



הרב הראשי עיה"ק אלעד **מרדכי מלכא שליט"א**
נשיא וראש מוסדות "אור המלך"

מחבר ספרי שו"ת דרך המלך, אמרי מרדכי, ודרכי המלך על המועדים ועוד
רשת מעונות, ורשת גנים, ת"ת פרי תואר, ובית יעקב פרי תואר, תיכון בית יעקב החדש, ת"ת מאור ישראל,
ישיבה קטנה ארחות יהודה, ביהמ"ד גבוה לרבנים ודיינים "לקח טוב" קופת "מפעל החסד" אלעד
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Parashat Toldot

Consulting *Da'at Torah* Brings Success and Good Fortune

Our *parasha* states (25:22), "The children agitated within her, and she said, 'If so, why am I like this?' And she went to inquire of Hashem."

The Words of our Sages

It says in the *Medrash Aggadah* (*Parashat Toldot* 25:22), "And the children agitated within her' - whenever she passed by the house of idol worship, Esav would push and try to escape; she would pass by the *batei knessiot* and the *batei medrashot* and Yaakov would push and try to escape. An alternative explanation: 'They agitated...' - Esav said to Yaakov, 'Come, let's divide up the world.' Yaakov said to him, 'You take this world and I'll take the World to Come.' An alternative explanation: Yaakov said to Esav, 'Sell me your birthright.' Esav answered, 'I'll sell it to you.' This is why it says in the Torah, "He sold it like the day." Yaakov told Esav, 'You should sell me your birthright now as per our agreement in the womb.'"

Questions

- 1- How could Rivkah ask, "Why is this happening to me?" Is it possible that the righteous Rivkah *Imeinu* complained and had grievances against the actions of Hashem? The *Ohr HaChaim* asks a similar question on Rashi. Rashi explains that Rivkah said, "If I am in such great pain, why did I desire and pray to conceive?" The *Ohr HaChaim* writes about this explanation, "Logic does not agree with this explanation; could it be that physical pains should cause the *tzadeket* to despise her pregnancy?!"
- 2- Why did Rivkah go to the *beit ha'medrash* to discover what was causing her such pain? Why did she not go to a doctor instead?

The Wide-Spread Attitude

It is accepted as a general rule today that the source of any problem should be explained through natural means, with the corresponding treatment also being based purely on human reasoning. Therefore, when a person is in pain, faces a potential tragedy, or is confronted with any significant problem, he will go to the doctor or attempt to find a solution through natural means. When a person's phone breaks, he looks for a practical explanation why the phone's not working and he can't hear what the other person is saying, and it does not even occur to him to think that Divine Providence affects his phone. So too, when a person is in pain or suffering, he doesn't think to reflect on the Divine Providence in the matter. He does not make a spiritual reckoning or try to better his ways but believes that his misfortunes have natural causes, and not that the Hand of Hashem is in the picture. Rivka *Imeinu* shows us a whole new perspective and teaches us to think differently about life's challenges. When a person

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has questions, is afflicted by suffering, or has any doubts while he walks down the path of life, he should know that everything is from Hashem and examine his actions to determine why he is experiencing these specific sets of difficulties. He should not rely exclusively on his own understanding, but go to a *Gadol BeYisrael* and ask him for personal advice, as well as requesting that he pray on his behalf. Hashem is the cause of all causes, and Divine Providence dictates whatever happens to a person. Therefore it is proper to consult the *Gedolim* and *Tzaddikim* who have a greater understanding of the ways of Hashem and can give us insight into the problems we experience.

A Person's Obligation to Examine His Actions in Times of Trouble and Consult the Elders of the Generation

Now we can understand Rivkah *Imeinu* and give an explanation for her words. Certainly Rivkah knew that everything comes from Hashem and wasn't, *chas ve'shalom*, complaining about physical pain. Rather, she was dismayed that whenever she passed a house of idol worship, she felt that her baby wanted to escape and enter. After 20 years of sincere prayer, how could it be that her child would be drawn to idol worship? Since nothing happens by chance, she thought that her deeds had been found lacking and her prayers were deficient. She therefore set out for the *Beit Medrash* to discover her shortcomings and how to address them. This is how we should understand her words, "If this is occurring"- that the child has a tendency to idol worship – "What is the point of my being pregnant with such a child?" In the *beit medrash* they explained, through Divine Inspiration, that there was nothing wrong with her or her prayers; Hashem wanted that two nations should emerge from her, and this is what caused the agitations.

I saw that a similar explanation was given by the Rizhner Rebbe: He asked in the name of the holy *sefer Ohr LeShamayim*, that since our Sages (*Bereishit Rabbah* 67:9) tell us that Rivkah was a prophetess, she certainly knew that she had two nations inside of her, and knew that they would take separate paths in the future. Why, then, did she need to go to the *beit midrash* and inquire of Shem? What new information could he give her? The Rizhner Rebbe answers that Rivkah knew that the negative part of Yitzchak must be separated from the positive part and that two children must be born to him. The same occurred with Avraham, who also needed to bear Yishmael, to separate any negative part from Avraham, so that Yitzchak could be born totally pure. What caused Rivkah distress was her inability to understand why she, and not some other woman, had to give birth to the negative part of Yitzchak. Why was she different from Sarah *Imeinu* who only gave birth to the good part while Hagar brought the negative component into the world? Since she went and asked Shem, Hashem provided her with an answer and explained that from Esav would come many great converts such as Shemayah, Avtalyon, and R' Meir, and many other righteous converts as well. By inquiring of Shem, she fulfilled the *pasuk* "*Veteshua Be'ra'v Yei'otz*, Salvation comes from seeking much advice," and was explicitly promised that righteous converts would come from her.



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Seek Advice from the Elders and Avoid Folly

Our Sages (*Shemot Rabba Parashat Shmot* 8) expound on the *pasuk* (3:16), "Go and gather the *zikenim* of Yisrael, the elders of Israel." They teach, "The *zekeinim* sustain the Jewish people. When do the Jewish people stand? When they have *zekeinim*. When the *Beit HaMikdash* stood, they would ask the *zekeinim*, as it says (*Devarim* 32), 'Ask your father and he will tell it to you, ask the *zekainim* and they will tell you.' Whoever takes advice from the *zekeinim* doesn't falter. We learn this from Achav ... 'And the King of Yisrael summoned the *zekeinim* and the entire nation, and they said to him, 'Don't listen [to Hadad] and don't give in.' Because he listened to the advice of the *zekeinim* [he was victorious, as it says], 'And the King of Yisrael went out, and he struck their horses and their chariots' (*Melachim* 1 20)."

The Demolition of *Zekeinim* - Construction; the Building of Youth - Destruction

Furthermore, our Sages (*Nedarim* 40a) tell us how important it is to take advice from the *zekeinim* of the generation and not to follow youth and the spirit of the times, "If youth tells you to build and the *zekeinim* tell you to destroy," says the *Gemara*, "listen to the *zekeinim* and not to the youth; for the building of youth is destructive, and the demolition of the *zekainim* is constructive. The symbol for this principle is Rechavam ben Shlomo." It is written regarding Rechavam (*Melachim* I 12:4-16), "They (the Jewish people) spoke to Rechavam, saying, 'Your father made our yoke difficult; now, you alleviate your father's difficult workload ... and we will serve you.' King Rechavam took counsel with the *zekainim* ... saying, 'How do you advise ...' They spoke to him, saying 'If today you become a servant to this people and serve them, and respond [positively] to them and speak kind words to them, they will be your servants all the days.' But he ignored the advice of the *zekainim* ... and he took counsel with the youths who had grown up with him ... He said to them, 'What do you advise?' ...The young men who had grown up with him spoke to him saying, '...This is what you should say to them: 'My little finger is thicker than my father's loins ... My father chastised you with sticks; I shall chastise you with scorpions!'...The king did not listen to the people, for it was a design from Hashem ... All of Yisrael saw that the king did not listen to them, and the people gave their response to the king, saying, 'What share have we in [the House of] David? [We have] no heritage in the son of Yishai! Back to your homes, [House of] Yisrael.'"

R' Yechezkel Abramsky's Insight into the Superiority of a Wise Man's Advice

The *Sefer Lekach Tov* relates R' Yechezkel Abramsky's explanation about how a *gadol beYisrael's* vision is superior to that of the rest of the nation: Imagine a person is told to stand 100 meters from a certain point. He is then asked if he is able to see the point that is 100 meters away from where he is standing. The man answers in the negative - he is short sighted and can see no more than 30 or 40 meters in front of him. Other people are brought, but they too cannot see more than 80 or even 90 meters, and are unable to glimpse the point in the distance. Finally, an individual with unique eyesight can see the point although it is 100 meters away. Even if the rest of the world joined forces, they still would not be



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successful in even glimpsing what this unique individual sees with perfect clarity. The same is true with the vision of *gedolei Yisrael* - they can see far into the future and see things that that are invisible to most people. When the masses contradict a *gadol BeYisrael*, their opinion has no weight; they are short-sighted and simply cannot see as far as the *gadol*.

Words of Mussar

We should reflect and internalize the lesson of Rivka *Imeinu* and learn not to rely on our own wisdom but to realize that "salvation comes through much advice." We should know that whatever befalls us comes directly from Hashem to rouse us and cause us to improve our ways. We should go to the *zekeinim* and ask them for guidance and direction in channeling our efforts, as well as requesting them to bless us with success. They are fluent in the ways of Hashem and can help us improve our situation and stop painful decrees. We should not be led astray by the wide-spread belief that all our problems have natural causes and natural solutions and ignore the Divine Providence behind it all. How wonderful it is for a person to turn with all his spiritual, and even physical, matters to the *zekeinim* and listen to their sage advice. By doing this, he will certainly succeed in all his endeavors.

Shabbat Shalom

Rav Mordechai Malka