

that Sarah was the daughter of Haran, Abraham's brother, and this opinion was likewise adopted by later Jewish writers, who urge that Sarah was adopted by Terah after her father's death, so that she was only his adopted daughter. But the language employed by Abraham himself, is too precise to admit of such a hypothesis. To this we may add, that Haran is distinctly spoken of, Gen. xi. 29, as "the father of Milcah, and the father of Iscah," but nowhere as the father of Sarah; and the supposition that Sarah is identical with Iscah, as some writers have supposed, is simply mere conjecture. Again, according to Exod. vi. 20, Amram, the father of Aaron and Moses, took Jochebed, his father's sister, to wife." It is, therefore, apparent that whatever natural disinclinations may have existed among the ancient Hebrews in contracting marriages with such near relatives, they were at least not looked upon as sinful, or the sacred writer in recording them, would certainly not have passed them over without uttering one word of censure against them.

As no matrimonial laws then existed, and as the Hebrews at that time were a nomadic people, wandering about from place to place with their flocks in search of pasture, and, therefore, were necessarily cut up in small communities, we can easily understand how marriages such as those above mentioned should have taken place, especially when we take into consideration the great disinclination that existed of contracting alliances with other tribes (See Gen. xxiv. 3, 4; xxvi. 34, 35; xxvii. 46). In course of time, however, when the Hebrew people assumed a nationality of a more marked character, though not yet possessed of a country of their own, the Almighty, not merely as their God, but also as their King and Ruler, gave his chosen people, by his servant Moses, both religious and civil laws, by which their duties to God, and their duties regulating their intercourse with their