

## **"And the angel of Hashem said to her, 'Return to your mistress and submit yourself under her hands'." (16:9)**

The end of this *pasuk*, "*And submit yourself under her hands*," is enigmatic. Why was it necessary for the angel to "encourage" Hagar to return to be "persecuted"? He should simply have said, "Return to your mistress." The text suggests that the angel was telling Hagar that Hashem had mandated her suffering.

*Horav Yosef Salant z.l.*, offers a profound insight into the matter. Hagar had originally responded to the angel that she had fled from her mistress' persecution. She had hoped that by escaping she would rid herself of travail. The angel responded that when it has been decreed from Above that a man is to undergo suffering and distress, he can not escape from it. If Hagar fled from this "oppression", she would ultimately have faced misery elsewhere. It was, therefore, to her benefit to remain with Sarah who was righteous and sincere, rather than suffer at the hands of a lesser person.

These words are striking! How often when we are faced with problems, be they at work, at home, or in the community in general, do we blame someone else? When we are persecuted, we inately focus with hatred upon our oppressor and not upon the real source of our problem -- ourselves. We may add that Hashem's method for exacting punishment is also beneficent. Imagine the "grief" one endures upon losing a job, making a bad investment, or having problems raising children. Does this compare to being struck by illness or having a family member critically hurt? Obviously not. We must remember that the cause of our retribution is our own actions. It is only as a result of Hashem's graciousness that we are availed the "opportunity" to undergo trials in a less threatening environment.