

Blessing for Torah Study:

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ-הָעוֹלָם
אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו וְצִוָּנוּ לַעֲסֹק בְּדִבְרֵי-תוֹרָה.

*Barukh atah Adonai Eloheinu melek ha'olam asher
kid'shanu b'mitzvotav v'tzivanu la'asok b'divrei torah.*

Blessed are You, Lord our God, Ruler of the Universe, who has sanctified us with commandments, and commanded us to study words of Torah.

Lunchtime Torah Express: Lech L'cha



"Yesterday, when you smiled at me in that cute way of yours and said 'You can be a real jerk,' was that just an observation or were you giving me permission?"

בראשית ט"ז:א-ג'

(א) וְשָׂרַי אִשְׁתְּ אַבְרָם לֹא יָלְדָה לוֹ וְלֹא שִׁפְחָה מִצְרַיִת וְשָׂמָּה הָגָר: (ב) וַתֹּאמֶר שָׂרַי אֶל-אַבְרָם הִנֵּה-נָא עֲצָרְנִי יְהוָה מִלָּדֶת בֶּן-נָא אֶל-שִׁפְחָתִי אוֹלִי אֲבֵנָה מִמֶּנָּה וַיִּשְׁמַע אַבְרָם לְקוֹל שָׂרַי: (ג) וַתִּקַּח שָׂרַי אִשְׁתְּ-אַבְרָם אֶת-הָגָר הַמִּצְרַיִת שִׁפְחָתָהּ מִקֶּץ עֶשְׂרִי שָׁנִים לְשֵׁבֶת אַבְרָם בְּאֶרֶץ כְּנָעַן וַתִּתֵּן אֹתָהּ לְאַבְרָם אִשָּׁה לוֹ לְאִשָּׁה:

Genesis 16:1-3

(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, יהוה has kept me from bearing. Consort with my maid; perhaps I shall have a child 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.

- What was Sarai thinking in this moment? What are the possibilities?
- What about Avram?
- God has promised that Avram's descendants will be many. How does that factor in here?

Ramban on Genesis 16:2

"And Avram listened to the voice of his wife"- the Torah does not say "and he did this" rather that he listened to her voice, to hint to us that even though Avram wanted desperately to have sons, he would not act without the permission of his wife. Even once acting he would not plan on building a family with Hagar rather Sarah. All of his intent was to do Sarah's will so she would be pleased with her family and maidservants.

And it said as well "Sarah took" to teach us that Avram didn't rush to take Hagar rather that Sarah took her and gave her to Avram. "To Avram as his

wife"--to hint to us that Sarah never gave up from being with Avram, never removed herself from him--he is her husband and she is his wife, but she wanted the Hagar would also be his wife...this was done by Sarah to honor her husband (that he would not have a child just with a concubine rather a wife).

בראשית ט"ז:ד-ו

(ד) וַיֵּבֶא אֶל־הָגָר וַתְּהַר וַתֵּלֶד כִּי הָרְתָהּ וַתִּקַּל גְּבוּרָתָהּ בְּעֵינֶיהָ: (ה) וַתֹּאמֶר שָׂרַי אֶל־אַבְרָם חֲמָסִי עָלֶיךָ אָנֹכִי נָתַתִּי שְׁפָחָתִי בְּחִיקְךָ וַתֵּלֶד כִּי הָרְתָהּ וַאֲקַל בְּעֵינֶיהָ יִשְׁפֹּט יְהוָה בֵּינִי וּבֵינֶיךָ: (ו) וַיֹּאמֶר אַבְרָם אֶל־שָׂרַי הִנֵּה שְׁפָחָתְךָ בְּיָדְךָ עֲשִׂי־לָהּ הַטּוֹב בְּעֵינֶיךָ וַתַּעֲנֶה שָׂרַי וַתִּבְרַח מִפָּנֶיהָ:

Genesis 16:4-6

(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. יהוה 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 is Sarai's esteem lowered in Hagar's eyes after she conceives?
- Why does Sarai blame Abram?
- Sarai wants God to decide between Sarai and Abram. Abram reacts by empowering Sarai to treat Hagar as she wishes. Why? What is the effect? Is this what Abram intends?

Rashi on Genesis 16:4

(1) *He cohabited with Hagar and she conceived from the first union* (Genesis Rabbah 45:4). (2) *And her mistress was lowered in her esteem*— She said, “As regards this woman Sarai, her conduct in private can certainly not be like that in public: she pretends to be a righteous woman, but she cannot really be righteous since all these years she has not been privileged to have children, whilst I have had that blessing from the first union” (Genesis Rabbah 45:4).

Ramban on Genesis 16:6

(1) And Sarai oppressed her and she fled from her presence (literally face): Our mother sinned in this oppression, and also Abraham in permitting her to do so. And Hashem heard her [Hagar's] oppression and gave her a son who would be a wild ass of a man to oppress the descendants of Abraham and Sarah in all kinds of oppression.

בראשית ט"ז:ז'-י"ד

(ז) וַיִּמְצְאָהּ מַלְאָךְ יְהוָה עַל-עֵין הַמַּיִם בַּמִּדְבָּר עַל-הָעֵין בְּדֶרֶךְ שׁוּר:
 (ח) וַיֹּאמֶר הָגָר שְׁפָחַת שָׂרִי אֵי-מִזָּה בָּאת וְאַנָּה תִּלְכִּי וְתֹאמַר מִפְּנֵי
 שָׂרִי גְבוּרָתִי אֲנֹכִי בָרַחַת: (ט) וַיֹּאמֶר לָהּ מַלְאָךְ יְהוָה שׁוּבִי אֶל-גְּבוּרָתְךָ
 וְהִתְעַנִּי תַחַת יְדֶיהָ: (י) וַיֹּאמֶר לָהּ מַלְאָךְ יְהוָה הֲרַבָּה אַרְבָּה אֶת-זֶרְעֶךָ
 וְלֹא יִסְפֹּר מִרְבּוֹ: (יא) וַיֹּאמֶר לָהּ מַלְאָךְ יְהוָה הֲנִיךָ הָרָה וְיִלְדֶת בֶּן
 וְקָרָאת שְׁמוֹ יִשְׁמָעֵאל כִּי-שָׁמַע יְהוָה אֶל-עֲנִיָּךְ: (יב) וְהוּא יִהְיֶה פָּרָא
 אָדָם יָדוּ בְּכָל וַיֵּד כָּל בּוֹ וְעַל-פָּנָי כָּל-אֲחָיו יִשְׁכָּן: (יג) וְתִקְרָא
 שֵׁם-יְהוָה הַדֹּבֵר אֵלֶיהָ אֲתָה אֵל רֹאִי כִּי אָמְרָה הִגַּם הָלָם רְאִיתִי אַחֲרַי
 רֹאִי: (יד) עַל-כֵּן קָרָא לְבָאָר בָּאָר לְחֵי רֹאִי הִנֵּה בֵּין-קִדְשׁ וּבֵין בְּרָד:

Genesis 16:7-14

(7) A messenger of יהוה 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 messenger of יהוה said to her, “Go back to your mistress, and submit to her harsh treatment.” (10) And the messenger of יהוה

said to her, “I will greatly increase your offspring, And they shall be too many to count.” (11) The messenger of יהוה said to her further, “Behold, you are pregnant And shall bear a son; You shall call him Ishmael, For יהוה has paid heed to your suffering. (12) He shall be a wild ass of a person; His hand against everyone, And everyone’s hand against him; He shall dwell alongside of all his kin.” (13) And she called יהוה who spoke to her, “You Are El-roi,” by which she meant, “Have I not gone on seeing after my being seen!” (14) Therefore the well was called Beer-lahai-roi; it is between Kadesh and Bered.—

Bereshit Rabbah 45:7

“He said: Hagar, Sarai’s maidservant, from where did you come, and where are you going? She said: From my mistress Sarai I am fleeing” (Genesis 16:8).

“He said: Hagar, Sarai’s maidservant” – if one says to you: Your ears are like those of a donkey, pay him no mind; if two [people tell you this], make a bridle for yourself. So, Abram said: “Behold, your maidservant is in your hand.” The angel said: “Hagar, Sarai’s maidservant.” So she said: “From my mistress Sarai I am fleeing.”

The Torah; A Women's Commentary, Genesis 16:12:1

To be equated with a virile strong male animal is usually a positive metaphor in the ancient Near East (see the references to the bull and the wild-ox in Deuteronomy 33:17). The rest of the blessing should likewise be construed as positive, although this translator understood it differently.

The Torah; A Women's Commentary, Genesis 16:12:2

“he shall dwell” Ishmael will be the father of a people neighboring Israel.

The Torah; A Women's Commentary, Genesis 16:14:1

Be’er-lachai-ro’i. Literally, “the well of the living one of my seeing.” The naming of a place after a theophany is a common biblical motif (cf. 28:19). However, Hagar is the only woman whose experience is enshrined in a place name. None of the matriarchs receive this honor. Such a privilege for the

marginalized slave-woman—the outsider—is striking; the narrative views Hagar with sympathy and as having value.

בראשית ט"ז:ט"ו-ט"ז

(טו) וַתֵּלֶד הָגָר לְאַבְרָם בֶּן וִיקְרָא אַבְרָם שֵׁם־בְּנוֹ אֲשֶׁר־יָלְדָהּ הָגָר
יִשְׁמָעֵאל: (טז) וְאַבְרָם בֶּן־שְׁמֹנִים שָׁנָה וְשֵׁשׁ עָשָׂר שָׁנִים בְּלֶדֶת־הָגָר
אֶת־יִשְׁמָעֵאל לְאַבְרָם: {ס}

Genesis 16:15-16

(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.

Tur HaArokh, Genesis 16:11:1

לִּשְׁמָעֵאל, “you are to call him Yishmael.” Avraham had not heard of this revelation of an angel to Hagar, but he still named him thus (on his own).” Nachmanides explains that the angel commanded Hagar to call the boy Yishmael. Hagar, however, was afraid to arrogate to herself the right to name the son of her master, so that she revealed to him that she had been given such instructions from the angel.