

**Primogeniture** ([/ˌpraɪməˈdʒɛnɪtʃər, -oʊ-/](#)) is the right, by law or custom, of the firstborn legitimate child to inherit all or most of their parent's estate in preference to shared inheritance among all or some children, any illegitimate child or any collateral relative.

Seems to be violated more than it is followed in the Torah

- Isaac's sons Esau (older) and Jacob
- In blessing Joseph's sons, Jacob gives the preferred blessing to the younger (Ephraim) instead of the older (Manasseh) and then when he blesses his own sons, Judah, the 4<sup>th</sup> oldest, gets the best blessing. Finally, Joseph (first son of Rachel) gets the double portion, not Reuben (first son of Leah).
- Ishmael is the older son of Abraham, yet he is cast out.

### **Genesis 20:12**

And besides, she is in truth my sister, my father's daughter though not my mother's; and she became my wife.

### **Genesis 30:3, 6**

She said, "Here is my maid Bilhah. Consort with her, that she may bear on my knees and that through her I too may have children."

And Rachel said, "God has vindicated me; indeed, [God] has heeded my plea and given me a son." Therefore she named him Dan.

### **Genesis 16:1-3**

Sarai, Abram's wife, had borne him no children. She had an Egyptian maidservant whose name was Hagar. And Sarai said to Abram, "Look, HaShem has kept me from bearing. Consort with my maid; perhaps I shall have a child through her." And Abram heeded Sarai's request. So Sarai, Abram's wife, took her maid, Hagar the Egyptian—after Abram had dwelt in the land of Canaan ten years—and gave her to her husband Abram as a wife.

### **Steinsaltz on Genesis 16:3**

**And she gave her to Abram her husband as a wife.** Hagar was apparently a full-fledged wife, not merely a maidservant or concubine. However, this change of status caused problems afterwards.

### **Notes**

- 1) Some translations, including the JPS translation used in Etz Hayim, refer to Hagar as a concubine, but the word in Hebrew is the word for wife, not concubine.
- 2) Hagar has the same Hebrew spelling as HaGer, or the stranger.

### Genesis 21:1-3

HaShem took note of Sarah as promised, and HaShem did for Sarah what had been announced. Sarah conceived and bore a son to Abraham in his old age, at the set time of which God had spoken. Abraham gave his newborn son, whom Sarah had borne him, the name of Isaac.

### Genesis 21:9 – 14

Sarah saw the son whom Hagar the Egyptian had borne to Abraham playing. She said to Abraham, “Cast out that slave-woman and her son, for the son of that slave shall not share in the inheritance with my son Isaac.” The matter distressed Abraham greatly, for it concerned a son of his. But God said to Abraham, “Do not be distressed over the boy or your slave; whatever Sarah tells you, do as she says, for it is through Isaac that offspring shall be continued for you. As for the son of the slave-woman, I will make a nation of him, too, for he is your seed.” Early next morning Abraham took some bread and a skin of water, and gave them to Hagar. He placed them over her shoulder, together with the child, and sent her away. And she wandered about in the wilderness of Beer-sheba.

#### לַצַּח (v) heb

1. to laugh, mock, play
  1. (Qal) to laugh
  2. (Piel)
    1. to jest
    2. to sport, play, make sport, toy with, make a toy of

### Ibn Ezra on Genesis 21:9

MAKING SPORT. Ishmael was acting as a boy is wont to act. Sarah was jealous because he was older than her son.

### Rashi on Genesis 21:9

לַצַּח MAKING SPORT — This means **worshipping idols**, as it is said in reference of the Golden Calf, (Exodus 32:6) “And they rose up to make merry (לַצַּח).” Another explanation is that it refers to **immoral conduct**, just as you say in reference to Potiphar’s wife, (Genesis 39:17) “To mock (לַצַּח) at me.” Another explanation is that it refers to **murder**, as (2 Samuel 2:14) “Let the young men, I pray thee, arise and make sport (וַיִּשְׁחָקוּ) before us” (where they fought with and killed one another) From Sarah’s reply — “for the son of this bondwoman shall not be heir with my son” — you may infer that he (Ishmael) was quarrelling with Isaac about the inheritance, saying, “I am the first-born and will, therefore, take a double portion”.

## **Genesis 25:1**

Avraham again took a wife. Her name was Keturah.

## **Pirkei DeRabbi Eliezer 30**

After the death of Sarah, Abraham again took (Hagar) his divorced (wife), as it is said, "And Abraham again took a wife, and her name was Keturah" (Gen. 25:1). Why does it say "And he *again*"? Because on the first occasion she was his wife, and he *again* betook himself to her. Her name was Keturah, because she was perfumed with all kinds of scents.

## **Nachmanides (Ramban) on Genesis 12:6**

I will tell you a principle by which you will understand all the coming portions of Scripture concerning Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. It is indeed a great matter which our Rabbis mentioned briefly, saying: "Whatever has happened to the patriarchs is a sign to the children." It is for this reason that the verses narrate at great length the account of the journeys of the patriarchs, the digging of the wells, and other events. Now someone may consider them unnecessary and of no useful purpose, but in truth they all serve as a lesson for the future: when an event happens to any one of the three patriarchs, that which is decreed to happen to his children can be understood.

## **Paul's Epistle to the Galatians 4:21-23 and 25-31**

<sup>21</sup> Tell me, you who want to be under the law, are you not aware of what the law says? <sup>22</sup> For it is written that Abraham had two sons, one by the slave woman and the other by the free woman. <sup>23</sup> His son by the slave woman was born according to the flesh, but his son by the free woman was born as the result of a divine promise.

<sup>28</sup> Now you, brothers and sisters, like Isaac, are children of promise. <sup>29</sup> At that time the son born according to the flesh persecuted the son born by the power of the Spirit. It is the same now. <sup>30</sup> But what does Scripture say? "Get rid of the slave woman and her son, for the slave woman's son will never share in the inheritance with the free woman's son."<sup>[a]</sup>

<sup>31</sup> Therefore, brothers and sisters, we are not children of the slave woman, but of the free woman.

### **Rabbi Eliezer Melamed, “Banish the Son of the Handmaid”**

Our matriarch Sarah afflicted and chastised Hagar to put her in her place. Only when she understood there was no more chance of Hagar and Ishmael changing their ways, did she request banishing them. The divine decree to banish the handmaid and her son, is also when it is not pleasant. The more we contributed to the prosperity of our Arab neighbors, the sons of Ishmael, the more their war against us intensified. We are commanded to examine whether and how we can encourage the emigration of our enemies from our land. If we do not succeed in removing our enemies from all our land, we will have to suffer.

### **Leviticus 18:9**

The nakedness of your sister — your father’s daughter or your mother’s, whether born into the household or outside—do not uncover their nakedness.

### **Deuteronomy 21:15-17**

If a householder has two wives, one loved and the other unloved, and both the loved and the unloved have borne him sons, but the first-born is the son of the unloved one— when he wills his property to his sons, he may not treat as first-born the son of the loved one in disregard of the son of the unloved one who is older. Instead, he must accept the first-born, the son of the unloved one, and allot to him a double portion of all he possesses; since he is the first fruit of his vigor, the birthright is his due.

### **Leviticus 19:33-34**

When strangers reside with you in your land, you shall not wrong them. The strangers who reside with you shall be to you as your citizens; you shall love each one as yourself, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt: I HaShem am your God.