

*Shiur L'Yom Chamishi*¹

[Thursday's Study]

READINGS: ***Torah Vayera:*** **Genesis 20:1 - 21:34**
 Haftarah: **II Kings 4:18-30**
 B'rit Chadasha: **Hebrews 11:11-16**

"God is with you in everything you do."
[Genesis 21:22]

Today's Meditation is Psalm 140:12-13;
This Week's Amidah prayer is Petition No. 1, *Da'at* - the Prayer for Intimate Knowledge

To most who live in the 21st Century Western world the cities of Sodom and G'morrah may seem like nothing more than *surreal metaphors*. We have never *seen those bustling cities glistening in the morning sun*. We have never walked through their open markets. We have never heard the screams of the innocent women and children being sold into slavery of the worst kind imaginable. We have never smelled the stench of the decaying bodies of the victims of every form of torture and murder.

We cannot even conceive of what it was like to *live there, to raise children there, to trade in the marketplaces there* or even to *visit friends or relatives there*. But it was different for Avraham. For Avraham the cities of the Plain – and the people in them – were very, very real. He knew those cities – and those people – very, very well. And while he certainly did not walk in agreement with the lawless and flesh-obsessed worldview that prevailed there, or feel anything but revulsion and sadness over the debauchery, violence, and perversion that was commonplace in the streets, I am sure the suddenness, the terror, and the shocking scope of their destruction must have left him stunned and saddened.

For Avraham and Sarah the obliteration of Sodom and G'morrah must have been the equivalent of *the mighty Babylon falling*. After all, Sodom and G'morrah were by far the largest, most populous, most prosperous economic and cultural centers in the region – if not the era - in which Avraham lived. The impact of the simultaneous total destruction of those cities on not only the economy but the sense of security of Kena'an was roughly equivalent to what the simultaneous total destruction of New York City and Los Angeles would be to the economy and the sense of security of America, or what the simultaneous total destruction of

¹ All rights with respect to this publication are reserved to the author, William G. Bullock, Sr., also known as *'the Rabbi's son'*. Reproduction of material from any *Rabbi's son* lesson without written permission from the author is prohibited. Copyright © 2015, William G. Bullock, Sr.

Johannesburg and Cape Town would be to the economy and sense of security of South Africa.

If not in those cities, where would he buy and sell? To whom would he market the products of his ever-expanding herds and flocks?

Within two days the destruction of Sodom and G'morrah caused the land where Avraham had been living to be covered by "*dense smoke, like smoke from a furnace*". **Genesis 19:27.**

At 99 Years of Age, Avraham Pulls Up Stakes Again

The fallout from the destruction of the cities of the plain was so violent, with its aftershocks and the raining down of salt and fire and sulphur, that just as Lot had been forced to leave Tzoar Avraham was forced to leave the area he had inhabited near Hebron and find pasture a safe distance away. Our patriarch chose to go to the South and West. He headed toward the coastal plain that rises from the shores of the Mediterranean.

In those days Kena'an's coastland areas were occupied by a seafaring people from the line of Cham. Torah identifies these people as the *P'lisht'im* [i.e. the Philistines]. In Hebrew *P'lish'tim* means 'wanderers' or 'strangers'. They were not originally from this area; they were just an occupying force of opportunistic squatters who came in and took over.

Avraham could no longer stay where they had been living. To escape the toxic fall-out of the day Avraham had no choice but to hit the road again. He, Sarai, and young Yishmael took up a *refugee's sojourn* in the land of the *Ph'lishtim*.

*Avraham journeyed from there to the South,
and dwelt between Kadesh and Shur, and stayed in Gerar.*

[Genesis 20:1]

In Hebrew Gerar simply means 'lodging place'. To dwell in this land, amongst these wanderers, Avraham and Sarah had to make peace with the local leaders. That meant they had to negotiate a deal with the P'lish'tim ruler in the region of Gerar - *Avi-melech*. The first thing they had to negotiate were rights of safe passage. But that would not be enough. They also had to negotiate with Avi-melech over rights of pasturage.

It would have been one thing if Avraham had been a man alone. But he was not. He had Sarah, Hagar, and Yishmael. The presence of the women in Avraham's entourage caused Avraham justifiable concern. In the pagan cultures of the day, all

women – of any age - were considered fair game. Foreign women were considered an exotic delicacy. That meant if such a woman came with a husband, the husband stood right in the path of some powerful cultural lust engines. Avraham justifiably feared the pagans of Gerar would kill him, ravish Sarah and Hagar, and sell the youngster Yishmael into slavery. Such was the world in which Avraham lived.

Avraham came up with a plan to deal with this sad state of reality. As he had done in Egypt years previously, he and Sarah would resort to a ruse. He would pretend that his relationship with Sarah was that of brother and sister² – not husband and wife. And so the deal Avraham cut with Avi-melech was that the latter would take Sarah into his harem – believing her to be Avraham’s sister instead of his wife. In exchange for Sarah, Avraham would be allowed to pasture his flocks in the area. Oh my. Does this sound familiar to anyone but me?

Some Behavior Patterns Die Hard

In Genesis 12:14 the Torah indicates that decades previously, when Avraham traveled to Egypt, the Egyptians – including Pharaoh - saw Sarah and praised her as a *beautiful woman*. That however was *a couple of decades ago*. By the time of today’s aliyah Sarah is – or approaching - *ninety years old*. Although Avraham certainly still considered Sarah the most beautiful woman on earth, the text of Torah does not indicate she was considered particularly beautiful or physically desirable by Avimelech.

So why the *ruse*? Why did Avraham and Sarah conceal the truth about their relationship? Did they really think Avimelech or his people would kill Avraham to have his way with Avraham’s 90-year-old wife? Did they lack faith, after all the years they had walked in covenant with Him, in the Holy One’s protection? Was it a scheme to cause Avimelech to come under the Holy One’s judgment and obtain wealth from Avimelech as they had obtained wealth from Pharaoh?

We do not know all the reasons why our beloved ancestors sinned and swore falsely, because Torah does not tell us fully. All we are given is Avraham’s confession when the ruse was exposed:

“I said to myself, ‘There is surely eyn-yir’at Elohim [no fear of God] in this place, and they will kill me because of my wife.’”
[Genesis 20:11]

The point is that even after multiple God-encounters our ancestors Avraham and Sarah - the super-heroes of faith of Hebrews 11 – were still nowhere near perfect

² The sages identify Sarai with Yischah, daughter of Avraham’s brother Haran, mentioned in Genesis 11:29. That would technically make her Avraham’s niece rather than his sister.

or sinless. They did not have 100% faith. They were fallible people just like us. Their relationship with the Holy One was not based upon sinless perfection - OR even upon total, unquestioning faith - but was instead founded upon the Holy One's *grace covenant* with them.

Likewise, our relationship with the Holy One is not based upon either sinless perfection or upon total, unquestioning faith, but upon the Holy One's *grace covenant* with us – the covenant that has been passed down to us by fallible men like Avraham, Moshe [Moses], David, Eliyahu [Elijah], Yeshayahu [Isaiah], Ezekiel, Daniel, and the *talmidim* of Messiah Y'shua.

Avraham's "Short Leash"

Note however that the Holy One loved Avraham and Sarah far too much to let the seeds of faithlessness the two of them sowed upon entering Gerar remain hidden long enough to yield their natural fruit. The Creator of Heaven and Earth actively intervened in a most embarrassing way, actually *appearing to Avimelech* - a pagan and idolatrous king - *in a dream to expose the deception* Avraham and Sarah had practiced. Tough love is *messy stuff*.

The Holy One does not demand perfection, but ***in His mercy He does not let His people long get away without suffering at least some carefully measured adverse consequences from behavior inconsistent with the Covenant and with Covenant destiny.*** The adverse consequences the Holy One allows His Covenant partners to suffer are always ***redemptive*** – but they are by no means *comfortable*.

Keep in mind the admonition we received from the writer of Hebrews:

*The Holy One disciplines those he loves
and whips everyone he accepts as a son.*

*Now, all discipline, while it is happening,
does indeed seem painful, not enjoyable;
but for those who have been trained by it,
it later produces its peaceful fruit, which is righteousness.
So, strengthen your drooping arms, and steady your tottering knees;
and make a level path for your feet;
so that what has been injured will not get wrenched out of joint
but rather will be healed.*

[Hebrews 12:6, 11-13]

Can you imagine Avraham's stress level therefore when Avimelech *called him on the carpet* and *confronted him* about this incident? Look at Avimelech's words:

lo meh-asita lanu

“What have you done to us?”

umeh-chatati lach ki-heveta alay

How have I wronged you that you have brought upon me

v'al mamlachti chata'ah gedolah

and on my kingdom such great guilt?

ma'asim asher lo-ye'asu asita imadi

You have done things to me that should not be done.

mah ra'ita ki asita et-ha-davar hazeh

What was your reason for doing this?”

[Genesis 20:9-10]

So Avraham had to “come clean” and own up to his pattern of faithlessness and deception – not to mention his involvement of his wife in this dishonest and downright reckless course of conduct.

Please note that this is *the last time* Torah records Avraham resorting to this kind of behavior. Apparently the Holy One *arranged* this experience so that Avraham could be brought to ***t'shuvah*** [i.e. repentance and return to the Holy One's path of righteousness].

As Promised: A Child Is Born!

Once the repentance came Avraham and Sarah were enabled to receive the promise of a son. As soon as the sin pattern was removed Sarah's womb was miraculously refreshed and opened. A 100-year-old man sired a son, Yitzchak, who nursed at his 90-year-old mother's breasts! Here is the record of this wondrous event as it is provided to us in Torah:

V'Adonai pakad et-Sarah

And the Holy One granted special providence to [and/or visited] Sarah

ka'asher amar vaya'as Adonai l'Sarah ka'asher diber

as He said He would, and the Holy One did what He promised for Sarah.

V'tahar v'teled Sarah l'Avraham ben liz'kunav

Sarah became pregnant, and she gave birth to Abraham's son in his old age

L'mo'ed asher-diber oto Elohim

It was at the appointed time according to what God had promised.

Please take note that the birth of Yitzchak was a *Divinely scheduled event*. Torah tells us it took place ***l'moed*** – Hebrew for ‘at the *appointed time*’. If the sages of Israel are correct this means in the Seventh Biblical month - either on *Yom T'ruah* [the Feast of Trumpets] or during *Chag Sukkot* [the Feast of Tabernacles].

And though the child's name was picked out for him by the Holy One long before his birth, the honor of actually bestowing that Divinely chosen name upon the child was accorded to Avraham, the father. Hence Torah tells us:

Vayikra Avraham et-shem-beno

Abraham gave a name to the son

Ha-nolad-lo asher-yaldah-lo Sarah Yitzchak

to whom Sarah had just given birth: Yitzchak.

v'Avraham ben-me'at shanah

Abraham was 100 years old

B'hivaled lo et Yitzchak beno

when his son Yitzchak was born.

V'tomer Sarah tzachok asah li Elohim

Sarah said, 'God has given me laughter.'

Kol ha-sh'omea yitzachak-li

All who hear about it will laugh for me.'

[Genesis 21:1-2]

This baby has been *a long time in coming*. But here he is, *right on time*. There is no way to explain it other than as the Miraculous, Sovereign Act of the Holy One. He has poured out His creative power once again, and we are the beneficiaries.

Let us indeed laugh with Sarah, Dear Reader! Blessed be the Name of the Holy One!

Yishmael and Yitzchak: Mismatched From the Beginning

For 13 years Yishmael lived in Avraham's camp as his son. Hagar's submission to Sarah in response to the Angelic visitation and Divine Vision she received in Genesis 16 had resulted in Avraham and Sarah making a place for Yishmael.

We know that after her return, however, Hagar was no longer Sarah's trusted 'handmaid' [Hebrew, *shifchah*, *shin*, *peh*, *chet*, *hey*, Strong's Hebrew word #8198, pronounced *shif-khaw*, meaning *a very personal confidante and representative, corresponding to Avraham's Elazar*]. She was not accepted back not as a *shifchah*, but merely as a common slave woman [Hebrew *ha-amah*]. This latter term has made it into our English language as 'bondwoman'.

With the birth of Yitzchak however even that changed. Yishmael did not respond

well at all to the newcomer, thirteen years his junior. And while Yishmael could not harm his younger brother as long as Yitzchak was safely nestled between Sarah's breasts, upon Yitzchak's weaning the abuse started. Here is how Torah records it:

Vayigdal ha-yeled vayigamal
The child grew and was weaned.

vaya'as Avraham mish'teh gadol b'yom higamel et-Yitzchak
Abraham made a great feast on the day that Yitzchak was weaned.

V'tere Sarah et-ben-Hagar ha-Mitzrit
But Sarah saw the son Hagar the Egyptian

asher-yaldah l'Avraham m'tzachek
had borne to Abraham scoffing.
[Genesis 21:8-9]

The Hebrew word used in Torah to describe what Sarah saw 'Hagar's son' doing to Yitzchak is ***m'tzachek***. This is the verb obtained by adding the prefix *mem* to the Hebrew verb meaning 'to laugh'. As we have discussed previously, the Hebrew letter *mem* is a pictograph of a flowing wave of water. Adding this pictograph to the beginning of a verb makes it into a continuous, ongoing, course of conduct. The verb ***m'tzachek*** describes a perverse kind of sporting, or scoffing, which becomes progressively more and more malevolent, escalating into acts of hatred and violence.

Sarah saw this unfolding, recognized where it was headed, and realized that too much was at stake to allow such malevolence to continue. So she said to Avraham:

Garesh ha-amah hazot v'et-benah
'Drive away this bondswoman together with her son.

ki lo yirash ben ha-amah hazot im-beni im-Yitzchak
The son of this bondswoman will not share the inheritance with my son Yitzchak!
[Genesis 21:10]

In the course of Yishmael's interactions with the much younger Yitzchak Sarah saw something that *only a mother can see*. She saw that the compromising arrangement under which she and Avraham and Hagar and Yishmael and Yitzchak had lived up to that point was not going to work out any more than the compromising arrangements under which she and Avram had tried to live in Egypt and Gerar had worked out. She saw that the development and training and security of the chosen seed which the Holy One had implanted in her 90 year old womb required that **drastic** action be taken, and soon.

Though it would not be considered 'politically correct' Sarah knew that a quick

and permanent forced separation was what was best - *even for Hagar and for Yishmael*. If Yishmael stayed, you see, someone *was going to get hurt* – if not killed. Nobody – absolutely nobody – was going to be safe.

Something had to give. Critical choices had to be made. Someone had to go. And Yitzchak was the child of Divine promise – the flesh and blood and DNA of both Avraham and Sarah. Yishmael was a young man now –and his days in Avraham’s camp were drawing to a close.

Avraham’s Seventh God Encounter

As you might expect Avraham was very troubled by Sarah’s decree of banishment. After all Yishmael was not only ‘the son of the slave woman’ as Sarah now saw him – he was also born of Avraham’s own flesh! And so the Holy One paid Avraham yet another visit.

Avraham’s seventh God-Encounter was initiated by the Sweet Voice Avraham had grown to know so well saying:

Al yera b'eyneycha al-ha-na'ar v'al-amatecha -

'Do not be troubled because of the boy and your slave

kol asher tomar eleycha Sarah sh'ma b'kolah

Sh'ma everything that Sarah tells you.

ki b'Yitzchak yikare lecha zara

It is through Yitzchak that you will gain posterity.

V'gam et-ben-ha-amah l'goy asimenu

But still, I will also make the slave's son into a nation,

ki zar'acha hu

for he is your child.'

[Genesis 21:12-13]

“*Sh'ma everything Sarah tells you*”, He said.

This is *nowhere near* what Avraham wanted to hear. This meant Avraham would indeed have to ‘drive away’ Yishmael and Hagar just as Sarah had demanded. Just as he had to separate from his birthplace and his father’s household; just as he had to separate from his comfortable nest in Egypt; just as he had to separate from his nephew Lot; just as he had to separate from his home in Hebron; just as he had to separate from his place of convenient sojourn in Gerar; so now he was going to have to separate from his beloved firstborn son and the woman who had given herself to him and life to his son.

Avraham had however learned over the years to trust the Holy One, and to **sh'ma** the Holy One's instructions without questioning them. He had learned to believe and trust, even without fully understanding, that whatever the Holy One says – however strange it sounds - will *always result in the best for those who love the Holy One*.

And so it came to pass that Avraham packed bread and water for Hagar and Yishmael and sent them both off into the desert – knowing in his heart that the Holy One would watch over them faithfully, just as He had promised.

Hagar's Second God Encounter

The Holy One, you see, *cares* very, very, much for Hagar and Yishmael. They – and their progeny - have their own part to play in the Holy One's great redemptive plan for mankind. And though the time has now come when they can not for even one moment longer stay in Avraham's camp, that does not mean that they are either *hated* or *accursed* or *abandoned* by Heaven. Angels have been assigned to watch over Hagar and Yishmael as they leave the patriarchal camp and walk down the *wadi* toward Egypt.

Angels know when the water runs out. Angels watch carefully, patiently, as Yishmael crawls up under a bush to find shade, wondering if he will live or die. Angels watch Hagar weep bitterly over her son, surrendering him to whatever fate the Holy One decrees for him.

That moment of surrender is exactly what the Angels had been told to wait for. The moment that surrender occurred the Angels *moved in*. Heaven *invaded their desert-scape* and *changed everything*.

The Holy One could, of course, very easily, have let Hagar and Yishmael die. He could have sent a lion or a serpent their way to end it all. But, you see, the problem with that is that He had *a covenant* with Avraham, the boy's father. And in connection with that covenant He had made a promise to both Avraham and to Hagar that this boy would live, not die, and would prosper, not waste away. And the Holy One made room, it seems, in His Divine Plan for a slave woman and her often-incorrigible son.

The Holy One is a **good** God. He is a **faithful** God. He is a Father to the fatherless, a Husband to the widow, a Friend to those in need. So Torah tells us:

Vayish'ma Elohim et-kol ha-na'ar vayikra
Elohim heard the boy weeping.

Malach Elohim el-Hagar min ha-shamayim v'yomer
The angel of Elohim called Hagar from heaven and said to her,

lah mah-lach Hagar al-tire'i
'What's the matter Hagar? Do not be afraid

ki-shama Elohim el-kol ha-na'ar ba'asher hu-sham
Elohim has heard the boy's voice there where he is.

The Holy One *listened*. The Holy One *heard*. The Holy One responded. The Holy One *gave heed to*, and was *moved to intervention by*, an incorrigible boy's incoherent sobs and a broken-hearted mother's desperate prayers.

The Holy One heard because He was right there all along. He is always *one step away*. He is always *one moment-of-surrender from intervention*. He will always hear – and respond to – a child's sobs. He will always hear – and be stirred by - a mother's prayers. And thanks be to Heaven the Holy One does not merely hear - He *springs into action*. He *steps out of eternity into time*. He *steps out of His Cloak of Invisibility and makes things happen in the physical, material world*. That is His *Nature*, and that is His *Promise*.

And so, in response to Yishmael's sobs and Hagar's prayers, the Holy One calls forth ***mayim hayim*** [living water]. And the earth opens up, and yields for Hagar and Yishmael a well. And then Torah says the Holy One *opened Hagar's eyes* to see what was not there before.

V'yifkach Elohim et-eyneyha v'tere be'er mayim
Elohim opened her eyes, and she saw a well of water.

v'telech v'temale et ha-chemet mayim vatashk et ha-na'ar
She went and filled the skin with water, giving the boy some to drink.

Drink deeply, Hagar. Drink deeply, Yishmael. Enjoy the sweetness of the water from that supernatural well of life and hope and peace. May the time come, and soon, when you taste the Living Water of the Holy One again.

Do not give up on the descendants of Yishmael, Dear Reader. However loud, however arrogant, however cruel, however argumentative, and however violent some of them may act; however badly they may hurt you or those you love; however loudly their leaders may mock everything that is good and noble, and however passionately they may exalt everything which is evil and base; however many innocents they put to the edge of the sword, do not give up on Yishmael.

Oh, *be wary of Yishmael*, for certain. Be very *wise*. Do not let yourself be taken in for one second by his lies. Do not ever give credence to his railing accusations

against the Holy One's people. Do not ever for one second allow your deceptive heart to buy the propaganda and side with him against those the Holy One has called to be *a light to the nations*. Do not let yourself be *intimidated by his threats*. Do not by any means *appease* him. Do not give in to the temptation to *compromise with* him. But in all this watchfulness, never, never give up on Yishmael either. The Holy One hasn't – and He never will.

Pray that there will be another strategic season of incoherent sobs. Pray that there will be another moment-of-absolute surrender. And pray that Living Water will once again nourish the DNA Yishmael received from his father Avraham.

Questions Regarding Today's Study

1. What do you think motivated Avram/Avraham to misrepresent to Pharaoh [Genesis 12] and Avimelech [today's aliyah] his relationship with Sarai/Sarah?
2. How did the Holy One protect Avraham and Sarah in this incident - despite their bearing of false witness?
3. How did the Holy One arrange for Avraham to be a blessing to Avimelech and his people even though they had sinned and provided a rather bad example of the Holy One's covenant people? [Remember, in Genesis 12:3, the Holy One covenanted with Avram that through Avram would all the peoples on earth be blessed]
4. How was Avimelech's reaction to discovering Avraham's sin different from Pharaoh's reaction in a similar situation in Genesis 12?
5. The Torah indicates that, among other gifts, Avimelech gave Avraham 1,000 shekels of silver.

[A] Why did Avimelech give Avraham a thousand shekels [about 25 pounds - a veritable fortune] of silver?

[B] Look up "silver" in a reference book such as "The Encyclopedia of Jewish Symbols" or whatever you have available. Why was silver an appropriate gift for the purpose Avimelech stated?

[C] What else did Avimelech give besides silver?

[D] Had Avimelech wronged Avraham or Sarah? If so, how?

[E] Can you explain why Avimelech showered Avraham and Sarah with gifts and kindnesses?

6. Immediately after the incident with Avimelech the Holy One fulfills His covenant promise to give Avraham and Sarah a son - ***Yitzchak*** [Isaac].

[A] What does the name ***Yitzchak*** mean?

- [B] How was this name appropriate for this child?
- [C] How old was Avraham when Yitzchak was born?
- [D] How old was Sarah when Yitzchak was born?

7. At the feast given to celebrate the weaning of Yitzchak trouble develops in the Covenant household.

- [A] What caused the trouble?
- [B] What was Sarah's proposed solution?
- [C] In the midst of the trouble, and the stress it caused, we are comforted to know that the Holy One did not "disappear" or "hide" Himself - He spoke to Avraham, and gave him counsel. What did He say?
- [D] It must have been a very difficult and emotional, if not traumatic, event when Avraham sent Hagar and Ishmael away. Imagine you are Avraham, and write a journal entry for the day you sent Hagar and Ishmael away, explaining what you did, why you did it, what you expected to happen to Hagar and Ishmael, and your feelings about the whole thing.
- [E] The Holy One did not by any means *abandon* Hagar or her son. What did He do for them?
- [F] Reread Genesis 16:7-16. To what place do you think Hagar fled?
- [G] How old was Ishmael when he and his mother were sent away?
- [H] What skill did Ishmael develop?
- [I] From what nation did Ishmael take a wife?

8. After Yishmael and Hagar have departed Avimelech comes to visit Avraham.

- [A] Why did Avimelech come to visit?
- [B] What were the terms of the covenant made between Avraham and the Ph'lishtim [Palestinians/Philistines]?
- [C] Were the Ph'lishtim among the peoples which the Holy One promised Moshe the children of Israel would dispossess of their land?
- [D] What does the place name "*Beersheva*" mean?
- [E] Why was that name given to the place where the covenant was made between Avraham and Avimelech?

9. In today's Haftarah the events surrounding the death of the only son of "the Shunamite" are related. As you read this aliyah keep in mind the parallel between this story and the life - and near death - of Yitzchak. Tomorrow's Torah aliyah will address the offering of Yitzchak by Avraham on Mount Moriyah. Keep in mind that whatever the Holy One entrusts to us is **His**, not ours – and that we are merely stewards. This holds true whether the thing entrusted is 1,000 shekels of silver or a child of promise.

We must decide which we love more – is it *the Holy One*, or is it *the persons and things He places in our care*?

[A] In your Bible Atlas look for **Shunem** [it should be just south of Mount Tabor, in the tribal allotment of Yissakhar (Issachar)] and for **Mount Carmel**. How far did the Shunamite travel on a donkey?

[B] Explain the Shunamite's answer to Gehazi in verse 26.

[C] Why do you think the Shunammite went to find Elisha - even though it wasn't Rosh Chodesh [New Moon] or Shabbat [Sabbath]?

[D] Why do you think the Shunamite refused to leave Elisha - even after he had sent Gehazi to Shunem to see to the boy?

10. In today's reading from the apostolic writings the author of the letter to the Messianic Hebrews [the Jews of that day who had accepted Y'shua as Messiah] discusses Avraham and Sarah.

[A] According to the writer of the letter to the Messianic Jews of the 1st Century what was Avraham enabled to become a father in his old age?

[B] The writer indicates that Avraham and Sarah, as well as others mentioned in previous verses, "did not receive the things promised; they only saw them and welcomed them from a distance." What promises of the Holy One did Avraham and Sarah not personally see fulfilled in their lifetime?

[C] Read Y'shua's statements in John 8:39-40 and 8:52-58. How do those statements relate to the content of today's apostolic writings?

[D] What admission/confession does the writer of Hebrews say all people of faith such as Avraham and Sarah must make?

[E] What, according to the writer of Hebrews, does such an admission/confession prove about the one making the admission/confession?

[F] Why, according to the writer of Hebrews, did Avraham and Sarah not return to Ur of the Chaldees [Babylon] or Charan?

[G] What, according to the writer of Hebrews, has the Holy One prepared for those who live as aliens and strangers on earth?

May your sins be revealed that they may be forgiven and washed away.

May you never let this world become your home.

May you never let the things of this world, however beautiful or dear to you, become more precious to you than the Holy One.

May you find the City of God prepared for you.

The Rabbi's son

Meditation For Today's Study

Psalm 140:12-13

*I know that the Holy One will maintain the cause of the afflicted,
and justice for the poor.*

*Surely the righteous shall give thanks to Your name;
The upright shall dwell in Your presence.*