

St. Mary's Church
Stone Harbor, New Jersey
 We Welcome You to Join Us
 For the Adult Forum and
 Worship
 All Year Long (well, almost)!

October 7, 2018
Fierce
Alice Connor
"Hagar"

"Abraham's Other Woman"



Here are a few quotes from Alice Connor on the subject of Hagar:

Abraham and Sarah were like the great-grandparents of the American myth... (p. 73)

Hagar was Sarah's slave...
 of little consequence, no status, no money, like property, no legal existence... (p. 74)

Hagar looks an awful like how whites have treated blacks for centuries. (p. 74)

Sarah said to Abraham: "It has ceased to be with me in the way of women."
 (Genesis 18:11 King James Version circa 1611) (p.75)

Two other translations:

Genesis 18:11-12 The Message (2002)
 "Abraham and Sarah were old by this time, very old. Sarah was far past the age for having babies. Sarah laughed within herself, 'An old woman like me? Get pregnant? With this old man of a husband?'"

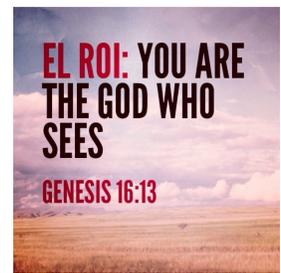
Genesis 18:11 Common English Bible (2011)
 "Now Abraham and Sarah were both very old. Sarah was no longer menstruating."

Abraham to Sarah: "You worthless dog." (p.76)

Hagar calls Yahweh: El-roi "God who sees."
The only person in the Bible to do so. (p. 76)

God sat with her (Hagar), suffered with her,
mourned with her, reminded her,
showed her a well...
gave her a promise... (p. 77, 78)
 (underlings mine for emphasis)

Hagar's wilderness is our wilderness. (p.78)



What are your comments, feelings, questions about this story about Hagar as told by Alice Connor?

continued on opposite side

On the opposite side I have noted Alice Conner’s depiction of how God (Yahweh) came and ministered to Hagar. Here is a very brief excerpt from an article that comments on this scene from a distinctly Jewish perspective: *God expresses sympathy toward Hagar, indicating that the moral-legal system of that era would necessarily lead to tragic results, such as what occurred with Sarah and Hagar. In highlighting Hagar's suffering and God's sympathy for her, the Torah illustrates its dissatisfaction with the morality of the ancient Near East.*



Jewish Bible Quarterly, Vol 41. No.4 by Angel Hayyin

Question: What insights do you draw from this ?



As depicted in Alice Connor’s narrative of Hagar, Hagar did not count. She was Sarah’s servant, there was no debate. Perhaps in another place and time, or under different circumstances, she might have received a little more respect from others. In the Bible, by the time she enters the story, she is already at rock bottom. Sarah, we are told, “had an Egyptian maidservant named Hagar.” Hagar was a slave.

Questions:

How do you relate to Hagar’s sense that she did not matter?
 How did Hagar’s experiences with Sarah reinforce the sense that she didn’t matter?

Questions:

What gave Hagar the courage to return to Sarah?
 How was Hagar liberated?

Hagar returned to the camp and to her adopted family, rejoicing in the divine knowledge that she was truly a part of the Promise, her face glowing from her encounter with God. (p.76)

Hagar did not call upon Yahweh, the god of her slave holders Abram and Sarai. Rather, she names and petitions God from her own tradition to deliver her from the wilderness. The name Hagar assigns to God is El Roi from her African heritage (The God Who Sees).

Hagar the Egyptian
The Western Journal of Black Studies
 Spring 2012 by Adam Cark

Last question:

Was Hagar “fierce”?
 If so, what made her so?



| Date | “Fierce Women” and Page |
|------------|---------------------------------|
| October 7 | <i>Hagar</i> p.73 |
| October 14 | <i>Deborah and Jael</i> p.81 |
| October 21 | <i>Song of Songs</i> p.89 |
| October 28 | <i>Widows</i> p.97 |