



## WOMEN OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

**VALVI VISHWAS GORAKHNATH**

Research Scholar,  
School of Social Sciences,  
Kavayitri Bahinabai Chaudhari,  
North Maharashtra University  
Jalgaon.425001, (MS) INDIA

### 1 ABSTRACT

*Both man and woman were made in the image of God. It was a woman that was taken from the side of Adam to be a suitable mate, as Adam was made first. Woman is called a “helper” to man, this is more than being an assistant, a “helper” means a co-worker. When it comes to women and the concept of submission in the Bible, it does not imply that she is inferior to man in any way, but she is ordained to have a different position in relation to man, each having distinct roles. Although women were treated in history in an inferior way, this does not mean that those who did so were obeying the commands of Scripture. There is huge difference in the way the Pharisees treated women in Jesus’ day and how the Bible instructs us to treat women. Certain Jews prayed in this time period, thank God I’m not a dog, a gentile or a woman. This shows their attitude was not following the Biblical precedent, as God gave to man a woman to be a necessary helper alongside him. Historically women have played an important part in the history of Israel and God’s plan. When Israel was enslaved in Egypt it was because of the determination of the Hebrew women that disobeyed the Pharaoh’s command to kill the newborn boys that brought in their deliverer.*

### 2 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:-

Researcher has presented this research paper with the title of. “Women of the Old Testament” For this research paper Researcher has used historical method and Primary and Secondary sources.

### 3 INTRODUCTION:

VALVI VISHWAS GORAKHNATH

1Page



in the Old Testament, women were not ordained to the priesthood. This does not mean that they were not important. It just means that they were not anointed to the Aaronic priesthood, or to anything, for that matter. Deborah was a prophetess and called herself a mother in Israel. Jochebed possibly had the most influence of all over the Hebrew nation. Ruth and Rahab were foreigners, but Providence arranged events so they could be Messiah's progenitors. Hannah's prayed-for little Samuel would be a priest, prophet, and judge and save the nation—only because he had a praying mother. Jezebel was a horrid influence but certainly impacted Israel. Ditto for the wicked Athaliah. Esther saved the nation from genocide. All these and many more were highly influential "mothers in Israel." But we reiterate: there were no women priests, no women elders, even though women were highly influential throughout the Old Testament. The Bible is not biased. Feminist theologians would have us believe that the Scriptures were androcentric,<sup>1</sup> that is, written with a masculine bias that excludes and subverts the true picture of women of Bible times. Because of this purported disadvantage, feminist theologians look at language, anthropology of neighboring civilizations, and context of story to spin fictional accounts of how Scripture would differ if authored by women. Studying customs and practices through archaeology and history, they superimpose what was normative of other ancient civilizations on the biblical accounts. Women today not only rewrite biblical stories about women, but also reformulate patriarchal prayers and create feminist rituals celebrating our ancestors. We rediscover in story and poetry, in drama and liturgy, in song and dance, our biblical forefathers' sufferings and victories. We not only spin tales about the voyages of Prisca, the missionary, or about Junia the apostle, but also dance Sarah's circle and experience prophetic enthusiasm. We sing litanies of praise to our forefathers and pray laments of mourning for the lost stories of our foremothers.

#### 1) Eve:-

Eve is the first woman and she was taken out of man, making him incomplete without her. She was still made in the image of God. It was the woman who was deceived by Satan; Satan attacked Adam through the woman and Adam fell by the exercise of his own free will. As far as he was concerned, she was the only woman on earth for him (which she was) and he was not going to live his life apart from her. Hence, Adam chose to live with the woman outside of the garden rather than fellowship with God inside the garden (he made this choice by partaking of the forbidden fruit). One of the things that we learn from Satan's deception of Eve is, this is Satan's greatest attack against man: he uses half-truths, lies and deception. Our defense against Satan's distortions is the truth, which is Bible doctrine

#### 2) Gomer:-



Gomer was Hosea's wife, whom he loved dearly. Throughout the book of Hosea, what we have is a parallel between God and Israel and Hosea and Gomer. God loves Israel and Hosea loves Gomer. Israel and Gomer are both unfaithful to their husbands. Many people think that Jesus teaching by parables was a new thing. It was not. God uses real-life instances in the Old Testament to teach the truth to us. Right along side every narrative in the Bible is Bible doctrine which we ought to learn by means of the narrative.

### 3) Hagar:-

Hagar is Sarai's Egyptian personal servant who had relations with Abram, producing a son, Ishmael. Ishmael became the father of another group of Arabs who have caused Israel problems to this very day. Because of Hagar's association with Abraham, both she and her son were preserved and blessed by God.

### 4) Haggith:-

Haggith is King David's 5 wife who bore Adonijah to him. While David th is still alive, Adonijah takes over as king, temporarily, in a power move, intending to edge out Solomon. When Bathsheba becomes aware of this, she goes to David and has him install Solomon as king.

### 5) Hannah:-

Hannah, the barren wife of Elkanah, promised God that she would give her first son completely over to God if He would but open up her womb. This son was Samuel, who became the last and greatest judge over Israel.

### 6) Jael:-

Jael killed Sisera, the general under Jabin, who went to war against Barak and Deborah. Sisera had escaped capture and was exhausted. Jael provided him a place to stay and killed him while he slept.

### 7) Jezebel:-

She was of Sidonian royalty who married Ahab, king over Israel (the Northern Kingdom). They were both about as evil as a couple could be. She was a nearly constant threat to the life of Elijah.

### 8) Jochebed:-

Jochebed was the birth-mother of Moses. All male children in Egypt were being killed by the midwives (by order of the Pharaoh), so Jochebed gave birth to Moses, and then placed him in a small boat, where he floated to the Pharaoh's daughter. Moses had obviously been



circumcised, as she knew immediately that he was a Hebrew infant. Jochebed participated in the raising of Moses, although the Pharaoh's daughter acted as his mother, giving him protection.

#### 9) Keturah:-

Abraham's second wife after the death of Sarah. Abraham recognized that the promise of God was fulfilled in Isaac, and he left all of his substance to Isaac.

#### 10) Leah:-

Leah was the older sister of Rachel and the daughter of Laban (who was the brother of Rebekah). Jacob was tricked into marrying her when he thought he had married Rachel, the sister he loved. She bore Jacob seven children, including one daughter.

#### 11) Maacah :-

When David became king over southern Israel (Judah), he married a third woman, a woman of a royal background, Maacah, the daughter of Talmai king of Geshur (this is an area east of the Jordan, and it provided David with an important political alliance from that area). She is the mother of Absalom, the brother of Tamar (who is raped by their half-brother Amnon). Absalom will kill Amnon, because David did nothing about his crime, and then Absalom escaped and lived for a few years in Geshur.

#### 12) Miriam:-

Miriam was Moses' older sister who, after he had been placed in a basket in the Nile, watched over him until he was picked up by Pharaoh's daughter. She then got her mother to nurse baby Moses (it was apparent that the Pharaoh's daughter knew what was going on here). As an adult, Miriam lost her concept of her place in relationship to Israel. She saw herself as important as Moses and bucked his authority. When Moses married a Cushite woman (an Egyptian), Miriam threw a royal fit. God made it very clear to Miriam that she was out of line by giving her leprosy temporarily. She died prior to entering into the Land of Promise.

#### 13) Naomi:-

Naomi, her husband and her two sons traveled from Israel into Moab, during a famine in Israel. Her husband and both sons died, and she remained with Ruth, her daughter-in-law. They returned together to Israel.

#### 14) Orpah:-



Orpah was Ruth's sister-in-law, a Moabite who married Ruth's husband's brother. When their husbands died, Orpah remained in Moab. Her choice not to stay with her mother-in-law was probably a choice which ultimately meant that she was not saved.

### **15) Potipher's wife:-**

The wife of Potipher, a ruler over Egypt, attempted to make Joseph commit adultery. Joseph refused, so she claimed that Joseph came on to her, and got him thrown into jail.

### **16) Queen of Sheba:-**

The Queen of Sheba came to Jerusalem to meet with and speak to Solomon. What drew her was his world-renown wisdom, which he had learned from David. Although we do not tend to think of Israel as being a missionary country, many people were drawn to Israel (like Ruth or the Queen of Sheba) because they had positive volition toward God. Israel also sent out missionaries, like the very reluctant Jonah.

1Kings 10

### **17) Rachel:-**

The woman that Jacob (Isaac's son) was in love with and his second wife (he was duped into marrying Rachel's sister instead of Rachel). Rachel bore two children to Jacob: Joseph and Benjamin, and died while giving birth to Benjamin. How Jacob felt about Rachel is recorded in Scripture in such a personal way, as to suggest that Jacob could have been the only person to write those words (Gen. 29:18-20).

### **18) Rahab:-**

Rahab was a prostitute who lived in Jericho. When Israel sent two spies in to check out Jericho, they enlisted her aide against her own people. She recognized that God was with them and asked that they spare her and her family. Later, she married an Israelite and was in the line of our Lord's humanity.

Application: Rahab illustrates to us what a person ought to do, if they believe that they are on the wrong side of a conflict. Rahab wholeheartedly joined the other side, so that, if the Jews lost, she would have been executed. This is just the opposite of Jane Fonda who, gave lip service and photo ops to the North Vietnamese, the enemies of the United States; but still returned to United States, because she made her money in the United States. When Rahab allied herself with Israel, she was all in, so to speak. Although Moses may have, at some point in time, committed the words of Genesis to "paper," this book had long been in existence before Moses came along.

### **19) Rebekah:-**



Abraham sent one of his servants to find a wife for Isaac. He found a beautiful virgin from the same family as Abraham (Abraham did not want Isaac to marry a Canaanite from the land where they lived). Rebekah bore Isaac twin sons, Jacob and Esau. One was a Jew (Jacob) and the other was a gentile (Esau). And this was not because Jacob was a nicer fellow than Esau (he truly wasn't), but because he was interested in his spiritual heritage and Esau was not.

#### **20) Rizpah: Saul's mistress:-**

Saul had a mistress, Rizpah. After Saul's death, his top general took up with Rizpah, which caused a rift between Saul's son, Ish-bosheth, and his general, Abner. Abner defected to David because of this dispute. The loss of Abner resulted in the end of Ish-bosheth as ruler over Northern Israel. Abner was the true power behind Ish-bosheth.

#### **21) Ruth:-**

Ruth was a Moabite woman who married a Jew. He died, but Ruth had bonded with her mother-in-law, Naomi, and accompanied her back to Bethlehem. She eventually married another Israelite, Boaz, and became another Gentile woman who was in the line of our Lord.

Matt. 1:5 We learn several things from Ruth. First of all, people were drawn to Israel in that day much the same way that people today are drawn to the United States. It is an expression of positive volition toward God, and it is clear that Ruth was a believer in the 2 Person of the Trinity based upon her relationship with her late husband and nd Naomi, her mother-in-law (Ruth 1:16). Secondly, a person is not a product of his own racial identity. Even though Ruth was a Moabite, she identified herself with her mother-in-law, who was a Jew. Finally, because Ruth followed the leading of God, she became a part of the Davidic line, which places her also in the line of the humanity of Jesus Christ.

#### **22) Sarah:wife of Abraham:-**

Originally named Sarai, she was Abraham's first wife. It was Sarai who suggested that Abraham fulfill God's promises by having sex with Hagar, her personal maid, which was a great mistake. However, as the man, this mistake was on Abraham's shoulders, because he chose to listen to his wife and do the wrong thing. Sarah bore her first son, Isaac, when she was 91 years of age, past the time of being able to conceive The idea behind this unusual birth was to foreshadow the birth of our Lord.

#### **23) The Shulamite woman :-**

The Song of Solomon is one of the most unusual books in all the Bible. It is about an extremely beautiful woman whom Solomon desires and Solomon has 1000 wives and mistresses. However, he is very taken with her beauty. Her soul is guarded by her shepherd-

VALVI VISHWAS GORAKHNATH

6P a g e



lover (he is in her soul), so that she does not give in to Solomon, as had so many women done before.

#### **24) Tamar wife of Er:-**

Tamar married Judah's firstborn child, Er, but he died. When his younger brother was to impregnate her, according to the Levirate marriage custom, he had sex with her, but did not impregnate her. God killed him. Judah promised her that she would marry another son of his, but reneged on the promise, thinking her to be bad luck. Judah himself impregnated her sometime later, taking her to be a prostitute. Her son, Perez (a twin), was in the line of our Lord.

Tamar, daughter of David Amnon, David's son by Ahinoam, was in lust with his half-sister, Tamar. He finagled a scenario where she had to take care of him and he raped her. Her full brother, Absalom, murdered Amnon, which set up a schism between his father David and himself. This led to a revolution throughout all Israel which caused David to leave the country.

#### **25) The woman from Tekoa:-**

An over-indulgent King David had become estranged from his son Absalom, who killed his half-brother Amnon for raping Tamar, Absalom's sister (these 3 are all David's children). Absalom fled to Geshur to live with his royal grandfather on his mother's side, who was the King of Geshur. After several years passed, Joab (David's nephew and general over the Israelite army) sensed that it was time to try to bring Absalom back to Israel. However, King David had probably told Joab "no" on at least one previous occasion, and even Joab knew that you do not go back to a king and ask him to reevaluate a previous decision. So, what Joab did was hire an improvisational actress from Tekoa. Joab chose a woman because David would be automatically sympathetic toward her.

The woman had to bring a false claim to David's court and assert that she is a widowed woman who is about to be cheated out of her land because of a dispute between her two sons, one of which killed the other (which she claims was because there was no one there to stop them). If this son is executed, the woman is left without someone to take care of her and the line of her husband is ended, which would mean a loss of their land. When David clearly rules in her favor, the woman continues to talk, and draws parallels between David and his estranged son Absalom. If he has pardoned her son, surely he can do no less for his own son, Absalom. At this point, David realizes that this was a set-up, and he gets her to admit that Joab put her up to this. As a result of all of this, Absalom is brought back to Jerusalem, and he will eventually use this opportunity to start a revolution against David.

#### **26) Zilpah:-**



Now, you may wonder, how is it that God seemingly blesses the 12 tribes of Israel when these are the sons of Jacob by 4 different women. The key is, God works with what He has. He works all things together for good to those who love God [one way of designating spiritual maturity in a believer] (Rom. 8:28). So the narrative here is not telling us, “If you really want to be blessed, then you need 4 wives.” Many times, in the biography of Jacob, it is clear that he is not often a happy camper (as opposed to the attitude of his son Joseph). God simply takes us where we are and works with us from that point forward. When we fail, God continues to work with us.

#### **27) Zipporah:wife of Moses**

Zipporah was Moses’ wife of Midianite descent. Moses appeared to get along much better with his father-in-law than he ever did with Zipporah. Moses apparently sent her away once he circumcised their children (she apparently viewed this as a gross and perhaps even heathen ritual). She returned to him later when he first entered the desert to lead Israel, but she apparently left him once again. In any case, after she is brought back to Moses by his father-in-law, we never hear about her again.

#### **28) Abigail:wife of David:-**

Abigail was married to Nabal, who was a worthless ass of a man. He scorned David, who had provided protection for Nabal and his men. David was about to come into his camp and kill him, when his wife, Abigail, interceded, convincing David not to kill him. When Nabal found out about this, he apparently had a heart attack or a stroke and died ten days later. Abigail married David (she was his third wife—see Ahinoam below

#### **29) Ahinoam of Jezreel :wife of David:-**

Ahinoam became David’s wife when he was in the wilderness and she appears to have been David’s second wife (although, he had been separated from his first wife, Michal, for about a year). Although the Bible does not specifically tell us that she is David’s second wife after Michal, she bears David’s first child (Amnon) and is always named before Abigail. She is not to be confused with Saul’s wife, Ahinoam, daughter of Ahimaaz Application: We actually learn a lot about single mothers from David and his wives. King David had at least 8 wives and 10 mistress Although David was a polygamist, he functioned more as an absentee father, as he had too many wives and children to properly take care of. His children were financially well taken care of by the state (he was king, so tax money from the state supported his wives and children). However, his contact with his children was infrequent and he was a sentimental, overindulgent and mostly absentee father. The result was, two of his boys grew up to be criminals (Amnon and Absalom—2Sam. 13), and one of them led a revolution against David. We learn from this that, even if children are financially taken care of, they cannot, in general, be raised by a single mother and turn out alright. 2 Because the man is

**VALVI VISHWAS GORAKHNATH**

8P a g e





spread far too thin with several wives, this rules out polygamy for believers and unbelievers as well God designed the family unit to include one father, one mother and however many children.

As an aside, although the Bible records several instances of polygamy, it does not ever advocate polygamy. Athaliah Athaliah was the only queen over Judah, the Southern Kingdom. She was executed

### 30) Bathsheba:-

Bathsheba was apparently David's right woman. Their relationship began as an illicit affair and resulted in the death of her husband, ordered by David (he made certain that Uriah, her husband, would be in the front line of battle). Bathsheba was the mother of Solomon and most of the kings of Israel came through her. David did suffer a great deal of discipline for his actions. Because of this discipline, this marked the end of David's collecting wives and mistresses; and the end of his chasing skirt in Jerusalem while his soldiers were at war. Name Description Scripture Application: We may want to romanticize this affair, and even suggest that, maybe David fooled around a lot, but he ended up with his right woman in the end. The Bible teaches an entirely different lesson. David had sexual relations with this woman that may have lasted minutes and may have lasted hours, but, as a result, his life was a shambles for about 10 years. God always disciplines His Own children David was both disciplined by God and he further suffered the natural consequences of what he had done (David reaped what David sowed; the believer in Jesus Christ should desire to reap what God sows). In fact, the results of David's sin comprise one of the longest connected narratives in the Bible (2Sam. 11-17). We learn a great many things from this, including the fact that infants who die are automatically saved.

### 31) Bilhah:-

The personal maid of Rachel who bore children for Jacob on behalf of Rachel, who was barren at the time. Her sons were Dan and Naphtali. She was sort of a surrogate mother, which was not uncommon in the ancient world. Gen. 30:1-8 The Cushite woman (wife of Moses) Moses appeared to separate from his wife, Zipporah, on at least 2 occasions, and the second time appears to be for good. He later married a Cushite woman, which caused quite a bit of controversy among Moses' siblings, Aaron and Miriam. Miriam was struck by God with leprosy for her impertinence. This suggests two things: (1) God does approve of remarriage under specific circumstances (Moses was abandoned by his wife); and (2) God does not disapprove of interracial marriages. 3Num. 12:1-15

Daughters of Lot. These unnamed women had sex with their father and bore two sons, Moab and Ben-ammi, who were the fathers of Moab and Ammon, Arabic races which oft times caused great problems for the Jews. We learn from this Lot did not teach his daughters what

VALVI VISHWAS GORAKHNATH

9P a g e



faith-rest is. Therefore, when with their father Lot in a cave after the destruction of Sodom, it never occurred to them that God still had a plan for their lives. One option is, they could have presented themselves to their great uncle Abraham, much the way the prodigal son offered to do the work of a slave for his father (Luke 15:11–32). Abraham would have no doubt received them graciously.

### 32) Deborah:-

Deborah was the only female judge in Israel of whom we are aware. God had chosen Barak to lead Israel against Jabin, a king of Canaan, and his general, Sisera. Barak would not go to war without being accompanied by Deborah. The time of the Judges was one of the most degenerate times in the Age of Israel. When women have to fight in wars side-by-side with men, we know we have reached a level of social disintegration.

Judges 5:1–15 Although there are many passages of Scripture that warn the Jews not to intermarry, the problem was not that these other wives had a different skin tone; the problem was, these foreign wives worshiped another god. Deut. 7:1–4 1 Kings 11:1 Ezra 9:2–12 Neh. 13:26–27. This does not mean that women should be thrown out of the United States armed forces; this is simply indicative of a generation where men are not truly men and women are not truly women. This is not a problem solved by social activism or political pressure, but by knowing the Word of God.

### 33) Delilah:-

Samson was perhaps one of the most flawed and most unusual of the heroes of Israel. When Delilah asked the nature of his super-human strength (he appeared to have the strength of a man on PCP without the factor of disorientation), he gave her several false answers and finally gave in and indicated that it was in his long hair, a part of his Nazirite vows (God gave him great strength while obeying his vows). When his hair was cut, God left him and he was captured by the Philistines.

### 34) Dinah:-

The only daughter of Jacob (her mother was Leah). Dinah was raped by Shechem ben Hamor, and Simeon and Levi tricked the men of his city into becoming circumcised, and then executed them while they were recovering from their operation.

### 35) Esther:-

Esther became queen over Persia and helped protect the deported Jews. Her story is one of the most fascinating. I believe that the book of Esther will be one of the evangelical tools of the Tribulation. The book of Esther foreshadows the Jews of today, scattered in gentile countries, the prey of Satan, and who are delivered by Jesus Christ again and again. In fact,



they are delivered by Jesus Christ, their God, even though they do not, as a whole, recognize Him as God. Sometime in the future, the Jews will recall and/or read Esther (a very well-known book to Jews) and say, "Where is God? Why don't we know Who God is in this book? Why don't we turn to God in this book? Why is God so clearly delivering us, but we do not acknowledge that He has delivered us?" In fact, I believe that many of the 144,000 Jews will be evangelized by the book of Esther. They will read Esther, or hear it read, and their hearts will be struck with, "This is us today! We do not know Who God is; we do not recognize the God of Israel. We are clinging to a plethora of laws and traditions, but not to the God Who formed us." It is a relatively short step from here to faith in Jesus Christ.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY:-

- 1) Holy Bible, 1Kings 11:1
- 2) Holy Bible, Genesis.1:25–27,2:23,3:1–20
- 3) Holy Bible, Hosea 1–3
- 4) Holy Bible,Matthew. 4:1–11
- 5) Holy Bible, Gen. 16:3–16
- 6) Holy Bible, 1Kings 1:5–53
- 7) Holy Bible, 1Sam. 1:1–2
- 8) Holy Bible, 1Kings 16:30–31
- 9) Holy Bible Judges 5:24–27
- 10) Holy Bible, Genesis,25:1-4
- 11) Holy Bible, Ex. 2:3–10 15
- 12) Holy Bible,Ruth,1:1-14
- 13) Holy Bible,Genesis,29:1-9
- 14) Holy Bible, Joshua 2:1–24
- 15) Judges,Holy Bible,16:4–21
- 16) Holy Bible,Esther 1:1–10
- 17) Holy Bible, 2Chron. 23:12–15
- 18) Holy Bible, Gen. 30:21 34:1–31
- 19) Holy Bible, Hebrews, 12:6
- 20) Holy Bible,Ruth 1:16