

חַיֵּי שָׂרָה

CHAYEI SARAH/LIFE OF SARAH Bereshith/Genesis 23:1-25:18

After the binding of Yitzchak in last week's parashah, Yitzchak just seems to disappear. But this week we meet up with him once more:

Bereshith/Genesis 24:62 Now Yitzchak came from the way of **Beer Lahai Roi**, for he dwelt in the South.

What is the significance of **Beer Lahai Roi**? Recall that a few chapters earlier, when Hagar had been cast out by Avraham for the first time, an angel met her and promised her many offspring, including a child who could fend for himself and could not easily be controlled:

Bereshith 16:11 And the Angel of יהוה said to her: "Behold, you *are* with child, and you shall bear a son. You shall call his name Ishmael, because יהוה has heard your affliction. ¹² He shall be a wild man; His hand *shall be* against every man, And every man's hand against him. And he shall dwell in the presence of all his brethren."

Hagar calls יהוה "Atah El Roi," (You are El who sees) and calls the well where the Almighty has seen her, "**Beer Lahai Roi**" (Well of the El who sees):

Bereshith 16:13 Then she called the name of יהוה who spoke to her, **You-Are-the-God-Who-Sees**; for she said, "Have I also here seen Him who sees me?" ¹⁴ Therefore the well was called **Beer Lahai Roi**; observe, *it is* between Kadesh and Bered.

So the question is, why did Yitzchak go to **Beer Lahai Roi**? And why does יהוה consider it important to tell us this detail? Did he go there to reconcile with his step-mother, Hagar? And why is Yitzchak "**dwelling at Beer Lahai Roi**" with his wife after his father's death?

Bereshith 25:11 And it came to pass, after the death of Avraham, that Elohim blessed his son Yitzchak. And **Yitzchak dwelt at Beer Lahai Roi**.

There are other details in **Parashat Chayei Sarah** that seem to go beyond the necessary covenant narrative. Avraham remarries and has six more sons. And then we are given a listing of the sons of Ishmael. None of these children will be inheritors of the covenant promises. Yet, יהוה wants us to know their names, pointing to their significance in some way.

Now that I have peeked your interest, I will say that I have no concrete answers. My thought is that all of the complexities of Avraham's extended family have everything to do with the world the way we see it today and the way things will play out in the end of days. In my research, the most helpful information I could find came from Tom Bradford - <https://www.torahclass.com>.

The final details of Avraham's life:

Bereshith 25:1 Avraham again took a wife, and her name was **Keturah**.² And she bore him Zimran, Jokshan, Medan, **Midian**, Ishbak, and Shuah.

We know very little about **Keturah**. We do not know where she came from or any of her ancestors. Her name means “**spices**,” and in fact, certain tribes associated with the spice trade have long been suspected as being descendants of Avraham and Keturah. Some of her children will be mentioned again later in Scripture, while others will never be heard from again.

As merchants (probably spice traders), it was the “**Midianites**” that bought Yosef from his brothers. Their territory was located on the Arabian Peninsula. These are the same Midianites and the same region to where Moshe arrived when he fled from Egypt. The area is where **ה'י'י' Elohim** showed up in the burning bush. Moshe's wife was a daughter of the priest of Midian.

Shemot/Exodus 2:16 Now the **priest of Midian** had seven daughters...²¹ Then Moshe was content to live with the man, and **he gave Zipporah his daughter to Moshe**.

Although Avraham had seven other sons (Ishmael plus Keturah's six), we are told that he gave all he had to Yitzchak. Avraham was a wealthy man and we can only imagine that this set the stage for a lot of jealousy between the covenant son and the others. Yet, before he died, Avraham did give gifts to all of his sons:

Bereshith 25:5 And Avraham gave all that he had to Yitzchak.⁶ But **Avraham gave gifts to the sons of the concubines** which Abraham had; and while he was still living he sent them eastward, away from Yitzchak his son, to the country of the east.

The sons of Keturah formed tribal confederations, and along with Ishmael and Esau's sons, make up the various Arab people in the Middle East today. Obviously, intermarriage and assimilation has made defining who is who quite difficult, and we can only generalize and say that together, they all make up the core of the modern Arab people today.

But it is important to understand that Ishmael, Keturah's sons, and Esau are all Semites, just as Yitzchak is. A Semite is a descendant of Noach's son, Shem. Therefore, all of Avraham's descendants are Semites. Arabs and Israelites are all cousins and all Semites! The term, anti-Semite as it is used today is seen as

bigotry against the Jewish people. Ironically, it is the Arab people (who are also Semites) who are usually those most accused of being anti-Semitic.

Ishmael was rejected by יהוה as the son of promise, but that does not mean he was cursed by יהוה. In fact, his mother Hagar was given a blessing similar to Avraham as far as descendants:

Bereshith 16:10 Then the Angel of יהוה said to her, "I will multiply your descendants exceedingly, so that they shall not be counted for multitude."

But we should remember that it was the grandson of Noach's son Ham (**Canaan**), who was cursed.

Bereshith 9:25 Then he said: "Cursed be Canaan; A servant of servants he shall be to his brethren."

But to our surprise, the cursed **Canaan** settles in the land which becomes known to us later as the very Land chosen by יהוה!

Bereshith 10:19 And the border of the **Canaanites** was from Sidon as you go toward Gerar, as far as Gaza; then as you go toward Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah, and Zeboiim, as far as Lasha.

When Avraham is commanded to walk about in the land "**which I will show you**," he departs from his land and his birthplace...and where does he go?

Bereshith 12:1 יהוה had said to Avram, "Leave your country, your people and your father's household and go to the land I will show you."

Bereshith 12:5 Then Avram took Sarai his wife and Lot his brother's son, and all their possessions that they had gathered, and the people whom they had acquired in Haran, and they departed to go to the land of Canaan. So, they came to the land of Canaan.

Avraham leaves the society where he has lived all his life, among descendants of Shem, and moves to the land of the children of **Canaan**...the most corrupt of nations! Yet יהוה approves of this move and tells him –

Bereshith 12:7 Then יהוה appeared to Avram and said, "To your descendants I will give this land."

This raises many questions. Why is it specifically the land of **Canaan** that is chosen to become the Land promised to Avraham? And why did the **Canaanites** initially receive this special land, worthy of יהוה's Presence? Why did יהוה not just hand over the Land to the descendants of Shem in the first place?

Avraham realizes quickly that he has been brought to this Land not in order to mingle with the **Canaanites** and become part of them, but rather the opposite. Avraham must wage his battle against Canaanite culture and prevail against it until he acquires the Land. The process will be long and difficult and continues to this day. It requires being set apart to the commandments...i.e., being holy.

Vayikra/ Leviticus 18:3 'According to the doings of the land of Egypt, where you dwelt, you shall not do; and according to the doings of the land of Canaan, where I am bringing you, you shall not do; **nor shall you walk in their ordinances.** ⁴ **You shall observe My judgments and keep My ordinances, to walk in them:** I am יהוה your Elohim.

Vayikra 18:24 ' **Do not defile yourselves with any of these things;** for by all these the nations are defiled, which I am casting out before you.

Avraham understands that his mission is to inherit the land from the Canaanites by creating an alternative culture, one that lives by the dictates of the Torah. Now we understand why Avraham insisted that his son would “**not take a wife from the daughters of the Canaanites.**” Being separate from the Canaanites was key to inheriting the Promised Land.

Bereshith 24:3 "and I will make you swear by יהוה, the E of heaven and the Elohim of the earth, that you will **not take a wife for my son from the daughters of the Canaanites,** among whom I dwell;

On January 14th, 2018, PLO President Mahmoud Abbas spoke in an address to the PLO Central Council these words: “This is our country. This has been our land since the days of the Canaanites. By the way, our Canaanite forefathers...from the days of the Canaanites and to this day, our forefathers have not left this land. They were here before our patriarch Abraham... Since before our patriarch Abraham...”

Perhaps there is some truth to what he said. Abbas claimed that they are Canaanites (which Yassir Arafat also did at times), conflicting with the claim that the Palestinians are Arabs who claim descendancy to Avraham through Ishmael, and to Isaac through Esau. If they are Canaanites, we know the will of יהוה. Canaan is the Land that יהוה gave to Israel, the Land that was to be taken from the Canaanites.

Bereshith 17:8 "Also I give to you and your descendants after you the land in which you are a stranger, all the **land of Canaan, as an everlasting possession;** and I will be their Elohim."

Bemidbar/Numbers 13:2 "Send men to spy out the land of Canaan, which I am giving to the children of Israel...

The Israelites were to refrain from making covenant with them:

Shemot 34:11 "Observe what I command you this day. Behold, I am driving out from before you the Amorite and the Canaanite and the Hittite and the Perizzite and the Hivite and the Jebusite. ¹² "**Take heed to yourself, lest you make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land** where you are going, lest it be a snare in your midst. ¹³ "But you shall destroy their altars, break their *sacred* pillars, and cut down their *wooden* images ¹⁴ '(for you shall worship no other god, for יהוה, whose name *is* Jealous, *is* a jealous El), ¹⁵ "lest you make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land, and they play the harlot with their gods and make sacrifice to their gods, and *one of them* invites you and you eat of his sacrifice, ¹⁶ "and you take of his daughters for your sons, and his daughters play the harlot with their gods and make your sons play the harlot with their gods.

The Israelites were to utterly destroy them, lest they cause them to sin:

Devarim/Deuteronomy 20:17 "but you shall utterly destroy them: the Hittite and the Amorite and the Canaanite and the Perizzite and the Hivite and the Jebusite, just as יהוה your Elohim has commanded you, ¹⁸ "**lest they teach you to do according to all their abominations which they have done for their gods,** and you sin against יהוה your Elohim.

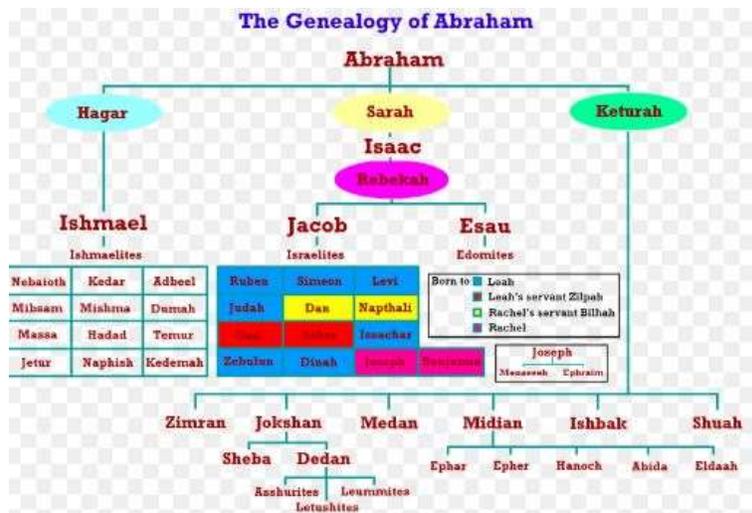
Unfortunately, the Canaanites were never totally destroyed. Could it be those of Canaanite descent who cause so much trouble today in the Land?

At the end of our parashah, we are given a listing of the children of **Ishmael**. That there are 12 is not coincidental. The 12 tribes of **Israel** have their parallel in Avraham's oldest son, **Ishmael**:

Bereshith 25:12 Now this *is* the genealogy of Ishmael, Avraham's son, whom Hagar the Egyptian, Sarah's maidservant, bore to Avraham. ¹³ And these *were* the names of the sons of Ishmael, by their names, according to their generations: The firstborn of Ishmael, Nebajoth; then Kedar, Adbeel, Mibsam, ¹⁴ Mishma, Dumah, Massa, ¹⁵ Hadar, Tema, Jetur, Naphish, and Kedemah. ¹⁶ These *were* the sons of Ishmael and these *were* their names, by their towns and their settlements, **twelve princes** according to their nations.

In **Isaiah 60**, we find side-by-side mention of three of Keturah's sons, and two of Ishmael's:

Isaiah 60:1 Arise, shine; For your light has come! And the glory of יהוה is risen upon you. ² For behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, And deep darkness the people; But יהוה will arise over you, And His glory will be seen upon you. ³ The nations shall come to your light, And kings to the brightness of your rising. ⁴ " Lift up your eyes all around, and see: They all gather together, they come to you; Your sons shall come from afar, And your daughters shall be nursed at *your* side. ⁵ Then you shall see and become radiant, And your heart shall swell with joy; Because the abundance of the sea shall be turned to you, The wealth of the nations shall come to you. ⁶ The multitude of camels shall cover your *land*, The dromedaries of **Midian** and **Ephah**; All those from **Sheba** shall come; They shall bring gold and incense, And they shall proclaim the praises of יהוה. ⁷ All the flocks of **Kedar** shall be gathered together to you, The rams of **Nebaioth** shall minister to you; They shall ascend with acceptance on My altar, And I will glorify the **house of My glory**.



Isaiah 60 is a prophecy of restoration and return to the Land of Israel. Look at these tribal peoples coming as friends and servants to worship at the “house of His glory!” Even though today, this is not something we see happening, it is prophecy to be aware of. Today we mostly hear about the hatred toward Jews by Moslems. But something is about to change. In the end will the fractured family of Avraham see some reconciliation through the Messiah?

Moslems say that Ishmael is the true founder of Islam. This is simply not true. Ishmael is a son of Avraham; not the covenantal chosen son, but nevertheless, he is a son blessed by his father and by יהוה. Islam says that the promises came down through Ishmael and are recorded through the Koran. They believe that the Bible text was corrupted and changed by Jews and Christians. Really? This is ridiculous to consider.

First, the religion of Islam didn’t even come into existence until the Prophet Mohammed formed it, almost 600 years after the time of Yeshua. The last book of the Hebrew Scriptures was written 1000 years before

Mohammed was even born. The last book of the Brit Chadasha was written 500 years before Mohammed was born.

Thomas Bradford continues to make the point that there are only two ways that we can know who a god is....His name and his attributes. There are those scholars who say that Allah is just Arabic for "god." While in the most general sense this is true, the ONLY name of god in Islam is Allah. They reject all Biblical names for Israel's Elohim, even when those names are Arab-ized. יהוה, El Shaddai, or any other Biblical name of title for the Elohim of the Universe is wrong according to Islam. So, the god of Islam has an entirely different name than the God of the Bible.

Also, the god of Islam glorifies death. The Elohim of the Bible glorifies life. The god of Islam says that Muslims are to win over converts to Islam by means of the sword. The Elohim of the Bible says that His believers are to win over converts by means of love and faith. The god of Islam says that how a Muslim behaves determines his eternal future. The Elohim of the Bible says that the condition of one's heart determines his eternal future. The god of Islam has no Messiah. The Elohim of the Bible says there MUST be a Messiah. The attributes, character, and instruction of the god of Islam as found in the Koran, is the exact opposite of the attributes, character and instruction of the Elohim of the Bible. We are NOT worshiping the same Elohim!

When the Israelites tried to be tolerant of both יהוה Elohim and the gods of other nations they ended up being scattered and many were destroyed. We must be careful that we don't do the very same thing today. יהוה's will and His plan of restoration can look different than the picture we have in our own mind. Studying the more obscure verses in the Torah and the prophecies will shine light as we need it!

Shabbat Shalom!

Ardelle