

## **The Mistakes of Sarah: Lessons for Modern Relationships**

**Grace Ifeoma Otubah**

Department of Religion and Human Relations

Nnamdi Azikiwe University

Awka, Nigeria

Phone: +2348037540485

Email: gi.otubah@unizik.edu.ng

### **Abstract**

This article explores the timeless lessons that can be gleaned from the biblical story of Sarah, particularly in the context of modern relationships. By examining Sarah's mistakes and their consequences, this study aims to provide insights into the complexities of human emotions, relationships, and spiritual growth. Through a mixed-methods approach, incorporating biblical exegesis, psychological analysis, and sociological perspectives, this research identifies key takeaways for fostering healthier, more resilient relationships in contemporary society. However, this article proffers solution to the mistake of Sarah that still takes place in our society. It was discovered that people still make the mistake of Sarah as a result of circumstances surrounding them, such as traditions and culture, greed and circumstantial pressures.

**Keywords:** Mistakes, Sarah, Lessons, Modern Relationships

## Introduction

Often times we blame people for doing what they did that we feel is wrong as if we have never done that, as if we could not be able to do that if we find ourselves in the shoe of the offender.

The story of Sarah, the wife of Abraham, is a fascinating and complex narrative that has captivated readers of the bible for centuries. On the surface, Sarah's story appears to be a simple tale of faith, obedience, and ultimate triumph. However, upon closer examination, it becomes clear that Sarah's journey is marked by mistakes, missteps, and painful consequences. Impatience has caused more havoc in our world than patience. People are always quick to take decision. This also results to regrets. Sarah, Abraham's wife was in a hurry to get a child without waiting for God's time. Many mistakes of Sarah are still on. Who do we **blame?** Despite these challenges, Sarah's story offers a rich tapestry of lessons for modern

relationships. This article seeks to explore these lessons, examining the ways in which Sarah's mistakes can inform and improve our own relationships today.

## Sarah the Wife of Abraham

Sarah the wife of Abraham was the mother of all nations. God promised Abraham that he will be the father of all nations and that his seeds/children will be like the stars/sand which cannot be counted. Abraham had a female maid by name Haggai. When Sarah saw that she is advanced in age and had no hope of getting any child despite the fact that God promised her husband that he will make him the father of all nations through Sarah, Sarah submitted her maid to her husband. Her maid Haggai became pregnant and she delivered a baby by name Ishmael. Later, God visited Sarah and she conceived and delivered a baby boy by name Isaac. Sarah became jealous and did not want the child of her slave girl/maid to be the heir to her husband and asked him to send the maid and the child Ishmael

away. The bible said that it displeased Abraham to do so. But God told him to do what his wife asked him to do. And Abraham sent Haggai and her son Ishmael away but not without blessing Ishmael. Ishmael was not brought up under the care of his father, so, he felt rejected.

People now begin to blame Sarah for her actions. Had it been that Sarah waited for God to fulfill his promises on her, the mistake would not have been made. She felt that God is wasting time or rather; she doubted God and made such a mistake. Now the question is: How many of us will be able to wait for the God's appointed time? You are 35 years or 40 years and you begin to jump up and down visiting native doctors, doing all sorts of evil just to get married because others of your age mate had married forgotten that most of your age mates are there in the grave? You don't have money; you go about stealing, doing all sorts of evil to get money without doing the right thing and waiting for God's appointed time. You have not gotten a child and you begin to commit

crime, just to get a child without waiting for God's appointed time. That time you used to jump up and down, you would have used it to consult God, and be faithful to God.

Some in the process of seeking for the fruit of the womb, they will get a fake child from babalawo/native doctor. You know, Satan will never give you anything good. He will give you fake thing with left hand and collect the good thing you have with right hand. But the bible tells us in Proverbs 10:22 "that the blessing of the LORD, it maketh rich, and he addeth no sorrow with it". God gives one perfect things. Now when you must have gotten that strange child from devil, what exactly do you expect from that child? Definitely the child will become a problem to his family and the society in general.

A woman had problem in her marriage and her husband left her for years, she waited and waited with prayers and by visiting of native doctors in secret (this is what I call mixture) she was advised by an elderly woman to go and beget a

male child outside her marriage. She told me, and I warned her not to do so. Eventually, she obeyed the elderly woman and got pregnant. Unfortunately, she lost the pregnancy. Had it been she succeeded in that, first of all she is carrying another man's pregnancy while her husband is alive. Moreover, those years she wasted in seeking for a child from wrong places, she would have reconciled with God and got her own child.

You that is going up and down aborting babies, selling your child out, when you are in dire need of a child, who then will you blame? What of a woman who feels that she is busy to take care of her children, and now employ a grown up maid in your family, is it not a mistake on your own part to have allowed that when the maid become pregnant through your husband? You, busy body woman, which could not take care of your children, but leave them at the mercies of the house maids. You will leave your house in the morning to come back late in the night. What do you expect from the house maid? She will train them her

own way, which will repeat the mistake of Sarah.

You that do not have time to teach your children the evil of sexual intercourse with blood relation, what do you think will be the fate of those children born under a cursed condition? disaster, sorrow, etc. Women be wise! You that got pregnant outside your wedlock, what do you expect? regrets, sorrow, anger, etc Is it the mistake of Sarah or your own? You that is unfaithful to your partner, meeting other men, bearing their child, whose blood is the child having? You that is in support of your daughter's prostitution: whose blood is with the unwanted baby? Is that the mistake of Sarah?

You that is having a young girl beside you who is in need and you could not help her, what do you expect from her? If she gets unwanted baby, whose fault is it? Or if she turns into another thing, misbehaving, have you not made the mistake of Sarah? If Sarah had allowed Haggai and her son to stay with her, they would not have gone

astray, to become a turn in the flesh not only to their generation but to the whole world.

What of a rich man that is supposed to take care of the people around but could not, what do you think will be the fate of those youths around you? Is it not frustration? And they must get their needs by all means, which is always in an evil way like belonging to occult, stealing, 419, prostitution: Is it the mistake of Sarah or your own mistake?

What of a government who is supposed to create job opportunity for youths and they loam about our streets, what do you expect from those jobless youths? Whose mistake is it? Is it the mistake of Sarah or that of the Government?

What of the elders, rulers, church leaders who honours people that get wealth in an ungodly way giving them titles, neglecting the poor wise ones, the neglected ones will now like to be honoured and then do one dubious thing or the other to get rich quick. When they hunt the society whose fault is it? Is it the mistake of

Sarah or the church leaders' mistakes?

You man that will like to marry as many wives as you like without taking care of them and educating them, when they turn into evil children, whose mistakes is that? Is it your own mistake or that of Sarah?

You that is in position to help the needy, and you did not, if he goes astray whose mistake is it? Is it that of Sarah or your own?

In that place where you are, what are you doing there? Are you preventing the mistake of Sarah or are you trying to create more mistakes? Everybody will like to blame Sarah; if you are in her shoe will you not do worse than she did?

Let us avoid the mistake of Sarah by doing what we are supposed to do, by waiting for the God's time which is the best. Stop unnecessary hurry. Pray without seasoning and trust in God always.

### **Reasons People Make the Mistake of Sarah**

### 1. Lack of patience

**Unrealistic expectations:** People often expect immediate results or solutions to their problems. When these expectations are not met, they may take matters into their own hands, like Sarah did.

**Impulsiveness:** Acting on impulse without considering the long-term consequences can lead to mistakes. Sarah's impulsive decision to give Hagar to Abraham had far-reaching consequences.

**Lack of trust in God's timing:** Sarah doubted God's ability to fulfil His promise within the appointed time. This lack of trust led her to take control, rather than waiting on God.

### 2. Doubt and disbelief

**Fear of uncertainty:** When faced with uncertainty or unknown outcomes, people may doubt God's sovereignty or promises. This fear can lead to mistakes. People often make mistakes when they don't fully comprehend the situation or God's plans.

**Unbelief:** unbelief can stem from a lack of faith, trust, or confidence in

God's promises. When people do not believe God will fulfil His promises, they take matters into their own hands.

### 3. Fear and anxiety

**Fear of loss or lack:** Sarah's fear of being childless led her to take drastic measures. People often make mistakes when driven by fear of loss, lack, or unmet needs.

**Anxiety about the future:** Uncertainty about the future can cause anxiety, leading people to make impulsive decisions. Sarah's anxiety about her childlessness led her to act impulsively.

**Fear of being overwhelmed:** When faced with overwhelming circumstances, people may make mistakes in an attempt to regain control. Sarah felt overwhelmed by her childlessness and took matters into her own hands.

### 4. Lack of trust

**Distrust in God's promises:** When people doubt God's goodness or sovereignty, they may take control of situations, leading to mistakes.

**Lack of faith in God’s promises:**

Sarah’s lack of faith in God’s promise to provide a child led her to take matters into her own hands. People often make mistakes when they don’t trust God’s promise.

**Unwillingness to surrender:** When individuals are unwilling to surrender their desires, plan, or control to God, they may make mistakes. Sarah’s unwillingness to surrender her desire for a child led to her mistakes.

**5. Cultural and social pressures**

**Societal expectation:** Cultural and societal expectations can pressure individuals into making mistakes. Sarah faced societal pressure to produce an heir.

**Family dynamics:** Family dynamics and relationships can influence decision-making, leading to mistakes. Sarah’s relationships with Abraham and Hagar contributed to her mistakes.

**Cultural norms:** Cultural norms and traditions can shape behavior and decision-making. Sarah’s

actions were influenced by the cultural norms of her time.

**7. Personal insecurities**

**Fear of inadequacy:** Personal insecurities, such as fear of inadequacy, can drive individuals to make mistakes. Sarah’s fear of being childless led her to mistakes.

**Low self-esteem:** Low self-esteem or a negative self-image can contribute to impulsive decisions and mistakes

**Emotional instability:** Emotional instability, such as anxiety or depression, can impair decision-making and lead to mistakes.

**6. Lack of communication**

**Poor communication:** Poor communication between individuals can lead to misunderstandings, miscommunications, and mistakes.

**Unexpressed expectations:** Unexpressed expectations or assumptions contributed to their mistakes.

**Lack of active listening:** Failing to listen actively or empathetically can

lead to mistakes. Sarah and Abraham's lack of active listening and empathy contributed to their mistakes.

## **7. Misunderstanding God's promises**

**Misinterpreting God's promises:** Misunderstanding or misinterpreting God's promises can lead to mistakes. Sarah misunderstood God's promise to provide a child.

**Unrealistic expectations:** Having unrealistic expectations about God's promises can lead to mistakes. Sarah expected God to fulfil His promise within her own timeframe.

**Lack of spiritual discernment:** Failing to discern God's will or timing can lead to mistakes. Sarah lacked spiritual discernment, leading her to take matters into her own hands.

## **8. Human weakness**

**Emotional weaknesses:** Human emotions, such as fear, anxiety, or anger, can lead to mistakes.

**Cognitive biases:** Cognitive biases, such as confirmation bias or

anchoring bias, can impair decision-making and lead to mistakes.

**Physical limitations:** Physical limitations, such as fatigue or illness, can affect decision-making and lead to mistakes.

## **9. Lack of spiritual maturity**

**Immaturity in faith:** Sarah's faith was still developing, leading to impulsive decisions and mistakes.

**Limited understanding of God's ways:** Sarah's limited understanding of God's ways and promises led to her mistakes.

**Inability to wait on God:** Sarah's lack of spiritual maturity made it difficult for her to wait on God's timing, leading to her taking matters into her own hands.

**Lack of discernment:** Sarah's lack of discernment made it challenging for her to distinguish between God's voice and her own thoughts or desire.

**Insufficient prayer and reflection:** Sarah may not have taken sufficient time for prayer and reflection,



leading to impulsive decisions and mistakes.

**Undeveloped trust in God:** Sarah's trust in God was still developing, leading to doubts and fears that contributed to her mistakes.

**Lack of spiritual guidance:** Sarah may not have access to spiritual guidance or mentorship, leading to mistakes and missteps.

### **CONSEQUENCES OF SARAH'S MISTAKE TO THE WORLD**

1. **Jewish-Arab conflict:** The story of Isaac and Ishmael has been interpreted as a symbol of the Jewish and Arab people's origins, contributing to ongoing conflicts in the Middle East. In other words, the narrative of Hagar and Ishmael has been interpreted differently by Jews and Muslims, leading to tensions and conflict between the two faith communities. However, the Arab-Israeli conflict, which has its roots in the rivalry between Isaac and Ishmael, continues to be a

major source of tension and conflict in the Middle East

**10. Religious divisions:** The narrative has been used to justify religious differences and conflicts between Jews, Christians, and Muslims. Sarah's mistake created a division between her son Isaac and Ishmael. This division led to a lifelong rivalry between the two brothers, which was passed down through their descendants (Genesis 21:9-10).

2. **Cultural identities:** The story has shaped cultural identities and influenced the development of Jewish, Christian, and Islamic traditions.
3. **Historical events:** The consequences of Sarah's mistake have been used to justify historical events, such as the Crusades and colonialism. The conflict between the descendants of Isaac and Ishmael has had significant implications for

global politics and geopolitics. The modern-day conflict between Israel and Palestinian territories, for example, has its roots in the ancient rivalry between the descendants of Isaac and Ishmael.

4. **Stereotypes and prejudice:**

The narrative has perpetuated stereotypes and prejudice against certain groups, including Arabs and Muslims.

5. **Family dynamics:**

The story highlights the complexities of family relationships and the consequences of our actions, showing the consequences of favoritism, jealousy, and expulsion. In other words, the tension and conflict between Sarah and Hagar created an unstable home environment, which can have long-lasting effects on family relationships.

6. **Trust and obedience:**

The narrative encourages personal reflection on the

importance of trust and obedience in our own lives.

7. **Spiritual growth:**

The story promotes spiritual growth and self-awareness. Sarah's decision to take matters into her own hands, rather than trusting God, had spiritual consequences.

It demonstrated a lack of faith and trust in God's sovereignty, which led to a range of spiritual problems.

8. **Conflict resolution:**

The consequences of Sarah's mistake can serve as a lesson in conflict resolution and the importance of addressing issues peacefully.

9. **Understanding and empathy:**

The narrative encourages understanding and empathy towards others, recognizing the complexities of human relations and the far-reaching consequences of our actions.

10. **Social justice:**

Hagar's mistreatment and expulsion have been seen as a symbol of social injustice, inspiring

advocacy for marginalized groups. Sarah's treatment of Hagar, including her harsh words and actions, has been criticized as an example of the mistreatment of women, particularly those in vulnerable positions such as slaves or servants.

11. **Monotheistic religions:** The concept of one God (Yahweh) and the covenant with Abraham has shaped Western religious thought and ethics.

12. **Interfaith dialogue:** Understanding the shared heritage and differences between Jewish, Christian, and Islamic traditions can foster interfaith dialogue and understanding.

### **LEARNING FROM SARAH'S MISTAKE GENESIS 16**

From the book of Genesis chapter 16, we saw how Sarah gave her maid to her husband Abraham as a wife as a result of impatient. How could she have possibly thought that it was a good idea for her husband to sleep

with her handmaid and bear a child? Although she sees her decision as good but quickly discovered that was a poor decision on her part, yet in the moment she felt that was the best option. How many times have we made a decision that at the time we felt that it was the correct decision, only to discover that was almost the worst thing that we could have done? We may as well ask what brought Sarah to make such a decision. Some of the things that might have been running through her head might be:

- Her inadequate to provide a son for Abraham
- She may have also felt as if she was a burden to Abraham, holding him back from being all that God wanted him to be.
- She may have also felt she had been part of the problem that God was attempting to fix.

According to Woodlam Church of Christ (2023), those feelings of worthlessness, insignificance and depression must have overwhelmed

her to the breaking point of seeking to provide a solution to the problem. However, her idea of there being a problem was her problem. There was no problem as to why Abraham had not had a child yet, she was not worthless and there wasn't even a problem for her to fix. If she had just been more patient, God would have revealed to her exactly how He was going to accomplish His plan (<https://woodiawchurchofchrist.com/learning-from-sarah-mistake>).

Today we have the struggle with the same issues that Sarah did. We struggle with our shortcomings, our failure and our inadequacies, and all too often we make poor decisions based on those feelings that come back to haunt us. If we could make as Sarah, why then do we blame Sarah? Why do we do the same as Sarah did even after seeing her shortcomings? Let us not criticize or question Sarah too much for her poor decision; let's learn for her mistakes and pray for more trust and patience. In the end, we will see that has been our plan all along.

Sarah is not only one of the most important women in the Bible, but also a complex person who struggled to follow God when His promises seemed unfulfilled (Sylvia Schroeder (2023)). Sarah learned through pain and joy that God's plan reveals itself unexpectedly. God told Abraham to leave his land and his people and go to another unknown land, which God would show him. "Now the Lord said to Abram, 'Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you. And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonours you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed'" (Genesis 12:1-3 ESV).

According to Sylvia Schroeder (2023), like Abraham, Sarah came from the pagan land of Ur. They left their family and home for a place unknown but promised by God. Sarah is the only woman in the Bible whose name God changed. God replaced Sarai, which meant "my

princess,” with Sarah, “mother of nations” God also renamed Abram to Abraham. Abram meant “high father”. Abraham meant “father of a multitude. However, no child came to Sarah, the mother of nations. Sarah grew impatient. As the couple aged and years passed without offspring, Abraham and Sarah looked for other ways to fulfil God’s words. According Sylvia Schroeder (2023), Sarah’s tragedy was also great because producing an heir mattered if Abraham would pass on his wealth and legacy. Children meant a continued family bloodline, a preserved heritage.

In the book of Genesis 21:10-11, the birth of Abraham’s long-awaited heir, Isaac, gave him and Sarah great joy, but their joy became full of regrets. God promised to give them a child. They had tried to rush God’s plan. In their haste to receive the fulfillment of God’s promise, they schemed to have a son on their own terms and according to their own timing. Sarah gave her Egyptian handmaid Hagar to Abraham to bear children for them. So Sarah’s Egyptian handmaid, Hagar, gave

birth to a son named Ishmael—a child of Abraham, but not the long-awaited promised child (Chuck Swindoll (September 10, 2020). Ishmael represented the compromise; while Isaac was the true child of promise. And for three years, conflict brewed. Sarah demanded that Abraham send Hagar and Ishmael into the wilderness.

Our God is a merciful God who forgives our sins. This can be seen in the book of psalm of David chapter 103:12 “As far as the east is from the west, so far does, he removes our transgressions from us” (KJV). God forgives our sins but our wrongdoing may have lingering consequences with others. God forgave the sin, but He didn’t change events to reverse the effect of our sin in the world. Although every act of sin is forgivable, but the effects of some sins are not erasable. We can learn a lesson from Abraham’s life, recognizing that the shock wave of sin can reverberate down through generations, even causing harm to people not yet born (Chuck Swindoll (September 10, 2020).

## **REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE ON THE MISTAKES OF SARAH**

One of the key features of the story of Sarah and Hagar is the way in which the wellbeing of both female characters are threatened by forces that prevented them from flourishing, to reach their full potential. Weem (1991 :34) in Juliiana Claassens (2024), asserts that these features caused the women much pain, each in her own way. Williams 1993 :29 in Juliana Claasens (2024), collaborates that in the case of Sarah, her situation of barrenness is shown to be a great threat to her status in a society that places great value on women's ability to bear children. Williams (1993) also stated that the case of Hagar, being forced into a situation of limited or no resources during her expulsion into the wilderness is responsible for this Egyptian slave woman's anguish. In both instances, according to Juliana Claassens (2024), these two women's plight is portrayed as parallel as both

women's ability to bear offspring is put into jeopardy - Sarah, due to her inability to conceive and Hagar, faced with the very real possibility of losing her son to hunger and thirst.

Remarkable about this narrative portrayal of indignity in the Sarah and Hagar narrative is the way in which the lives of these two women, who are portrayed as coming from different social and ethnic backgrounds, are interconnected, profoundly affecting one another. Sarah Ahmed (2004:194) considers the role of emotions such as fear, hate, disgust and pain within what she calls the 'contact zone' in which people of different racial or ethnic backgrounds are shaped and reshaped at the moment of encounter.

In this regard, the narrative of Sarah and Hagar offers, as feminist and womanist scholars have suggested, a prime example of a contact zone denoting the interaction between racialized others, which, as so often happens in interracial relationships, evokes strong emotions of disgust and contempt. Hagar, after she had

conceived, looked with contempt upon her mistress. As her body grows heavy with child, Hagar regards her mistress Sarah as a 'lightweight'. Sarah responds to this slighting by afflicting Hagar (Weems 1991:36).

Sarah's irritation and sense of disgust is evident in Genesis 21:10 when Sarah complains to her husband about 'this slave woman', speaking in contempt and not even mentioning her name (cf. also Genesis 16:5-6). That the power firmly lies in the hands of Sarah and Abraham though is evident from the fact that Abraham proceeds to tell his wife that Hagar is in her hand so that she can do with her whatever is good in her eyes (Genesis 16:6). And in Genesis 21 we see how Sarah continues this abuse when she incites Abraham to banish Hagar and Ishmael to a life in the wilderness that may very likely have led to the demise of mother and child (v. 10). It is remarkable that the lives of these women intersect at the very point at which Sarah is most vulnerable. Martha Nussbaum (2001) rightly has proposed that:

the roots of anger, hatred, and disgust lie very deep in the structure of human life, in our ambivalent relation to our lack of control over objects and the helplessness of our own bodies. (p. 234)

In the case of Sarah, according to Frymer-Kensky (2002:234), it is indeed her situation of barrenness that directly is responsible for causing a great deal of pain and suffering in the life of Hagar when she uses Hagar's body as a means to secure a baby for herself and her husband. When this plan does not quite work out, she afflicts Hagar. Moreover, after the wondrous occasion of the birth of her son, when Sarah sees Isaac playing (with Ishmael), she perceives Ishmael's presence to be a threat to her son.

Ahmed (2004) collaborated that such narratives work by generating a subject that is endangered by imagined others whose proximity threatens not only to take something away from the subject (jobs, security, wealth), but to take the place of the subject. The presence of this other is imagined as a threat to

the object of love. (p. 43). However, in continuation, Ahmed (2004:43) states that this perceived threat serves the function of transforming 'the bodies of others' 'into "the hated" through a discourse of pain'. The primary subject is construed as being injured or hurt by the presence of the other. In collaboration to this, Judith Butler (2004:28), states that this insight is particularly significant for how people in pain treat one another - personal and collective suffering often resulting in violence.

According to Ahmed (2004:84-85), emotion of disgust can be said to be profoundly ambivalent, encompassing at the same time a strong attraction toward the subject or object that is found to be repulsing. Ahmed (2004) in Juliana Claasens (2024), writes with reference to disgust's twin emotion hatred that where there is hate, there is obviously an excessive need for the object. In other words, hate is opposed to indifference: in hate, the object makes a difference, but cannot satisfy the subject, whose need goes beyond it. (p. 51). In the story of

Sarah and Hagar, it is clear that Sarah, due to her inability to bear children, needs Hagar and is drawn to her. But we also see the ambivalence at the heart of this desire when Sarah turns on Hagar in an expression of profound disgust.

The immediate effect of disgust according to Juliana Claasens (2024), is that it causes the subject to create distance between the self and the object or subject he or she finds disgusting. In the narrative of Sarah and Hagar, we see this vividly illustrated: firstly, Hagar removes herself from the situation of contempt when she runs away, and in the second instalment of the narrative, she is cast out or expelled by Sarah. Sarah Ahmed (2004:12) in quoting Judith Butler (2004), argues that emotions such as disgust or hatred have an inherent world-making quality. It is by means of the repetition of these emotions that worlds are evoked, that identities are negotiated and that boundaries are fixed. Sarah Ahmed (2004), describes the effect of disgust as follows: "Disgust does something,



certainly: through disgust, bodies 'recoil' from their proximity, as a proximity that is felt as nakedness or as an exposure on the skin surface. ... So disgust, even defined simply as bad taste, shows us how the boundaries that allow the distinction between subjects and objects are undone in the moment of their making". (Ahmed 2004:83)

In Genesis 21:16 Hagar alone in the wilderness raises her voice in lament, protesting her own plight as well as what this expulsion is about to do to her child. And after her eyes are opened and she sees the source of her salvation in the form of a well, providing life-sustaining water, Frymer-Kenski (2002:236) narrative divulges further details about the life the mother and son would make for themselves in the wilderness - a life that may be difficult in the harsh conditions of the wilderness, but a life lived in freedom.

## **CONCLUSION**

Sarah and Hagar has the potential to serve as a space for contemplating complex ethical issues arising from

the interaction that continues to occur between interracial and/ or interreligious relationships. The story of Sarah and Hagar is not a happy one though - the relationship between the two women disintegrates completely and ends with the expulsion of Hagar. But as Martha Nussbaum (2001:244) has proposed, 'painful literary experiences', which confirm that we are 'needy and limited creature[s]', are helpful in that they may assist us in reaching a greater understanding of ourselves as well as of others.

Wiesel (1986:248249) in his work blames Sarah who, in his mind, could have done better by loving both Isaac and Ishmael. He laments: 'If only she could have brought them together instead of setting them apart! Maybe some of today's tragedies would have been avoided'. In this quote Wiesel refers to the Palestinian crisis that, according to him, has its roots in the separation of brothers. One could add though numerous instances of interracial, interethnic and interreligious strife that mar our world today - of

particular significance for us in Nigeria with our complex and still often painful race relations

According to Juliana Claassens (2024), the story of Sarah and Hagar thus may help us contemplate the effect of disgust on the bodies involved in the contact zone. Martha Nussbaum (2001:299), in Juliana Claasens (2024), argued that disgust is the enemy of compassion. She argues that in a society's pursuit for justice, which is closely associated with the obligation to cultivate compassion in its people, 'the impediments to compassion's ethical work' is 'supplied by shame, resentment, envy, and disgust'. We have moreover seen how disgust can block new meanings, being responsible for stereotypical notions that taint the relationship between racialized others. And in its most extreme manifestation of disgust, certain bodies may become fixed as objects of hate which may result in their destruction in what is known as hate crimes (Ahmed 2004:57, 60).

The Sarah and Hagar narrative implores the reader not to ignore the

injustice done to those who literature (and society) deem disgusting or unfit. For as Ahmed (2004:57) warns us: 'To allow such bodies to disappear in our own analysis would be to repeat the crime rather than to redress its injustice'. As biblical interpreters we are called to redress injustice and lift up interpretations that may restore the dignity of men, women and children scarred in situations of dehumanization.

In Genesis 16, Abram once again shows that though he is the father of faith, he still makes mistakes and has doubts. According to Jeremy Myers (2024), it is always a bad idea to try to accomplish God's plan deviating from its own timing. Trying to deviate from it messes everything up. Jeremy Myers (2024) further stated that, Abram in the book of Genesis 16, was seen trying to rush God's plan. God has promised to Abram land and a family, but Abram has received neither. So in Genesis 16, Abram tries to provide a family for himself rather than trust and wait on God.

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