

TOLDOS (GENESIS 25:19-28:9)

Help Ourselves!

2025 · Rabbi Yerachmiel Seplovitz

History appeared to be repeating itself.

Abraham and his wife taught the world about righteousness and kindness and that there is but One G-d Who created and runs the entire world. Part of their Jewish Outreach Plan included bringing an heir into the world who would carry on their sacred mission.

Eventually they were blessed with the miraculous birth of Isaac:

*And these are the generations of Isaac, son of Abraham; **Abraham was the father of Isaac.*** (Genesis, 25:19)

Yes, *Abraham was the father of Isaac.*

The Pesikta Zutrasa understands this verse to mean that anyone who observed the good deeds of Isaac would say that Abraham was definitely his father.

Isaac was not only the physical image of his father, he was truly a “chip off the old block.” He was kind and righteous and carried on his father’s teachings.

And he too, like his father before him, needed an heir. And he too, like his father before him, was married to an amazingly righteous woman, Rebecca. And she too, like her mother-in-law Sarah before her, was barren.

*Isaac prayed extensively to G-d **opposite his wife**, because she was barren.* (Genesis 25:21)

Opposite his wife. What does that mean?

Rashi tells us that Isaac stood in one corner of the tent, and Rebecca stood in the other corner. Both of them stood in the tent and poured out their hearts to G-d, begging for a child.

Yes, begging for a child. A child for whom???

The Midrash tells us that Isaac and Rebecca had two different things in mind in their prayers:

Isaac prayed, “Master of the World! May all the children You give to me be from this righteous woman!”

And Rebecca? You guessed it! “May all the children You give to me be from this righteous man!”

Do you see what they were praying for? Do you see WHOM they were praying for? “This is not about me; please do it for her/him!”

Isaac wanted children. But it was not about him. He could have done what his father did. Take another wife; let HER give you children... He wouldn't do it. His wife Rebecca was righteous. How could he allow her to suffer the pain of being childless?

Rebecca wanted children. But it was not about her. Her husband was a righteous man. How could she sit by and watch him suffer the pain of not having children?

And so they prayed and prayed. They prayed for each other.

And G-d accepted his prayer and his wife Rebecca conceived. (ibid)

G-d accepted HIS prayer... G-d granted Isaac's request that righteous Rebecca would be a mother. And as a result, he became a father!

In last week's Torah Portion we read about the birth of Isaac. That event is recorded right after the Torah tells us that Abraham prayed for Abimelech the Philistine king and his wife and his maids. He prayed for them because they were unable to have children.

The Philistines wanted children and Abraham wanted children. Abraham selflessly prayed for the Philistines to have children and shortly afterward he was blessed with a child!

Rashi tells us that this teaches us that if a person prays on behalf of somebody else when he himself needs that same thing, he will be answered first.

We never lose by being concerned for others.

In other words, we're all in this together. If I think only of myself, G-d might be less inclined to answer me. But if I pray for you, and show my concern for you, He will hopefully send His blessings to both of us.

G-d loves ALL of His children, and He wants us to love them too. When we show our love and concern for His children, He sends His love to all of us.

Have a great Shabbos.

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