

Rashi on Genesis 16:1

A HANDMAID, AN EGYPTIAN — She was a daughter of Pharaoh; when he saw the miracles which had been performed for Sarah's sake he said, "It is better for my daughter to be a handmaid in this man's house than be mistress in another man's house" (Genesis Rabbah 45:1).

Rashi on Genesis 16:4

AND HE CAME UNTO HAGAR AND SHE CONCEIVED from the first union (Genesis Rabbah 45:4).

HER MISTRESS WAS SLIGHTED IN HER EYES — She said, "As regards this woman Sarai, her conduct in private can certainly not be like that in public: she pretends to be a righteous woman, but she cannot really be righteous since all these years she has not been privileged to have children, whilst I have had that blessing from the first union" (Genesis Rabbah 45:4).

Rashi on Genesis 16:5

The wrong done to me (חמסי)— the punishment for it I call down on you (עלִיךְ). "When you prayed to the Holy One, blessed be He, (15:2) 'what wilt Thou give me, seeing that I go childless', you prayed only on behalf of yourself whereas you should have prayed on behalf of both of us — then would I have been borne in mind (by God) together with you" (i.e. when you had the gift of a child it would have been "my" child also — not that of a strange woman). Besides this, you deprive me (חומס) of your protecting words since you hear how I am despised and yet you keep silent (Genesis Rabbah 45:5).

Wherever this word "between thee" (masc.) occurs in Scripture it is written defective (i.e. without the second yod) whilst here it is written plene, therefore read it as וּבִינֶיךָ (the fem form that corresponds to ביניך in our text — as though Sarah turned to Hagar saying "May God judge between me and thee"). Thus she cast the evil eye on Hagar so that she miscarried on this occasion. This explains what the angel said to Hagar, (16:11) הִנֵּךְ הָרָה "behold, thou wilt conceive"; but had she not already conceived and yet he announces to her that she would conceive? This therefore informs us that she miscarried in this, her first conception (cf. verse 11) (Genesis Rabbah 45:5).

Ramban on Genesis 16:2

AND ABRAM HEARKENED TO THE VOICE OF SARAI. Scripture does not state, "And he did so." Rather it says that he hearkened to the voice of Sarai, thus indicating that even though

Abram was very desirous of having children, he did not do so without permission of Sarai. Even now it was not his intention to build up a family from Hagar, and that his children be from her. His intent was merely to do Sarai's will so that she may build a family from Hagar for she will find satisfaction in her handmaid's children, or that by the merit of this act she will become worthy to have children, as our Rabbis have said.

Ramban on Genesis 16:6

Our mother did transgress by this affliction, and Abraham also by his permitting her to do so. And so, G-d heard her [Hagar's] affliction and gave her a son who would be *a wild-ass of a man*, to afflict the seed of Abraham and Sarah with all kinds of affliction.