

"And (when) she saw that she had conceived, her mistress was despised in her eyes... And Sarai dealt harshly with her, and she fled from her (face)." (16:4,6)

There seems to be a distinct correlation between Hagar's attitude towards her mistress and Sarah's response. *Horav Yisrael Yaakov Lubchenski z.l.*, suggests that actually Sarah's attitude towards Hagar had never changed. It remained consistent throughout their relationship. After Hagar lost respect for her venerable mistress, however, she felt abused. He explains this statement in the following manner:

Hagar was a princess who had left a lifestyle of wealth and fame to join Avraham in the quest for greater spirituality. She chose to be a maidservant in Avraham's home, rather than a princess in an environment of godlessness and depravity. Undoubtedly, living under Sarah's tutelage was not easy. Sarah imposed upon her students the same exacting spiritual demands which she made upon herself. As long as Hagar viewed Sarah with the proper reverence and awe, consistent with her sublime level of spirituality, she didn't object to "working" hard. Every activity Sarah performed, every demand she made on herself, was sweet and easy to emulate since this was the path to spiritual purity. Simply, this is what her mentor Sarah required.

When Sarah became "light" in Hagar's eyes, when Hagar questioned the sincerity and purity of Sarah's motives, Hagar no longer perceived these demands to be sweet! Instead she viewed them as harsh demands! As long as Hagar believed that Sarah was sincere in her teachings and pure in her requirements, she did not complain. When her attitude towards her teacher changed, she could no longer tolerate the spiritual demands Sarah placed upon her.

Whether one is a parent, teacher or leader, it is important to maintain the respect of those he is seeking to inspire. For, the inspiration imparted is consistent with the image the child/student/congregant has of his mentor.