Class # 3–Parshat Lech Lecha - When does tough love end and abuse begin?

Advanced Fellowship Parsha Class - Sponsored in memory of Alice Toby Barbanel Z”l

Rabbi Pinny Rosenthal - prepared collaboratively with Rabbi Yoni Sacks

<https://youtu.be/AaeUUQO-pk8> Supernanny | Mom Totally Loses It At Supernanny Over Nap Times

1. What sort of problems in a household require help from the Super Nanny?
2. Who has more expertise in child raising, parents or supernanny? Who knows their children better?
3. Who is responsible for the ultimate decisions in child raising -parents or supernanny? Who is better qualified to make these decisions?
4. Would a live in Nanny be better qualified to make decisions about child raising than the biological parents?
5. Is Danielle right to rebuke Supernanny? Does she rebuke Supernanny in a respectful way? Would it ever be proper to rebuke in a disrespectful way? ,-

**Birth of Ishmael**

16:1 Abram's wife Sarai had not borne him any children. She had an Egyptian slave-girl by the name of Hagar. 16:2 Sarai said to Abram, 'God has kept me from having children. Come to my slave, and hopefully I will [be built up] have sons through her.' Abram heeded Sarai. 16:3 After Abram had lived in Canaan for ten years, his wife Sarai took Hagar the Egyptian her slave, and gave her to her husband Abram as a wife. 16:4 [Abram] came to her, and she conceived.

When she realized that she was pregnant, she looked at her mistress with contempt. 16:5 Sarai said to Abram, 'It's all your fault! I myself placed my slave in your arms! Now that she sees herself pregnant, she looks at me with disrespect. Let God judge between me and you!'

16:6 Abram replied to Sarai, 'Your slave is in your hands. Do with her as you see fit.' Sarai afflicted her, and [Hagar] ran away from her. 16:7 An angel of God encountered her by a spring in the desert, in the oasis on the road to Shur. 16:8 [The angel] said, 'Hagar, maid of Sarai! From where are you coming, and where are you going?' 'I am running away from my mistress, Sarai,' she replied.

16:9 The angel of God said to her, 'Return to your mistress, and submit yourself to her.'16:10 [Another] angel said in God's name, 'I will grant you many descendants. They will be so many that they will be beyond count.'

16:11 [Still another] angel of God said to her, 'You are pregnant, and will give birth to a son. You must name him Ishmael, for God has heard your affliction.

1. In this conflict, who is the “authority / decision maker” ie the Danielle character? Who is the subordinate ie the “super nanny”?
2. Did Hagar accept her role as a subordinate? Was she right or wrong?
3. Does Sarai rebuke Hagar in a respectful way? Is Sarai correct in her choice of rebuke?

Radak

אבנה, **I shall be built up** the son from this union would be called אבנה, "I shall be built up." All children are a building consisting of genetic input by father and mother. Sarai said that any son from this union with her husband would be accepted by her as if he were part of her biological family. She would treat him as her own son.

וישמע אברם, **Abram listened** he agreed with Sarai's plan, preferring not to wait any longer for G'd to fulfill His promise in giving him children from Sarai as he had understood this promise up until now. He decided that since Sarai had stopped menstruating she would not be able to become pregnant. As a result, he reasoned that G'd's promise to him was to be fulfilled via Hagar who would become the mother of any children of his. Seeing that even Sarai had arrived as such an interpretation of G'd's promise, he had no reason to disagree with her.

ויבא ... ותקל גבירתה, **she looked at her mistress with contempt** she thought that now that it was clear that Avram's seed would be from her she would become the top ranking wife of Avram. As a result, she refused to carry out instructions given to her by Sarai.

ותענה שרי, **And she afflicted her** Sarai overburdened her with work, and made her perform the work in an intolerably harsh manner. It is even possible that the word ותענה includes physical as well as verbal abuse of Hagar by Sarai. The Torah testifies that Sarai did not act piously toward her, Although Avram had given her a free hand when he said "do to her as appears fit in your eyes," from a moral point of view she should have treated Hagar in a manner befitting her status as a wife or legal companion of Avram. From the point of view of practicing human kindness, Although Avram had given her a free hand when he said "do to her as appears fit in your eyes," from a moral point of view she should have treated Hagar in a manner befitting her status as a wife or legal companion of Avram. From the point of view of practicing human kindness, חסידות, she should have treated a subordinate with all possible consideration. The scholar Ibn Gabirol said "how beautiful is the attribute of practicing forgiveness in circumstances when this is possible!" Sarai's actions as reported were not pleasing in the eyes of the Lord. This is reflected in the words of the angel to Hagar (verse 11) כי שמע ה' אל עניך, "for the Lord has listened to the oppression you have endured." This is why the angel gave her a blessing as compensation for the harsh treatment she had suffered. Avram did not prevent Sarai from acting as she did, even though it was displeasing in his eyes, because he was concerned primarily with preserving his relations with Sarai. The reason why this whole story is preserved for all future generations in our chapter is to teach moral-ethical lessons, and to warn us not to indulge in injustice.

Sephorno

שפחתך בידך, **Your maid servant is in your hands** for she has not been given her freedom by you who are her mistress.

ותענה שרי, **And She afflicted her** Sarai's objective in maltreating Hagar was to remind her of the fact that she remained her slave. She was not to insult her mistress any more. She meant to make clear that any gentile who insults Israelites will experience similar harsh treatment. Compare Isaiah 60,14 והשתחוו על כפות רגליך כל מנאציך, "all those who reviled you shall prostrate themselves at your (Israel) feet."

1. What is the debate between the Radak and the Seforno concerning Sarai’s handling of Hagar contemptuous behavior?
2. What support from the text can you bring for each side?
3. According to the Radak, why do you think Sarai acted improperly?

**Rambam, Laws of Proper Character Traits 2:3**

There are temperaments with regard to which a man is forbidden to follow the middle path. He should move away from one extreme and adopt the other.

Among these is arrogance. …..

Anger is also an exceptionally bad quality. It is fitting and proper that one move away from it and adopt the opposite extreme. He should school himself not to become angry even when it is fitting to be angry. If he should wish to arouse fear in his children and household - or within the community, if he is a communal leader - and wishes to be angry at them to motivate them to return to the proper path, he should present an angry front to them to punish them, but he should be inwardly calm. He should be like one who acts out the part of an angry man in his wrath, but is not himself angry.

The early Sages said: Anyone who becomes angry is like one who worships idols. They also said: Whenever one becomes angry, if he is a wise man, his wisdom leaves him; if he is a prophet, his prophecy leaves him. The life of the irate is not true life.

Therefore, they have directed that one distance himself from anger and accustom himself not to feel any reaction, even to things which provoke anger. This is the good path.

1. All of us have gotten angry in at least one of these scenarios. How do you practically handle these tough situations?
   1. A frustrating call center representative who kept you on the phone for an hour and did not even resolve your claim in the end.
   2. The waiter who spilled food on you.
   3. Your cleaning lady that messed up the kashrus in your home.
   4. The dry cleaner who ruined your favorite outfit.