

Yitzchak entreated Hashem opposite his wife. (25:21)

They both prayed. Rivkah *Imeinu* prayed on her own behalf. Yitzchak *Avinu* also prayed on her behalf. He knew that, as part of Hashem's promise to Avraham *Avinu*, he would be blessed with progeny. He entreated Hashem that Rivkah should be the mother of his children. Twenty years is a long time to pray for something. Apparently, they were prepared to continue praying until Rivkah conceived and gave birth to a healthy child. It was not just about having a child, but rather, they sought to serve as a link in the Patriarchal continuum which laid the foundation of the Jewish nation. Prayer has extraordinary efficacy, and one never knows which prayer will be most effective. There is no such thing as, "I will pray for just so long." There is no cutoff period concerning prayer. We continue with the hope that our next entreaty will make the difference. Yitzchak and Rivkah never became despondent. They continued until they achieved success.

An inspiring story illuminates this idea in a most practical manner. A wise king was blessed with power, enormous wealth, and personal acumen. Indeed, he had everything except what he yearned for the most: an heir, a successor to his throne, someone who would continue his destiny. To this end, the wise king gathered all the young men in the country and presented them with a test. He gave each one a bag of seeds and instructed him to plant his seeds. The one who presented him with (what he felt was) the nicest flower would become his heir. He allotted three months for this test.

On the designated day, all the young men arrived at the palace bedecked in their most elegant clothing, as befits one who meets royalty. For one of them, this would be his most life-altering moment. Each one brought along his flower pot with the beautiful flower he had nurtured. One-by-one, each passed before the king and showed him his flower. His ministers "oohed" and "ahhed" as thousands of contestants passed by the king. His majesty smiled to each one and said, "Good work," "Nice," but none of them received his nod implying that he had been selected as the winner. Last, the king saw a young fellow with an empty flower pot. The king motioned to him to come over.

"My son, why do you have an empty flower pot?" The young man replied, "Your majesty, I have no idea why my seeds did not produce the slightest vestige of a flower. I did everything correctly, watering the seeds and turning over the soil, but no results. I prayed to G-d. I begged, I wept, but I received no response. My flower pot remained barren." As he related his utter failure, he began to weep incessantly. The king put his arms around him and said, "Indeed, you win the contest. You will be my heir." Everyone looked at the king incredulously. How could he give away the prize to someone who had failed dismally?

The king explained. "All the seeds which I apportioned to each of the contestants had been cooked, thus negating their ability to produce any flowers. All the contestants switched their seeds for other ones in order to produce flowers that would impress me. This young man was the only honest one of the bunch. He planted the seeds that I gave him and prayed, and prayed. He

continued to hope that somehow his seeds would produce an appealing flower. He never gave up. He won due to his integrity. One to whom honesty is his guiding principle, who trusts in G-d and never despairs, is the type of successor I seek. He is deserving of the crown.”

How often do we pray, beseech, entreat, beg and plead to Hashem for a positive response to our petition? What do we do when the response we hope for is not forthcoming? We often throw in the towel and say, “I tried. What more can I do?” What about hope? What about never giving up?” What about believing that the pain and anguish, along with copious tears and prayer, is exactly what we are supposed to be doing? We do not know what will affect salvation, but we should never give up. Yitzchak *Avinu* and Rivkah *Imeinu* showed us the meaning and efficacy of *tefillah*.