

Stories with a Twist [238]

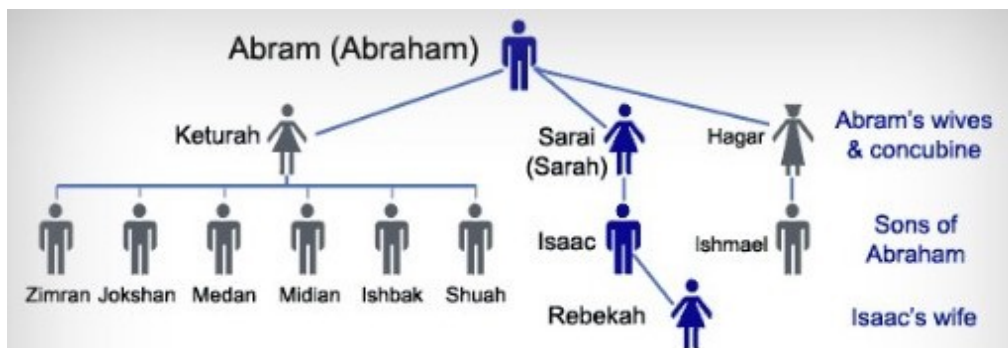
He Had Gone to Bring Hagar Back to Abraham

Genesis Rabbah 60:14 and Rashi to Genesis 24:62



Background to Our Story

Abraham's Family Tree



Genesis Chapter 16: 1-16

¹ Sarai, Abram's wife, had borne him no children. She had an Egyptian maidservant whose name was Hagar. ² And Sarai said to Abram, "Look, the Lord has kept me from bearing. Consort with my maid; perhaps I shall have a son through her." And Abram heeded Sarai's request. ³ So Sarai, Abram's wife, took her maid, Hagar the Egyptian-after Abram had dwelt in the land of Canaan ten years-and gave her to her husband Abram as concubine. ⁴ He cohabited with Hagar and she conceived; and when she saw that she had conceived, her mistress was lowered in her esteem. ⁵ And Sarai said to Abram, "The wrong done me is your fault! I myself put my maid in your bosom; now that she sees that she is pregnant, I am lowered in her esteem. The Lord decide between you and me!" ⁶ Abram said to Sarai, "Your maid is in your hands. Deal with her as you think right." Then Sarai treated her harshly, and she ran away from her.

? Why did Abraham say to Sarai "Your maid is in your hands. Deal with her as you think right"?

Answer 1 _____

Answer 2 _____

⁷ An angel of the Lord found her by a spring of water in the wilderness, the spring on the road to Shur, ⁸ and said, "Hagar, slave of Sarai, where have you come from, and where are you going?" And she said, "I am running away from my mistress Sarai."

⁹ And the angel of the Lord said to her, "Go back to your mistress, and submit to her harsh treatment." ¹⁰ And the angel of the Lord said to her,

*"I will greatly increase your offspring,
And they shall be too many to count."*

¹¹ The angel of the Lord said to her further,

*"Behold, you are with child
And shall bear a son;
You shall call him Ishmael,
For the Lord has paid heed to your suffering.*

*¹² He shall be a wild ass of a man;
His hand against everyone,
And everyone's hand against him;
He shall dwell alongside of all his kinsmen."*

¹³ And she called the Lord who spoke to her, "You Are El-roi," by which she meant, "Have I not gone on seeing after He saw me!" ¹⁴ Therefore the well was called Beer-lahai-roi; it is between Kadesh and Bered. — ¹⁵ Hagar bore a son to Abram, and Abram gave the son that Hagar bore him the name Ishmael. ¹⁶ Abram was eighty-six years old when Hagar bore Ishmael to Abram.

? How did Hagar feel after God spoke to her?

Genesis Chapter 21: 1-21

¹ The Lord took note of Sarah as He had promised, and the Lord did for Sarah as He had spoken. ² Sarah conceived and bore a son to Abraham in his old age, at the set time of which God had spoken. ³ Abraham gave his newborn son, whom Sarah had borne him, the name of Isaac. ⁴ And when his son Isaac was eight days old, Abraham circumcised him, as God had commanded him. ⁵ Now Abraham was a hundred years old when his son Isaac was born to him. ⁶ Sarah said, "God has brought me laughter; everyone who hears will laugh with me." ⁷ And she added,

Who would have said to Abraham That Sarah would suckle children! Yet I have borne a son in his old age."

⁸ The child grew up and was weaned, and Abraham held a great feast on the day that Isaac was weaned.

⁹ Sarah saw the son whom Hagar the Egyptian had borne to Abraham playing. ¹⁰ She said to Abraham, "Cast out that slave-woman and her son, for the son of that slave shall not share in the inheritance with my son Isaac." ¹¹ The matter distressed Abraham greatly, for it

concerned a son of his. ¹² But God said to Abraham, "Do not be distressed over the boy or your slave; whatever Sarah tells you, do as she says, for it is through Isaac that offspring shall be continued for you. ¹³ As for the son of the slave-woman, I will make a nation of him, too, for he is your seed."

? Why did Sarah want Hagar and Ishmael cast out?

? Why was Abraham distressed?

Answer 1 _____

Answer 2 _____

Bonus ? How do we know that Abraham was also distressed over Hagar and not only over Ishmael?

Bonus ? Why do you think God allows for Hagar and Ishmael to be sent away?

Answer 1 _____

Answer 2 _____

Answer 3 _____

¹⁴ Early next morning Abraham took some bread and a skin of water, and gave them to Hagar. He placed them over her shoulder, together with the child, and sent her away. And she wandered about in the wilderness of Beer-sheba. ¹⁵ When the water was gone from the skin, she left the child under one of the bushes, ¹⁶ and went and sat down at a distance, a bowshot away; for she thought, "Let me not look on as the child dies." And sitting thus afar, she burst into tears.

¹⁷ God heard the cry of the boy, and an angel of God called to Hagar from heaven and said to her, "What troubles you, Hagar? Fear not, for God has heeded the cry of the boy where he is. ¹⁸ Come, lift up the boy and hold him by the hand, for I will make a great nation of him." ¹⁹ Then God opened her eyes and she saw a well of water. She went and filled the skin with water, and let the boy drink. ²⁰ God was with the boy and he grew up; he dwelt in the wilderness and became a bowman. ²¹ He lived in the wilderness of Paran; and his mother got a wife for him from the land of Egypt.

? What does God do to bring some measure of justice to an unjust situation?

Genesis Chapter 23: 1-2

¹Sarah's lifetime-the span of Sarah's life-came to one hundred and twenty-seven years. ² Sarah died in Kiriath-arba-now Hebron-in the land of Canaan; and Abraham proceeded to mourn for Sarah and to bewail her. ³

Genesis 24:61–24:67

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

⁶² Now Isaac had come from going to Beer-Lhai-Roi; for he was living in the Negev ⁶³ And Isaac went out walking in the field toward evening and, looking up, he saw camels approaching. ⁶⁴Raising her eyes, Rebekah saw Isaac. She alighted from the camel 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. ⁶⁶ The servant told Isaac all the things that he had done. 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.

Bonus ? How do we know that Isaac was very close to his mother?

Genesis 25: 1

¹ Abraham took another wife, whose name was Keturah.

Bonus ? Why did Abraham take another wife after Sarah's death?

Genesis Rabbah 61:5 and Rashi to Genesis 25:1

Keturah: This is Hagar, but she is called Keturah because her deeds were as pleasing as incense (ketoret), and because she bound up her entrance, in that she did not have relations with any man from the day she separated from Abraham.

? Are you surprised to learn that according to the Rabbis, Keturah was Hagar? Why yes? Why not?

The Text: Genesis Rabbah 60:14 and Rashi to Genesis 24:62

"Now Isaac had come from going..." (Genesis 24:62). He came from a mission to bring someone.

And where had he gone?

To Beer Lahai Roi. He had gone to bring Hagar (back to Abraham that he might take her again as his wife), the one who had sat by the well (be'er) and implored Him who is the life (lahai) of all the worlds, saying, "Look upon (re'eh) my misery."



Explaining the Story (What is the sequence of events that take place in the story?)

Comprehension and Analysis Questions

Extra Bonus ? Why did Isaac go to bring Hagar back to his father so he could marry her?

Answer 1 _____

Answer 2 _____

Answer 3 _____

Extra Bonus ? Why didn't Abraham bring Hagar back himself?

Answer 1 _____

Answer 2 _____

Answer 3 _____

"The Twist" – Or the Lessons We Can Learn from the Text

- ! It is never too late to right a wrong!
- ! You don't have to carry on your parents' grudges, especially when your parents were wrong!
- ! True love: Doing what is best for those you love, even though it might not be the best for you.

EPILOGUE

Isaac was very young when his mother's rival and stepbrother were sent away. However, after many years had passed and he is about to get married himself, Isaac gains a new perspective and understands that Hagar was treated unjustly. Isaac deeply loved his mother and he might have some apprehension about bringing back Hagar. However, seeing that his father feels lonely and wishing to rectify the wrong, he allows his love for his father and his sense of justice to overcome his own mixed feelings about the matter, and he himself goes to Be'er Lahai Roi to bring Hagar back so his father would marry her.