

Hayyei Sarah

Genesis 23.1-25.18

This translation was taken from the JPS Tanakh

Chapter 23

¹ Sarah'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 Then Abraham rose from beside his dead, and spoke to the Hittites, saying, ⁴ "I am a resident alien among you; sell me a burial site among you, that I may remove my dead for burial." ⁵ And the Hittites replied to Abraham, saying to him, ⁶ "Hear us, my lord: you are the elect of God among us. Bury your dead in the choicest of our burial places; none of us will withhold his burial place from you for burying your dead." ⁷ Thereupon Abraham bowed low to the people of the land, the Hittites, ⁸ and he said to them, "If it is your wish that I remove my dead for burial, you must agree to intercede for me with Ephron son of Zohar. ⁹ Let him sell me the cave of Machpelah that he owns, which is at the edge of his land. Let him sell it to me, at the full price, for a burial site in your midst."

¹⁰ Ephron was present among the Hittites; so Ephron the Hittite answered Abraham in the hearing of the Hittites, all who entered the gate of his town, saying, ¹¹ "No, my lord, hear me: I give you the field and I give you the cave that is in it; I give it to you in the presence of my people. Bury your dead." ¹² Then Abraham bowed low before the people of the land, ¹³ and spoke to Ephron in the hearing of the people of the land, saying, "If only you would hear me out! Let me pay the price of the land; accept it from me, that I may bury my dead there." ¹⁴ And Ephron replied to Abraham, saying to him, ¹⁵ "My lord, do hear me! A piece of land worth four hundred shekels of silver—what is that between you and me? Go and bury your dead." ¹⁶ Abraham accepted Ephron's terms. Abraham paid out to Ephron the money that he had named in the hearing of the Hittites—four hundred shekels of silver at the going merchants' rate.

¹⁷ So Ephron's land in Machpelah, near Mamre—the field with its cave and all the trees anywhere within the confines of that field—passed ¹⁸ to Abraham as his possession, in the presence of the Hittites, of all who entered the gate of his town. ¹⁹ And then Abraham buried his wife Sarah in the cave of the field of Machpelah, facing Mamre—now Hebron—in the land of Canaan. ²⁰ Thus the field with its cave passed from the Hittites to Abraham, as a burial site.

Chapter 24

¹ Abraham was now old, advanced in years, and the Lord had blessed Abraham in all things. ² And Abraham said to the senior servant of his household, who had charge of all that he owned, "Put your hand under my thigh ³ and I will make you swear by the Lord, the God of heaven and the God of the earth, that you will not take a wife for my son from the daughters of the Canaanites among whom I dwell, ⁴ but will go to the land of my birth and get a wife for my son Isaac." ⁵ And the servant said to him, "What if the woman does not consent to follow me to this land, shall I then take your son back to the land from which you came?" ⁶ Abraham answered him, "On no account

must you take my son back there! ⁷ The Lord, the God of heaven, who took me from my father's house and from my native land, who promised me on oath, saying, 'I will assign this land to your offspring'—He will send His angel before you, and you will get a wife for my son from there. ⁸ And if the woman does not consent to follow you, you shall then be clear of this oath to me; but do not take my son back there." ⁹ So the servant put his hand under the thigh of his master Abraham and swore to him as bidden.

¹⁰ Then the servant took ten of his master's camels and set out, taking with him all the bounty of his master; and he made his way to Aram-naharaim, to the city of Nahor. ¹¹ He made the camels kneel down by the well outside the city, at evening time, the time when women come out to draw water. ¹² And he said, "O Lord, God of my master Abraham, grant me good fortune this day, and deal graciously with my master Abraham: ¹³ Here I stand by the spring as the daughters of the townsmen come out to draw water; ¹⁴ let the maiden to whom I say, 'Please, lower your jar that I may drink,' and who replies, 'Drink, and I will also water your camels'—let her be the one whom You have decreed for Your servant Isaac. Thereby shall I know that You have dealt graciously with my master."

¹⁵ He had scarcely finished speaking, when Rebekah, who was born to Bethuel, the son of Milcah the wife of Abraham's brother Nahor, came out with her jar on her shoulder. ¹⁶ The maiden was very beautiful, a virgin whom no man had known. She went down to the spring, filled her jar, and came up. ¹⁷ The servant ran toward her and said, "Please, let me sip a little water from your jar." ¹⁸ "Drink, my lord," she said, and she quickly lowered her jar upon her hand and let him drink. ¹⁹ When she had let him drink his fill, she said, "I will also draw for your camels, until they finish drinking." ²⁰ Quickly emptying her jar into the trough, she ran back to the well to draw, and she drew for all his camels.

²¹ The man, meanwhile, stood gazing at her, silently wondering whether the Lord had made his errand successful or not. ²² When the camels had finished drinking, the man took a gold nose-ring weighing a half-shekel, and two gold bands for her arms, ten shekels in weight. ²³ "Pray tell me," he said, "whose daughter are you? Is there room in your father's house for us to spend the night?" ²⁴ She replied, "I am the daughter of Bethuel the son of Milcah, whom she bore to Nahor." ²⁵ And she went on, "There is plenty of straw and feed at home, and also room to spend the night." ²⁶ The man bowed low in homage to the Lord ²⁷ and said, "Blessed be the Lord, the God of my master Abraham, who has not withheld His steadfast faithfulness from my master. For I have been guided on my errand by the Lord, to the house of my master's kinsmen."

²⁸ The maiden ran and told all this to her mother's household. ²⁹ Now Rebekah had a brother whose name was Laban. Laban ran out to the man at the spring — ³⁰ when he saw the nose-ring and the bands on his sister's arms, and when he heard his sister Rebekah say, "Thus the man spoke to me." He went up to the man, who was still standing beside the camels at the spring. ³¹ "Come in, O blessed of the Lord," he said, "why do you remain outside, when I have made ready the house and a place for the camels?" ³² So the man entered the house, and the camels were unloaded. The camels were given straw and feed, and water was brought to bathe his feet and the feet of the men with him. ³³ But when food was set before him, he said, "I will not eat until I have told my tale." He said, "Speak, then."

³⁴ "I am Abraham's servant," he began. ³⁵ "The Lord has greatly blessed my master, and he has become rich: He has given him sheep and cattle, silver and gold, male and female slaves, camels and asses. ³⁶ And Sarah, my master's wife, bore my master a son in her old age, and he has assigned to him everything he owns. ³⁷ Now my master made me swear, saying, 'You shall not get a wife for my son from the daughters of the Canaanites in whose land I dwell; ³⁸ but you shall go to my father's house, to my kindred, and get a wife for my son.' ³⁹ And I said to my master, 'What if the woman does not follow me?' ⁴⁰ He replied to me, 'The Lord, whose ways I have followed, will send His angel with you and make your errand successful; and you will get a wife for my son from my kindred, from my father's house. ⁴¹ Thus only shall you be freed from my adjuration: if, when you come to my kindred, they refuse you—only then shall you be freed from my adjuration.'

⁴² "I came today to the spring, and I said: O Lord, God of my master Abraham, if You would indeed grant success to the errand on which I am engaged! ⁴³ As I stand by the spring of water, let the young woman who comes out to draw and to whom I say, 'Please, let me drink a little water from your jar,' ⁴⁴ and who answers, 'You may drink, and I will also draw for your camels'—let her be the wife whom the Lord has decreed for my master's son.' ⁴⁵ I had scarcely finished praying in my heart, when Rebekah came out with her jar on her shoulder, and went down to the spring and drew. And I said to her, 'Please give me a drink.' ⁴⁶ She quickly lowered her jar and said, 'Drink, and I will also water your camels.' So I drank, and she also watered the camels. ⁴⁷ I inquired of her, 'Whose daughter are you?' And she said, 'The daughter of Bethuel, son of Nahor, whom Milcah bore to him.' And I put the ring on her nose and the bands on her arms. ⁴⁸ Then I bowed low in homage to the Lord and blessed the Lord, the God of my master Abraham, who led me on the right way to get the daughter of my master's brother for his son. ⁴⁹ And now, if you mean to treat my master with true kindness, tell me; and if not, tell me also, that I may turn right or left."

⁵⁰ Then Laban and Bethuel answered, "The matter was decreed by the Lord; we cannot speak to you bad or good. ⁵¹ Here is Rebekah before you; take her and go, and let her be a wife to your master's son, as the Lord has spoken." ⁵² When Abraham's servant heard their words, he bowed low to the ground before the Lord. ⁵³ The servant brought out objects of silver and gold, and garments, and gave them to Rebekah; and he gave presents to her brother and her mother. ⁵⁴ Then he and the men with him ate and drank, and they spent the night. When they arose next morning, he said, "Give me leave to go to my master." ⁵⁵ But her brother and her mother said, "Let the maiden remain with us some ten days; then you may go." ⁵⁶ He said to them, "Do not delay me, now that the Lord has made my errand successful. Give me leave that I may go to my master." ⁵⁷ And they said, "Let us call the girl and ask for her reply." ⁵⁸ They called Rebekah and said to her, "Will you go with this man?" And she said, "I will." ⁵⁹ So they sent off their sister Rebekah and her nurse along with Abraham's servant and his men. ⁶⁰ And they blessed Rebekah and said to her,

"O sister!
May you grow
Into thousands of myriads;
May your offspring seize
The gates of their foes."

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

⁶² Isaac had just come back from the vicinity of Beer-lahai-roi, for he was settled in the region of the Negeb. ⁶³ And Isaac went out walking in the field toward evening and, looking up, he saw camels approaching. ⁶⁴ Raising 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.

Chapter 25

¹ Abraham took another wife, whose name was Keturah. ² She bore him Zimran, Jokshan, Medan, Midian, Ishbak, and Shuah. ³ Jokshan begot Sheba and Dedan. The descendants of Dedan were the Asshurim, the Letushim, and the Leummim. ⁴ The descendants of Midian were Ephah, Epher, Enoch, Abida, and Eldaah. All these were descendants of Keturah. ⁵ Abraham willed all that he owned to Isaac; ⁶ but to Abraham's sons by concubines Abraham gave gifts while he was still living, and he sent them away from his son Isaac eastward, to the land of the East.

⁷ This was the total span of Abraham's life: one hundred and seventy-five years. ⁸ And Abraham breathed his last, dying at a good ripe age, old and contented; and he was gathered to his kin. ⁹ His sons Isaac and Ishmael buried him in the cave of Machpelah, in the field of Ephron son of Zohar the Hittite, facing Mamre, ¹⁰ the field that Abraham had bought from the Hittites; there Abraham was buried, and Sarah his wife. ¹¹ After the death of Abraham, God blessed his son Isaac. And Isaac settled near Beer-lahai-roi.

¹² This is the line of Ishmael, Abraham's son, whom Hagar the Egyptian, Sarah's slave, bore to Abraham. ¹³ These are the names of the sons of Ishmael, by their names, in the order of their birth: Nebaioth, the first-born of Ishmael, Kedar, Adbeel, Mibsam, ¹⁴ Mishma, Dumah, Massa, ¹⁵ Hadad, Tema, Jetur, Naphish, and Kedmah. ¹⁶ These are the sons of Ishmael and these are their names by their villages and by their encampments: twelve chieftains of as many tribes.— ¹⁷ These were the years of the life of Ishmael: one hundred and thirty-seven years; then he breathed his last and died, and was gathered to his kin.— ¹⁸ They dwelt from Havilah, by Shur, which is close to Egypt, all the way to Asshur; they camped alongside all their kinsmen.