

Parshat VaEra Podcast

Nechama Goldman Barash

Four Women of VaEra

I. Yocheved

Sanhedrin 58a

Come and hear a proof for the opinion of [Rabbi Akiva](#) from the verse: “**And Amram took Jochebed his aunt** as a wife” ([Exodus 6:20](#)). **What, was she not his maternal aunt?** Presumably, Jochebed was the sister of Kohath, Amram’s father, from both of Kohath’s parents, and not from his father alone. Evidently, a descendant of Noah may marry his father’s sister.

The Gemara rejects this proof: **No**, she was **his paternal aunt**, Kohath’s half sister. Since she was not Kohath’s sister from his mother’s side, she was not forbidden to Amram.

Come and hear a proof for the opinion of [Rabbi Eliezer](#) from what Abraham said to Abimelech with regard to Sarah: “**And moreover, she is my sister, the daughter of my father, but not the daughter of my mother;** and so she became my wife” ([Genesis 20:12](#)). **By inference, the daughter of the mother of a descendant of Noah is forbidden** to him.

The Gemara rejects this proof: **But** how can **you understand** that Sarah was Abraham’s **sister? She was his brother’s daughter.** By tradition, it is known that Sarah was Haran’s daughter Iscah. **And since that was so**, there **is no difference** whether they were **paternal** relatives, **and there is no difference** whether they were **maternal** relatives; in any event she was **permitted** to him, even according to the *halakha* of Jews. **Rather, this** is what

סנהדרין נח.
ת"ש) [שמות ו, כ](#) (ויקה עמרם את יוכבד דודתו מאי לאו
דודתו מן האם
לא דודתו מן האב
ת"ש) [בראשית כ, יב](#) (וגם אמנה אחותי בת אבי היא
אך לא בת אמי מכלל דבת האם אסורה
ותסברא אחותו הואי בת אחיו הואי וכיון דהכי הוא לא
שנא מן האב ולא שנא מן האם שריא אלא התם הכי
קאמר ליה קורבא דאחות אית לי בהדה מאבא ולא
מאמא

<p>Abraham was saying to Abimelech there: She is related to me like a sister, as the daughter of my brother is like a sister, and our relationship is from the side of my father but not from the side of my mother.</p>	
--	--

II. Unnamed Canaanite wife of Simon

<p>Seichel Tov <i>"And they took Dinah out of Shechem's house and went out"</i> Rabbi Yehuda said: They dragged her out and left. Rabbi Hama said: "For it is hard for a woman who has had relations with a gentile to leave him." She was saying "Where shall I hide my disgrace," until Shimon swore that he would marry her and that is what the verse means when it says, "Saul the son of the Kenaanite woman, (Genesis 46 10)" [Look up the verse to understand! It is suggesting that Shimon indeed married her and gave his name to a child whose mother had laid with a Kenaanite man – in other words, Shechem who is a Hivi] that she lay with a descendant of Kenaan. And our sages said that Shimon took her and buried her in the land of Kenaan.</p>	<p>שכל טוב (בובר) בראשית פרשת וישלח פרק לד ויקחו את דינה מבית שכם ויצאו. ר' יהודה אומר גוררין בה ויצאו. א"ר חמא הנבעלת לגוי קשה לפרוש, היתה אומרת אנה אוליך את חרפתי, עד שנשבע לה שמעון שיקחנה לו לאשה, זש"ה ושאלו בן הכנענית (בראשית מו י), שנבעלת לחוי שהוא בן כנען. ורבותינו אמרו נטלה שמעון וקברה בארץ כנען: C</p>
--	---

III. Elisheva

<p>Leviticus Rabbah 20:2 Elisheva the daughter of Amminadav did not enjoy happiness in the world. True, she witnessed five crowns [attained by her relatives] in one day: her brother-in-law was a king, her brother was a prince, her husband was High Priest, her two sons were both Deputy High Priests, her grandson Phinehas was a Priest anointed for war. But when her sons entered to offer incense and were burnt, her joy was changed to mourning. Thus it is written, "After the death of the two sons of Aaron."</p>	<p>ויקרא רבה כ:ב אֱלִישֶׁבֶע בַּת עֲמִינדָב לֹא שָׂמְחָה בְּעוֹלָם, שְׂרָאָתָהּ חֲמִשָּׁה כְּתָרִים בְּיוֹם אֶחָד, יְבָמָה מְלֶךְ, אַחִיָּה נָשִׂיא, בַּעֲלָהּ כֹהֵן גָּדוֹל, שְׁנֵי בָנִיהָ שְׁנֵי סֹגְנֵי כֹהֲנֵהוּ, פְּנִיחָס בֶּן בְּנֵה מְשֻׁחַ מִלְחָמָה, כִּיּוֹן שְׁנִכְנָסוּ בָנִיהָ לְהַקְרִיב וְנִשְׂרְפוּ, נִהְפְּכָה שְׂמֻחָתָהּ לְאַבְל, הַדָּא הוּא דְכְּתִיב: אַחֲרֵי מוֹת שְׁנֵי בָנֵי אַהֲרֹן.</p>
--	--

IV. Daughter of Putiel

<p>Mechilta D'Rabbi Yishmael Yitro – Amalek Chapter 3 And Yitro heard. He was called by seven names. Jether. Jetro, Heber. Hobab. Ben</p>	<p>מכילתא דרבי ישמעאל יתרו - מסכתא דעמלק פרשה א</p>
---	--

<p>Reul. Putiel. Keni. Jether because he caused an additional chapter to be put into the Torah. Jethro because he abounded in good deeds. Heber, because he associated himself with God. Hobab because he was beloved of God. Ben because he was like a son unto God and Reul because he was like a friend of God. Putiel because he freed himself from idolatry. Keni because he was zealous for God and also because he acquired Torah for himself.</p>	<p>וישמע יתרו. שבעה שמות נקראו לו: יתר, יתרו, חובב, רעול, חבר, פוטיאל, קני. יתר, שהותיר פרשה אחת בתורה. יתרו, שייתר במעשים טובים. חובב, שהיה חביב למקום. רעואל, שהיה כריע למקום. חבר, שנעשה כחבר למקום. פוטיאל, שנפטר מעבודה זרה. קני, שקנא לשמים וקנה לו תורה</p>
--	--

<p>Shemot Rabbah (Vilna) Parshat Vaera 7, 5</p> <p>And Eleazar, Aaron's son, took him one of the daughters of Putiel to wife (6,25). It does not say the daughter of Putiel, but Of the Daughters of Putiel because his wife belonged to two families – to the tribe of Joseph who conquered (pitpet) his passion and also to Jethro who fattened (pitam) calves for idolatrous purposes.</p>	<p>שמות רבה (וילנא) פרשת וארא פרשה ז סימן ה ...ואלעזר בן אהרן לקח לו מבנות פוטיאל וגו', בת פוטיאל לא נאמר אלא מבנות פוטיאל שהיתה אשתו משתי משפחות משבט יוסף שפטפט ביצרו, ובא מצד אחר מיתרו שפיטם עגלים לעבודת כוכבים</p>
--	---