

Dvar Torah for Parshat Toldot**Based on *Likutey Moharan I*, Lesson #155**

"Yitzchak stood in one corner and pleaded with God, and his wife stood in another corner and pleaded with God, because she was barren. God was convinced by [Yitzchak's] pleas and Rivkah became pregnant." Genesis 25:21 (according to Rashi)

Yitzchak Avinu (Isaac our Patriarch) and Rivkah Imeinu (Rebecca our Matriarch) knew that part of their mission in life was to produce an heir that would not only carry on the spiritual legacy begun by Avraham Avinu and Sarah Imeinu, but that would establish its permanence. As much as Avraham Avinu had accomplished, and as much as Yitzchak Avinu would accomplish, without the third pillar, a Godly nation could not come into being.

So they prayed and prayed. For years and years they prayed, pleaded and entreated. It took twenty years of their saintly prayers till their goal was accomplished and Rivkah Imeinu became pregnant. Twenty years!

I don't know about you, but if I prayed for something for twenty years and didn't get answered, I would get tired and discouraged. Even if I knew that my goal was important, or even critical, to my whole existence, I would probably get tired and discouraged. (Not "probably," but in actuality!) In fact, if not for Rebbe Nachman's explicitly saying that it may take days and years before seeing results (*Rabbi Nachman's Wisdom* #234), I wouldn't've made it as far as I have.

But whence this weariness and discouragement? Lack of faith. "For certainly, if one had perfect faith and believed that God is close to him and hears every single word that comes from his mouth, and listens to the tone of his prayer, he would definitely not have any sadness, slothfulness or sluggishness in his prayer. And he would certainly pray properly" (*Likutey Moharan I*, Lesson #155).

Rebbe goes on to say that one's faith has to be such that instead of growing impatient, frustrated and angry when faced with setbacks and distractions, one remains patient, calm and focused.

If we had real faith—God **is** interested, He **is** listening - we would pray early and often. We have to plant our faith and tend to it so that it grows. It may take twenty years of prayer to have a child (and another twenty to make sure he turns out to be a proper Jew!). That's a lot. Yet, there are so many little things, and so many short-term concerns that we can "practice" on. How much prayer is needed to get rid of a headache? To find a proper orthodontist or a convenient parking spot? How much prayer is needed for our children to return home safely from school or a visit to friends? God is in charge of these things as well, and as commonplace as they may be, they are not automatic.

When our faith has grown so that we are used to praying, we can invest more time, effort and ingenuity in long-term projects, such as self-control, and the big things, like a world peace and the coming of Mashiach.

agutn Shabbos! Shabbat Shalom!

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