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IS SHE YOUR SISTER, MISTER?

What other hidden identities form a pattern? One is the sister, like Dinah. Miriam was the sister of Moses and Aaron. Leah and Rachel were sisters. Moses discovered his wife Tziporah with her sisters; all were first identified with a well or body of water. Our first example, Dinah, was a sister of the twelve tribes. The matriarchs had a pattern of concealing their spousal relationship with the mask of a sister:

It came about when he came near to Egypt, that he said to Sarai his wife, 'See now, I know that you are a beautiful woman; and when the Egyptians see you, they will say, "This is his wife"; and they will kill me, but they will let you live. *Please say that you are my sister so that it may go well with me because of you, and that I may live on account of you.*'

It came about when Abram came into Egypt, the Egyptians saw that the woman was very beautiful. Pharaoh's officials saw her and *praised her* to Pharaoh; and the woman was taken into Pharaoh's house. *Therefore, he treated Abram well for her sake; and gave him sheep and oxen and donkeys and male and female servants and female donkeys and camels.*

But the LORD struck Pharaoh and his house with great plagues because of Sarai, Abram's wife. Then Pharaoh called Abram and said, 'What is this you have done to me? Why did you not tell me that she was your wife? *Why did you say, "She is my sister,"* so that I took her for my wife? Now then, here is your wife, take her and go.' Pharaoh commanded his men concerning him; and they escorted him away, with his wife and all that belonged to him. (Ge 12:11-20)

So Abram went up from Egypt to the Negev, he and his wife and all that belonged to him, and Lot with him. Now Abram was very rich in livestock, in silver and in gold. (Ge 13:1-2)

Now Abraham journeyed from there toward the land of the Negev, and settled between Kadesh and Shur; then he sojourned in Gerar. *Abraham said of Sarah his wife, 'She is my sister.'* So Abimelech king of Gerar sent and took Sarah. But God came to Abimelech in a dream of the night, and said to him, '*Behold, you are a dead man because of the woman whom you have taken, for she is*

married. Now Abimelech had not come near her; and he said, 'Lord, will You slay a nation, even though blameless? Did he not himself say to me, "*She is my sister?*" And she herself said, "*He is my brother.*" In the integrity of my heart and the innocence of my hands I have done this...' (Ge 20:1-16)

Then Abimelech called Abraham and said to him, 'What have you done to us? And how have I sinned against you, that you have brought on me and on my kingdom a great sin? You have done to me things that ought not to be done.' ...Abraham said, 'Because I thought, surely *there is no fear of God in this place, and they will kill me because of my wife.* Besides, she actually is my sister, the daughter of my father, but not the daughter of my mother, and she became my wife;' and it came about, when God caused me to wander from my father's house, that I said to her, 'This is the kindness which you will show to me: everywhere we go, say of me, "'He is my brother.'"

Abimelech then took *sheep and oxen and male and female servants*, and gave them to Abraham, and restored his wife Sarah to him. Abimelech said, 'Behold, my land is before you; settle wherever you please.' To Sarah he said, 'Behold, I have given your brother *a thousand pieces of silver*; behold, *it is your vindication* before all who are with you, and before all men you are cleared.' (Ge 20:1-16)

So Isaac lived in Gerar. *When the men of the place asked about his wife, he said, 'She is my sister,' for he was afraid to say, 'my wife,' thinking, the men of the place might kill me on account of Rebekah, for she is beautiful.* It came about, when he had been there a long time, that Abimelech king of the Philistines looked out through a window, and saw, and behold, Isaac was caressing his wife Rebekah.

Then Abimelech called Isaac and said, 'Behold, certainly she is your wife! How then did you say, "*She is my sister*"? And Isaac said to him, 'Because I said, "*I might die on account of her.*"' Abimelech said, 'What is this you have done to us? One of the people might easily have lain with your wife, and you would have brought guilt upon us.' So Abimelech charged all the people, saying, 'He who touches this man or his wife shall surely be put to death.' (Ge 26:6-11)

Now Isaac sowed in that land and reaped in the same year a hundredfold. And the LORD blessed him, and the man became rich, and continued to grow richer until he became very wealthy; for he had *possessions of flocks and herds and a great household, so that the Philistines envied him.* (Ge 26:12-14)

Notice that in each case above, the sister-wife's reputation and virtue was put in jeopardy because of envy and/or covetousness. Even Jacob relied on two sisters for counsel in leaving his sojourning with Laban to return to the Land, Covenant, and

People of Israel. The two sisters point out to Jacob that they have no inheritance in the Land of Laban. They see that he no longer looks at Jacob the way he did. Laban is envious of Jacob's wealth, and he feels as though it should be his. The sisters believe they were sold by Laban, and there is nothing for them or their children. The sisters know that their future health and wealth, the inheritance of their children, depends upon Jacob's return to the Land of Promise with the sheep.

The sisters give counsel: Jacob, return to the Land of Promise with all "these" children and the streaked, striped, and speckled goats and sheep, oxen, donkeys, and nursing camels. Return to the altar of your father Abraham, Jacob, and take the many-colored flocks and herds with you. Redeem the nations from the Land of Laban, and surely El Shaddai will meet us there to help us. We must, however, leave in secret, a three-day head-start. The reader heard these words of the righteous journey to the Promised Land as well:

Then they said, 'The God of the Hebrews has met with us. Please, let us go a *three days' journey* into the wilderness that we may sacrifice (*chag*) to the LORD our God, otherwise He will fall upon us with pestilence or with the sword.'¹ (Ex 5:3)

It wasn't just the Israelites who were delivered from Egypt. A mixed multitude went out of Egypt with Israel along with all their flocks, herds, silver and gold! In every place of potential captivity or adultery, the captor's house was struck or threatened with plague, and the virtuous woman is vindicated and goes free. Strangely, Moses tells Pharaoh that the Israelites will be struck with a plague if they don't go three days' journey to celebrate a feast to the God of the Hebrews. When Pharaoh refuses to let them go, *Egypt* is struck with the plagues instead. The three days' journey is one led of the Holy Spirit, a bride following her husband:

Go and proclaim in the ears of Jerusalem, saying, 'Thus says the LORD,
"I remember concerning you the devotion of your youth,
The love of your betrothals,
Your following after Me in the wilderness,
Through a land not sown.'" (Je 2:2)

Israel was like Sarah and Rebekah generations before, she is the virtuous woman held illegally by Pharaoh. While Abraham and Isaac feared that they would be overpowered and killed by Pharaoh and Abimelech, the Holy One of Israel had no fear that Pharaoh could overpower Him. If Pharaoh does not release Israel to her betrothal ceremony in the wilderness, then the anger of a jealous Bridegroom will fall on him:

Put me like a seal over your heart,

¹ Two of the four Altar Judgments listed in the Prophets

Like a seal on your arm.
For love is as strong as death,
Jealousy is as severe as Sheol;
Its flashes are flashes of fire,
The very flame of the LORD. (So 8:6)

Ten plagues convinced Pharaoh temporarily, and the destruction at the Reed Sea broke the chains completely.

Thus they set out from the mount of the LORD *three days' journey*, with the *Ark of the Covenant* of the LORD journeying in front of them for the *three days*, to *seek out a resting place* for them. (Nu 10:33)

The Land, the Covenant, and the People of peace seek the Shabbat peace of Seventh Feast, Sukkot. It began in Egypt with a three-day journey to represent the three days of Passover, Unleavened Bread, and First Fruits of the Barley. An analogy may also be made to include the three pilgrimage “days”² of Pesach, Shavuot, and Sukkot. Esther’s journey to the King’s chamber also took three days. On the third day of the fast during the Days of Unleavened Bread,³ she dressed in her highly colored royal robes and approached him. Even Esther’s story has the element of a jealous husband, the king, who orders the potential violator, Haman (may his name be blotted out), to be hung on the gallows he intended for Mordechai.

The story likely would not have happened if the king knew beforehand who Esther was. Likewise, a Pharaoh arose who didn’t know Joseph, and he tried to drown babies in the Nile. A jealous Bridegroom kills him and his warriors in the abyss of the Reed Sea. The woman’s captors and potential killers are punished measure-for-measure.

The sisters’ advice to return to the home of the patriarchs is applied several times in relation to Biblical prophecy. Three is a number of resurrection. The ill will between Laban and Jacob became more obvious after Laban “put three days’ journey between himself and Jacob.”⁴ The seed which has been hidden, buried, and concealed in the Days of Unleavened Bread can burst forth like the Third Day of Creation to reveal the fruit of the counsel. Counsel is the Third Spirit of Adonai, and it moved on the Third Day of Creation when fruits first appeared in the Earth. Until the Third Day, the potential was there, yet hidden.

Like Esther’s hidden identity, these sisters giving counsel to the patriarchs to return the sheep to the Land and Covenant of Israel are cloaking a deeper meaning. They were

² Sometimes a “day” in Scripture refers to a period of time, such as “in that day.”

³ Zlotowitz, 2003, p. 82

⁴ Ge 30:36

how the patriarchs were tested as to whether they would protect their sister. Here is the not-so-secret secret:

Treasure and guard your sister, the Holy Spirit⁵

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⁵ Ruach HaKodesh