

Kol Rina
An Independent Minyan
Parashat Toldot
November 21, 2020 *** 5 Kislev, 5781

Kol Rina – An Independent Minyan, is a traditional egalitarian community. We are haimish (homey/folksy), friendly, participatory, warm and welcoming. We hold weekly services in South Orange as well as holiday services and celebrations which are completely lay led. We welcome all to our services and programs from non-Hebrew readers to Jewish communal and education professionals.

Toldot in a Nutshell

https://www.chabad.org/parshah/article_cdo/aid/3178/jewish/Toldot-in-a-Nutshell.htm

Isaac and Rebecca endure twenty childless years, until their prayers are answered and Rebecca conceives. She experiences a difficult pregnancy as the “children struggle inside her”; G-d tells her that “there are two nations in your womb,” and that the younger will prevail over the elder. Esau emerges first; Jacob is born clutching Esau’s heel. Esau grows up to be “a cunning hunter, a man of the field”; Jacob is “a wholesome man,” a dweller in the tents of learning. Isaac favors Esau; Rebecca loves Jacob. Returning exhausted and hungry from the hunt one day, Esau sells his birthright (his rights as the firstborn) to Jacob for a pot of red lentil stew. In Gerar, in the land of the Philistines, Isaac presents Rebecca as his sister, out of fear that he will be killed by someone coveting her beauty. He farms the land, reopens the wells dug by his father Abraham, and digs a series of his own wells: over the first two there is strife with the Philistines, but the waters of the third well are enjoyed in tranquility. Esau marries two Hittite women. Isaac grows old and blind, and expresses his desire to bless Esau before he dies. While Esau goes off to hunt for his father’s favorite food, Rebecca dresses Jacob in Esau’s clothes, covers his arms and neck with goatskins to simulate the feel of his hairier brother, prepares a similar dish, and sends Jacob to his father. Jacob receives his father’s blessings for “the dew of the heaven and the fat of the land” and mastery over his brother. When Esau returns and the deception is revealed, all Isaac can do for his weeping son is to predict that he will live by his sword, and that when Jacob falters, the younger brother will forfeit his supremacy over the elder. Jacob leaves home for Charan to flee Esau’s wrath and to find a wife in the family of his mother’s brother, Laban. Esau marries a third wife—Machalath, the daughter of Ishmael.

Haftarah in a Nutshell

https://www.chabad.org/parshah/article_cdo/aid/587261/jewish/Haftarah-in-a-Nutshell.htm

This week's haftarah opens with a mention of the tremendous love G-d harbors for the children of Jacob, and the retribution He will visit upon the children of Esau who persecuted their cousins. This follows the theme of this week's Torah reading, whose two protagonists are Jacob and Esau. The prophet Malachi then rebukes the kohanim (priests) who offer blemished and emaciated animals on G-d's altar: "Were you to offer it to your governor, would he be pleased or would he favor you? . . . O that there were even one among you that would close the doors [of the Temple] and that you would not kindle fire on My altar in vain!" The haftarah ends with a strong enjoiner to the kohanim to return to the original

covenant that G-d had made with their ancestor, Aaron the High Priest. "True teaching was in his mouth, and injustice was not found on his lips. In peace and equity he went with Me, and he brought back many from iniquity."

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Communication Matters (Toldot) by Rabbi Jonathan Sacks z"l
<https://rabbisacks.org/toldot-5781/>

The Netziv (Naftali Zvi Yehuda Berlin, 1816–1893, dean of the yeshiva in Volozhin) made the astute observation that Isaac and Rebecca seem to suffer from a lack of communication. He noted that Rebecca's "relationship with Isaac was not the same as that between Sarah and Abraham or Rachel and Jacob. When they had a problem, they were not afraid to speak about it. Not so with Rebecca." (Ha'amek Davar to Gen. 24:64) The Netziv senses this distance from the very first moment Rebecca sees Isaac, as he is "meditating in the field" (Gen. 24:63), at which point she fell off her camel and "covered herself with a veil" (Gen. 24:65). He comments, "She covered herself out of awe and a sense of inadequacy, as if she felt she was unworthy to be his wife, and from then on this trepidation was fixed in her mind."

Their relationship, suggests the Netziv, was never casual, candid, and communicative. The result was, at a series of critical moments, a failure of communication. For instance, it seems likely that Rebecca never informed Isaac of the oracle she had before the twins, Esau and Jacob, were born, in which God told her "the elder will serve the younger" (Gen. 25:23). That, apparently, is one reason she loved Jacob rather than Esau, knowing that he was the one chosen by God. If Isaac had known this foretelling of their sons' futures, would he still have favoured Esau? He probably did not know, because Rebecca had not told him. That is why, many years later, when she hears that Isaac was about to bless Esau, she is forced into a plan of deception: she tells Jacob to pretend he is Esau. Why does she not simply tell Isaac that it is Jacob who shall be blessed? Because that would force her to admit that she has kept her husband in ignorance about the prophecy all the years the children were growing up. Had she spoken to Isaac on the day of the blessing, Isaac might have said something that would have changed the entire course of their, and their children's, lives. I imagine Isaac saying this: "Of course I know that it will be Jacob and not Esau who will continue the covenant. But I have two quite different blessings in mind, one for each of our sons. I will give Esau a blessing of wealth and power: 'May God give you the dew of heaven and the richness of the earth ... May nations serve you and peoples bow down to you.' (Gen. 27:28-29) I will give Jacob the blessing God gave Abraham and me, the blessing of children and the promised land: 'May God Almighty bless you and make you fruitful and increase your numbers until you become a community of peoples. May He give you and your descendants the blessing given to Abraham, so that you may take possession of the land where you now reside as a foreigner, the land God gave to Abraham.'" (Gen. 28:3-4).

Isaac never intended to give the blessing of the covenant to Esau. He intended to give each child the blessing that suited them. The entire deceit planned by Rebecca and carried out by Jacob was never necessary in the first place. Why did Rebecca not understand this? Because she and her husband did not communicate.

Now let us count the consequences. Isaac, old and blind, felt betrayed by Jacob. He “trembled violently” when he realised what had happened, saying to Esau, “Your brother came deceitfully.” Esau likewise felt betrayed and experienced such violent hatred towards Jacob that he vowed to kill him. Rebecca was forced to send Jacob into exile, thus depriving herself of the company of the son she loved for more than two decades. As for Jacob, the consequences of the deceit lasted a lifetime, resulting in strife between his wives and even between his children. “Few and evil have been the days of my life” (Gen. 47:9), he said to Pharaoh as an old man. So many lives scarred by one act which was not even necessary in the first place – Isaac did in fact give Jacob “the blessing of Abraham” without any deception, knowing him to be Jacob not Esau. Such is the human price we pay for a failure to communicate. The Torah is exceptionally candid about such matters, which is what makes it so powerful a guide to life: real life, among real people with real problems. Communication matters. In the beginning God created the natural world with words: “And God said: ‘Let there be’”. We create the social world with words. The Targum translated the phrase, “And man became a living soul,” (Genesis 2:7) as “And man became a speaking soul.” For us, speech is life. Life is relationship. And human relationships are built through communication. We can tell other people our hopes, our fears, our feelings and thoughts.

That is why any leader – from a parent to a CEO – must set as their task good, strong, honest, open communication. That is what makes families, teams and corporate cultures healthy. Everyone must know what their overall aims are as a team, what their specific roles are, what responsibilities they carry, and what values and behaviours they are expected to exemplify. There must be praise for those who do well, as well as constructive criticism when people do badly. Criticism must be of the act, not the person; the person must feel respected whatever their failures. This last feature is one of the fundamental differences between a “guilt morality” of which Judaism is the supreme example, and a “shame morality” like that of ancient Greece (namely, guilt makes a clear distinction between the act and the person, which shame does not). There are times when much depends on clear communication. It is not too much to say that there are moments when the very fate of the world depends upon this.

One such instance happened during the Cuban Missile Crisis of 1962 when the United States and the Soviet Union were on the brink of nuclear war. At the height of the crisis, as described by Robert McNamara in his film, *The Fog of War*, John F. Kennedy received two messages from the Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev. One was conciliatory, the other far more hawkish. Most of Kennedy’s advisers believed that the second represented Khrushchev’s real views and should be taken seriously.

However, one man offered a different perspective. Llewellyn Thompson Jr. had been American ambassador to the Soviet Union from 1957 to 1962 and had come to know the Russian president well. He had even spent a period of time living with Khrushchev and his wife. He told Kennedy that the conciliatory message sounded like Khrushchev's own personal view while the hawkish letter, which did not sound like him, had probably been written to appease the Russian generals. Kennedy listened to Thompson and gave Khrushchev an opportunity to back down without losing face – and the result being that a potentially devastating war was averted. It is terrifying to imagine what might have happened, had Thompson not been there to establish which was and which was not the real act of communication.

So many aspects of our lives are impacted by misinformation and enhanced by genuine communication. This is why friends, parents, partners and leaders must establish a culture in which honest, open, respectful communication takes place, and that involves not just speaking but also listening. Without it, tragedy is waiting in the wings.

[Esau's Primal Scream by Amy Kalmanofsky](http://www.jtsa.edu/esau-primal-scream)
<http://www.jtsa.edu/esau-primal-scream>

Sometimes words fail us. When they do, depending on the cause and our own propensities, we resort to song, dance, or other forms of wordless expression. And sometimes we scream. Primal screams that communicate an agony beyond verbal expression resound throughout the Torah.

The first belongs to murdered Abel, whose blood cries out from the ground for justice (Gen. 4:10). Another belongs to Hagar as she watches her son wither to his death (Gen. 21:16). Israel screams in servitude in Egypt (Exod. 2:23) and later during their trials in the wilderness (Num. 14:1).

Perhaps the most piercing scream of all occurs in Parashat Toledot when first-born Esau realizes that his younger brother, Jacob, had tricked him out of receiving his father Isaac's blessing. Esau approaches his father to receive the blessing only to learn that just moments before, Jacob had stolen his identity and his blessing. When Isaac informs him of this, Esau releases a great and bitter primal scream (Gen. 27:34).

Esau screams. He screams for the loss he feels and for the deception he experienced. At their core, Esau's screams communicate his frustration at a world that does not conform to communal norms nor to his personal expectations. His father's blessing belonged to him as the eldest son. In ancient Israel, first-borns had a unique status (Exod. 13:2) and received double the family inheritance (Deut. 21:17). For Esau, Isaac's blessing Jacob defied all his assumptions of the way the world *should* work and how his life *should* unfold.

I have always felt for Esau, whose brother and mother betray him. But in the last years of political turmoil, natural disasters, rising antisemitism, and COVID-19, Esau's screams

resonate with me more. Like Esau, I feel as if I live in a world that does not conform to my expectations.

For the first time in my life, my basic assumptions about how I live and work, how my children are educated, how my family and friends gather, how we live Jewishly are challenged. Nothing feels certain. What seemed to me to be fundamental truths about the way the world *should* work have been upended. Often, I want to scream like Esau. Blessedly for me, the Torah reflects this topsy-turvy world. It tells a story of individuals that defy norms and expectations to become a people that defy norms and expectations. Abraham abandons his father's house. Younger sons Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph all rise to prominence. Against norms and odds, God chooses Israel, Jacob's descendants and not Esau's, to become God's first-born ([Exod. 4:22](#)).

Like our own, the Torah's topsy-turvy world is difficult to inhabit, but I firmly believe that it offers deep religious insights and reflects the world I prefer to live in personally and religiously. I do not want to live in a determined world.

A determined world—a world in which norms are fixed and expectations met—does not allow for change, growth, and surprise. It does not allow for miracles that interrupt and defy the natural world, showcasing divine power and changing the course of human history.

A determined world does not make room for God, but it also does not make room for humanity. A world in which paths and futures are fixed disempowers humans and does not allow them to make change and set their own course. Even more unappealing to me is that a determined world does not allow for intimate relationships among human beings or between humans and God. Intimacy thrives in a world that allows for change, growth, and surprise.

In the Torah's undetermined world, God can disrupt nature, part seas, and choose a humble unworthy people to love ([Deut. 7:7–8](#)). Human beings also have the power and freedom in this world to set their course, to defy norms, and even to choose God. Jacob makes this clear in next week's parashah when he vows to be in relationship with God *only if* God protects and provides for him ([Gen. 28:20–22](#)).

In the Torah's undetermined world, God can have an intimate relationship with Israel—a relationship that erupts in a moment, is founded on desire and choice, and that develops over time. This relationship is not fixed and cannot be manifest in a determined world. It changes. God and Israel can love and reject each other only to come together again in love ([Isa. 54:7](#)).

I do not want to live in a determined world. I do not want to live in the world described by the biblical outlier Kohelet in which the earth remains the same forever. I do not want to inhabit religiously a world in which nothing is new under the sun—where assumptions are never challenged—or where my relationship with God cannot develop and deepen.

Rather, I want to live in a world that sometimes makes me want to scream, but that allows for change and repair—a world in which an intimate relationship with God is

possible—a world in which Esau’s primal screams and my own, in time, become joyful cries of reconciliation (Gen. 33:4). (*Amy Kalmanofsky is Dean at the List College and Kekst Graduate School and the Blanch and Romie Shapiro Professor of Bible at JTS.*)

Parashat Toldot by Rabbi Arainne Weitzman
<https://ajr.edu/teachings/divreitorah/>

Parashat Toledot traces the arc of the patriarch Isaac’s life from the beginnings of his married life to his old age. Along the way, seemingly more energetic actors plot and scheme around him: his wife Rebecca, his sons Jacob and Esau, even his neighbors, the Philistines. Isaac’s primary virtue appears to be naivety.

Some readers find Isaac’s character to be one of extended adolescence, always traveling in his parents’ footsteps, repeating the steps of their lives, and never venturing forth on his own. One might say that he has a failure to launch. Instead of going out to find a wife, one is brought to him. Instead of leaving the land of Canaan in time of famine to improve his fate, he stays close to home. He moves to the wadi of Gerar and digs up the same wells his father dug years before. He encounters a new king, Abimelech, and tells the same lie his father told twice – that his wife is actually his sister (although he is not a very successful liar). He lacks the one marker of mature adulthood both his father Abraham and son Jacob share: a spiritual name change. Abram becomes Abraham, Jacob becomes Israel, but Isaac is always Isaac. The leader who more clearly follows Abraham’s path is not Isaac, but his wife Rebecca, who forges ahead with her own wisdom, and decides the fate of the Jewish people by helping Jacob supplant Esau as Isaac’s heir.

So what kind of leader is Isaac? Isaac is a nurturer, not an innovator. He maintains his family in health, prosperity, and love, rather than seeking out greener pastures and endangering them all. After the explosive growth ushered in by Abraham, Isaac makes sure the family actually survives.

Rabbi Ellen Weinberg Dreyfus writes on this *parasha*,

Isaac’s digging the same wells that his father dug shows us how he takes his place in... the family story that becomes our national history. He understands the need to reclaim his father’s traditions and to ensure their survival. It is an act of maturity [that he further honors with] his father’s memory giving the wells the “same names that his father had given them” (Genesis 26:18). Only then did Isaac’s servants find “there a well of [living] water” (Genesis 26:19).

Isaac puts all of his energy into maintaining the basic infrastructure of life: digging wells so that the most elemental needs of life can be quenched, and “playing” with his wife so that the core unit of his family is maintained in joy. Abraham struck out with a new vision of religious life, but he failed to maintain his most primary relationships. Jacob allowed jealousy and trickery to fester in his own household. Neither Abraham nor Jacob were blessed with the simple peace and harmony that pervades Isaac’s life. Isaac’s spiritual gift is the elevation of the life of home and family. Perhaps more of us can appreciate this particular gift in a time when the radius of our own lives has

become smaller and smaller. [Rabbi Levi Yitzchak of Berditchev](#) argues that Isaac provided an essential function in the spiritual evolution of Abraham and Sarah's family. While Abraham's spiritual role was to "gather up the divine sparks" scattered among the world outside the land of Israel, Isaac's role was to devote his life to lifting up those sparks within the land itself. This was Isaac's accomplishment, which the Torah refers to as "Toledot Yitzchak" ([Kedushat Levi on Genesis 26:3](#)).

As our world again gets smaller, and if we are lucky enough to remain safely in secure homes, may we turn to the wisdom of Isaac in lifting up those divine sparks in our own homes. May we devote ourselves to providing both the playful love and nourishing "living water" for ourselves and those we care for, and trust that we are fulfilling our spiritual purpose in this time. (*Rabbi Ariann Weitzman (AJR 2011) is the Associate Rabbi and Director of Congregational Learning for Bnai Keshet Reconstructionist Synagogue in Montclair, NJ.*)

[Toldot by Rabbi Michael Rosenfeld-Schueler](#)

<https://www.thejc.com/judaism/sidrah/toldot-1.508882>

The biblical character, Isaac, takes a passive and mostly quiet role, especially following the trauma after the binding of Isaac. Arguably, Chapter 26 is the only chapter in Genesis dedicated to Isaac's character. I would like to address two ways of understanding Isaac's relationship with his father, Abraham.

Firstly, one way to understand their relationship is to consider how Isaac repeats Abraham's steps and routines. Similar to Abraham, famine propels Isaac towards Egypt and Isaac also informs locals that his wife Rebecca is his sister. After Abraham dies, the local Philistines fill Abraham (and now Isaac's) wells with dirt.

Isaac tries to redig Abraham's wells with the same names but the fresh water is a source of conflict between Isaac and the local Philistines. Perhaps, this indicates the idiom "like father, like son" and Isaac learned from his parents to act in a similar manner. Nachmanides (1194-1270), suggests that events and actions of the biblical patriarchs become imprinted or part of future descendants' narrative and identity. The second lens of viewing Isaac's relationship with his father is through symbolism. The biblical well represents life, Torah, inner truths and meeting places. Rabbi Shmuel Bornsztain suggests that the digging of wells is a metaphor for self-discovery and authentic expression from the depths of one's soul (Shem Mishmuel, Toldot 1925). Filling the wells and "living waters" with dirt reflects Isaac's psychological blockage. For a chapter all about Isaac, his father is mentioned explicitly no less than eight times in the first part of the chapter. There is even a play on words with the Philistine king named Avimelech (my father is king) who is named seven times in the chapter. Word repetition in the Torah is noteworthy and draws the reader towards specific themes. Isaac's identity is wrapped up with his father and while Isaac goes through the steps similar to his father, he doesn't always receive the same outcome. The redigging of

wells is a time for Isaac to create his identity more independently of his father. Rehovot and Beersheba are two places where Isaac successfully finds flowing well water and peace with his neighbours, both of which symbolise his personal growth (independent of his father) including developing his inner voice. *(This article was taken from the Jewish Chronicle which is the worlds oldest Jewish newspaper based in London. They are an independent publication.)*

Strength, Patience, and Hope by Rabbi Dr. Tzvi Hersh Weinreb

https://outorah.org/p/27105?utm_source=SilverpopMailing&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=shsh%20Toldot%205781%20%281%29&utm_content=&spMailingID=32788846&spUserID=MTk3MTk2OTk5NjMyS0&spJobID=1823863603&spReportId=MTgyMzg2MzYwMwS2

When I was a young boy, I had two distinct images of a strong man. One was of Charles Atlas. Do you remember him? If you do, you are no longer a youngster. Pictures of Charles Atlas appeared on the rear cover of the comic books that I voraciously read as a child. His muscular body was presented as the model of strength, and all of us "97 pound weaklings" were urged to correspond with Mr. Atlas, who, through his "dynamic tension" technique, could make similarly muscular men out of all of us.

The other image was of a man I knew who attended the small synagogue that my father, of blessed memory, frequented every Monday and Thursday, when the Torah was read. I don't think that anyone in the *shul* knew the man's real name. Everyone referred to him as "the *Shtarker*," the Strong Man. I was then no more than eight years old, so to my eyes, he was at least seven feet tall. He was certainly head and shoulders above everyone else in that tiny synagogue. His physical prowess was demonstrated when he lifted the Torah after the Torah reading concluded. He lifted it high and extended his arms so that ten or twelve of the Torah columns were exposed. My memory may deceive me, but I think that no one else in the *shul* was ever given the honor of lifting the Torah. No one else could compete with the *Shtarker's* feat. Over the years, I have come to reflect upon the many "*shtarkers*" in the Bible. Samson is one obvious candidate for the title. But even kindly Abraham was a warrior, and a victorious one. Jacob was proud of his triumphant use of "my sword and my bow." Moses was able to slay the Egyptian who tormented his Jewish victim. Joshua, Saul, and David were all "*shtarkers*" who led their people in battle.

One biblical figure stands out as a "non-*shtarker*," a gentle soul, perhaps even a pacifist. I refer, of course, to Isaac, the hero of the Torah portion we read this week, *Parashat Toldot* (*Genesis 25:19-28:9*). Isaac commits no aggressive acts, however legitimate they might be, and never even asserts himself verbally.

I have long been conscious of the contrast between Isaac and the other major characters of the Bible. But only recently was I made aware of a fascinating problem. It was brought to my attention by Rabbi Yehuda Shaviv in his excellent book on the

weekly Torah portions, entitled *MiSinai Ba (He Came From Sinai)*. Rabbi Shaviv concurs with my view of Isaac as a decidedly non-militant personality. But he is troubled by the fact that in the Jewish mystical tradition, the trait of *gevurah*, strength, is assigned to Isaac and not to the other Patriarchs. Thus, in Kabbalistic terminology, Abraham represents *chesed*, compassion, and Jacob stands for *tiferet*, harmony. It is gentle Isaac who carries the banner of *gevurah*. How are we to understand this perplexing attribution of strength to that patriarch who seems to least exemplify it?

Rabbi Shaviv answers this dilemma with the following provocative sentence: "Forgoing the military option is itself a show of strength." I can accept his formulation, but I choose to modify it slightly. The way I see it, there are two types of strength. One way is to exert power. Abraham chose that way when he waged war against the four kings in the story we read just a few short weeks ago. Similarly, Joshua and David found that way necessary in their struggles.

But Isaac knew the secret of another way of demonstrating strength. He faced challenges that he could have met aggressively. More than once, he faced hostility. In our *parasha*, we read of the enmity he confronted at the hands of the Philistines, who stopped up the wells he needed to water his flock. In verses 13-22 of chapter 26, we read "...The Philistines envied him...They stopped up all the wells his father had dug..." What was Isaac's response? Not war! Rather, "Isaac departed..." He left the scene, he dug new wells, but again he faced violent opposition. "The herdsmen of Gerar quarreled with him..." They continued to stop his wells. In response, he dug another well and dug yet another well. He persisted, swallowing his pride and suppressing every impulse of striking back violently. Ultimately, he prevailed. Finally, he dug a well which was uncontested.

Some find his patience in the face of his enemies frustrating. But *Midrash Tanchuma* finds it admirable and remarks: "Behold! See what strength Isaac possessed!" The Midrash validates Rabbi Shaviv's contention that sometimes, "forgoing the military option is itself a show of strength."

There is a verse in the biblical *Book of Proverbs* which is particularly apt here. It reads, "Better to be forbearing than mighty; to have self-control than to conquer a city." (*Proverbs* 16:32).

Isaac's method of achieving goals persistently but patiently is again demonstrated in a very different context in this week's Torah portion. We are told that he was forty years old when he married Rebecca, whereas his children were not born until he was sixty. He suffered twenty years of disappointing childlessness. It would have been perfectly appropriate for him to take another wife, or a concubine, during those twenty years. After all, his father Abraham had done just that, marrying Hagar when Sarah could not bear him a child. Could Isaac not have assumed that Rebecca would have given her consent to such a move, as did his mother Sarah?

Isaac rejected that option. Instead, again patiently and persistently, he chose to pray. He prayed fervently, year after year. The great medieval commentator Rabbi David

Kimchi, or Radak, remarks: "He prayed consistently and for a long period of time because he loved Rebecca exceedingly. He did not wish to offend her by taking another wife. Therefore, he persisted in prayer until the Lord answered him." There are many texts in our tradition that give support to Isaac's way of demonstrating strength. One that particularly intrigues me is this Talmudic statement: "Who is the strongest of the strong? He who transforms his enemy into a friend." This was Isaac's way. He asks us to strive to convert our enemy into a friend.

Another text illustrates that strength is more about patient self-control than physical might. It is found in the Talmudic tractate *Kiddushin* 40a, where the tale is told about a certain Rabbi Zadok, who resists the attempts of a particularly powerful noblewoman to lead him astray. He exerts moral strength, and to him the Talmud applies the following biblical verse: "Bless the Lord, O His angels, mighty creatures who do His bidding, ever obedient to His bidding. Bless the Lord, all His hosts, His servants who do His will." (*Psalms* 103:20-21)

Isaac's way recognizes the necessity for great patience and forbearance. If we adopt Isaac's way, we must be prepared for a lengthy process before our challenges are resolved. In the words of Rabbi Abraham Isaac Kook, words which have been memorialized in a popular song, "An eternal people does not fear the long and arduous path."

Patience is necessary for those who follow Isaac's way. But a wise woman taught us that patience is but another name for hope. That woman was Jane Austen, who put these words into the mouth of one of the characters in her great novel, *Sense and Sensibility*. "Know your own happiness. You want nothing but patience—or give it a more fascinating name: call it hope." (*Rabbi Dr. Tzvi Hersh Weinreb is Executive Vice President, Emeritus of the Orthodox Union, following more than seven years as Executive Vice President.*)

...From Erwin Mevorah:

Perasha -Toldot - rav Fischel Schacter shilita

The rabbi began his talk this week with the news that the Boeing jet that had not been allowed to fly for sometime was now given the green light to begin flying . Says the rabbi - it was said that no other air plane went through so many different tests to prove that it was safe to fly again .Says the rabbi it's probably the safest plane today . In life says the rabbi - one has to have a setback before he is able to move forward - before one can fly they have to be first grounded . We have in our lives two parts - one where we feel so close to HASHEM - the other is where we are at the opposite end- where we feel so far away from HASHEM . The tests that the abot - Abraham , Yitzhak and Yakov had and the struggles that they went through - are our tests today . The beracha that they were able to achieve can also apply to us - if we know how to unlock the door . Yakov had to go totally against his nature to receive the blessing from his

father - this is the key to beracha - to go against ones nature . In order to open a locked door - we need a key . Each notch on the key must be precise for the door to open . Says the rabbi each test that we endure is another notch on our key of life . There are times when we ask HASHEM - can't you make it a little easier for me - why are things so difficult . The Sefet Emet tells us that HASHEM wants to send us so much beracha in our lives but the yeser hara stops it . HASHEM then has to set it up where the beracha comes by the way of a mistake . It has to make its way in the back door - in a hidden way .

Yitzhak became blind - he wanted to give the beracha to esav - HASHEM wanted Yakov to receive the blessing . The only way for it to happen was by a mistake - this is proving how much HASHEM is in charge and how the beracha can only happen because it's in his will for it to happen . This says the rabbi is a much higher level beracha - it becomes where it wasn't Yitzhak giving to beracha fo Yakov - it was HASHEM himself blessing Yakov .

In truth Yakov didn't need the beracha to begin with . He lived a very simple life - studying Torah in his tent . Rivka his mother saw in the future that his children and all the future generations will need this beracha - this is why she forced him to receive them. The rabbi told over a story about how sometimes one has to do what ever it takes to receive a beracha . There was the rebbe that was known to give blessings to couples that were expecting . The husband would go in and meet the rebbe and the rebbe will ask where is your wife holding in her pregnancy . The rebbe will then bless the couple . Once a man came in a asked for the blessing first before giving over any information - the rebbe blessed this person and then asked - what stage is your wife in . The man replied - she is one month before her first month . This couple were married for years without a child - they wanted desperatly to have a baby . The rebbe understood that she wasn't expecting and looked at the man and said - you tricked me - but then the rebbe said - you got it !! A year later they had a baby .

When Yakov went into Yitzhak to receive the blessing - he dressed in the garments of esav - it was a garment made of goat skins . Says the rabbi - goat skins in general smell terrible . Yitzhak smelled a very pleasant scent . It was the scent that he smelled - when he first met his wife Rivka . He first saw her as he was in the fields just as he finished praying mincha . He had come back from the akida - and travelled to see his mother - only to be told that Sarah had passed away . He first thought was one where he became totally confused - he put his own pain on the side and now concentrateed on his father - how would he be able to cope - who will take care of him . He went and brought Hagar - Abrahams second wife that he sent away to once again marry Abraham . Yitzhak did a great thing he came from a state where his mother passed away and all that was on his mind was his father . He went from total confusion amd pain to one where he just wanted his father to be taken care of . This was happening just before he met Rivka. Prior to this Yitzhak prayed in the fields the prayer of mincha . It was the smell that he remembered from that time - this was the same smell

that he smelled now . It was the most beautiful smell imanigable . He saw Ribka - he marries her and brings her into his tent. Immediately all the blessing that Sarah had in her tent - transferred over to Ribka . Says the rabbi we all have moments where we are totally confused - we have to know that this is the time where we are so close to beracha . This is the time for mincha - just before it gets dark where we can't see things so clearly - where things are so confusing - this is the opportune time for mincha .When Yitzhak smelled that scent on Yakov - he gave over the beracha to his son - because he knew that smell is one of beracha . It was difficult for Yitzhak when he was in the fields - he did something for his father - with that act - he enacted the prayer of mincha . There is no prayer that has the power to answer a person more then the prayer of mincha . Beracha comes in the most confusing times .

Because even though we are in a state of confusion - If we understand what we have to do - this is where we have the key to open the lock and receive beracha .

Shabbat shalom

Yahrtzeits

Perry Fine remembers his mother Rosette Fine (Reizel bat Lazar v'Sarah) on Sunday November 22nd (Kislev 6)

Nancy Isaacson remembers her mother Ruth Isaacson on Sunday November 22nd (Kislev 6)

Happenings at Kol Rina

Friday Torah Study and Service:

The days are shorter . . . The Sabbath Queen comes earlier. We will begin at 4:15 with Mincha, led by Harriet Hessdorf, followed at 4:30 by Torah study led by Len Levin. Nikki Pusin will be leading Kabbalat Shabbat, beginning at 5:00, and Len Levin will lead Maariv. Peter Greene will deliver a d'var on the topic "My father's (and my) journey through the early days of television, Part I." We hope you will join us!

Use the following Zoom link to attend:

<https://zoom.us/j/533517572?pwd=dVFHR2NGZFBCYWp1Yzd6ald0bzFRdz09>

Our regular weekday evening minyan will take place on Monday, November 23, beginning at 8:00. Your presence allows mourners and those observing yahrzeits to say Kaddish. Please support your Kol Rina friends by attending.

Use the following Zoom link to attend:

<https://zoom.us/j/97663987468?pwd=NjFhaVZUZkpSZ3pxQWJjOU5UWFR4QT09>

We are looking for a volunteer

Linda Dorf has been handling our Eventbrite invitations all by herself; she would like a backup person to be familiar with the system just in case she is temporarily unavailable. If you are able to help, please contact Linda at [<dorf_rips1@icloud.com>](mailto:dorf_rips1@icloud.com) Your minyan thanks you!