



OD YOSEF HAI NEWSLETTER

ROSH YESHIVAH AND COMMUNITY RABBI
DAYAN ABRAHAM DAVID SHLI"TA

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Thoughts on Parashat

TOLDOT

Year 23

by Dayan Abraham David

The pasuk tells us that Rifka was barren and could not have children 'Vayetar Yitzhak La Hashem Lenchach Ishto Ki Akarah heh' and Yitzhak prayed with her, 'Vayeater lo Hashem vetahar Rifka.' And G-d answered his prayer and Rifka conceived. Rashi brings the Midrash that G-d answered his prayer and not hers 'Shein domeh tefilat sadik ben sadik le tefilat Tzadik ben Rasha.' We cannot compare the prayer of a righteous person, the son of a Rasha, to that of a righteous person, the son of a Tzadik. So his prayer was answered and not hers. How do we understand this, surely the merit of a Tzadik who comes from a background of wicked people should be greater than that of a Tzadik who is born to a Tzadik as our Rabbi tell us 'Bamakom Baal Teshuba omed ein Zadikim gamurim yecholim la-amod'. Great Tzadikim cannot stand on the level where a Baal Teshuvah does, so how come his prayers were answered and not hers? Of course the prayers of a Baal Teshuvah and Tzadik ben Rasha who has come

so far is worthy of being answered, for the great merit they have but in this case his prayers were answered and not hers, as we shall explain.

Both of them were praying she should conceive and have children. Rifka coming from a family with a father like Betuel and a brother like Lavan would of course be praying for a righteous child, but her concept of a Tzadik would be somewhat limited and not as great as the concept of Yitzhak who was a Tzadik ben Tzadik and lived among Tzadikim. His beseeching would be for a child on a much higher level, so G-d heard his prayer and not hers; a child according to his yearnings and concept not hers. That is why it says 'Einu Domeh' that it is not comparable and not that her prayer were not as worthy. It is most important we read and learn about our great ancestors and the Tzadikim of our nation and where possible to live among them so that we should raise the level of our aspirations.

On the negative side we should make sure we keep away from sights and concepts of cruelty and wickedness. Esau married the wicked Hittite women, Yehudit and Basmat. They caused great pain and bitterness to Yitzhak and Rifka

for the idolatry they brought into their home. 'Vatheyena Morat Ruach Le Yitzhak VulRifka'. The Midrash makes an observation that it affected Yitzhak more than Rifka that is why it puts Yitzhak first. Why was this so? Rifka was also a great Tzadeket and idolatry should also repulse her as much as Yitzhak. The Midrash concludes that since Rifka came from a home where idolatry had been the practice she was not as badly affected as Yitzhak who came from the house of Abraham.

Our Rabbis are in no way criticising Rifka,; she was the ultimate Tzadeket who filled the place of Sarah Emenu with the miraculous light which lasted from Shabbat to Shabbat, the cloud of Glory and the *berachah* in the dough in her home but to teach and warn us of the effect of what we see and hear. Rifka who had left the home of Betuel and Lavan at a very young age, sixty years earlier and lived in the home of Abraham and Yitzhak, Because of that influence at an early age was able to tolerate the idolatry more than Yitzhak. This is a frightening lesson for us of the negative influence of what we see and hear and the affect it can have upon us all our lives. It is frightening to see our children today exposed to so much trash.

TORAH INSIGHTS

Vayitrotzetzu Habanim Bekirba vatomer im ken lama ze anochi. Chazal explain her complaint lama ze anochi because she could not understand what was happening

with the embryo she was carrying, for when she passed a Beth Hamidrash she felt a movement as if her embryo became excited and moved about and when she passed an avoda zara the embryo got excited and moved about. She was disturbed what sort of child she was carrying who seemed to be attracted by both. She went to the Beth Hamidrash of Shem and was told that there were twins, she accepted this for at least one would be a complete tzadik even if the other was not.

Rashi explains according to the peshat that she was complaining about the actual pain of the pregnancy 'tzar ha ibur' and explains 'lama ze anochi'. Why did I pray and beseech for such a pregnancy which causes me so much pain. It seems that she was regretting having prayed to become pregnant. How can we entertain such an outlook and complaint from Rifka Emeinu. The meforshim question Rashi's explanation and disagree strongly with it.

The Or HaChayim Hakadosh gives a wonderful explanation as peshat of the pasuk which maybe is what Rashi means. That the pain was so strong accompanied with great movement of the embryo, she was afraid she would be losing her pregnancy, ie that violent movement was the beginning of an abortion so she complained why did I pray for such a pregnancy which would come to nothing. So she went to the Beth Hamidrash to ask for a beracha to save the pregnancy. So we could explain Rashi as well, that she was complaining about the futility of

having such a type of pain for fear that it might lead to an abortion and not because of the actual pain.

TORAH GEMS

Rashi on Pasuk '*Haleteni na min hadom haadom hazeh* (25:30)

That Abraham had died on that day so as not to see his grandson Esav behaving abominably in wickedness (as Rashi brings previously that he did five cardinal sins: murder, rape and '*avodah zara*', denied '*Olam Haba*' and despised the '*Bechorah*', the service of the first born). Abraham's life was shortened by five years so he should not see Esav's corruption which would cause him pain and shame and would go against the promise that G-d had given him, that he would have a peaceful and happy old age.

We have a difficulty here, how come that five years of Abraham's life in this world was taken away from him because of the suffering and shame caused by Esav. Does it not say in Pirkei Avot: '*Yafa sha Achat ba Olam Haze me kol chaye Olam Haba*', one hour in this world is worth all '*Olam Haba*' because of what we are able to achieve in this world with Torah and Mitzvot which we cannot achieve in the world to come? Would it not be worthwhile for Abraham all the pain and shame for what he could achieve in five more years of his life in this world? Was having a happy and peaceful old age so much more important? Maybe we could answer that since Hashem had promised him a peaceful and happy old age. If Abraham would have pain and

shame in his old age because of his grandson, people would say that G-d has not fulfilled his promise to Abraham and it would cause a '*Chillul Hashem*', hence Abraham himself would be quite willing to give up five years of his life so as to avoid a '*Chillul Hashem*', even though he would lose out so much.

STORIES OF TZADDIKIM

A father and son once came to Reb Yaacov Kaminitzky to resolve a dispute. The father was upset that his son was earning only a passing grade in his maths course since he knew that the boy was capable of doing much better. For his part, the son freely admitted that he was putting only a minimal effort into his math studies because he did not want to take time from his *Gemara* learning. Reb Yaakov asked the boy how much more time a day it would take him to do "A" work in mathematics. "Not more than half an hour", the boy replied. "In that case", said Reb Yaakov, "you should invest the time".

Reb Yaakov continued but did not try to convince the boy that a knowledge of mathematics is intrinsically valuable. Rather, he stressed the danger of doing anything half-heartedly. The issue was not whether to study maths – which was in any event required by the Yeshiva High School. That being the case, Reb Yaakov warned, there was a danger that today's half-hearted approach to math would lead, at some point in the future, to a similar half-hearted

approach to the *Gemara* or to other important pursuits.

Shabbat Shalom

HALACHOT cont

1) The Mitzvah of Tefillin is an exceptionally important mitzvah for the Tefillin contain verses of the Torah expressing the unity of G-d and the acceptance upon our self of His duty; verses of the miracles of Yetzeyat Mitzraim basic tenets of our faith. Harsh warnings are said about those who do not put them on.

2) We have in mind when we put the Tefillin on our arm placing the box facing our heart, that our heart the source of our will is to his service and the Tefillin on our heads to remember all the miracles He has done for us and all we owe Him.

3) We put on the Tefillin only after we have put on the Tallit. We should have them on at the beginning of Shaharit for the Shema Yisrael we say before the Akeda when possible. We say the parasha of '*Kadesh Li Kol Bechor*' after we have put on the Tefillin but if we do not have time it can be said after the Tefilah while we still have the Tefillin on. But if we forgot and took off the Tefillin we do not need to put them on again just to say the Kadesh Li.

4) The Ben Ish Hai says that if someone who did not have a Talit Gedolah with him and puts on the Tefillin, when he later gets the Tallit, he should take off his Tefillin, put on

the Tallit and then put on the Tefillin again but without a beracha.

***Avot Ubanim starts this
Motzei Shabbat
one hour after Shabbat
terminates.
There will be refreshments
and prizes.***

***If you wish to sponsor a Kiddush
Please contact
Monty Sassoon 07787 571313
For Seuda Shlishit
or to rent the
Nancy Reuben Hall
for a Simcha
Please contact
Yanky David 07725 408724***

***We have a regular Youth Minyan
organised by Jason Ibrahim and
Jordan Moses followed by a
kiddush***

SHABBAT TIMES

Shabbat commences	3:52 pm
Shabbat terminates	5:02 pm
Mincha Erev Shabbat	3:37 pm
Followed by Kabbalat Shabbat	
Shacharit	8:30 am
Mincha on Shabbat followed by Seuda Shlishit & Arbit	3:22 pm
Shacharit	6:50 am
Mincha	1:30pm
Arbit	7:45 pm