שיחות הרה״י הרב הלל חבר שליט״א

<u>פרשת תולדות תשפ״ב</u>

I. <u>The power of תפילה</u>

This week's פרשה is פרשת תולדות. "ואלה תולדת יצחק בן אברהם... ויהי יצחק בן ארבעים שׁנה בקחתו את רבקה בת בתואל הארמי מפדן ארם אחות לבן הארמי לו לאשה – he was forty years old when he got married. How old was רבקה? Three. And how old was he when they had a baby? Sixty. That means that they waited twenty years! You know, for some people it takes a while before they get kids, but twenty years?! She was only three years old, so I think they waited ten years until she was able to have kids, and then another ten years they were praying because they didn't have kids...

"ויעתר יצחק לה' לנכח אשתו כי עקרה היא, ויעתר לו ה' ותהר רבקה אשתו".

So, it says that יצחק was praying opposite his wife, "כי עקרה היא". What does עקרה mean? Barren. What does Barren mean? That means that they cannot have kids. Which means that her make up, her body, is not *capable* of having kids, that's what barren means, it means that she doesn't have the כלים to have kids. Now, the פסוק says "היא" – "כי עקרה היא" means she, however it's spelt "הוא", and the בעל הטורים says "הוא" – that he was also עקר!

So, here you have two people married, איש ואשה, *she* can't have kids, physically, and *he* can't have kids, physically... and they're praying, and sure enough – they have kids! They have twins, יעקב and עשו. *We* are all children of יצחק, which means that we are all coming from a beginning where it was impossible to have any kids! And how did they get kids? Because they prayed.

Now, the תורה is not a history book. It isn't just trying to tell you 'history', this is what happened in the past, because there are many, many, many things that happened in the past that they don't tell us... they only write the parts of the story that are important for us to take a lesson from. So, of course there was a miracle! That a barren man and a barren woman can't have any kids – and they had kids! That's a miracle! But they told us that having the kids was a consequence of their prayers, "ויעתר יצחק לה' לנכח אשתו", he prayed opposite his wife, "כי עקרה היא", and ה' answered them. So, the fact that ה' made a miracle for יצחק and רבקה is a nice story, but apparently, they're not telling you the story just for the sake of the story, they're telling you the story in order to teach you a lesson... And what is the lesson?

There's nothing impossible, and if you pray for something, you can get it! They're giving you over here the tremendous power of תפילה.

Parenthetically, a famous story that I told you many times... I have a friend, he was in the ישיבה, and they called him up and said "your father is very, very sick in the hospital, and I think you had better come" – "Come? Yes, ok..." He goes to the hospital, the doctor comes out of the room and says "it's very, very serious... his heart stopped pumping, and we don't think it's going to last too much longer" – "Ok, what am I supposed to do?" He goes into the room and starts praying, and an

hour later the doctor comes out and says "I don't know what you're doing, but keep it up, because his heart started working again!" It started working again, and he lived another couple of years! So, the בחור comes back to the Rebbi (It was Rabbi Shlomo Rothenberg? And the Rebbi was Rabbi Davis…) and he says "רבי, what am I supposed to believe? Am I supposed to believe that it was *my* תפילה, *my* prayer that brought my father's life back?" – He says "You're חייב to believe that! You have to believe that! There is a כח in תפילה, that you can bring about the results…"

So, we have to understand that there is a power of תפילה, take advantage of it, and of course we are talking about when we speak seriously to ה', with כוונה…

II. Hypocritical behavior

I want to just mention, later on in the פרשה, it says that יצחק calls עשו because he wants to give him a ברכה, and he tells him "go get me מטעמים" and he'll give him a ברכה. So, there's the story with רבקה and יעקב… and then עשו comes in to his father with the מטעמים, and he says "who are you?" – "I'm עשו, your son".

"ויאמר לו יצחק אביו מי אתה ויאמר אני בנך בכרך עשו". "ויחרד יצחק חרדה גדולה עד מאד ויאמר מי אפוא הוא הצד ציד ויבא לי ואכל מכל בטרם תבוא ואברכהו גם ברוך יהיה" – he got the ברכה! So, apparently it was known to יצחק that it was יעקב who got the ברכה.

And then we have a very powerful line…

"כשמע עשו את דברי אביו ויצעק צעקה גדלה ומרה עד מאד".

When עשו heard the words of his father, that his brother had gotten the ברכה, "ויצעק צעקה גדלה ומרה עד מאד". Are there any extra words in the תורה? No. So what does צעק mean? צעק, not צחק – he didn't laugh, he was screaming! So צעקה means that it was loud. But it's not only "צעק", it's "צעקה גדלה". Now, screaming is loud, and then they say גדולה, so that means, up the volume! You got to the peak of volume… Then it says "ומרה". What does מרה mean? Bitter. What is that telling you? That it was not merely a verbal cry, it was an internal cry, from terrible sorrow and feeling inside… "ומרה עד מאד" – there is nowhere further to go, "עד מאד" means extreme. So, you have an extreme screaming, of volume and of quality!

I have a question. What's עשו yelling so much for? Why is he yelling? He missed what? The ברכה. The ברכה that his father was about to give.

Now, I have another question. Do you think that עשו believed in the power of the ברכה of his father? Yes. How much did he believe in it? More than us! More than we believe! You go to a rabbi, you get a ברכה, "Ok, yes, amen", you know…

Did you ever go to shul and hear ברכת כהנים? Never? Who is giving you a ברכה in "ושמו את שמי על בני ישראל ואני אברכם" said ה' ברכת כהנים?, which really means that the vehicle of getting a ברכה to you is through the "כהנים, ואני אברכם" – I'll bless you. So, I don't know, it could be that the כהנים are giving you a blessing, it could be

that ה' is giving you a blessing, but be what it may – you're getting a ברכה from ה'! Unbelievable!

So, I was once in shul, and all of a sudden, after the חזרה, I hear a guy in the hallway screaming (AHH!!!), he is screaming at the top of his lungs!! "What happened?" – "I missed ברכת כהנים! I missed the ברכה of כהנים! I didn't get the ברכה, I was outside!" That's a joke, I never heard that… But really, you should hear that every day, a guy should be saying "Wow!!! I MISSED ברכת כהנים??!! How is that possible?!" Or he was outside, at home, or other things…

So, עשו apparently had more אמונה than we do, even though he's not supposed to be the best guy in the world… "ויצעק צעקה גדלה ומרה עד מאד"! Did he have אמונה? Yes. A strong אמונה? Definitely a strong אמונה. He had אמונה in a ברכה of יצחק, right? Good.

So, I have a קשיא. He had tremendous אמונה. How much אמונה? Tops! "ויצעק צעקה גדלה ומרה עד מאד". Hmm… By the way, who is he believing in? His father. And his father is God? No. He's going through יצחק, of course he has אמונה in ה', so must believe in ה', it must be that he is not an אפיקורס. Does he believe in ה'? Yes. Strongly? Yes.

Hmm… So, pray tell, please tell me, how is it possible that two seconds later he says "I can't wait! Whenever I get a chance, I'm going to kill יעקב, my brother, he stole my ברכה!"?!!

One second – you just said he believes! How much does he believe? Very, very much! Doesn't the same One who told you to give a ברכה also say that you're not supposed to kill people?! So, tell me, how does he balance in his brain that he believes a thousand percent in ה', and yet – I'm going to kill my brother?! This is very hypocritical!

There's a contradiction in the guy's behavior, he's a hypocrite, he's not balanced out…

You have a similar thing with עשו's son, who was chasing after יעקב and caught up with him. He says "what are you doing here?" – "I have to kill you" – "why do you have to kill me?" – "because my father commanded me to kill you, כיבוד אב ואם, I have to listen to my father!" He believes in כיבוד אב ואם! So he has to kill… but the same One that said כיבוד אב ואם said "don't kill people"! So he says "listen, I'll give you all my money, and an עני is considered like he's מת, and therefore you've done it" – "Ok, good, I'll do that…" But the guy is running to kill someone to fulfil כיבוד אב ואם, even though it says that you're not supposed to kill people!

So, חז"ל say it's like a psychology that there's such a thing in a person of "אור וחושך משתמשין ביחד". A person can somehow have together in the same brain, in the same body, justify the fact that he's going to kill someone, and also justify that he believes in ה' a thousand percent. How is that possible? That's the mix-up that there is in a

person. It's not saying that we should try to do that, to the contrary, it's inappropriate, it's just showing how far off a person is able to go, coexisting with contradictory things inside of him… So, we have to be careful not to be caught up with these מדות.

First of all, the power of תפילה – they're not just telling us a story, they're telling us that ***we*** do have a power to ask for things and get it, and believe it (I'm talking to myself), we just have to realize the power of תפילה. And number two, we should check our חשבון הנפש and make sure that there are no things in our חשבון that are contradicting each other. We should not be living lives of hypocrisy, we should be living lives of consistency, and if we believe in ה', then all of our actions should reflect that אמונה.

שבת שלום.