

Stollen Moments – Vayera – November 16, 2024

PARASHA SUMMARY FROM WWW. REFORMJUDAISM.ORG

- Abraham welcomes three visitors, who announce that Sarah will soon have a son. (18:1-15)
- Abraham argues with God about the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. (18:16-33)
- Lot's home is attacked by the people of Sodom. Lot and his two daughters escape as the cities are being destroyed. Lot's wife is turned into a pillar of salt. (19:1-29)
- Lot impregnates his daughters, and they bear children who become the founders of the nations Moab and Ammon. (19:30-38)
- Abimelech, king of Gerar, takes Sarah as his wife after Abraham claims that she is his sister. (20:1-18)
- Isaac is born, circumcised, and weaned. Hagar and her son, Ishmael, are sent away; an angel saves their lives. (21:1-21)
- God tests Abraham, instructing him to sacrifice Isaac on Mount Moriah. (22:1-19)

Genesis 20

וַיִּסַּע מִשָּׁם אַבְרָהָם אֶרְצָה הַנְּגֵב וַיָּשֶׁב בֵּין-קְדֵשׁ וּבֵין שׁוּר וַיָּגַר בְּגֵרָר: וַיֹּאמֶר אַבְרָהָם אֶל-שָׂרָה אִשְׁתּוֹ אַחְתִּי הִיא וַיִּשְׁלַח אַבְיִמֶלֶךְ מֶלֶךְ גֵּרָר וַיִּקַּח אֶת-שָׂרָה: וַיָּבֹא אֱלֹהִים אֶל-אַבְיִמֶלֶךְ בַּחֲלוֹם הַלַּיְלָה וַיֹּאמֶר לוֹ הֲנִנִּי מֵת עַל-הָאִשָּׁה אֲשֶׁר-לָקַחְתָּ וְהוּא בָעֵלְתָּ בָעַל: וַאֲבִימֶלֶךְ לֹא קָרַב אֵלֶיהָ וַיֹּאמֶר אֲדֹנָי הַגּוֹי גַּם-צִדִּיק תִּהְיֶה: הֲלֹא הוּא אָמַר-לִי אַחְתִּי הִיא וְהִיא-גַּם-הִיא אִמְרָה אֲחִי הוּא בְתָם-לְבָבִי וּבְנִקְנֹן כִּפִּי עָשִׂיתִי זֹאת: וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלָיו הֲאֵלֹהִים בַּחֲלֹם גַּם אָנֹכִי יִדְעֵתִי כִּי בְתָם-לְבָבְךָ עָשִׂיתָ זֹאת וְאַחֲשֶׁךָ גַּם-אָנֹכִי אֹתָךְ מִחַטּוֹ-לִי עַל-כֵּן לֹא-נִתְתִּיךָ לְנֶגַע אֵלֶיךָ: וְעַתָּה הֲשִׁב אִשְׁתְּ-הָאִישׁ כִּי-נָבִיא הוּא וַיִּתְפַּלֵּל בְּעַדָּךְ וְחָנָה וְאִם-אֵינֶנּוּ מְשִׁיב דָּע כִּי-מֹות תָּמוּת אַתָּה וְכָל-אֲשֶׁר-לָךְ: וַיִּשְׁכַּם אַבְיִמֶלֶךְ בַּבֹּקֶר וַיִּקְרָא לְכָל-עַבְדָּיו וַיַּזְכֵּר אֶת-כָּל-הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה בְּאָזְנֵיהֶם וַיִּירָאוּ הָאֲנָשִׁים מְאֹד: וַיִּקְרָא אַבְיִמֶלֶךְ לְאַבְרָהָם וַיֹּאמֶר לוֹ מָה-עָשִׂיתָ לָנוּ וְמָה-חָטַאתִי לָךְ כִּי-הִבַּאתָ עָלַי וְעַל-מַמְלַכְתִּי חֲטָאָה גְדוֹלָה מֵעַשִׂים אֲשֶׁר לֹא-יַעֲשׂוּ עָשִׂיתָ עִמָּדִי: וַיֹּאמֶר אַבְיִמֶלֶךְ אֶל-אַבְרָהָם מָה רָאִיתָ כִּי עָשִׂיתָ אֶת-הַדְּבָר הַזֶּה: וַיֹּאמֶר אַבְרָהָם כִּי אָמַרְתִּי רַק אִין-יִרְאֶת אֱלֹהִים בְּמָקוֹם הַזֶּה וְהִרְגִנִּי עַל-דְּבַר אִשְׁתִּי: וְגַם-אֲמַנָּה אַחְתִּי בַת-אָבִי הִיא אֵף לֹא בַת-אִמִּי וַתְּהִי-לִי לְאִשָּׁה: וַיְהִי כֹאֲשֶׁר הִתְעַו אֹתִי אֱלֹהִים מִבֵּית אָבִי וְאָמַר לָהּ זֶה חֲסִדְךָ אֲשֶׁר תַּעֲשִׂי עִמָּדִי אֵל כָּל-הַמָּקוֹם אֲשֶׁר נָבִיא שָׁמָּה אָמַר-לִי אֲחִי הוּא: וַיִּקַּח אַבְיִמֶלֶךְ צֹאן וּבָקָר וְעַבְדִּים וַיִּשְׁפָּחֵת וַיִּתֵּן לְאַבְרָהָם וַיָּשֶׁב לוֹ אֶת שָׂרָה אִשְׁתּוֹ: וַיֹּאמֶר אַבְיִמֶלֶךְ הִנֵּה אֶרְצִי לְפָנֶיךָ בְּטוֹב בְּעֵינַיִךְ שָׁב: וְלִשְׂרָה אָמַר הִנֵּה נָתַתִּי אֵלָיךְ כְּסָף לְאַחֶיךָ הִנֵּה הוּא-לָךְ כְּסוֹת עֵינַיִם לְכָל אֲשֶׁר אַתָּה וְאֵת כָּל וְנִכְחַת: וַיִּתְפַּלֵּל אַבְרָהָם אֶל-הָאֱלֹהִים וַיִּרְפָּא אֱלֹהִים אֶת-אַבְיִמֶלֶךְ וְאֶת-אִשְׁתּוֹ וְאֶמְהַתּוּ וַיָּלְדוּ: כִּי-עָצָר עָצָר יְהוָה בְּעַד כָּל-רַחֲסָם לְבֵית אַבְיִמֶלֶךְ עַל-דְּבַר שָׂרָה אִשְׁתְּ אַבְרָהָם: {ס}

1 Abraham journeyed from there to the region of the Negeb and settled between Kadesh and Shur. While he was sojourning in Gerar, 2 Abraham said of Sarah his wife, “She is my sister.” So King Abimelech of Gerar had Sarah brought to him. 3 But God came to Abimelech in a dream by night and said to him, “You are to die because of the woman that you have taken, for she is a married woman.” 4 Now Abimelech had not approached her. He said, “O lord, will You slay people even though innocent? 5 He himself said to me, ‘She is my sister’! And she also said, ‘He is my brother.’ When I did this, my heart was blameless and my hands were clean.” 6 And God said to him in the dream, “I knew that you did this with a blameless heart, and so I kept you from sinning against Me. That was why I did not let you touch her. 7 Therefore, restore the man’s wife—since he is a prophet, he will intercede for you—to save your life. If you fail to restore her, know that you shall die, you and all that are yours.” 8 Early next morning, Abimelech called his servants and told them all that had happened; and they were greatly frightened. 9 Then Abimelech summoned Abraham and said to him, “What have you done to us? What wrong have I done that you should bring so great a guilt upon me and my kingdom? You have done to me things that ought not to be done. 10 What, then,” Abimelech demanded of Abraham, “was your purpose in doing this thing?” 11 “I thought,” said Abraham, “surely there is no fear of God in this place, and they will kill me because of my wife. 12 And besides, she is in truth my sister, my father’s daughter though not my mother’s; and she became my wife. 13 So when God made me wander from my father’s house, I said to her, ‘Let this be the kindness that you shall do me: whatever place we come to, say there of me: He is my brother.’” 14 Abimelech took sheep and oxen, and male and female slaves, and gave them to Abraham; and he restored his wife Sarah to him. 15 And Abimelech said, “Here, my land is before you; settle wherever you please.” 16 And to Sarah he said, “I herewith give your brother a thousand pieces of silver; this will serve you as vindication before all who are with you, and you are cleared before everyone.” 17 Abraham then prayed to God, and God healed Abimelech and his wife and his slave girls, so that they bore children; 18 for יהוה had closed fast every womb of the household of Abimelech because of Sarah, the wife of Abraham.

Questions for Discussion

- This again?
- Let’s look at some differences between the first version and the second.

From David H. Aaron (HUC-JIR)

Literary Station	Genesis 12:10-20	Genesis 20:1-18
Context for Displacement Theme	(10) There was a famine in the land, and Abram went down to Egypt to sojourn there, for the famine was severe in the land.	(1) Abraham journeyed from there to the region of the Negeb and settled between Kadesh and Shur. While he was sojourning in Gerar,
Anticipating Danger	(11) As he was about to enter Egypt, he said to his wife Sarai, “I know what a beautiful woman you are. (12) If the Egyptians see you, and think, ‘She is his wife,’ they will kill me and let you live.(13) Please say that you are my sister, that it may go well with me because of you, and that I may remain alive thanks to you.”	(2) Abraham said of Sarah his wife, “She is my sister.” ...
Matriarch Transference	(14) When Abram entered Egypt, the Egyptians saw how very beautiful the woman was. (15) Pharaoh’s courtiers saw her and praised her to Pharaoh, and the woman was taken into Pharaoh’s palace.	...So King Abimelech of Gerar had Sarah brought to him.
Wealth Acquisition	(16) And because of her, it went well with Abram; he acquired sheep, oxen, asses, male and female slaves, she-asses, and camels.	
Divine Intervention	(17) But the LORD afflicted Pharaoh and his household with mighty plagues on account of Sarai, the wife of Abram.	(3) But God came to Abimelech in a dream by night and said to him, “You are to die because of the woman that you have taken, for she is a married woman.” (4) Now Abimelech had not approached her. He said, “O Lord, will You slay people even though innocent? (5) He himself said to me, ‘She is my sister!’ And she also said, ‘He is my brother.’ When I did this, my heart was blameless and my hands were clean.” (6) And God said to him in the dream, “I knew that you did this with a blameless heart, and so I kept you from sinning against Me. That was why I did not let you touch her. (7) Therefore, restore the man’s wife—since he is a prophet, he will intercede for you—to save your life. If you fail to restore her, know that you shall die, you and all that are yours.”
Local King's Actions		(8)Early next morning, Abimelech called his servants and told them all that had happened; and the men were greatly frightened.

<p>King Confronts Abraham (Morality Play)</p>	<p>(18) Pharaoh sent for Abram and said, “What is this you have done to me! Why did you not tell me that she was your wife? (19) Why did you say, ‘She is my sister,’ so that I took her as my wife? Now, here is your wife; take her and begone!”</p>	<p>(9) Then Abimelech summoned Abraham and said to him, “What have you done to us? What wrong have I done that you should bring so great a guilt upon me and my kingdom? You have done to me things that ought not to be done. (10) What, then,” Abimelech demanded of Abraham, “was your purpose in doing this thing?”</p>
<p>Absolving Patriarch</p>		<p>(11) “I thought,” said Abraham, “surely there is no fear of God in this place, and they will kill me because of my wife. (12) And besides, she is in truth my sister, my father’s daughter though not my mother’s; and she became my wife. (13) So when God made me wander from my father’s house, I said to her, ‘Let this be the kindness that you shall do me: whatever place we come to, say there of me: He is my brother.’”</p>
<p>[Displaced] Wealth Acquisition</p>		<p>(14) Abimelech took sheep and oxen, and male and female slaves, and gave them to Abraham; and he restored his wife Sarah to him. (15) And Abimelech said, “Here, my land is before you; settle wherever you please.” (16) And to Sarah he said, “I herewith give your brother a thousand pieces of silver; this will serve you as vindication before all who are with you, and you are cleared before everyone.”</p>
<p>Resolution</p>	<p>(20) And Pharaoh put men in charge of him, and they sent him off with his wife and all that he possessed.</p>	<p>(17) Abraham then prayed to God, and God healed Abimelech and his wife and his slave girls, so that they bore children; (18) for the LORD had closed fast every womb of the household of Abimelech because of Sarah, the wife of Abraham.</p>