** [25] **She** then **said to him:** With regard to your second question, **both straw and feed is plentiful with us, as well as room to stay the night.** She responded to the questions in the order in which they were asked. As noted by the Sages, it is considered the trait of a wise person to answer questions in the same order that they were posed.

SELECTED RASHI

24:22 AND TWO BRACELETS (the word for bracelet signifies something joined or united) — a symbol of the two Tablets of stone, joined one to another (Genesis Rabbah 60:6).

[26] The man bowed low in homage to the LORD

כוַיִּקֹּד הָאִישׁ וַיִּשְׁתַּחוּ לַיהוָה׃



THE READING · GENESIS 24:27–52

רביעי
Fourth Aliyah

Eliezer recounts the full story of his journey and the sign at the well, attributing every step to the direct guidance of the LORD in leading him to Rebekah; hearing this, Laban and Bethuel acknowledge that the match was decreed by the LORD, and Abraham's servant bows low to the ground in gratitude. AI SUMMARY

[27] and 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."

כזוַיֹּאמֶר בָּרוּךְ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי אֲדֹנִי אַבְרָהָם אֲשֶׁר לֹא־עָזַב חַסְדּוֹ וַאֲמִתּוֹ מֵעִם אֲדֹנִי אָנֹכִי בַּדֶּרֶךְ נָחַנִי יְהוָה בֵּית אֲחֵי אֲדֹנִי׃

[28] The maiden ran and told all this to her mother's household.

כחוַתָּרָץ הַנַּעֲרָ וַתַּגֶּד לְבֵית אִמָּהּ כַּדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה׃

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

כטוּלְרִבְקָה אָח וּשְׁמוֹ לָבָן וַיָּרָץ לָבָן אֶל־הָאִישׁ הַחוּצָה אֶל־הָעָיִן׃

THE STEINSALTZ TANAKH

[26] The condition that the servant had earlier stipulated (verse 14) was merely divination, and its fulfillment alone did not prove that this girl was destined to marry Isaac. However, once it became clear that the same girl who fulfilled his conditions was also a close relative of Abraham, **the man bowed and prostrated himself to the Lord.** [27] **He said: Blessed is the Lord, God of my master Abraham, who did not withhold His kindness and His truth from my master. I have been guided by the Lord on the** proper and correct **way,** and He ensured that I traveled **to the** very **house of my master's brethren.** [28] **The girl ran and told her mother's household akin to these matters.** [29] **Rebecca had a brother and his name was Laban.** It can be inferred from the continuation of the story that Laban was the firstborn, as well as the dominant figure in the family. **And Laban ran out to the man, to the spring.** After Rebecca ran to her home, her brother ran from the house to discover more about the mysterious man who had arrived from afar, given gifts to his sister, questioned her, and requested to lodge in their house.

SELECTED RASHI

24:29 AND HE RAN — Why did he run and what did he run for? (The next verse explains why). ויהי כראות הנזם AND IT CAME TO PASS WHEN HE SAW THE RING —he said, "This must be a rich man", and he had an eye to his money.

ל 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:

30 when 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.

לא וַיֹּאמֶר בּוֹא בְרוּךְ יְהוָה לָמָּה תַעֲמֹד בַּחוּץ
וְאָנֹכִי פִּנִּיתִי הַבַּיִת וּמָקוֹם לַגְּמַלִּים:

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?"

לב וַיָּבֵא הָאִישׁ הַבַּיְתָה וַיְפַתַּח הַגְּמַלִּים וַיִּתֵּן
תֶּבֶן וּמִסְפּוֹא לַגְּמַלִּים וּמַיִם לִרְחֹץ רַגְלָיו
וְרַגְלֵי הָאֲנָשִׁים אֲשֶׁר אִתּוֹ:

32 So 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.

לג (ויישם) [וַיּוּשַׂם] לְפָנָיו לֶאֱכֹל וַיֹּאמֶר לֹא
אֹכַל עַד אִם־דִּבַּרְתִּי דְבָרָי וַיֹּאמֶר דַּבֵּר:

33 But when food was set before him, he said, "I will not eat until I have told my tale." He said, "Speak, then."

לד וַיֹּאמַר עֶבֶד אַבְרָהָם אָנֹכִי:

34 "I am Abraham's servant," he began.

לה וַיהוָה בֵּרַךְ אֶת־אֲדֹנִי מְאֹד וַיִּגְדָּל וַיִּתֶּן־לוֹ
צֹאן וּבָקָר וְכֶסֶף וְזָהָב וַעֲבָדִם וּשְׁפָחֹת
וּגְמַלִּים וַחֲמֹרִים:

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.

לו וַתֵּלֶד שָׂרָה אֵשֶׁת אֲדֹנִי בֵן לַאדֹנִי אַחֲרֵי
זִקְנָתָהּ וַיִּתֶּן־לוֹ אֶת־כָּל־אֲשֶׁר־לוֹ:

36 And Sarah, my master's wife, bore my master a son in her old age, and he has assigned to him everything he owns.

THE STEINSALTZ TANAKH

30 Perhaps in his role as the older brother Laban wanted to ensure that everything would transpire in an appropriate and ethical manner, and it was for this reason that he ran to greet the servant. However, it is also possible that his motivations were less pure. **It was when he saw the nose ring and the bracelets upon his sister's hands,** an indication of wealth, **and when he heard the words of Rebecca his sister, saying: So spoke the man to me,** that he asked me certain questions, prayed, and engaged in other activities, but he did not relate any information about himself, that **he,** Laban, **came to the man and behold, he was standing beside the camels at the spring.** 31 **He,** Laban, **said: Come, blessed of the Lord; why do you stand outside when I have cleared the house** so that there will be room for you and your entourage to stay? Abraham's servant was accompanied by other subordinates, as is evident from the next verse. Laban continues: **And** in addition, there is even a **place for the** ten **camels,** who take up a large area. 32 **The man came to the house and he,** Laban, **unloaded the camels; he gave straw and feed for the camels, and,** as was customary in honor of a guest after a long journey, Laban gave him **water to wash his feet and the feet of the men who were with him.** 33 Following the greeting he received, Abraham's servant entered the house. **Food was placed before him to eat, and he said: I will not eat until I have spoken my words.** If the servant were to eat and lodge in the house, he would already feel a certain debt of gratitude to his hosts. Therefore, he insists on first explaining the purpose of his visit and his intentions, and only then will he eat. **He,** Laban, **said: Speak.** 34 **He said: I am Abraham's servant,** and I am responsible for all matters in my master's household. 35 **The Lord has greatly blessed my master; and he became** much more **wealthy** than when he lived in Haran with your family. **He,** God, **gave him flocks and cattle, and silver and gold, and slaves and maidservants, and camels and donkeys.** In addition, Abraham and Sarah were childless when they left Haran and already advanced in age, but since then, 36 **Sarah, my master's wife,** whom you know well, as she too is from your family, **bore a son to my master after her old age. And** as my master is Abraham's foremost son, **he gave to him everything that he has.**

לזוַיַּשְׁבִּעֵנִי אֲדֹנִי לֵאמֹר לֹא־תִקַּח אִשָּׁה לִבְנִי
מִבְּנוֹת הַכְּנַעֲנִי אֲשֶׁר אָנֹכִי יֹשֵׁב בְּאַרְצוֹ׃

37 Now 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;

לחאִם־לֹא אֶל־בֵּית־אָבִי תֵּלֵךְ וְאֶל־מִשְׁפַּחְתִּי
וְלָקַחְתָּ אִשָּׁה לִבְנִי׃

38 but you shall go to my father's house, to my kindred, and get a wife for my son.'

לטוָאֹמַר אֶל־אֲדֹנִי אֻלַי לֹא־תֵלֵךְ הָאִשָּׁה אַחֲרָי׃

39 And I said to my master, 'What if the woman does not follow me?'

מוַיֹּאמֶר אֵלַי יְהוָה אֲשֶׁר־הִתְהַלַּכְתִּי לְפָנָיו
יִשְׁלַח מַלְאָכוֹ אִתְּךָ וְהִצְלִיחַ דַּרְכֶּךָ וְלָקַחְתָּ
אִשָּׁה לִבְנִי מִמִּשְׁפַּחְתִּי וּמִבֵּית אָבִי׃

40 He 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.

מאאָז תִּנָּקֶה מֵאָלָתִי כִּי תָבוֹא אֶל־מִשְׁפַּחְתִּי
וְאִם־לֹא יִתְּנוּ לָךְ וְהָיִית נָקִי מֵאָלָתִי׃

41 Thus 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.'

THE STEINSALTZ TANAKH

37 The previous comments invite an obvious question: If Abraham is such an illustrious and wealthy individual, and all of his wealth will be inherited by this one son, why has he sent his servant so far away to find a wife for that son? The servant therefore explains: **My master administered an oath to me, saying: You shall not take a wife for my son from the daughters of the Canaanites, in whose land I live.** 38 **Rather, you shall go to my father's house and to my family, and take a wife for my son** from there. Since my master desires to remain within the framework of his family, he insisted that I should not find a wife for his son from any other nation, but only from his family. 39 **I said to my master: Perhaps the woman will not follow me.** The mention of this exchange is significant for the continuation of the story. 40 **He said to me: The Lord, before whom I walked,** whom I served, **will send His angel with you and will make your path successful; and you shall take a wife for my son from my family, and from my father's house.** 41 If you take such a wife, **then you shall be absolved of my oath, when you come to my family** and request from them a wife for my son; **and if they do not give her to you, you shall** likewise **be absolved of my oath.**

SELECTED RASHI

24:37 THOU SHALT NOT TAKE A WIFE FOR MY SON FROM THE DAUGHTERS OF THE CANAANITES if you do not first go to my father's house and to my family that thou mayest take a wife to my son and she will not be willing to follow you.

24:39 PERADVENTURE THE WOMAN WILL NOT FOLLOW ME —The word אולי perhaps is written without ו so that it may be read אֵלַי unto me. Eliezer had a daughter and he was endeavouring to find some reason why Abraham should say that he must appeal to him (Eliezer) that he should give his daughter in marriage to Isaac. Abraham said to him, "My son is blessed and you are subject to a curse. One who is under a curse cannot unite with one who is blessed" (Genesis Rabbah 59:9).

מב וָאָבֹא הַיּוֹם אֶל־הָעָיִן וָאֹמַר יְהוָה ׀ אֱלֹהֵי
אֲדֹנִי אַבְרָהָם אִם־יֶשְׁךָ־נָא ׀ מַצְלִיחַ דַּרְכִּי אֲשֶׁר
אָנֹכִי הֹלֵךְ עָלֶיהָ׃

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!

מג הִנֵּה אָנֹכִי נִצָּב עַל־עֵין הַמָּיִם וְהָיָה הָעַלְמָה ׀
הַיֹּצֵאת לִשְׁאֹב וְאָמַרְתִּי אֵלֶיהָ הַשְׁקִינִי־נָא
מְעַט־מַיִם מִכַּדֵּךְ׃

43 As 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,’

מד וְאָמְרָה אֵלַי ׀ גַּם־אַתָּה שְׁתֵה וְגַם לִגְמַלֶּיךָ
אֶשְׁאָב הִוא הָאִשָּׁה אֲשֶׁר־הֹכִיחַ יְהוָה
לְבֶן־אֲדֹנִי׃

44 and 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.’

מה אֲנִי ׀ טֶרֶם אֲכַלֶּה לְדַבֵּר אֶל־לִבִּי וְהִנֵּה רִבְקָה
יֹצֵאת ׀ וְכַדָּהּ עַל־שִׁכְמָהּ וַתֵּרֶד הָעַיְנָה וַתִּשְׁאָב
וָאֹמַר אֵלֶיהָ הַשְׁקִינִי נָא׃

45 I 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.’

מו וַתְּמַהֵר וַתּוֹרֶד כַּדָּהּ ׀ מֵעָלֶיהָ וַתֹּאמֶר שְׁתֵה
וְגַם־גְּמַלֶּיךָ אַשְׁקֶה וָאֶשְׁתְּ וְגַם הַגְּמַלִּים
הִשְׁקָתָה׃

46 She quickly lowered her jar and said, ‘Drink, and I will also water your camels.’ So I drank, and she also watered the camels.

THE STEINSALTZ TANAKH

42 I came this day to the spring, and I said: Lord, God of my master Abraham, if You would please make the path upon which I am going successful. 43 Behold, I am standing beside the spring of water; and there will be the young woman who comes out to draw, that I say to her: Please give me a little water to drink from your jug; 44 and she will say to me: You too drink, and I will draw for your camels as well; she is the woman whom the Lord has confirmed for my master’s son. 45 Before I concluded to speak to my heart, behold, Rebecca came out with her jug on her shoulder; and she descended to the spring, and drew. I said to her: Please give me drink. 46 She hurried and lowered her pitcher from her shoulder, and said: Drink, and I will give to your camels to drink as well. I drank and she gave to the camels to drink as well.

SELECTED RASHI

24:42 AND I CAME THIS DAY — Today I started on my journey and today I have arrived here. Hence we may infer that the earth (the road) shrunk for him (i. e. that the journey was shortened in a miraculous manner) (Sanhedrin 95a). R. Acha said: The ordinary conversation of the patriarchs' servants is more pleasing to God than even the Torah (religious discourse) of their children, for the chapter of Eliezer (the account of his journey) is repeated in the Torah (i. e. it is written once as a narrative and again repeated as part of the conversation of the patriarch’s servant) whereas many important principles of the Law are derived only from slight indications given in the Text (Genesis Rabbah 60:8).

מז וָאֶשְׁאַל אֹתָהּ וָאמַר בַּת־מִי אָתְּ וַתֹּאמֶר
בַּת־בְּתוּאֵל בֶּן־נָחוֹר אֲשֶׁר יָלְדָה־לּוֹ מִלְכָּה
וָאָשִׂם הַנֶּזֶם עַל־אַפָּהּ וְהַצְּמִידִים עַל־יָדֶיהָ:

47 I inquired of her, 'Whose daughter are you?' And she said, 'The daughter of Bethuel, son of Nahor, whom Milcah bore to him.' And I put the ring on her nose and the bands on her arms.

מח וָאֶקֹּד וָאֶשְׁתַּחֲוֶה לַיהוָה וָאֲבָרֵךְ אֶת־יְהוָה
אֱלֹהֵי אֲדֹנִי אַבְרָהָם אֲשֶׁר הִנְחַנִי בְּדֶרֶךְ אֱמֶת
לָקַחַת אֶת־בַּת־אֲחִי אֲדֹנִי לִבְנוֹ:

48 Then 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.

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

49 And 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."

נ וַיַּעַן לָבָן וּבְתוּאֵל וַיֹּאמְרוּ מֵיְהוָה יָצָא הַדָּבָר
לֹא נוּכַל דַּבֵּר אֵלֶיךָּ רַע אוֹ־טוֹב:

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

נא הִנֵּה־רִבְקָה לְפָנֶיךָ קַח וָלֵךְ וּתְהִי אִשָּׁה
לְבֶן־אֲדֹנֶיךָ כַּאֲשֶׁר דִּבֶּר יְהוָה:

51 Here is Rebekah before you; take her and go, and let her be a wife to your master's son, as the LORD has spoken."

נב וַיְהִי כַּאֲשֶׁר שָׁמַע עֶבֶד אַבְרָהָם
אֶת־דִּבְרֵיהֶם וַיִּשְׁתַּחוּ אַרְצָה לַיהוָה:

52 When Abraham's servant heard their words, he bowed low to the ground before the LORD.

THE STEINSALTZ TANAKH

47 **I** then **asked her and said: Whose daughter are you? She said: Daughter of Betuel, son of Nahor, whom Milka bore to him. I** subsequently **placed the ring on her nose, and the bracelets on her arms.** 48 **I bowed and prostrated myself to the Lord, and blessed the Lord, God of my master Abraham, who guided me in the true path to take the daughter of my master's brother for his son.** This concludes the servant's narration of the events that led him to his hosts. 49 **And now** he submits his request: **If you will do kindness and truth with my master** and agree to give the girl in marriage to the son of my master, **tell me. And if** you do **not** desire this match, likewise **tell me; and I will turn to the right or to the left.** I shall search elsewhere for a wife for the son of my master, as I can ask other family members as well. 50 **Laban and Betuel answered and said: The matter comes from the Lord,** and evidently it is destined in Heaven for Rebecca to marry Isaac; **we can speak to you neither bad nor good.** The mention of Laban's name before his father's is indicative of his central role; perhaps Betuel was weak or ill at the time. 51 **Behold, Rebecca is before you, take her, and go, and she shall be a wife for your master's son, as the Lord has spoken.** 52 **It was when Abraham's servant heard their statement** of consent, **he prostrated himself to the earth to the Lord,** again expressing his thanks for the success of his mission.

SELECTED RASHI

24:47 AND I ASKED HER ... AND I PUT THE RING —He changed the order of proceedings for in fact he had first given the presents and afterwards questioned her. But he did this in order that they should not catch him by his own words and say, "How could you give her anything when you did not yet know who she was!"

24:50 THEN LABAN AND BETHUEL ANSWERED —He (Laban) was a wicked person and so rushed in to answer before his father.

24:50 WE CANNOT SPEAK UNTO THEE — refusing this proposition either by answering you with unpleasant words (i. e. a flat refusal) or by giving you a reasoned reply, for it is evident that the matter proceedeth from the Lord since, according to your statement, He brought her and you together.

24:52 HE PROSTRATED HIMSELF — From this we may learn that we should thank God for good news (Genesis Rabbah 60:6).



THE READING · GENESIS 24:53–67

חמישי

Fifth Aliyah

Rebekah's willingness to leave immediately and join Isaac, despite her family's request for delay, demonstrates her independent commitment to fulfilling what she recognized as Hashem's (God's) plan. Her marriage to Isaac, bringing him comfort after Sarah's death, shows how the matriarch's arrival restored the Divine Presence (Shechinah) to the household, as Sarah's tent was renewed through her. AI SUMMARY

53 The 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.

נג וַיּוֹצֵא הָעֶבֶד כְּלֵי־כֶסֶף וּכְלֵי זָהָב וּבְגָדִים
וַיִּתֵּן לְרִבְקָה וּמִגְדָּנֹת נָתַן לְאָחִיהָ וּלְאִמָּהּ׃

54 Then 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."

נד וַיֹּאכְלוּ וַיִּשְׁתּוּ הוּא וְהָאֲנָשִׁים אֲשֶׁר־עִמּוֹ
וַיָּלִינוּ וַיָּקוּמוּ בַבֹּקֶר וַיֹּאמֶר שַׁלְּחֵנִי לַאדֹנִי׃

55 But her brother and her mother said, "Let the maiden remain with us some ten days; then you may go."

נה וַיֹּאמֶר אָחִיהָ וְאִמָּהּ תֵּשֶׁב הַנַּעֲרָ אִתָּנוּ יָמִים
אוֹ עָשׂוֹר אַחַר תֵּלֵךְ׃

THE STEINSALTZ TANAKH

53 **The servant produced vessels of silver, vessels of gold, and garments, and he gave them to Rebecca; and he gave her brother and her mother precious objects,** food or gifts, as a tribute for the match. 54 **He and the men who were with him ate and drank and stayed the night,** as the previous events and discussions all took place during the evening hours: He met Rebecca toward the end of the day before the sun set (verse 11). They most likely reached her house in the early evening hours, after which he dined with her family. **They arose in the morning, and he,** the servant, **said: Send me to my master.** I wish to return to him and fulfill his request. His implicit intention was that they should send the girl with him, and thereby allow him to complete his mission. 55 **Her brother,** who again spoke first, **and her mother said: Let the girl remain with us** for a full period, **one year, or ten months; afterward she shall go.** It is preferable that she remain here in the meantime; she may leave after all of the necessary preparations for her departure and her wedding have been completed.

SELECTED RASHI

24:55 AND HER BROTHER AND HER MOTHER SAID —But where was Bethuel? He wished to prevent the marriage therefore an angel came and killed him (Genesis Rabbah 60:12).

24:55 ימים (literally, days) means a year — just as (Leviticus 25:29) "For a whole year (ימים) shall he have the right of redemption" — for the custom was to give a maiden twelve months to provide herself with a trousseau (literally, ornaments) (Genesis Rabbah 60:12).

24:55 OR TEN — i. e. ten months. But if you say that it does really mean "days" ("a few days", and that it does not mean a year) I reply that it is not usual for people who make a request to ask for a little and to say "If you do not agree to this, then give us even more" (Ketubot 57b).

נו וַיֹּאמֶר אֲלֵהֶם אַל־תְּאַחֲרוּ אֹתִי וַיהוָה הִצְלִיחַ דַּרְכִּי שַׁלְּחוּנִי וְאֵלְכָה לַאדֹנִי:

56 He 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.”

נז וַיֹּאמְרוּ נִקְרָא לַנַּעֲרָ וְנִשְׁאֲלָה אֶת־פִּיהָ:

57 And they said, “Let us call the girl and ask for her reply.”

נח וַיִּקְרְאוּ לְרִבְקָה וַיֹּאמְרוּ אֵלֶיהָ הֲתֵלְכִי עִם־הָאִישׁ הַזֶּה וַתֹּאמֶר אֵלֵךְ:

58 They called Rebekah and said to her, “Will you go with this man?” And she said, “I will.”

נט וַיְשַׁלְּחוּ אֶת־רִבְקָה אֲחֹתָם וְאֶת־מֵנִקְתָּהּ וְאֶת־עֶבֶד אַבְרָהָם וְאֶת־אֲנָשָׁיו:

59 So they sent off their sister Rebekah and her nurse along with Abraham’s servant and his men.

ס וַיְבָרְכוּ אֶת־רִבְקָה וַיֹּאמְרוּ לָהּ אֲחֹתֵנוּ אַתְּ הֲיִי לְאַלְפֵי רְבָבָה וְיִירַשׁ זַרְעֵךְ אֵת שַׁעַר שֹׂנְאָיו:

60 And 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.”

סא וַתָּקָם רִבְקָה וְנַעֲרֹתֶיהָ וַתִּרְכַּבְנָה עַל־הַגְּמַלִּים וַתֵּלַכְנָה אַחֲרֵי הָאִישׁ וַיִּקַּח הָעֶבֶד אֶת־רִבְקָה וַיֵּלֶךְ:

61 Then Rebekah and her maids arose, mounted the camels, and followed the man. So the servant took Rebekah and went his way.

THE STEINSALTZ TANAKH

56 He said to them: Do not delay me, as the Lord has made my path successful; send me and I will go to my master. 57 They said: We will call the girl and ask her response. 58 They called Rebecca and said to her: Will you go with this man? Some commentaries suggest that their use of the term “this man” instead of referring to him as the servant of Abraham, was a veiled warning: Do you really agree to undertake a long journey with this unfamiliar man? **She said: I will go.** 59 After Rebecca’s response, her family were left with no choice, and therefore **they sent Rebecca their sister, and her nursemaid, and Abraham’s servant, and his men. 60 They blessed Rebecca, and said to her: Our sister, may you become thousands and ten thousands.** We wish that a great nation should come from you, **and let your descendants** defeat and **inherit the gate of their enemies. 61 Rebecca and her young women rose.** Since Nahor’s family was noble and wealthy, Rebecca was sent with her nursemaid and other girls to accompany her. **And** they **rode upon the camels, and followed the man.** Rebecca’s nursemaid and servants rode on the camels that were led by Abraham’s other subordinates, while **the servant took Rebecca** himself, personally overseeing her well-being, **and went.**

SELECTED RASHI

24:57 AND ASK HER MOUTH — From this we may infer that a woman should not be given in marriage except with her own consent (Genesis Rabbah 60:12).

24:58 AND SHE SAID, I WILL GO — of my own accord even though you do not consent (Genesis Rabbah 60:12).

24:60 MAYEST THOU BECOME THOUSANDS OF MYRIADS — May you and your seed receive that blessing which was promised to Abraham on Mount Moriah, (Genesis 22:17) “I will greatly multiply thy seed … [and let thy seed possess the gates of their enemies]”. May it be God’s will that that seed may proceed from you and not from another woman”.

סבוְיִצְחָק֙ בָּ֣א מִבּ֔וֹא בְּאֵ֖ר לַחַ֣י רֹאִ֑י וְה֥וּא יוֹשֵׁ֖ב
בְּאֶ֥רֶץ הַנֶּֽגֶב׃

62 Isaac had just come back from the vicinity of Beer-lahai-roi, for he was settled in the region of the Negeb.

סגוַיֵּצֵ֥א יִצְחָ֛ק לָשׂ֥וּחַ בַּשָּׂדֶ֖ה לִפְנ֣וֹת עָרֶ֑ב וַיִּשָּׂ֤א
עֵינָיו֙ וַיַּ֔רְא וְהִנֵּ֥ה גְמַלִּ֖ים בָּאִֽים׃

63 And Isaac went out walking in the field toward evening and, looking up, he saw camels approaching.

BERESHIT RABBAH 60:14 ONLINE AT TORAHFORM.COM Why camels carried Rebecca and why Isaac prayed alone

IBN EZRA & SFORNO P. 41 Why Isaac took a detour before meeting Rivkah

סהוַתִּשָּׂ֤א רִבְקָה֙ אֶת־עֵינֶ֔יהָ וַתֵּ֖רֶא אֶת־יִצְחָ֑ק
וַתִּפֹּ֖ל מֵעַ֥ל הַגָּמָֽל׃

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

THE NETZIV P. 53 Why Rivka was so struck seeing Yitzchak for the first time

סהוַתֹּ֣אמֶר אֶל־הָעֶ֔בֶד מִי־הָאִ֥ישׁ הַלָּזֶ֖ה הַהֹלֵ֣ךְ
בַּשָּׂדֶ֑ה לִקְרָאתֵ֔נוּ וַיֹּ֣אמֶר הָעֶ֔בֶד הוּא֙ אֲדֹנִ֔י
וַתִּקַּ֥ח הַצָּעִ֖יף וַתִּתְכָּֽס׃

65 and 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.

THE STEINSALTZ TANAKH

62 **Isaac came from going to** visit the area of **Be'er Lahai Roi,** the location where the angel of God had found Hagar. This name was due to Hagar's vision of God there; it means the well [be'er] of the living [ḥai] God of my vision [ro'i] (see 16:14). **And he,** Isaac, **was living in the land of the South.** 63 **Isaac went out to walk [lasuaḥ] in the field** among the bushes [siḥim] **toward evening; and he lifted his eyes, and behold, he saw camels coming.** 64 Presumably realizing that their caravan was approaching their destination, **Rebecca lifted her eyes,** and **she saw Isaac.** Perhaps his appearance had been previously described to her, or she possibly identified him by his dress and manner as a noble individual, as he was strolling in the field rather than working. She might have intuitively sensed that he was Isaac. In any event, she was excited, **and she fell from the camel.** This probably means that she leaned toward the servant, who was walking next to her and leading the camel. 65 **She said to the servant,** as she leaned toward him: **Who is that man who walks in the field toward us?** He appears to me to be an exceptional individual. Although Rebecca had apparently already identified Isaac, perhaps she wanted her suspicions confirmed. Alternatively, the dialogue in this verse preceded the events of the previous verse. **The servant said: He is my master,** Isaac. **She took the veil and covered herself.** Since her journey was complete, and she was now about to meet her future husband, she covered herself with a veil in a formal manner.

SELECTED RASHI

24:62 HE HAD JUST COME FROM THE WELL LACHAI-ROI— For he had gone there to bring Hagar back to Abraham that he might take her again as his wife (Genesis Rabbah 60:14).

24:63 TO MEDITATE — this means "to pray" (Genesis Rabbah 60:14), as we find (Psalms 102:1) "[A prayer of the afflicted ...] when he poureth forth his plaint.

24:64 AND SHE SAW ISAAC — She saw his lordly appearance and gazed at him in astonishment (Genesis Rabbah 60:15).

24:64 SHE ALIGHTED (literally, she fell) — She let herself slide towards the ground; as the Targum renders it וארכינת —she inclined herself towards the earth, but did not actually reach the ground. Similarly in (Genesis 24:14) "let down thy pitcher, I pray thee", the word הטי let down, Onkelos translates by ארכיני "incline", and (Psalm 18:10) "He bowed (ויט) the heavens" he translates by וארכין which means "He bent them towards the ground". A similar idea is (Psalms 37:24) "Though he fall (יפול) he shall not be utterly cast down" which is as much as to say, "though he bends himself towards the earth yet he shall not touch the ground (i. e. shall not fall entirely)" (Genesis Rabbah 60:15).

66 The servant told Isaac all the things that he had done.

סוַיְסַפֵּר הָעֶבֶד לְיִצְחָק אֵת כָּל־הַדְּבָרִים אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה:

67 Isaac 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.

סזוַיְבִאֶהָ יִצְחָק הָאֹהֱלָה שָׂרָה אִמּוֹ וַיִּקַּח אֶת־רִבְקָה וַתְּהִי־לוֹ לְאִשָּׁה וַיֶּאֱהָבֶהָ וַיִּנָּחֶם יִצְחָק אַחֲרֵי אִמּוֹ:

RAMBAN P. 38 Why had Sarah's tent stayed empty until Rebekah arrived?

THE STEINSALTZ TANAKH

66 **The servant related to Isaac all the matters that he had done,** his own actions, as well as the miraculous fashion in which his mission was accomplished. 67 **Isaac brought her into the tent of his mother Sarah.** As a distinguished woman, Sarah likely had her own tent, in which she kept her personal possessions. This tent, located in Hebron, remained empty after her death, and it was here that Isaac brought Rebecca. It is possible that this is the tent referred to earlier, in the story of Abraham's hospitality to the angels (18:9–10). **He took Rebecca, she became his wife, and he loved her. Isaac was comforted after his mother.** Evidently, his mother had died not long before. As Sarah's only son, Isaac felt a deep inner void upon her passing. Upon the arrival of Rebecca, he finally felt that he could be comforted after his mother's demise. He brought Rebecca to Sarah's tent because she was expected to take over the matriarchal role in the family, a function that she would indeed fulfill in an important sense later.

SELECTED RASHI

24:67 INTO HIS MOTHER SARAH'S TENT — He brought her into the tent and she became exactly like his mother Sarah — that is to say, the words signify as much as, [And he brought her into the tent] and, behold, she was Sarah, his mother). For whilst Sarah was living, a light had been burning in the tent from one Sabbath eve to the next, there was always a blessing in the dough (a miraculous increase) and a cloud was always hanging over the tent (as a divine protection), but since her death all these had stopped. However, when Rebecca came, they reappeared" (Genesis Rabbah 60:16).

24:67 [AND ISAAC WAS COMFORTED] AFTER HIS MOTHER'S DEATH — It is natural that whilst a man's mother is living he is wrapped up in her, but when she dies he finds comfort in his wife (Pirkei DeRabbi Eliezer 32).



THE READING · GENESIS 25:1–11

שישי

Sixth Aliyah

Even in his final years, Avraham (Abraham) builds a family through Keturah, yet he ensures that his full inheritance and spiritual legacy pass to Yitzchak (Isaac) alone, sending the other sons away with gifts to avoid conflict. Avraham dies "old and contented" at one hundred seventy-five, buried by both Yitzchak and Yishmael (Ishmael) together in the cave of Machpelah, after which Hashem's (God's) blessing passes directly to Yitzchak. AI SUMMARY

א וַיֹּסֶף אַבְרָהָם וַיִּקַּח אִשָּׁה וּשְׁמָהּ קְטוּרָה׃

[1] Abraham took another wife, whose name was Keturah.

BERESHIT RABBAH 60:16 P. 34 How Rebecca showed she could fill Sarah's role

BERESHIT RABBAH 61:3 ONLINE AT TORAHFORM.COM Why effort should never stop just because you've already succeeded

ב וַתֵּלֶד לוֹ אֶת־זִמְרָן וְאֶת־יָקְשָׁן וְאֶת־מְדָן
וְאֶת־מִדְיָן וְאֶת־יִשְׁבָּק וְאֶת־שׁוּחַ׃

[2] She bore him Zimran, Jokshan, Medan, Midian, Ishbak, and Shuah.

ג וְיָקְשָׁן יָלַד אֶת־שְׁבָא וְאֶת־דְּדָן וּבְנֵי דְדָן הָיוּ
אַשּׁוּרִם וּלְטוּשִׁם וּלְאֻמִּים׃

[3] Jokshan begot Sheba and Dedan. The descendants of Dedan were the Asshurim, the Letushim, and the Leummim.

THE STEINSALTZ TANAKH

[1] Following the banishment of Ishmael to the desert with Hagar, the death of Sarah, and the marriage of Isaac, **Abraham,** who was left alone, **took another wife, and her name was Ketura.** [2] **She bore him Zimran, and Yokshan, and Medan, and Midyan, and Yishbak, and Shuah.** [3] **And Yokshan begot Sheva and Dedan.** These tribes possibly lived in the southern Arabian peninsula. Sheva and Dedan also appear in the list of the sons of Raama, son of Kush, son of Ham (see 10:7). **And the sons of Dedan were Ashurim, and Letushim, and Le'umim.** These are either simply the names of the tribes, or descriptions of their character traits, which mean, respectively: Those who dwell in encampments, those who are swift, and those who form nation-units.

SELECTED RASHI

25:1 KETURAH — This is Hagar. She was named Keturah because her deeds were as beautiful (sweet) as incense (Ketoreth) (Genesis Rabbah 61).

ד וּבְנֵי מִדְיָן עֵיפָה וָעֵפֶר וַחֲנֹךְ וַאֲבִידָע וְאֶלְדָּעָה כָּל־אֵלֶּה בְּנֵי קְטוּרָה:

4 The descendants of Midian were Ephah, Epher, Enoch, Abida, and Eldaah. All these were descendants of Keturah.

ה וַיִּתֵּן אַבְרָהָם אֶת־כָּל־אֲשֶׁר־לוֹ לְיִצְחָק:

5 Abraham willed all that he owned to Isaac;

ו וְלִבְנֵי הַפִּילַגְשִׁים אֲשֶׁר לְאַבְרָהָם נָתַן אַבְרָהָם מַתָּנֹת וַיְשַׁלְּחֵם מֵעַל יִצְחָק בְּנוֹ בְּעוֹדֶנּוּ חַי קֵדְמָה אֶל־אֶרֶץ קֶדֶם:

6 but 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.

BERESHIT RABBAH 61:4 P. 35 Why things added later can outshine the original

ז וְאֵלֶּה יְמֵי שְׁנֵי־חַיֵּי אַבְרָהָם אֲשֶׁר־חָי מְאַת שָׁנָה וְשִׁבְעִים שָׁנָה וְחָמֵשׁ שָׁנִים:

7 This was the total span of Abraham's life: one hundred and seventy-five years.

ח וַיִּגְוַע וַיָּמָת אַבְרָהָם בְּשֵׂיבָה טוֹבָה זָקֵן וְשָׂבֵעַ וַיֵּאָסֶף אֶל־עַמָּיו:

8 And Abraham breathed his last, dying at a good ripe age, old and contented; and he was gathered to his kin.

THE STEINSALTZ TANAKH

[4] **And the sons of Midyan,** who is listed here among the sons of Abraham, were: **Ephah, and Efer, and Hanokh, and Avida, and Eldaa. All these were the children of Ketura.** Since Abraham was very old and had been infertile until the births of Ishmael and Isaac, some commentaries suggest that these were the sons of Ketura alone, and were not Abraham's, although he raised them in his house. However, this explanation is not particularly convincing. It seems more likely that whereas Abraham considered himself elderly and advanced in age, he was still quite capable of procreation and he himself fathered a number of children from Ketura. It can also be inferred from here and from the story of the birth of Ishmael that it was Sarah who was infertile. [5] Although these additional offspring were born to him, **Abraham gave all that was his to Isaac.** [6] **And to the sons of the concubines of Abraham,** Hagar and Ketura, **Abraham gave gifts.** Since he did not deem them his inheritors, he instead gave them presents, in the form of money or valuables, but not property. **And** he **sent them away from Isaac his son, while he was still alive,** so that they should not contest Isaac's inheritance. They traveled **eastward, to the east country.** The nations that have been identified from this list indeed lived on the eastern side of the Jordan River, and reached as far as the southern portion of the Negev, perhaps even to the Arabian Peninsula. These nations were sent eastward, and dwelled together with the descendants of Ishmael, and do not feature in the main narrative of the Torah. [7] **These are the days of the years of Abraham's life that he lived, one hundred and seventy-five years.** Abraham lived for many years after his wife Sarah passed away. [8] **Abraham expired and died at a good old age.** His later years were pleasant, without battles, struggles, or tension in his family. He was **aged** in years **and content** with his life. **And he was gathered to his people,** his soul returned to its source. This expression is used by the Bible only in reference to the passing of righteous individuals.

SELECTED RASHI

25:5 AND ויתן אברהם וגו AND ABRAHAM GAVE etc. — R. Nehemiah said, he gave him the blessing as a legacy (literally, will, testament). The Holy One, blessed be He, had said to Abraham (12:2) "Be thou a blessing" which means "the blessing are entrusted to you that you may bless whomsoever you please", and Abraham transferred them to Isaac (cf. Genesis Rabbah 61:6).

25:6 THE CONCUBINES — The word is written deficient, (without י, but our texts have a י in both places) because he had only one concubine, Hagar, who is identical with Keturah. Wives are those whom a man marries with a marriage-contract (Ketubah): concubines have no marriage contract, as we explain in the Talmud (Sanhedrin 21a) in reference to David's wives and concubines.

25:6 ABRAHAM GAVE GIFTS — Our Rabbis explained (Sanhedrin 91a) that he transmitted to them the names of impure things. Another explanation is: all that he had received as gifts because of Sarah — and other gifts that people had given him — all these he gave to them because he did not wish to derive any benefit from these.

25:7 A HUNDRED AND SEVENTY FIVE YEARS — (lit, a hundred years, and seventy years and five years) — at the age of one hundred years he was as strong as at seventy, and at the age of seventy he was as five — without sin.

ט וַיִּקְבְּרוּ אֹתוֹ יִצְחָק וְיִשְׁמָעֵאל בָּנָיו
אֶל־מְעָרַת הַמַּכְפֵּלָה אֶל־שְׂדֵה עֶפְרֹן בֶּן־צֹחַר
הַחִתִּי אֲשֶׁר עַל־פְּנֵי מַמְרֵא:

י הַשָּׂדֶה אֲשֶׁר־קָנָה אַבְרָהָם מֵאֵת בְּנֵי־חֵת
שָׁמָּה קֻבַּר אַבְרָהָם וְשָׂרָה אִשְׁתּוֹ:

יא וַיְהִי אַחֲרֵי מוֹת אַבְרָהָם וַיְבָרֶךְ אֱלֹהִים
אֶת־יִצְחָק בְּנוֹ וַיֵּשֶׁב יִצְחָק עִם־בְּאֵר לַחַי רֹאִי:

[9] His sons Isaac and Ishmael buried him in the cave of Machpelah, in the field of Ephron son of Zohar the Hittite, facing Mamre,

[10] the field that Abraham had bought from the Hittites; there Abraham was buried, and Sarah his wife.

[11] After the death of Abraham, God blessed his son Isaac. And Isaac settled near Beer-lahai-roi.

THE STEINSALTZ TANAKH

[9] **Isaac and Ishmael, his** eldest **sons, buried him in the Cave of Makhpela, in the field of Efron son of Tzohar the Hitite, that is** located **before Mamre.** They knew that Abraham had purchased this land for a burial plot and that he had buried Sarah there. [10] **The field that Abraham purchased from the children of Het; there Abraham was buried, and Sarah his wife.** Their descendants would later be buried there as well. [11] **It was after the death of Abraham, God blessed Isaac his son; and Isaac lived beside Be'er Lahai Roi** in the Negev, where he was engaged primarily in shepherding sheep. The Torah will later relate that he also worked in agriculture (26:12).

SELECTED RASHI

25:9 ISAAC AND ISHMAEL — From this we gather that Ishmael repented of his evil ways (cf.Bava Batra 16b) and yielded the precedence to Isaac. This is what is meant by the "good old age" mentioned in connection with Abraham (Genesis Rabbah 38:12).

25:11 AND IT CAME TO PASS AFTER THE DEATH OF ABRAHAM THAT GOD BLESSED ISAAC etc. — He comforted him with the words of the formula of consolation which we offer to mourners (Sotah 14a). Another explanation is: Although the Holy One, blessed be He, had entrusted the blessings to Abraham to bless whomever he wished yet he (Abraham) feared to bless Isaac, because he foresaw that Esau would be born from him. He therefore said, "Let the Master of the blessings come himself and bless whomever it seems proper in his eyes" — God came and blessed him (Isaac)(Genesis Rabbah 61:6).



THE READING · GENESIS 25:12–18

שביעי

Seventh Aliyah

Ishmael's twelve sons become chieftains of twelve tribes, fulfilling God's promise to Abraham that Ishmael would father a great nation, and Ishmael lives to one hundred and thirty-seven years before being gathered to his kin. The settlement of his descendants, spreading from Havilah to Asshur, marks the closing of Ishmael's line before the Torah's narrative turns fully to Isaac and his descendants. AI SUMMARY

יבוְאֵ֗לֶּה תּוֹלְדֹת֙ יִשְׁמָעֵ֣אל בֶּן־אַבְרָהָ֔ם אֲשֶׁ֣ר
יָלְדָ֔ה הָגָ֖ר הַמִּצְרִ֣ית שִׁפְחַ֣ת שָׂרָ֑ה לְאַבְרָהָֽם׃

יגוְאֵ֗לֶּה שְׁמוֹת֙ בְּנֵ֣י יִשְׁמָעֵ֔אל בִּשְׁמֹתָ֖ם
לְתוֹלְדֹתָ֑ם בְּכֹ֣ר יִשְׁמָעֵאל֙ נְבָי֔וֹת וְקֵדָ֖ר וְאַדְבְּאֵ֥ל
וּמִבְשָֽׂם׃

ידוּמִשְׁמָ֥ע וְדוּמָ֖ה וּמַשָּֽׂא׃

טוחֲדַ֥ד וְתֵימָ֖א יְטוּר֥ נָפִ֖ישׁ וָקֶדְמָֽה׃

12 This is the line of Ishmael, Abraham's son, whom Hagar the Egyptian, Sarah's slave, bore to Abraham.

13 These are the names of the sons of Ishmael, by their names, in the order of their birth: Nebaioth, the first-born of Ishmael, Kedar, Adbeel, Mibsam,

14 Mishma, Dumah, Massa,

15 Hadad, Tema, Jetur, Naphish, and Kedmah.

THE STEINSALTZ TANAKH

12 Following the completion of the story of Abraham's life, the Torah deals briefly with his secondary offspring, thereby rounding out the picture with regard to his children. **These are the descendants of Ishmael son of Abraham, whom Hagar the Egyptian, Sarah's maidservant, bore to Abraham.** 13 **And these are the names of the sons of Ishmael, by their names, according to their birth: The firstborn of Ishmael was Nevayot.** **And** the other sons of Ishmael, some of whom became heads of families, tribes, or small nations, are: **Kedar, Adbe'el, Mivsam,** 14 **Mishma, Duma, Masa,** 15 **Hadad, Temah, Yetur, Nafish, and Kedem.**

SELECTED RASHI

25:13 BY THEIR NAMES ACCORDING TO THEIR PROGENY — by the order in which they were born one after the other.



THE READING · GENESIS 25:16–18

מפטיר
Maftir

Ishmael's twelve sons become chieftains of their tribes, fulfilling God's earlier promise that he would father a great nation, and he lives to the age of one hundred thirty-seven before dying and being gathered to his people. His descendants settle across a broad territory from Havilah to Asshur, dwelling alongside their kinsmen. AI SUMMARY

16 These are the sons of Ishmael and these are their names by their villages and by their encampments: twelve chieftains of as many tribes. —

טזאֵ֚לֶּה הֵ֣ם בְּנֵ֣י יִשְׁמָעֵאל֮ וְאֵ֣לֶּה שְׁמֹתָם֒ בְּחַצְרֵיהֶ֔ם וּבְטִירֹתָ֑ם שְׁנֵים־עָשָׂ֥ר נְשִׂיאִ֖ם לְאֻמֹּתָֽם׃

17 These were the years of the life of Ishmael: one hundred and thirty-seven years; then he breathed his last and died, and was gathered to his kin.—

יזוְאֵ֚לֶּה שְׁנֵ֣י חַיֵּ֣י יִשְׁמָעֵ֔אל מְאַ֥ת שָׁנָ֛ה וּשְׁלֹשִׁ֥ים שָׁנָ֖ה וְשֶׁ֣בַע שָׁנִ֑ים וַיִּגְוַ֣ע וַיָּ֔מָת וַיֵּאָ֖סֶף אֶל־עַמָּֽיו׃

18 They dwelt from Havilah, by Shur, which is close to Egypt, all the way to Asshur; they camped alongside all their kinsmen.

יחוַיִּשְׁכְּנ֗וּ מֵֽחֲוִילָה֙ עַד־שׁ֣וּר אֲשֶׁר֮ עַל־פְּנֵ֣י מִצְרַ֔יִם בֹּאֲכָ֖ה אַשּׁ֑וּרָה עַל־פְּנֵ֖י כָּל־אֶחָ֥יו נָפָֽל׃

THE STEINSALTZ TANAKH

16 **These are the sons of Ishmael and these are their names.** The sons of Ishmael typically did not construct permanent settlements. Rather, they dwelled **in their enclosures,** which were considered semi-permanent living places, **and in their fortifications,** structures that were capable of shielding them when necessary. The sum total of the sons of Ishmael was **twelve princes of their nations.** Each one of them was the prince of a small nation. 17 **These are the years of the life of Ishmael:** He lived for **one hundred and thirty-seven years; and he expired and died; and he was gathered to his people.** 18 **They,** the sons of Ishmael, **dwelled from Havila, until Shur that is adjacent to Egypt, all the way to Ashur: He resided [nafal] adjacent to all his brethren.** Alternatively: His portion was ultimately adjacent to his brethren . The term nafal here possibly means conquest, so that the tribes of Ishmael ruled over their brethren, the children of Ketura.

SELECTED RASHI

25:17 AND HE EXPIRED — This expression — expiring — associated with a word denoting dying is only mentioned in the case of righteous people (Bava Batra 16b).



HAFTARAH · I KINGS 1:1-31

הפטרה

Haftarah

As King David ages and Adonijah prematurely proclaims himself king without consulting his father, Nathan and Bathsheba intervene to remind David of his earlier oath that Solomon would succeed him. David, affirming his commitment, swears before them that Solomon will indeed become king, reestablishing the rightful succession. AI SUMMARY

א וְהַמֶּלֶךְ דָּוִד זָקֵן בָּא בַּיָּמִים וַיְכַסֻּהוּ בַּבְּגָדִים
וְלֹא יִחַם לוֹ׃

1 King David was now old, advanced in years; and though they covered him with bedclothes, he never felt warm.

ב וַיֹּאמְרוּ לוֹ עֲבָדָיו יְבַקְשׁוּ לַאדֹנִי הַמֶּלֶךְ
נַעֲרָה בְתוּלָה וְעָמְדָה לִפְנֵי הַמֶּלֶךְ וּתְהִי־לוֹ
סֹכֶנֶת וְשָׁכְבָה בְחֵיקֶךָ וְחַם לַאדֹנִי הַמֶּלֶךְ׃

2 His courtiers said to him, “Let a young virgin be sought for my lord the king, to wait upon Your Majesty and be his attendant; and let her lie in your bosom, and my lord the king will be warm.”

ג וַיְבַקְשׁוּ נַעֲרָה יָפָה בְּכָל גְּבוּל יִשְׂרָאֵל
וַיִּמְצְאוּ אֶת־אֲבִישַׁג הַשּׁוּנַמִּית וַיָּבִאוּ אֹתָהּ
לַמֶּלֶךְ׃

3 So they looked for a beautiful girl throughout the territory of Israel. They found Abishag the Shunammite and brought her to the king.

THE STEINSALTZ TANAKH

1 **King David was old, advanced in years.** Although he was only about seventy, the trials and tribulations of his life had caused him to age early. **They covered him in garments,** blankets and quilts, **but he would not be warmed.** This was one of the signs of his old age. Coverings do not create heat but merely preserve the body’s own warmth. David’s body was insufficiently healthy to produce the heat he needed. 2 **His servants said to him: Have them seek for my lord the king a young virgin; she will stand before the king** to serve him in an official capacity, **and she will be an attendant for him,** taking care of his daily needs. Additionally, the real reason for her appointment is that **she will lie in your bosom** and warm your bed, **and it will** thereby **be warm for my lord the king.** 3 **They sought** for this purpose **a beautiful young woman within the entire border of Israel, and they found Avishag the Shunamite,** from the city of Shunem, **and brought her to the king.** Although Avishag’s beauty was not necessary for her task, nevertheless David’s servants searched for a pretty woman, as everything surrounding the king should be aesthetically pleasing.

RASHI

1:1 But he was not warmed. Our Rabbis said, “He who disgraces clothing will ultimately be deprived of their pleasures.” [Dovid’s clothing did not warm him] because he tore off the corner of Shaul’s robe. The Midrash [Aggadah states], Rabbi Shmuel son of Nachmeni said, that as Dovid saw the angel standing in Yerusholayim with his sword drawn in his hand, his blood became cold from fear.

1:2 Virgin girl. Her virginity warms her flesh.

1:2 A warmer. “A warmer,” and similarly, “and he who chops wood will be warmed [יסכן] by them.”

הפטרה

ד וְהַנַּעֲרָה יָפָה עַד־מְאֹד וַתְּהִי לַמֶּלֶךְ סֹכֶנֶת
וַתְּשָׁרְתֵהוּ וְהַמֶּלֶךְ לֹא יְדָעָהּ׃

4 The girl was exceedingly beautiful. She became the king's attendant and waited upon him; but the king was not intimate with her.

ה וַאֲדֹנִיָּה בֶן־חַגִּית מִתְנַשֵּׂא לֵאמֹר אֲנִי אֶמְלֹךְ
וַיַּעַשׂ לוֹ רֶכֶב וּפָרָשִׁים וַחֲמִשִּׁים אִישׁ רָצִים
לְפָנָיו׃

5 Now Adonijah son of Haggith went about boasting, "I will be king!" He provided himself with chariots and horses, and an escort of fifty outrunners.

ו וְלֹא־עֲצָבוֹ אָבִיו מִיָּמָיו לֵאמֹר מַדּוּעַ כָּכָה
עָשִׂיתָ וְגַם־הוּא טוֹב־תֹּאַר מְאֹד וְאֹתוֹ יָלְדָה
אַחֲרֵי אַבְשָׁלוֹם׃

6 His father had never scolded him: "Why did you do that?" He was the one born after Absalom and, like him, was very handsome.

ז וַיִּהְיוּ דְבָרָיו עִם יוֹאָב בֶּן־צְרוּיָה וְעִם אֶבְיָתָר
הַכֹּהֵן וַיַּעְזְרוּ אַחֲרֵי אֲדֹנִיָּה׃

7 He conferred with Joab son of Zeruiah and with the priest Abiathar, and they supported Adonijah;

THE STEINSALTZ TANAKH

4 **The young woman was exceedingly beautiful, and she became an attendant for the king and she served him, but the king was not intimate with her.** He did not engage in relations with her, perhaps because he was too old and frail. 5 In the meantime, **Adoniya son of** David from his wife **Hagit exalted himself, saying: I will become king,** as I am the rightful heir to the throne. **He provided for himself chariots, horsemen, and fifty men running before him** to announce his arrival. 6 In a parenthetical aside, the verse provides a few explanations for Adoniya assuming the trappings of the monarchy: **His father never distressed him, saying: Why did you do so?** David had never chastised or disciplined Adoniya when he acted improperly. **Moreover, he,** Adoniya, **was of very good form,** a handsome man. His external appearance reinforced his self-confidence and his belief that he was destined for greatness. **And** the verse offers a third reason for his claim to the throne, namely that **she,** Hagit, **bore him after Avshalom.** Avshalom and Adoniya were not maternal brothers; the verse simply means that Adoniya was the next oldest brother, after Avshalom. Consequently, after the two eldest sons in the family, Amnon and Avshalom, had been killed, Adoniya was David's oldest surviving son. 7 Adoniya sought to enlist the support of certain prominent individuals in his design to ascend the throne: **He consulted with Yoav son of Tzeruya and with Evyatar the priest, and they supported Adoniya.**

RASHI

1:4 Was not intimate with her. Because a virgin is more suitable for [the purpose] of warming than a non-virgin. But our Rabbis said [he was not intimate with her] because "He shall not have too many wives," and he already had eighteen.

1:5 Exalted himself. He elevated himself.

1:5 And fifty men. Whose spleens had been removed, and whose soles of their feet had been carved.

1:6 Had never angered him. He did not anger him. This [episode] teaches you that he who refrains from rebuking his child causes his death.

1:6 And he was also very handsome. [He was as handsome] as Avsholom, about whom it is written, "And as Avsholom there was no one as handsome." This caused them to be proud.

1:6 She gave birth to him. ["She" refers to] his mother.

1:6 After Avsholom. I.e., his mother reared him in the same spoiled manner that Avsholom's mother reared him.

1:7 With Yoav ben Tseruyah. Because he knew that Dovid bore a grudge against him for having killed Avner, Amasa, and Avsholom; and that he would eventually charge his son, who would reign in his place, to deal with him. He [Yoav] therefore wanted that this one [Adoniyahu] should reign through his assistance so that he would favor him.

1:7 And with Evyosor the kohein. He was dismissed from the priesthood at the time when Dovid escaped from Yerusholayim on account of Avsholom, when he [Evyosor] consulted the Urim and Tumim and was unsuccessful as it is stated, "And Evyosor went up." He [Evyosor] was a descendant of Eili. And he knew that he would not serve in the days of Shlomo, for it was stated to Eili, "And I will appoint for Myself a faithful kohein… and he will serve before My anointed one…" He [Evyosor] wanted that this one [Adoniyah become king] through his assistance.

8 but the priest Zadok, Benaiah son of Jehoiada, the prophet Nathan, Shimei and Rei, and David's own fighting men did not side with Adonijah.

ח וְצָדוֹק הַכֹּהֵן וּבְנָיָהוּ בֶן־יְהוֹיָדָע וְנָתָן הַנָּבִיא וְשִׁמְעִי וְרֵעִי וְהַגִּבּוֹרִים אֲשֶׁר לְדָוִד לֹא הָיוּ עִם־אֲדֹנִיָּהוּ׃

9 Adonijah made a sacrificial feast of sheep, oxen, and fatlings at the Zoheleth stone which is near En-rogel; he invited all his brother princes and all the king's courtiers of the tribe of Judah;

ט וַיִּזְבַּח אֲדֹנִיָּהוּ צֹאן וּבָקָר וּמְרִיא עִם אֶבֶן הַזֹּחֶלֶת אֲשֶׁר־אֵצֶל עֵין רֹגֶל וַיִּקְרָא אֶת־כָּל־אֶחָיו בְּנֵי הַמֶּלֶךְ וּלְכָל־אַנְשֵׁי יְהוּדָה עַבְדֵי הַמָּלֶךְ׃

10 but he did not invite the prophet Nathan, or Benaiah, or the fighting men, or his brother Solomon.

י וְאֶת־נָתָן הַנָּבִיא וּבְנָיָהוּ וְאֶת־הַגִּבּוֹרִים וְאֶת־שְׁלֹמֹה אָחִיו לֹא קָרָא׃

11 Then Nathan said to Bathsheba, Solomon's mother, "You must have heard that Adonijah son of Haggith has assumed the kingship without the knowledge of our lord David.

יא וַיֹּאמֶר נָתָן אֶל־בַּת־שֶׁבַע אֵם־שְׁלֹמֹה לֵאמֹר הֲלוֹא שָׁמַעַתְּ כִּי מָלַךְ אֲדֹנִיָּהוּ בֶן־חַגִּית וַאֲדֹנֵינוּ דָוִד לֹא יָדָע׃

12 Now take my advice, so that you may save your life and the life of your son Solomon.

יב וְעַתָּה לְכִי אִיעָצֵךְ נָא עֵצָה וּמַלְטִי אֶת־נַפְשֵׁךְ וְאֶת־נֶפֶשׁ בִּנֵךְ שְׁלֹמֹה׃

THE STEINSALTZ TANAKH

8 But Tzadok the priest, who was also a prominent priest like Evyatar, **Benayahu son of Yehoyada,** the commander of the Keretites and the Peletites, **Natan the prophet, Shimi** and **Re'i,** two of David's men, **and the mighty men who were with David,** all these **were not with Adoniyahu.** These men did not oppose Adoniya actively, but they refused to endorse him as long as the king had not stated his opinion. Although Benayahu was subordinate to Yoav, who was the commander-in-chief of the army, since he was the commander of a separate military unit, he could act independently. **9** One day, **Adoniyahu slaughtered sheep and oxen and fatlings at the Zohelet stone,** which means the dragged stone, or the stone alongside which water flows, **which is** located **near Ein Rogel,** a spring near Jerusalem, **and he called all his brothers, the king's sons, and all the men of Judah, the king's servants,** to participate in his celebration; **10 but he did not call Natan the prophet, Benayahu, the mighty men** of David, **and Solomon his brother,** as Adoniya knew that they did not support him, and he also suspected that Solomon considered himself to be the heir to the throne. **11 Natan spoke to Bathsheba, mother of Solomon, saying: Have you not heard that Adoniyahu son of Hagit has** in effect **become king, and David our lord does not know? 12 Now go, let me please counsel you, and** you will thereby **save your life, and the life of your son Solomon.** Since the crown was promised to Solomon, it is clear that Adoniya will try to eliminate him, and perhaps you, his mother, as well.

RASHI

1:8 And Noson the prophet. Who prophesied to Dovid that Shlomo would reign, as it is stated in Divrei Hayomim, " his name will be Shlomo."

1:9 And fattened [oxen]. Oxen which are [fattened by being] fed forcefully.

1:9 The stone of Zocheles. A huge stone used by the young men to test their strength by moving or dragging it. An expression similar to "moving [זוחלין]" water, or, "those that creep [זוחלי] on the earth." [Targum] Yonoson rendered [אבן זוחלת as] אבן סכותא [=a lookout stone], upon which people stand and look far into the distance.

1:9 Ein-Rogel. [Targum] Yonoson rendered [עין רוגל as] עין קצרא, which is [a well] used by a clothes washer who would press the woolen clothes with his feet [=רגליו], by trampling [on them].

1:10 And his brother Shlomo, he did not invite. For he knew that the prophet had prophesied about him that he would reign.

1:12 And you will save your life. From the rivalry which will follow the death of the king, for your son will wish to reign, as the Holy One Blessed Is He, had promised him.

הפטרה

יג לְכִי֩ וּבֹ֨אִי | אֶל־הַמֶּ֜לֶךְ דָּוִ֗ד וְאָמַרְתְּ֤ אֵלָיו֙
הֲלֹֽא־אַתָּ֣ה אֲדֹנִ֔י הַמֶּ֖לֶךְ נִשְׁבַּ֣עְתָּ לַאֲמָתְךָ֑
לֵאמֹ֡ר כִּי־שְׁלֹמֹ֣ה בְנֵךְ֩ יִמְלֹ֨ךְ אַחֲרַ֜י וְה֣וּא יֵשֵׁ֗ב
עַל־כִּסְאִ֛י וּמַדּ֥וּעַ מָלַ֖ךְ אֲדֹנִיָּֽהוּ׃

יד הִנֵּ֥ה עוֹדֵ֛ךְ מְדַבֶּ֥רֶת שָׁ֖ם עִם־הַמֶּ֑לֶךְ וַאֲנִי֙
אָב֣וֹא אַחֲרַ֔יִךְ וּמִלֵּאתִ֖י אֶת־דְּבָרָֽיִךְ׃

טו וַתָּבֹ֥א בַת־שֶׁ֖בַע אֶל־הַמֶּ֣לֶךְ הַחַדְרָ֑ה וְהַמֶּ֥לֶךְ
זָקֵ֖ן מְאֹ֑ד וַאֲבִישַׁג֙ הַשּׁוּנַמִּ֔ית מְשָׁרֶ֖ת
אֶת־הַמָּֽלֶךְ׃

טז וַתִּקֹּ֥ד בַּת־שֶׁ֖בַע וַתִּשְׁתַּ֣חוּ לַמֶּ֑לֶךְ וַיֹּ֥אמֶר
הַמֶּ֖לֶךְ מַה־לָּֽךְ׃

יז וַתֹּ֣אמֶר לוֹ֮ אֲדֹנִי֒ אַתָּ֣ה נִשְׁבַּ֣עְתָּ בַּיהוָ֣ה
אֱלֹהֶ֗יךָ לַאֲמָתֶ֔ךָ כִּי־שְׁלֹמֹ֣ה בְנֵ֔ךְ יִמְלֹ֥ךְ אַחֲרַ֖י
וְה֣וּא יֵשֵׁ֑ב עַל־כִּסְאִֽי׃

יח וְעַתָּ֣ה הִנֵּ֣ה אֲדֹנִיָּ֣ה מָלָ֔ךְ וְעַתָּ֥ה אֲדֹנִ֖י הַמֶּ֑לֶךְ
לֹ֥א יָדָֽעְתָּ׃

יט וַיִּזְבַּ֣ח שׁ֣וֹר וּמְרִיא־וְצֹ֗אן לָרֹב֙ וַיִּקְרָ֣א
לְכָל־בְּנֵ֣י הַמֶּ֔לֶךְ וּלְאֶבְיָתָ֥ר הַכֹּהֵ֖ן וּלְיֹ֣אָב שַׂר
הַצָּבָ֑א וְלִשְׁלֹמֹ֥ה עַבְדְּךָ֖ לֹ֥א קָרָֽא׃

13 Go immediately to King David and say to him, 'Did not you, O lord king, swear to your maidservant: "Your son Solomon shall succeed me as king, and he shall sit upon my throne"? Then why has Adonijah become king?'

14 While you are still there talking with the king, I will come in after you and confirm your words."

15 So Bathsheba went to the king in his chamber. —The king was very old, and Abishag the Shunammite was waiting on the king.—

16 Bathsheba bowed low in homage to the king; and the king asked, "What troubles you?"

17 She answered him, "My lord, you yourself swore to your maidservant by the LORD your God: 'Your son Solomon shall succeed me as king, and he shall sit upon my throne.'

18 Yet now Adonijah has become king, and you, my lord the king, know nothing about it.

19 He has prepared a sacrificial feast of a great many oxen, fatlings, and sheep, and he has invited all the king's sons and Abiathar the priest and Joab commander of the army; but he has not invited your servant Solomon.

THE STEINSALTZ TANAKH

13 Natan advised Bathsheba: **Go and come to King David, and say to him: Did you not, my lord the king, take an oath to your maidservant, saying: Solomon your son will become king after me, and he will sit upon my throne? Why has Adoniyahu become king?** 14 **Behold, while you are still speaking there with the king, I will come after you, and I will complete your words.** When confronted with two sources verifying this information and suggesting action, David will take the steps necessary to prevent the coronation of Adoniya and to crown Solomon instead. 15 **Bathsheba came to the king, into the chamber; the king was very old;** he appeared weak and was probably lying in bed. **And Avishag the Shunamite was serving the king.** She was the king's personal caregiver who attended to all his needs, and in practice she was the person closest to him. 16 **Bathsheba bowed, and prostrated herself to the king, and the king said: What happened to you?** What is the matter? 17 **She said to him: My lord, you took an oath by the Lord your God to your maidservant,** to me, saying: **Solomon your son will become king after me, and he will sit upon my throne.** 18 **Now behold, Adoniya has become king; and now, my lord the king, you did not know.** 19 **He** has **slaughtered bulls, fatlings, and sheep in abundance.** He has held a great celebration in honor of his ascent to the throne, **and summoned all the sons of the king, and Evyatar the priest, and Yoav commander of the army, but Solomon your servant he did not summon.** Evidently, these are not innocent festivities, but a coronation.

כ וְאַתָּה֙ אֲדֹנִ֣י הַמֶּ֔לֶךְ עֵינֵ֥י כָל־יִשְׂרָאֵ֖ל עָלֶ֑יךָ
לְהַגִּ֤יד לָהֶם֙ מִי֙ יֵשֵׁ֣ב עַל־כִּסֵּ֔א אֲדֹנִ֥י־הַמֶּ֖לֶךְ
אַחֲרָֽיו׃

[20] And so the eyes of all Israel are upon you, O lord king, to tell them who shall succeed my lord the king on the throne.

כא וְהָיָ֗ה כִּשְׁכַּב֙ אֲדֹנִ֣י־הַמֶּ֔לֶךְ עִם־אֲבֹתָ֖יו
וְהָיִ֣יתִי אֲנִ֣י וּבְנִ֣י שְׁלֹמֹ֔ה חַטָּאִ֖ים׃

[21] Otherwise, when my lord the king lies down with his fathers, my son Solomon and I will be regarded as traitors."

כב וְהִנֵּ֣ה עוֹדֶ֔נָּה מְדַבֶּ֖רֶת עִם־הַמֶּ֑לֶךְ וְנָתָ֖ן
הַנָּבִ֥יא בָּֽא׃

[22] She was still talking to the king when the prophet Nathan arrived.

כג וַיַּגִּ֣ידוּ לַמֶּ֔לֶךְ לֵאמֹ֖ר הִנֵּ֣ה נָתָ֣ן הַנָּבִ֑יא וַיָּבֹ֥א
לִפְנֵ֖י הַמֶּ֑לֶךְ וַיִּשְׁתַּ֥חוּ לַמֶּ֖לֶךְ עַל־אַפָּ֥יו אָֽרְצָה׃

[23] They announced to the king, "The prophet Nathan is here," and he entered the king's presence. Bowing low to the king with his face to the ground,

כד וַיֹּ֣אמֶר֮ נָתָן֒ אֲדֹנִ֣י הַמֶּ֔לֶךְ אַתָּ֥ה אָמַ֖רְתָּ
אֲדֹנִיָּ֣הוּ יִמְלֹ֔ךְ אַחֲרַ֖י וְה֣וּא יֵשֵׁ֑ב עַל־כִּסְאִֽי׃

[24] Nathan said, "O lord king, you must have said, 'Adonijah shall succeed me as king and he shall sit upon my throne.'

כה כִּ֣י | יָרַ֣ד הַיּ֗וֹם וַיִּזְבַּ֤ח שׁוֹר֙ וּמְרִיא־וְצֹ֣אן לָרֹ֔ב
וַיִּקְרָ֞א לְכָל־בְּנֵ֣י הַמֶּ֗לֶךְ וּלְשָׂרֵ֤י הַצָּבָא֙
וּלְאֶבְיָתָ֣ר הַכֹּהֵ֔ן וְהִנָּ֥ם אֹכְלִ֛ים וְשֹׁתִ֖ים לְפָנָ֑יו
וַיֹּאמְר֖וּ יְחִ֥י הַמֶּ֖לֶךְ אֲדֹנִיָּֽהוּ׃

[25] For he has gone down today and prepared a sacrificial feast of a great many oxen, fatlings, and sheep. He invited all the king's sons and the army officers and Abiathar the priest. At this very moment they are eating and drinking with him, and they are shouting, 'Long live King Adonijah!'

כו וְלִ֣י אֲנִי־עַבְדֶּ֗ךָ וּלְצָדֹק֙ הַכֹּהֵ֔ן וְלִבְנָיָ֥הוּ
בֶן־יְהוֹיָדָ֖ע וְלִשְׁלֹמֹ֥ה עַבְדְּךָ֖ לֹ֥א קָרָֽא׃

[26] But he did not invite me your servant, or the priest Zadok, or Benaiah son of Jehoiada, or your servant Solomon.

THE STEINSALTZ TANAKH

[20] **And you, my lord the king, the eyes of all Israel are upon you, to tell them who will sit upon the throne of my lord the king after him.** You must decide; if you do not take action, Adoniya will take the throne. [21] **It will be that when my lord the king lies with his fathers,** when you die, **I and my son Solomon will be deprived.** If you do not state your preference now, we will suffer later. [22] **Behold, while she was still talking with the king, Natan the prophet came** into the chamber, as planned. [23] **They,** David's servants, **told the king, saying: Behold, it is Natan the prophet. He,** Natan, **came before the king and prostrated himself to the king on his face to the ground,** a standard courtesy honoring the head of state, who must be respected and feared by all. [24] **Natan said: My lord the king, did you say: Adoniyahu will become king after me, and he will sit upon my throne?** [25] **For he,** Adoniya, **went down today** to the spring, **and he slaughtered bulls, fatlings, and sheep in abundance, and he summoned all the king's sons, and the commanders of the army, and Evyatar the priest; here they are, eating and drinking before him, and they are saying: Long live King Adoniyahu.** [26] Natan added: **But me, your servant, and Tzadok the priest, and Benayahu son of Yehoyada, and your servant Solomon, he did not summon** to the festivities.

RASHI

1:21 Sinners. [They will be] lacking and restrained from any greatness, as in, "[Sling a stone] at a hair, and not miss [יחטיא]."

1:24 Did you say. In the interrogative.

1:25 For he has gone down this very day. The city was situated on higher ground and the אבן הזוחלת was below in a valley.

הפטרה

כז אִם מֵאֵת֙ אֲדֹנִ֣י הַמֶּ֔לֶךְ נִהְיָ֥ה הַדָּבָ֖ר הַזֶּ֑ה וְלֹ֤א הוֹדַעְתָּ֙ אֶת־[עַבְדְּךָ֔] (עבדיך) מִ֥י יֵשֵׁ֛ב עַל־כִּסֵּ֥א אֲדֹנִי־הַמֶּ֖לֶךְ אַחֲרָֽיו׃

27 Can this decision have come from my lord the king, without your telling your servant who is to succeed to the throne of my lord the king?”

כח וַיַּ֥עַן הַמֶּ֖לֶךְ דָּוִ֑ד וַיֹּ֣אמֶר קִרְאוּ־לִ֔י לְבַת־שָׁ֖בַע וַתָּבֹ֥א לִפְנֵ֖י הַמֶּ֑לֶךְ וַתַּעֲמֹ֖ד לִפְנֵ֥י הַמָּֽלֶךְ׃

28 King David’s response was: “Summon Bathsheba!” She entered the king’s presence and stood before the king.

כט וַיִּשָּׁ֥בַע הַמֶּ֖לֶךְ וַיֹּאמַ֑ר חַי־יְהוָ֗ה אֲשֶׁ֤ר־פָּדָה֙ אֶת־נַפְשִׁ֔י מִכָּל־צָרָ֖ה׃

29 And the king took an oath, saying, “As the LORD lives, who has rescued me from every trouble:

ל כִּ֣י כַאֲשֶׁר֩ נִשְׁבַּ֨עְתִּי לָ֜ךְ בַּיהוָ֣ה אֱלֹהֵ֣י יִשְׂרָאֵל֮ לֵאמֹר֒ כִּי־שְׁלֹמֹ֣ה בְנֵךְ֮ יִמְלֹךְ֣ אַחֲרַי֒ וְה֣וּא יֵשֵׁ֔ב עַל־כִּסְאִ֖י תַּחְתָּ֑י כִּ֥י כֵ֛ן אֶֽעֱשֶׂ֥ה הַיּ֖וֹם הַזֶּֽה׃

30 The oath I swore to you by the LORD, the God of Israel, that your son Solomon should succeed me as king and that he should sit upon my throne in my stead, I will fulfill this very day!”

לא וַתִּקֹּ֤ד בַּת־שֶׁבַע֙ אַפַּ֣יִם אָ֔רְצָה וַתִּשְׁתַּ֖חוּ לַמֶּ֑לֶךְ וַתֹּ֗אמֶר יְחִ֤י אֲדֹנִי֙ הַמֶּ֣לֶךְ דָּוִ֔ד לְעֹלָֽם׃

31 Bathsheba bowed low in homage to the king with her face to the ground, and she said, “May my lord King David live forever!”

THE STEINSALTZ TANAKH

27 **Is it from my lord the king that this matter came to be, and you did not inform your servant who will sit on the throne of my lord the king after him?** Alternatively, this is a statement rather than a question: I am surprised that you have not declared to your servant who will be the next king. 28 **King David answered and said: Summon Bathsheba to me.** Apparently, Bathsheba had left the room upon the prophet’s entrance. **She came before the king and stood before the king.** 29 **The king took an oath and said: As the Lord lives, who has redeemed my soul from every trouble,** 30 **for as I** previously **took an oath to you by the Lord, God of Israel, saying that Solomon your son will become king after me, and he will sit upon my throne in my stead; so I will do this day.** I will take steps today to ensure that he will reign after me. 31 **Bathsheba bowed with her face to the ground, and she prostrated herself to the king** as a sign of gratitude, **and she said: May my lord, King David, live forever.** This standard declaration to the king had a poignant meaning here: I wish that you would live forever and would not need an heir, but I thank you for your promise.



מדרש

Midrash

2 chosen for the booklet · 3 more online at torahform.com/chayei-sara

BERESHIT RABBAH 60:16 · ON GENESIS 25:1
How Rebecca showed she could fill Sarah's role 34

BERESHIT RABBAH 61:4 · ON GENESIS 25:6
Why things added later can outshine the original 35

ON GENESIS 25:1

How Rebecca showed she could fill Sarah's role

Bereshit Rabbah 60:16

Rebecca's arrival restored the miraculous signs that had accompanied Sarah—the protective cloud over the tent, the open doors of hospitality, the blessing in the dough, and the Shabbat lamp—showing that she was a true successor to Sarah's piety and virtue, conducting herself in purity just as Sarah had. Seeing this, Isaac drew her into his mother's tent, recognizing her as a worthy continuation of Sarah's legacy. Rabbi Yudan derives an additional lesson from the sequence of events: a parent should first ensure that his grown children are married before remarrying himself, as Abraham did by waiting until after Isaac's marriage to Rebecca before he himself took Ketura as a wife. AI SUMMARY

“Isaac brought her into the tent of his mother Sarah; he took Rebecca, she became his wife, and he loved her, and Isaac was comforted after his mother” (Genesis 24:67). “Isaac brought her into the tent of his mother Sarah” – all the days that Sarah was alive, there was a cloud suspended over the entrance to her tent. When she died, that cloud ceased. When Rebecca came, the cloud returned. All the days that Sarah was alive, the doors were kept wide open [for guests]. When Sarah died, that opening ceased. When Rebecca came, the opening returned. All the days that Sarah was alive, there was [divine] blessing bestowed upon her dough. When Sarah died, that blessing ceased. When Rebecca came, it returned. All the days that Sarah was alive, there was a lamp kindled from Shabbat night until Shabbat night. When Sarah died, that lamp ceased. When Rebecca came, it returned. When he saw that she was acting just like his mother, separating ḥalla in purity, and shaping loaves from her dough in purity, immediately, he “brought her into the tent.”

Rabbi Yudan said: The Torah teaches you that if an [unmarried] person has adult children, he should see to marrying them off first and then take a wife for himself. From whom do you learn it? From Abraham. First, “Isaac brought her into the tent of his mother Sarah” and then, “Abraham took another wife, and her name was Ketura” (Genesis 25:1).

ON GENESIS 25:6

Why things added later can outshine the original

Bereshit Rabbah 61:4

The sages debate the identity of Ketura, with Rav identifying her as Hagar, reunited with Abraham by divine command, her new name reflecting that she was "perfumed" with mitzvot (commandments) and good deeds and had remained sealed and untouched during her years of separation from him. Bar Kappara broadens the discussion into a general principle: whenever Scripture uses a term of "addition" (tosefet) to describe a person or thing, that addition surpasses the original—illustrated through Abel surpassing Cain, Benjamin surpassing Joseph, Shela surpassing Er, the extra years granted to Job and Hezekiah, and the sons of Ketura surpassing Ishmael. The unifying teaching is that what comes as a divinely granted addition often exceeds the original in merit or blessing. AI SUMMARY

"And her name was Ketura" – Rav said: This is Hagar. Rabbi Neḥemya said to him: 'But is it not written "[Abraham took] another [vayosef]"?' He said to him: '[That means only that] he married her on the basis of a divine command, just as it says: "The Lord continued [vayosef] speaking to me again, saying"' (Isaiah 8:5). He said to him: 'But is it not written "and her name was Ketura"?' He said to him: 'That is because she was perfumed [mekuteret] with mitzvot and good deeds.' [He said to him:] But is it not written: "And to the sons of the concubines of Abraham [Abraham gave gifts and sent them away from Isaac his son, while he was still alive...]"?' (Genesis 25:6). He said to him: 'Pilagsham is written. "While he was still alive [ḥai]" – [this alludes to Hagar] the one who had sat by the well and said to the One who lives [ḥai] forever: See my misery.'

Rabbi Berekhya said: Even though it says: "She [Hagar] went off and wandered in the wilderness..." (Genesis 21:14), lest you say that perhaps some person was suspected [of becoming immorally involved] with her, the verse states: "And her name was Ketura" – from the word 'bound up' [ketar]; she was like one who seals a treasure and takes it out bound and sealed.

Bar Kappara said: Additions [tosafto] that are granted by the Holy One blessed be He are even greater than the original item. Cain was the original son [of Eve], and Abel, because he was considered an addition, as it is written: "She continued [vatosef] giving birth...[to Abel]" (Genesis 4:2) – he was born with his two twin sisters. Joseph was the original son [of Rachel], and Benjamin, because addition is written in his regard, he produced ten children, as it is written: "And the sons of Benjamin: Bela, and Bekher..." (Genesis 46:21). Er was the original son [of Judah], and Shela, because an expression of addition is used for him, he produced ten courts. That is what is written in Chronicles: "The sons of Shela son of Judah: Er, father of Lekha; and Lada father of Maresha; and the families of the house of the craft of fine linen, of the house of Ashbe'a..." (I Chronicles 4:21–23). Job's age was originally only seventy years, and one hundred and forty years were added to his life, as it is written: "After this, Job lived for one hundred and forty years" (Job 42:16). Hezekiah's original reign was only fourteen years, but fifteen years were added to it, as it is stated: "Behold, I am adding fifteen years to your days" (Isaiah 38:5). Ishmael was the original son, and the sons of Ketura, because an expression of addition is used regarding them [the verse tells us] "She bore him Zimran..." (Genesis 25:2).

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Bereshit Rabbah 60:14, Bereshit Rabbah 61:3, Bereshit Rabbah 58:2, each to read or print.

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מפרשים

Classical Commentaries

4 chosen for the booklet

GENESIS 24:14 · SFORNO
Why true kindness means giving more than asked 38

GENESIS 24:67 · RAMBAN
Why had Sarah's tent stayed empty until Rebekah arrived? 38

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Why Isaac took a detour before meeting Rivkah 41

SFORNO

Why true kindness means giving more than asked

Genesis 24:14

Eliezer's test establishes a model of chessed (lovingkindness): the one seeking a kindness should ask for only a small part of what is truly needed, while the one who gives should respond by providing fully, even beyond what was requested. The sign Eliezer seeks is meant to reveal a woman whose character embodies this generous, overflowing quality of giving. Additionally, the word "hochachta" hints that Rivkah's worthiness came through Divine admonishment and guidance that shaped and refined her character until she became fit to marry Yitzchok. AI SUMMARY

"let the maiden to whom I say, 'Please, lower your jar that I may drink,' and who replies, 'Drink, and I will also water your camels'—let her be the one whom You have decreed for Your servant Isaac. Thereby shall I know that You have dealt graciously with my master.'"

I will also water your camels. — A supplicant should ask for less than his needs and the giver should provide him with all his needs or more.

Whom You have determined. — Hochachta in Hebrew can also be rendered "whom You have rebuked" — You admonished and instructed her until she was worthy of marrying Yitzchok.

RAMBAN

Why had Sarah's tent stayed empty until Rebekah arrived?

Genesis 24:67

Isaac's bringing Rebekah into Sarah's tent reflects the deep honor he showed his mother, since that tent had stood untouched since her death, reserved for its righteous mistress, until Rebekah's own righteousness made her fit to occupy it. The verse's mention of Isaac's love for his wife explains the depth of his grief for Sarah, which found no comfort until Rebekah herself consoled him. The midrash adds that Rebekah's arrival restored the miraculous blessings of Sarah's household, such as the blessing in the dough, which had ceased upon Sarah's death, showing that she inherited her mother-in-law's merit and spiritual stature. AI SUMMARY

"Isaac 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."

AND ISAAC BROUGHT HER INTO HIS MOTHER — SARAH'S TENT. The construct is missing here [for the noun ohel (tent) appears with the definite article, and in this form it cannot be used in construct with "his mother Sarah." The verse then should be understood as if it were written, "and Isaac brought her into the tent which was the tent of his mother Sarah."] There are many cases like this.

The purport of the verse is to tell of the honor that Isaac bestowed upon his mother for from the time that Sarah died they did not take down her tent because they said, “Let not another woman come into the tent of the honorable mistress.” But when he saw Rebekah he brought her into that tent in her honor and there he took her as his wife. This is the meaning of the words, and he loved her, and he was comforted, indicating that he was deeply grieved for his mother, finding no comforter until he was comforted by his wife through his love for her. Otherwise, what reason is there for Scripture to mention a man’s love for his wife?

But Onkelos explained: And Isaac brought her into the tent and, behold, she was like Sarah his mother. It is for this reason that Scripture mentions the love he had for her because it was on account of her righteousness and the aptness of her deeds that he loved her and was comforted by her.

And so the Rabbis mentioned in Bereshith Rabbah, “Before Sarah died there was a blessing of miraculous increase in the dough. [After her death it stopped, and when Rebekah came the blessing reappeared.”]

RAMBAN

Did Abraham lack anything, and why swear the servant in?

Genesis 24:1

Ibn Ezra reads "ba-kol" (in all things) simply as a description of Abraham's full complement of blessings—length of days, wealth, honor, and sons—and dismisses the midrashic idea that Abraham had a daughter named Bakkol, noting that if that were the peshat (plain meaning), the verse would have said "im" (with) Bakkol rather than "ba-kol." Ramban likewise explains the verse's plain sense as Abraham lacking nothing except grandchildren through Isaac, which is why he adjured his servant, but he then defends and expands the derash (homiletical reading), presenting Acheirim's view that "bakol" alludes to a Divine attribute called Kol, from which emanates a related attribute called "bat" (daughter)—identified with Knesseth Yisrael (the assembly of Israel) and the Shechinah (Divine Presence)—with which Abraham, as the embodiment of chesed (kindness), was specially blessed. Thus Ibn Ezra stays within the peshat and rejects the fanciful midrashic detail, while Ramban affirms the peshat but insists that the Rabbis' derash points to a deep kabbalistic truth not to be mocked by those who think themselves masters of Torah's secrets. AI SUMMARY

“Abraham was now old, advanced in years, and the LORD had blessed Abraham in all things.”

AND ABRAHAM WAS OLD, WELL STRICKEN IN AGE. — Scripture reiterates [Abraham’s old age although it has already mentioned it] in order to inform us of the reason that he adjured his servant. Thus Scripture says that because Abraham saw himself to be very old and he thought that if he will send the servant to the land of his origin, perhaps before the messenger would return, he will have gone to his long home, he therefore adjured his servant — whose counsel Isaac would follow since he ruled over all that he had — that he should not take for him a wife from the daughters of Canaan.

In Bereshith Rabbah, the Rabbis said: “Here it was old age combined with vitality; further on it was old age without vitality.” By this the Rabbis wanted to explain that ba’im [literally: “coming” in days — mentioned above] — means the beginning of the days of old age, as the word ba’im indicates the present, just as, ‘Haba’im’ (those that come) in at these gates. But here it says that he was very old for

already he was ba bayamim [literally: "he had come in days" — past tense], just as: Thy brother 'ba' (came) with subtlety.

AND THE ETERNAL HAD BLESSED ABRAHAM IN ALL THINGS. — I.e., with riches, possessions, honor, longevity and children, which are all the treasures of man. Scripture mentions this in order to say that Abraham was perfect in every detail, lacking in no respect save seeing his son have children who would inherit his superior position and his honor. This was why he desired it.

Now our Rabbis have a wonderful insight into this verse. They said: "And the Eternal had blessed Abraham 'bakol' (in all things). Rabbi Meir said that Abraham was blessed in that he did not have a daughter. Rabbi Yehudah said that he did have a daughter. Acheirim say that he did have a daughter and her name was Bakol."

Rabbi Meir thus explained that Abraham did not have a daughter. This was a blessing for Abraham for he could not have married her except to the cursed sons of Canaan. If he were to send her to his country, she would also worship the idols as they did because a woman is subject to the authority of her husband. Indeed, Abraham did not want his worthy children from his wife Sarah to go outside the Land, and surely not that they worship the idols.

Rabbi Yehudah, however, explained that Abraham did have a daughter since the Merciful One did not even cause him to lack a daughter, and that was the blessing implied by the expression, in all things, for he had everything that people desire, completely without exception. Then came Acheirim and mentioned the name of the daughter.

Now truthfully, the intent of Acheirim and their controversy with Rabbi Yehudah were not merely to inform us of the name of this daughter. Far it be from them to expend the great and generalized blessing of Abraham on this matter, i.e., that Scripture is saying that G-d blessed him with one daughter with that name. However, Acheirim established a new interpretation on this verse, a very profound matter, and they explained with it one of the secrets of the Torah.

Thus they said that the word bakol hints at a great matter, namely, that the Holy One, blessed be He, has an attribute called Kol (All), so called because it is the foundation of everything. It is with reference to this attribute that it says, I am the Eternal that maketh 'Kol' (all). And this is also what Scripture says, And the profit of the earth is 'bakol' (in all), that is to say, the profit of the earth and the abundant goodness that is bestowed upon all that come into the world is on account of this attribute Kol. It is the eighth attribute of the thirteen attributes.

And there is another attribute called bath [literally "daughter"] that emanates from it, and with it He moves everything. This is "the Court of the Holy One, blessed be He," that is hinted at in the word, Vahashem (And the Eternal), in all places. It is called kalah (bride) in the book of The Song of Songs because it is comprised of hakol (the All), and it is this attribute which the Sages have surnamed Knesseth Yisrael (the assembly of Israel) in many places because it is the gathering of hakol (the All). It was this attribute which was to Abraham as a bath because he was the man of kindness, and he conducted himself in accordance with it.

This was why Acheirim said that this blessing with which Abraham had been blessed in all things does not allude either to his having begotten a daughter from his wife Sarah, as Rabbi Yehudah said, or not, as Rabbi Meir claimed, but instead it hints at a great matter, i.e., that he was blessed with an attribute called bath which is contained in the attribute Kol, and is therefore also called Kol, being analogous to the expression, For My name is in him. Thus Abraham was blessed in heaven and on earth. This is why he said, By the Eternal, the G-d of heaven and the G-d of the earth.

This matter is to be found hinted at in the traditions of our Rabbis in many places. Thus they said in the Midrash Chazita: "Rabbi Shimon ben Yochai asked Rabbi Eliezer the son of Rabbi Yosi, 'Have you possibly heard from your father of the meaning of the verse, The crown wherewith his mother hath crowned him?' He said to him, 'Yes.' He asked, 'How?' He replied, 'It is like a king who had an only daughter whom he loved very much, and he

would call her “my daughter.” This did not completely express his love for her until he called her “my sister.” Still he was not satisfied until he called her “my mother.” In the same way, the Holy One, blessed be He, loved Israel in the beginning and called them “My daughter.” It is this which Scripture says, Hearken, O daughter, and consider. This did not completely express His love for them until He called them “My sister,” as it is said, Open to me, my sister, my love. Still He was not satisfied until He called them “My mother,” as it is said, Attend unto Me, O My people, ‘ule’umi’ (O My nation). The word is written le’imi (O My mother).’ Then Rabbi Shimon ben Yochai arose and kissed him on his head, and he said to him, ‘Had I come to listen to this word of yours it would have been sufficient.’

...” Now, had the commentator who prides himself on his knowledge of the Torah’s secrets known this, his lips would be dumb and not deride the words of our Rabbis. Therefore, I have written this in order to silence those who speak arrogantly against the righteous one.

IBN EZRA, WHO READS IT DIFFERENTLY

AND THE LORD HAD BLESSED ABRAHAM IN ALL THINGS. — With length of days, wealth, honor and sons, these being all the things that men desire to have. If the interpretation that Abraham had a daughter named Bakkol were correct, then Scripture should have read: and the Lord blessed Abraham “with” Bakkol.

IBN EZRA

Why Isaac took a detour before meeting Rivkah

Genesis 24:63

Ibn Ezra reads "la-su'ach" simply as a philological note, explaining that it means walking among the trees, and treats "li-fenot erev" as a time marker meaning close to sunset, promising a fuller discussion later in Parashat Ki Tetze. Sforno, by contrast, sees Yitzchak's walk as a deliberate detour from his usual path so that he could pray privately without being interrupted by travelers, even though his prayer at Be'er Lachay Ro'i had already been answered, citing Daniel 10:12. Sforno further explains the geography of the camels' approach to account for why Rivkah, coming from the east, would see Yitzchak walking toward her. AI SUMMARY

“And Isaac went out walking in the field toward evening and, looking up, he saw camels approaching.”

AND ISAAC WENT OUT TO MEDITATE. — The word la-su’ach (to meditate) means to walk among the trees.

AT THE EVENTIDE. — Close to sunset. The opposite of li-fenot erev (at the eventide) is lifnot boker (before the dawning of the day). I will give a full explanation of these terms in the Torah portion Ki Tetze.

SFORNO, WHO READS IT DIFFERENTLY

ויצא יצחק לשוח — he had detoured from his regular path to the field in order to pour out his heart to G’d in prayer. He did not want to be interrupted in his devotion by passing travelers whom he would have to greet. This was in spite of the fact that he had already prayed in Beer lachay Ro-i. His prayer had been answered already, in accordance with Daniel 10,12 מן היום אשר נתת את לבך להבין ולהענות...נשמעו

דבריך, "for from the first day you set your mind to get understanding, practicing abstinence before your G'd, your prayer was heard and I have come because of your prayer."

והנה גמלים באים — when he had gone out to pray, the camels were already headed in his direction. This is what Rivkah referred to when she asked about the man walking "toward us?" (verse 65) This is because when Yitzchok returned from Beer lachay Ro-i to his house he was walking from the north to the south. People coming from Charan (Aram Naharaym) headed for Avraham's house would be traveling from the east to the west. This is why after having deviated from his route which would have taken him from north to south, and walking in an easterly direction instead, Yitzchok would be walking in the direction from which the camels were approaching, from the land known also as ארץ בני קדם the land belonging to the people of the East. He had reason to believe that Rivkah would come from that direction.



חסידות

From the Chassidic Courts

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APTA · OHEV YISRAEL, CHAYEI SARA

Heartfelt song can soften harsh judgments in exile

Ohev Yisrael

Yitzchak's going out "to meditate in the field" toward evening represents his effort to sweeten and remove the harsh dinim (judgments) from Knesset Yisrael (the Community of Israel) during exile, while Rivkah—who embodies the Shechinah (Divine Presence)—is stirred with mercy upon seeing the suffering, even though it will yield great future reward (gemul). Her covering herself with a veil (hatzaif, numerically equal to rinah, "song") teaches that through heartfelt zemirot (songs) and Pesukei DeZimrah (Verses of Praise) recited with awe and love, Israel can cut down the accusers, nullify harsh judgments, and draw down goodness and redemption speedily. AI SUMMARY

"And Isaac went out to meditate in the field, etc." One may say that it is known that the attribute of Yitzchak is the attribute of fear and gevurah (severity/strength). And evening, too, is the attribute of dinim (judgments), and Yitzchak the tzaddik (righteous one) wished to rectify his aspect and to remove and clear away the harsh dinim from upon Yisrael his children. This is "and Yitzchak went out to meditate in the field" — in the manner that Yitzchak called it "field," and when he looked upon the destruction of the Temple, "Zion shall be plowed as a field," he prayed about this matter. This is "lasuach basadeh" (to meditate in the field) — to pray in the "field of holy apples." And "toward evening" means to remove all the dinim from upon Knesset Yisrael (the Community of Israel), above and below, and especially at the time when they are scattered and dispersed among the nations.

"And he lifted up his eyes and saw, and behold, camels (gemalim) were coming." This means: he saw the good reward (gemul) that would grow from this for the seed of Israel in the future, on account of the greatness and multitude of the troubles and afflictions that they accepted upon themselves and suffered in the time of exile, and nevertheless they served Hashem Yitbarach (the Blessed One) and kept the Torah and mitzvot. And when he saw this good reward, his mind was set at ease about it and he agreed to the matter.

"And Rivkah" — she is the Shechinah (Divine Presence) — "lifted up her eyes and saw Yitzchak." This means: when she, too, saw the troubles and afflictions that would pass over Israel in the time of exile, her mercy was greatly stirred and her innards yearned for her children. "And she fell from off the camel (gamal)" means that she fell from the good reward (gemul) that would grow for the seed of Israel from this in the future, and her mind was not set at ease by this. For this reason she did not wish to agree to it — namely, that they should have troubles and afflictions beyond measure, even though afterward their reward, their goodness, and their success would be doubled without measure or limit — in the manner of "neither them nor their reward."

"And she said to the servant, 'Who is this man…'" — for Yitzchak signifies his attribute, the attribute of din (judgment), and this is "coming to meet us" — meaning that it is in opposition to us, for she did not wish to agree to this matter. "And he said, 'He is my master'" — this is the attribute of Yitzchak, which is the attribute of gevurah. "And she took the veil and covered herself" — this means that when the Shechinah sees, as it were, that Knesset Yisrael is in distress and exile, she, too, clothes herself in various garments and joins with them in their distress; and please God, at the time of the redemption, the glory of Hashem will be revealed, and she will remove

herself from the garments, and His kingship will be revealed over us, as it is written, "And your eyes shall see your Teacher."

Further, "the veil" (hatzaif) in gematria (numerical value) equals "rinah" (song) — meaning that the righteousness of Rivkah our mother, peace be upon her, availed through her prayer: that through the rinah and singing of Pesukei DeZimrah (Verses of Praise) with complete intention, in awe and love, they would be able to cover themselves from the dinim, and also to nullify them, and to protect themselves. Also, "zemirot" (songs) carries the meaning of "zamir aritzim" (the cutting down of the tyrannical). That is, through the zemirot, offered in awe and fear and love, truly and wholly, one can cut down and destroy all the accusers and prosecutors, and nullify all the dinim and afflictions from upon them, and sweeten them at their root. And through this, all goodness will be drawn down upon them, speedily in our days, Amen. And understand this.

Translation: translated by AI (anthropic/claude-sonnet-5)

BERDITCHEV · CHAYEI SARA, KEDUSHAT LEVI

What made Yitzchok's love for Rivkah true love

Kedushat Levi

Yitzchok's love for Rivkah was not rooted in physical attraction or self-gratification, but in recognizing her as a true partner enabling him to serve the Creator more fully. True love between husband and wife is measured by how much each enables the other to fulfill the Divine will, not by how one's own desires are satisfied. AI SUMMARY

Genesis 24,67. “Yitzchok brought Rivkah into the tent of his mother Sarah, and he wed her and she became his wife and he loved her.” We need to examine what the Torah meant by Yitzchok loving Rivkah that is so extraordinary that it has to be spelled out here. A husband can love his wife on two different levels. He may love her, i.e. be physically attracted to her as she enables him to satisfy his biological urges. If this is his “love,” it is not love at all, but is merely love of his self. There are husbands who do not love their wives because they are instruments of fulfilling their physical desires, but because their wives enable them to perform their Creator’s will better and more profoundly. This is the true meaning of “someone loving his wife.” The Torah testifies that Yitzchok’s love for Rivkah was of the latter category.

Translation: Kedushat Levi translated by Rb. Eliyahu Munk

Why did Abraham insist on paying full price for the cave?

Likutei Halakhot, Choshen Mishpat, Laws of Gifting 4:11

Avraham Avinu insisted on paying full price for the Me'arat HaMachpelah, and David insisted on paying full price for Aravnah's threshing floor, because places of such elevated kedushah (holiness) are surrounded by powerful klipot (husks/shells) that can only be subdued by revealing the holy gevanin (colors/hues)—the aspect of the four hundred worlds of longing—contained within silver and gold, not by receiving them as a free gift. The higher the kedushah of a place, the greater the klipot surrounding it, and correspondingly the greater the need to draw forth this revelation of holy colors through payment in order to nullify them. AI SUMMARY

11. And therefore Avraham Avinu (our father Abraham) did not wish to take the Me'arat HaMachpelah (Cave of Machpelah) as a gift from Efron, as it is written (Bereishit 23): "Let him give it to me for full price (kesef malei)." For because of the great intensity of the kedushah (holiness) that was there, when it was under the hand of Efron, the klipot (husks/shells) surrounded it very greatly, and therefore with Efron there was darkness and gloom, as is brought. Therefore it was not possible to remove it from Efron as a gift, for free, but only for full price, because it is impossible to bring out and raise up kedushah for free, especially such a lofty kedushah.

Therefore he gave him four hundred shekels of silver, which hint at the four hundred alemin dechisufin (worlds of longing), as is written in the holy Zohar. That is, because the money of Avraham was very holy, and all the elevated gevanin (colors/hues) were revealed through it, which are the greatness of the Borei yitbarach (Creator, blessed be He). This is the aspect of the four hundred worlds of longing in which the tzaddikim (righteous ones) delight, which are the aspect of the totality of all the holy colors, which everyone craves and delights to see and gaze upon.

And this is the aspect of "four hundred shekels of silver, over l'socher (current among merchants)," and its Targum (Aramaic translation) renders: "that is accepted in commerce in every province" — that is, all the commerce and trade in every province is all done by means of silver (kesef), as it is written (Kohelet 10): "And money answers everything," because silver contains within it all the elevated colors that are included in the four hundred worlds of longing, which are the aspect of "four hundred shekels of silver."

And by this power Avraham acquired the Me'arat HaMachpelah from Efron, by revealing the greatness of the Creator through his four hundred shekels of silver, in which all the colors, etc., were included, as above. Through this the klipot that wished to cling there were subdued, and they fell and were nullified, and the field and the cave rose up and were acquired by Avraham, as it is written: "And the field of Efron rose [vayakam]" — "it had a rising [tekumah]," as Rashi explains there — and all this through the revelation of the colors that were in the silver of Avraham, as above.

But certainly Efron did not merit to enjoy these colors, for afterward, when the silver came into his hand, the colors — which are the aspect of the four hundred worlds of longing — became hidden, as explained above.

Similarly, David did not want to accept the threshing floor of Aravnah for free, because that was the site of the Beit HaMikdash (Holy Temple), where it was impossible to extract from the sitra achra (the "other side," i.e., the realm of impurity) for free, but only with full payment of silver, in order to subdue the kelipot (husks/shells of

impurity) that surrounded it, through the revelation of the hues contained in silver and gold, as mentioned above.

This is why silver and gold are mentioned there regarding David, as it is written in Divrei HaYamim (Chronicles) (I 21): "for full silver... and David gave... shekels of gold," because there it was necessary to raise up holiness to the highest degree, since that was the site of the Beit HaMikdash and the Beit Kodshei HaKodashim (House of the Holy of Holies).

Therefore it was necessary to reveal all the hues contained in the silver and gold, in order to subdue the kelipot that surrounded that place—for the higher the holiness, the more the kelipot surround it there. Correspondingly, one must draw forth the revelation of the hues even more, in order to subdue them and nullify them through this, as mentioned above.

Translation: translated by AI (anthropic/claude-sonnet-5)

PIASECZNO · CHAYEI SARA, ESH KODESH

Why Sarah's death at hearing of the Akedah was not a failure

Esh Kodesh

Sarah's death upon hearing of the Akedah was not a failure but an act of advocacy for Israel: by letting her pure soul depart under the weight of that suffering, she demonstrated before Hashem that even the greatest tzaddik (righteous person) cannot endure excessive suffering, and that this too was for Israel's sake. This is why the Torah affirms that all her years, including her final moment, were equally good, teaching that suffering must come in a measure the soul can bear, and that Hashem should have mercy and bring swift salvation instead. AI SUMMARY

"And the life of Sarah was... years... these were the years of the life of Sarah" (Bereishit 23:1). Rashi explains that the repetition of "years" in each clause indicates that at twenty she was without sin, as she was at one hundred. This phrase, "the years of the life of Sarah," highlights that all her years were equally good. We must understand what this teaches us, for it seems that no other righteous woman in the Torah is described with such greatness. Furthermore, it is puzzling that even though the Torah later uses similar wording regarding Avraham Avinu and Rashi also comments that he was without sin, it does not repeat the phrase "the years of Avraham" to emphasize that all his years were equally good.

The holy books, specifically in the work Ma'or VaShemesh at the beginning of Parashat Va'era by the holy Rebbe Menachem Mendel of Rimanov, explain the Talmudic statement that "the covenant was established through salt" and "the covenant was established through suffering." Just as salt preserves meat when used in the right measure but becomes unbearable when overused, so too suffering must be balanced to be bearable and mixed with mercy.Rashi comments that Sarah's death is juxtaposed with the Binding of Isaac because upon hearing about it, her soul departed from her body, and she died. The faithful shepherd, Moshe Rabbeinu, juxtaposed Sarah's death with the Akedah to advocate on our behalf, illustrating that excessive suffering can cause even the greatest soul, like Sarah's, to leave the body. If Sarah, who was as pure at one hundred as she was at twenty, and whose years were all equally good, could not withstand such intense suffering, how much more so can we not endure.

Additionally, it can be said that Sarah herself internalized the Akedah to such a degree that it caused her soul to depart—also for the sake of Israel. She showed Hashem that Israel cannot withstand excessive suffering. Even those who survive severe suffering often have their strength, spirit, and minds diminished. There is little difference between partial death and total death in such cases.

This explains why the Torah emphasizes "the years of the life of Sarah." It might seem that Sarah failed compared to her previous years by allowing the Akedah to affect her so deeply. However, since she did so for the sake of Israel, the Torah affirms that all her years, including those affected by the Akedah, were equally good. May Hashem have mercy on us, all of Israel, and quickly bring salvation, both spiritually and physically, with revealed kindnesses.

Translation: Sefaria Community Translation

GER · CHAYEI SARA, SEFAT EMET

Why did Eliezer retell his whole mission in detail?

Sefat Emet

Eliezer's repeated, self-scrutinizing account of his mission teaches that one must examine one's own motives carefully, lest personal interest—however subtle—distort the fulfillment of a sacred task. Every person, like Eliezer, should see himself as a sheliach (emissary) of HaShem, recognizing that success in any undertaking comes not from personal merit but from aligning fully with the Divine will, so that "the desire of HaShem will prosper in his hand." AI SUMMARY

My grandfather and teacher, of blessed memory, said in the name of the holy Rabbi of Kotzk, regarding "אלי" (concerning me), that it is written this way because when he had a personal interest at stake, he did not feel his own interest. And it seems that the Torah repeated the entire passage because of this—as our Rabbis, of blessed memory, said, "the conversation of the servants [of the Patriarchs] is more pleasing [than the Torah of their children]"—for he, too, feared that he might have some ulterior interest, and that through it he might spoil the mission. For he knew with certainty that the will of Avraham Avinu (Abraham our Father) would be fulfilled by HaShem, may He be blessed; he only feared lest he himself cause some flaw in carrying out the mission.

This is what is meant by "my way has prospered"—he reviewed the entire matter for himself and became aware of his own interest. And when his personal interest was removed, he merited to complete the mission properly. This was also because he knew that all the success came through the merit of Avraham Avinu, even though he himself was also a tzaddik (righteous man).

So, too, every person must know that he is a sheliach (emissary) of HaShem, may He be blessed, in this world. And in accordance with his awareness of this, all his deeds should be directed toward this purpose. He should also know that whatever he merits to accomplish comes about because it is His, may He be blessed, will that His will be done. Then, "the desire of HaShem will prosper in his hand."

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Modern Commentaries

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COVENANT & CONVERSATION

Estrangement between brothers does not have to be permanent

Rabbi Sacks: On Judaism and Islam

Beneath the surface narrative of Ḥayei Sara, the sages uncovered a hidden story of reconciliation: Isaac sought out Hagar, who returned as Abraham's wife Keturah, while Ishmael was reconciled with his father through the kindness of his wife Fatimah—a name deliberately echoing Islamic tradition. This midrashic reading, culminating in Isaac and Ishmael standing together at Abraham's burial, teaches that the estrangement between the two brothers, and by extension between Judaism and Islam, need not be the final word; separation was only the beginning of their story, not its end. Rabbi Sacks draws from this a message of hope for mutual respect and friendship between the two faiths descended from Abraham. AI SUMMARY

On Judaism and Islam

The language of the Torah is, in Erich Auerbach's famous phrase, "fraught with background." Behind the events that are openly told are shadowy stories left for us to decipher. Hidden beneath the surface of Parashat Ḥayei Sara, for example, is another story, alluded to only in a series of hints. There are three clues in the text.

The first occurs when Abraham's servant is returning with the woman who is to become Isaac's wife. As Rebecca sees Isaac in the distance, we are told that he is "coming from the way of Be'er-laḥai-ro'i" (24:62) to meditate in the field. The placement is surprising. Thus far we have situated the patriarchal family at Beersheva, to which Abraham returns after the binding of Isaac, and Hebron, where Sarah dies and is buried. What is this third location, Be'er-laḥai-ro'i, and what is its significance?

The second is the extraordinary final stage of Abraham's life. For chapter after chapter we read of the love and faithfulness Abraham and Sarah had for one another. Together they embarked on a long journey to an unknown destination. Together, they stood against the idolatry of their time. Twice, Sarah saved Abraham's life by pretending to be his sister. They hoped and prayed for a child and endured the long years of childlessness until Isaac was born. Then Sarah's life draws to a close. She dies. Abraham mourns and weeps for her and buys a cave in which she is buried, and he is to be buried beside her. We then expect to read that Abraham lived out the rest of his years alone before being placed beside "Sarah his wife" (25:10) in the "Cave of Makhpelah" (25:9).

Unexpectedly, however, once Isaac is married, Abraham marries a woman named Keturah and has six children by her. We are told nothing else about this woman, and the significance of the episode is unclear. The Torah does not include mere incidental details. We have no idea, for example, what Abraham looked like. We do not even know the name of the servant he sent to find a wife for Isaac. Tradition tells us that it was Eliezer, but the Torah itself does not. What then is the significance of Abraham's second marriage and how is it related to the rest of the narrative?

The third clue to the hidden story is revealed in the Torah's description of Abraham's death:

And Abraham expired, and died in a good old age, an old man, and full of years, and was gathered to his people. Isaac and Ishmael his sons buried him in the Cave of Makhpelah, in the field of Ephron the son of Zohar the Hittite, which is before Mamre, the field which Abraham purchased of the children of Het. There was Abraham buried, and Sarah his wife. (25:8–10)

Ishmael's presence at the funeral is surprising. After all, he had been sent away into the desert years before, when Isaac was young. Until now, we have assumed that the two half-brothers have lived in total isolation from one another. Yet the Torah places them together at the funeral without a word of explanation.

The sages pieced together these three puzzling details to form an enthralling story.

First, they point out that Be'er-laḥai-ro'i, the place from which Isaac was coming when Rebecca saw him, is mentioned once before in Genesis (16:14): It is the spot where Hagar, pregnant and fleeing from Sarah, encountered an angel who told her to return. It is indeed she who gives the place its name, meaning "the well of the Living One who sees me" (16:14). The midrash thus says that Isaac went to Be'er-laḥai-ro'i in search of Hagar. When Isaac heard that his father was seeking a wife for him, he said, "Shall I be married while my father lives alone? I will go and return Hagar to him."

Hence the sages' answer to the second question: who was Keturah? She was, they said, none other than Hagar herself. It is not unusual for people in the Torah to have more than one name: Jethro, Moses's father-in-law, had seven. Hagar was called Keturah because "her acts gave forth fragrance like incense (ketoret)."

This indeed integrates Abraham's second marriage as an essential component of the narrative. Hagar did not end her days as an outcast. She returned, at Isaac's prompting and with Abraham's consent, to become the wife of her former master.

This also changes the painful story of the banishment of Ishmael. We know that Abraham did not want to send him away – Sarah's demand was "very grievous in Abraham's sight on account of his son" (21:11). Nonetheless, God told Abraham to listen to his wife. There is, however, an extraordinary midrash, in Pirkei deRabbi Eliezer, which tells of how Abraham twice visited his son. On the first occasion, Ishmael was not at home. His wife, not knowing Abraham's identity, refused the stranger bread and water. Ishmael, continues the midrash, divorced her and married a woman named Fatimah. This time, when Abraham visited, again not disclosing his identity, the woman gave him food and drink. The midrash then says "Abraham stood and prayed before the Holy One, blessed be He, and Ishmael's house became filled with all good things. When Ishmael returned, his wife told him about it, and Ishmael knew that his father still loved him."

Father and son were reconciled.

The name of Ishmael's second wife, Fatimah, is highly significant. In the Koran, Fatimah is the daughter of Mohammad. Pirkei deRabbi Eliezer is an eighth-century work, and it is here making an explicit, and positive, reference to Islam.

The hidden story of Ḥayei Sara has immense consequence for our time. Jews and Muslims both trace their descent from Abraham – Jews through Isaac, Muslims through Ishmael. The fact that both sons stood together at their father's funeral tells us that they too were reunited.

Beneath the surface of the narrative in Ḥayei Sara, the sages read the clues and pieced together a moving story of reconciliation between Abraham and Hagar on the one hand, Isaac and Ishmael on the other. Yes, there was conflict and separation; but that was the beginning, not the end. Between Judaism and Islam there can be friendship and mutual respect. Abraham loved both his sons, and was laid to rest by both. There is hope for the future in this story of the past.

THE NETZIV

Why Rivka was so struck seeing Yitzchak for the first time

Ha'amek Davar on Genesis 24:64

When Rivka lifted her eyes and saw Yitzchak, she beheld him still standing in prayer, and at that moment he appeared like an angel of God, awesome in his bearing. The Netziv's point is that Yitzchak's greatness was revealed precisely through his posture of tefillah (prayer), which transformed his countenance into something exalted and otherworldly. It was this vision of holiness, rather than ordinary human appearance, that so struck Rivka upon first encountering her future husband. AI SUMMARY

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

"And Rivka raised her eyes, etc. and saw Yitzhak"--as he still stood and prayed, and he was then like an angel of God, awesome.

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מקורות

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