

Things Fall Apart: Sarah, Hagar, and Avraham

1. Genesis Chapter 16

<p>1 Now Sarai Avram's wife bore him no children; and she had a handmaid, an Egyptian, whose name was Hagar. 2 And Sarai said to Avram: 'Behold now, the God has stopped me from bearing children; please come to my handmaid; perhaps I will be built up through her.' And Avram listened to the voice of Sarai. 3 And Sarai Avram's wife took Hagar the Egyptian, her handmaid, after Avram had dwelt ten years in the land of Canaan, and gave her to Avram her husband to be his wife. 4 And he went in unto Hagar, and she conceived; and when she saw that she had conceived, her mistress was lowered in her eyes. 5 And Sarai said unto Avram: 'My wrong is upon you: I gave my handmaid into your bosom; and when she saw that she had conceived, I was lowered in her eyes: God judge between me and you.' 6 Avram said to Sarai: Your maid is in your hand; do to her as you wish. And Sarai oppressed her, and [Hagar] fled from her presence</p>	<p>א וְשָׂרַי אֵשֶׁת אַבְרָם, לֹא יָלְדָה לוֹ; וְלֵה שִׁפְחָה מִצְרִית, וְשָׂמָהּ הָגָר. ב וַתֹּאמֶר שָׂרַי אֶל-אַבְרָם, הִנֵּה-נָא עֲצָרְנִי ה' מִלְדֹת--בְּאֵ-נָא אֶל-שִׁפְחָתִי, אוֹלֵי אֲבֹנָה מִמֶּנָּה; וַיִּשְׁמַע אַבְרָם, לְקוֹל שָׂרַי. ג וַתִּקַּח שָׂרַי אֵשֶׁת-אַבְרָם, אֶת-הָגָר הַמִּצְרִית שִׁפְחָתָהּ, מִקֶּץ עֶשֶׂר שָׁנִים, לְשֵׁבֶת אַבְרָם בְּאֶרֶץ כְּנָעַן; וַתִּמְנָן אֹתָהּ לְאַבְרָם אִישָׁהּ, לוֹ לְאִשָּׁה. ד וַיָּבֵא אֶל-הָגָר, וַתִּהְיֶה; וַתֵּרָא כִּי הָרְתָהּ, וַתִּקַּל גְּבֵרָתָהּ בְּעֵינֶיהָ. ה וַתֹּאמֶר שָׂרַי אֶל-אַבְרָם, חָמְסִי עָלֶיךָ--אֲנֹכִי נִתְמִי שִׁפְחָתִי בְּחִיקָהּ, וַתֵּרָא כִּי הָרְתָהּ וַאֲקַל בְּעֵינֶיהָ; יִשְׁפֹט ה', בֵּינִי וּבֵינֶיךָ. ו וַיֹּאמֶר אַבְרָם אֶל-שָׂרַי, הִנֵּה שִׁפְחָתְךָ בְּיָדְךָ--עֲשִׂי-לָהּ, הַטּוֹב בְּעֵינֶיךָ; וַתַּעֲנֶה שָׂרַי, וַתִּבְרַח מִפְּנֵיהָ.</p>
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2. Bereishit Rabbah 45:5

<p><i>And Sarai said to Avram, my wrong is upon you.</i> R. Yudan in the name of R. Yudah [said]: You wrong me with words. Why? Since you hear my humiliation and are silent. R. Berechiah in the name of R. Abba [said]: I ask for judgement against you. It is like two people incarcerated in prison. It happened that the king passed by. One of the prisoners said, "Execute judgment for me!" [The King] said, "Let him out." His fellow prisoner said, "I ask for judgement against you – if you had said, 'Execute judgment for us!' as you were let out, I would have been let out. And since you said, 'Execute judgment for me!', you were let out and I was not let out." So too, [Sarai said], "If you had said, <i>We are infertile</i>, as God gave you [a child], so God would have given me [a child]. And since you</p>	<p>[ותאמר שרי אל אברם חמסי] וגו' ר' יודן בשם ר' יודה חומסני את בדברין, למה שאתה שומע ביזיוני ושותק. ר' ברכיה בשם ר' אבא יבעי דיני גבך, לשני בני אדם שהיו חבושים בבית האסורים נמצא המלך עובר, אמר ליה חד תבוע דיקי דידי, אמר אפיקותיה, אמר ליה חבריה יבעי דיני גבך, אילו אמרת תבוע דיקי דידן כמה דאפקך כן אפקי, וכדו דאמרת תבוע דיקי דידי לך אפיק ולי לא אפיק, כך אילו אמרת הולכים אנו ערירים כמה דיהב לך כן יהב לי, וכדו דאמרת ואנכי הולך</p>
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said, *I am infertile* (Genesis 15:2), you were given [a child] and I was not given [a child].”

עריי (בראשית טו ב) לך יהב ולי לא יהב

3. Genesis Chapter 21

1 And God remembered Sarah as God had said, and God did to Sarah as God had spoken. **2** And Sarah conceived, and bore Avraham a son in his old age, at the set time of which God had spoken to him. **3** And Avraham called the name of his son that was born unto him, whom Sarah bore to him, Yitzchak. . . .

8 And the child grew, and was weaned. And Avraham made a great feast on the day that Yitzchak was weaned. **9** And Sarah saw the son of Hagar the Egyptian, whom she had borne to Avraham, laughing (metzachek). **10** [Sarah] said to Avraham: 'Cast out this bondwoman and her son; for the son of this bondwoman shall not inherit with my son, with Yitzchak' **11** And the matter was very bad in Avraham's sight on account of his son. **12** And God said to Avraham: 'Let the matter not be bad in your eyes because of the lad, and because of you maid; listen to everything that Sarah says; for Yitzchak will be your official heir. **13** And also of the son of the maid will I make a nation, because he is your child. **14** And Avraham arose up early in the morning, and took bread and a bottle of water, and gave it unto Hagar, putting it on her shoulder, and the child, and sent her away; and she departed, and strayed in the wilderness of Beer-sheva. **15** And the water in the bottle was finished, and she cast the child under one of the shrubs. **16** And she went, and sat her down over against him a good way off, as it were a bow-shot; for she said: 'Let me not see the death of the child.' And she sat over against him, and lifted up her voice, and wept. **17** And God heard the voice of the lad; and the angel of God called to Hagar out of heaven, and said unto her: 'What is with you Hagar? Do not be afraid for God has heard the voice of the lad where he is. **18** Get up and lift up the lad, and hold him fast by the hand; for I will make him a great nation.' **19** And God opened her eyes, and she saw a well of water; and she went, and filled the bottle with water, and gave the lad

א וְה' פָקַד אֶת-שָׂרָה, כַּאֲשֶׁר אָמַר; וַיַּעַשׂ ה' לְשָׂרָה, כַּאֲשֶׁר דָּבַר. **ב** וַתַּהַר וַתֵּלֶד שָׂרָה לְאַבְרָהָם בֶּן, לְזִקְנָיו, לְמוּעֵד, אֲשֶׁר-דָּבַר אֱלֹהִים. **ג** וַיִּקְרָא אַבְרָהָם אֶת-שֵׁם-בְנֵו הַנּוֹלָד-לוֹ, אִשָּׁר-יִלְדָה-לוֹ שָׂרָה-- יִצְחָק . . .

ח וַיִּגְדַּל הַיֶּלֶד, וַיִּגְמַל; וַיַּעַשׂ אַבְרָהָם מִשְׁתֵּה גָדוֹל, בְּיוֹם הַגְּמֹל אֶת-יִצְחָק. **ט** וַתִּרְאֵ שָׂרָה אֶת-בֶּן-הָעִבְרָיִת, הַמְצֻרִית, אֲשֶׁר-יִלְדָה לְאַבְרָהָם--מִצְחָק. **י** וַתֹּאמֶר, לְאַבְרָהָם, גֵּרֵשׁ הָאִמָּה הַזֹּאת, וְאֶת-בְּנָהּ: כִּי לֹא יִירָשׁ בֶּן-הָאִמָּה הַזֹּאת, עִם-בְּנֵי עַם-יִצְחָק. **יא** וַיֵּרַע הַדָּבָר מְאֹד, בְּעֵינָיו אַבְרָהָם, עַל, אוֹדֹת בְּנֵו. **יב** וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים אֶל-אַבְרָהָם, אַל-יֵרַע בְּעֵינֶיךָ עַל-הַנְּעִר וְעַל-אִמָּתְךָ--כֹּל אֲשֶׁר תֹּאמַר אֵלֶיךָ שָׂרָה, שְׁמַע בְּקוֹלָהּ: כִּי בְיִצְחָק, יִקְרָא לְךָ וָרַע. **יג** וְגַם אֶת-בֶּן-הָאִמָּה, לְגוֹי אֲשִׁימֶנּוּ: כִּי וָרַע, הוּא. **יד** וַיִּשְׁכֶם אַבְרָהָם בַּבֶּקֶר וַיִּקַּח לֶחֶם וְחֶמֶת מַיִם וַיִּתֵּן אֶל-הָעִבְרָיִת שֵׁם עַל-שִׁכְמָהּ, וְאֶת-הַיֶּלֶד--וַיִּשְׁלַחָהּ; וַתֵּלֶךְ וַתִּמַּע, בְּמִדְבַר בְּאֵר שֶׁבַע. **טו** וַיִּכְלוּ הַמַּיִם, מִן-הַחֶמֶת; וַתִּשְׁלַח אֶת-הַיֶּלֶד, תַּחַת אֶחָד הַשִּׁיחִים. **טז** וַתֵּלֶךְ וַתִּשָּׁב לָהּ מִן-הַחֶמֶת, כַּמִּטְחוֹי קָשָׁת, כִּי אָמְרָה, אַל-אֲרָאָה בְּמוֹת הַיֶּלֶד; וַתִּשָּׁב מִן-הַחֶמֶת, וַתִּשָּׂא אֶת-קִלְעָהּ וַתִּבְרָךְ. **יז** וַיִּשְׁמַע אֱלֹהִים, אֶת-קוֹל הַנְּעִר, וַיִּקְרָא מִלְּאֵף אֱלֹהִים אֶל-הָעִבְרָיִת מִן-הַשָּׁמַיִם, וַיֹּאמֶר לָהּ מֵה-לֶךְ הָעִבְרָיִת; אַל-תִּירָא, כִּי-שָׁמַע אֱלֹהִים אֶל-קוֹל הַנְּעִר בְּאֲשֶׁר הוּא-שָׁם. **יח** וַיִּחַ קוֹמֵי שָׂאִי אֶת-הַנְּעִר, וַהֲחִזִּיקִי אֶת-יָדָהּ בּוֹ: כִּי-לְגוֹי גָדוֹל, אֲשִׁימֶנּוּ. **יט** וַיִּפְקַח אֱלֹהִים אֶת-עֵינֶיהָ, וַתִּרְאֵ בְּאֵר מַיִם; וַתֵּלֶךְ וַתִּמְלֵא אֶת-הַחֶמֶת, מַיִם, וַתִּשְׁק, אֶת-

drink. **20** And God was with the lad, and he grew; and he lived in the wilderness, and became an archer. **21** And he lived in the wilderness of Paran; and his mother took him a wife out of the land of Egypt.

הַנָּעַר. כ. וַיְהִי אֱלֹקִים אֶת-הַנָּעַר, וַיִּגְדַּל; וַיֵּשֶׁב, בְּמִדְבָּר, וַיְהִי, רֹכֵה קֶשֶׁת. כא וַיֵּשֶׁב, בְּמִדְבַר פָּאָרָן; וַתִּקַּח-לוֹ אִמּוֹ אִשָּׁה, מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם.

4. Pirkei d'Rabbi Eliezer Chapter 29

Yishmael went and took a wife from the daughters of Moav. After three years, Avraham went to visit his son Yishmael and he swore to Sarah that he would not get off his camel in the place where Yishmael was living. [Avraham] arrived there in the middle of the day, and he found Yishmael's wife there. He said to her, "Where is Yishmael?" She said, "He and his mother went to bring fruit and dates from the wilderness." [Avraham] said to her, "Give me a little bread and water as I am weary from my travels through the wilderness." She said, "I haven't any bread or any water." [Avraham] said, "When Yishmael comes tell him the following message, . . . and say to him, *An old man from Canaan came to see you and said to change your door post as it is not good for you.*" And when Yishmael came back from the wilderness, she told him these things. And Yishmael understood and divorced her. And his mother sent and took a wife for him from her father's household and Fatima was her name. And again after three years, Avraham went to visit his son Yishmael and he swore to Sarah, as he did the first time, that he would not get off his camel in the place where Yishmael was living. [Avraham] arrived there in the middle of the day, and he found Yishmael's wife there. He said to her, "Where is Yishmael?" She said, "He and his mother went to herd camels in the desert." [Avraham] said to her, "Give me a little bread and water as I am weary from my travels through the wilderness." She took out bread and water and gave him. Avraham stood and prayed before before God for his son, and Yishmael's home became filled will all good manner of blessing. And when Yishmael came home, [his wife] told him what had occurred and Yishmael knew that all along his father's mercies were with him, *as a father has mercy on his children.*

שֶׁלַח יִשְׁמַעֵאל וּלְקַח לוֹ אִשָּׁה מִבְּנוֹת מוֹאָב, לְאַחַר שְׁלֹשׁ שָׁנִים הֵלֵךְ אַבְרָהָם לִרְאוֹת אֶת יִשְׁמַעֵאל בְּנוֹ, וּנְשָׁבַע לְשָׂרָה שֶׁלֹּא יֵרֵד מֵעַל הַגָּמֶל בְּמִקּוֹם שִׁישְׁמַעֵאל שְׂרוּי תָּמֹן, וְהִגִּיעַ לְשֵׁם בַּחֲצֵי הַיּוֹם, וּמִצָּא שֵׁם אֶת אִשְׁתּוֹ שֶׁל יִשְׁמַעֵאל, אִמ' לֵה הֵיכָן הוּא יִשְׁמַעֵאל, אִמְרָהּ לוֹ הֵלֵךְ הוּא וְאִמּוֹ לְהַבִּיא פִּירוֹת וְתַמְרִים מִן הַמִּדְבָּר, אִמ' לֵה תְּנִי לִי מַעֲט לֶחֶם וּמִים כִּי עֵיפָה נַפְשִׁי מִדֶּרֶךְ הַמִּדְבָּר, אִמְרָהּ לוֹ אֵינִי לִי לֶחֶם וְלֹא מִים, אִמ' לֵה כְּשִׁיבָא יִשְׁמַעֵאל הַגִּידִי לּוֹ אֶת הַדְּבָרִים הַלֵּלוּ . . . וְאִמְרִי לוֹ זָקֵן אֶחָד מֵאֶרֶץ כְּנַעַן בָּא לִרְאוֹתְךָ וְאִמ' חֲלַף מִפְתֵּן בֵּיתְךָ שְׂאִינָה טוֹבָה לָךְ, וְכִשְׁבָא יִשְׁמַעֵאל מִן הַמִּדְבָּר הַגִּידָהּ לוֹ אֶת הַדְּבָרִים הַלֵּלוּ . . . וְהִבִּין יִשְׁמַעֵאל וּשְׁלַחָהּ. וּשְׁלַחָהּ אִמּוֹ וּלְקַחָהּ לוֹ אִשָּׁה מִבֵּית אָבִיהָ וּפְטִימָה שְׁמָהּ, וְעוֹד אַחֲרַי שְׁלֹשׁ שָׁנִים הֵלֵךְ אַבְרָהָם לִרְאוֹת אֶת יִשְׁמַעֵאל בְּנוֹ, וּנְשָׁבַע לְשָׂרָה כַּפְּעַם רִאשׁוֹנָה שְׂאִינּוּ יוֹרֵד מִן הַגָּמֶל בְּמִקּוֹם שִׁישְׁמַעֵאל שְׂרוּי שֵׁם, וְהִגִּיעַ לְשֵׁם בַּחֲצֵי הַיּוֹם וּמִצָּא שֵׁם אִשְׁתּוֹ שֶׁל יִשְׁמַעֵאל וְאִמ' לֵה הֵיכָן הוּא יִשְׁמַעֵאל, אִמְרָהּ לוֹ הוּא וְאִמּוֹ הִלְכוּ לְרַעוֹת אֶת הַגָּמְלִים בַּמִּדְבָּר, אִמ' לֵה תְּנִי לִי מַעֲט לֶחֶם וּמִים כִּי עֵיפָה נַפְשִׁי מִדֶּרֶךְ הַמִּדְבָּר, וְהוֹצִיאָהּ לֶחֶם וּמִים וּנְתַנָּהּ לוֹ, עִמַּד אַבְרָהָם וְהָיָה מִתְּפַלֵּל לְפָנֵי הַב' הַעַל בְּנוֹ וְנִתְמַלֵּא בֵּיתוֹ שֶׁל יִשְׁמַעֵאל מְכַל טוֹב מִמִּין הַבְּרָכוֹת, וְכִשְׁבָא יִשְׁמַעֵאל הַגִּידָהּ לוֹ אֶת הַדְּבָר וַיִּדַע יִשְׁמַעֵאל שֶׁעַד עַכְשָׁו רַחֲמֵי אָבִיו עָלָיו כְּרַחֵם אֵב עַל בָּנָיִם

