Shabbat Announcements

Parshat Toldot *November 30, 2024 29 Cheshvan, 5785*

Torah
Artscroll 124
Hertz 93

Haftorah
Artscroll 1207
Hertz 948

Shabbat Mevarchim
Rosh Chodesh Kislev
Molad: Sunday, Dec 1
@4:49:15 am
Rosh Chodesh
Sunday & Monday, Dec.1 & 2

Times
(Monday Edition)

Week of 11/24	
Mon/	6:35/7:45am
Tues/Wed/Fri	6:45/7:45am
Thurs: Thanksgiving	7:30/8:30 am
Mincha	4:15pm
Shabbat 11/30	
Candle Lighting	4:10pm
Mincha	4:15pm
Hashkama	8:00am
Parsha Shiur	8:30am
Main/Youth	9:00pm
Beit Midrash	9:15pm
Early Mincha	12:15 pm
No Gemara Shiur	
Mincha	3:50pm
Shabbat Ends	5:13pm
Latest Times for Shema/Shemoneh Esrei	
November 30	9:21/10:08am
December 7	9:26/10:13am

Rabbi Sacks on Toldot

It is the deep, reverberating question at the heart of Toldot. Why did Rebecca tell Jacob to deceive Isaac and take Esau's blessing? Her instruction is brisk and peremptory:

"Now, my son, listen carefully and do what I tell you: Go now to the flock and bring me two choice young goats, so I can prepare some tasty food for your father, just the way he likes it. Then take it to your father to eat, so that he may give you his blessing before he dies." Gen. 27:8-10

Rebecca's swift action is extraordinary. The situation had only just arisen – she could not have known in advance that Isaac was about to bless Esau, or that he would request some venison first – yet her plan was immediate, detailed and complete. She had no doubts or hesitations. She was determined to seize the moment. When Jacob raised concerns (What if Isaac is not deceived? What if he touches my skin and knows immediately that I am not Esau?) her reply is brief and blunt.

"My son, let the curse fall on me. Just do what I say; go and get them for me." Gen. 27:13

Our question tends to be, how could Jacob deceive his father? Yet the real question is about Rebecca. It was her plan, not his. How did she consider it permissible [1] to deceive her husband, [2] to deprive Esau of his father's blessing, and [3] to order Jacob to commit an act of dishonesty? Jacob on his own would not have conceived such a plan. He was an ish tam, meaning "a simple, straightforward, plain, quiet, innocent man, a man of integrity" (Gen. 25:27)? How then did Rebecca come to do what she did?

There are three possible answers. The first: she loved Jacob (Gen. 25:28). She preferred him to Esau, but she knew Isaac felt otherwise. So she was driven by maternal instinct. She wanted her beloved son to be blessed.

This is an unlikely answer. The patriarchs and matriarchs are role-models. They were not driven by mere instinct or vicarious ambition. Rebecca was not Lady Macbeth. Nor was she Bathsheba, engaging in court politics to ensure that her son, Solomon, would inherit David's throne (see 1 Kings 1). It would be a serious misreading to interpret the narrative this way.

The second possibility is that she believed strongly that Esau was the wrong person to inherit the blessing. She had already seen how readily he had sold his birthright and "despised" it (Gen. 25:31-34). She did not believe a "hunter" and "a man of the field" fitted the template of the Abrahamic covenant. She knew that this was one of the reasons why God chose Isaac not Ishmael, because Ishmael was destined to be "a wild ass of a man" (Gen. 16:12). She knew that Isaac loved Esau but felt – for various reasons, depending on which commentary one follows – that he was blind to his son's faults. It was vital to the future of the covenant that it be entrusted to the child who had the right qualities to live by its high demands.

The third possibility is simply that she was guided by the oracle she had received prior to the twins' birth: "Two nations are in your womb, and two peoples from within you will be separated; one people will be stronger than the other, and the older will serve the younger." Gen. 25:23

Jacob was the younger. Therefore, Rebecca must have assumed, he was destined to receive the blessing.

Possibilities two and three make sense, but only at the cost of raising a more fundamental question. Did Rebecca share her thoughts with Isaac? If she did, then

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Pinchas Hecht,z"l

why did Isaac persist in seeking to bless Esau? If she did not, then why not?

It is here that we must turn to a fundamental insight of the Netziv (R. Naftali Zvi Yehudah Berlin, 1816-1893). What is fascinating is that Netziv makes his comment, not on this week's parsha, but on last week's – the first time Rebecca set eyes on her husband-to-be. Recall that Isaac did not choose his wife. Abraham entrusted that task to his servant. Servant and bride-to-be are travelling back by camel, and as they approach Abraham's tents, Rebecca sees a figure in the distance

Now Isaac had come from Beer Lahai Roi, for he was living in the Negev. He went out to the field one evening to meditate, and as he looked up, he saw camels approaching. Rebecca also looked up and saw Isaac. She got down from her camel and asked the servant, "Who is that man in the field coming to meet us?" "He is my master," the servant answered. So she took her veil and covered herself. Gen. 24:62-65

On this Netziv 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. Her 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." Commentary to Gen. 24:65

Netziv understood that in this description of the first encounter between Rebecca and Isaac, nothing is incidental. The text emphasises distance in every sense. Isaac is physically far away when Rebecca spots him. He is also mentally far away: meditating, deep in thought and prayer. Rebecca imposes her own distance by covering herself with a veil.

The distance goes deeper still. Isaac is the most withdrawn of the patriarchs. Rarely do we see him as the initiator of a course of action. The events of his life seem to mirror those of his father. The Torah associates him with pachad, "fear" (Gen. 31:42). Jewish mysticism connected him with gevurah, best understood as "self-restraint." This is the man who had been bound as a sacrifice on an altar, whose life had been reprieved only at the last moment. Isaac, whether because of the trauma of that moment or because of the inhibiting effect of having a strong father, is a man whose emotions often lie too deep for words.

No wonder, then, that he loves Rebecca on the one hand, Esau on the other. What these two very different people have in common is that they are so unlike him. They are both brisk and action-oriented. Their "native hue of resolution" is not "sicklied o'er by the pale cast of thought."[1] No wonder, too, that Rebecca hesitates before speaking to him.

Just before the episode of the blessing, another scene takes place, apparently unrelated to what follows. There is a famine in the land. Isaac and Rebecca are forced into temporary exile, as Abraham and Sarah had been twice before. On God's instructions, they go to Gerar. There, just as Abraham had done, Isaac passes off his wife as his sister, afraid that he might be killed so that his wife could be taken into the royal harem. Something happens, however, to disclose the truth:

"When Isaac had been there a long time, Abimelech king of the Philistines looked down from a window and saw Isaac caressing [metzachek] his wife Rebecca. Gen. 26:8

We tend to miss the significance of this scene. It is the only one in which Isaac is the subject of the verb tz-ch-k. Yet this is the root of Isaac's name – Yitzchak - meaning "he will laugh." It is the one scene of intimacy between Isaac and Rebecca. It is the only episode in which Isaac, as it were, is true to his name. Yet it nearly brings disaster. Abimelech is furious that Isaac has been economical with the truth. It is the first of a series of disputes with the Philistines.

Did this reinforce Isaac's belief that he could never relax? Did it confirm Rebecca's belief that she could never be unequivocally intimate with her husband? Perhaps so, perhaps not. But Netziv's point remains. Rebecca felt unable to share with Isaac the oracle she had received before the twins' birth and the doubts she had about Esau's suitability for the blessing. Her inability to communicate led to the deception, which brought a whole series of tragedies in its wake, among them the fact that Jacob was forced to flee for his life, as well as the counter-deception perpetrated against him by his father-in-law Laban.

It is hard to avoid the conclusion that the Torah is telling us that communication is vital, however hard it is. Rebecca acts at all times out of the highest of motives. She holds back from troubling Isaac out of respect for his inwardness and privacy. She does not want to disillusion him about Esau, the son he loves. She does not want to trouble him with her oracle, suggesting as it did that the two boys would be locked into a lifelong struggle. Yet the alternative – deception – is worse.

We have here a story of the tragedy of good intentions. Honesty and openness are at the heart of strong relationships. Whatever our fears and trepidations, it is better to speak the truth than practice even the most noble deception.

Great Neck Synagogue
26 Old Mill Road, Great Neck , NY 11023
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Rabbi Dale Polakoff, Rabbi
Rabbi Moshe Genack, Assistant Rabbi
Yitzy Spinner, Cantor
Jakey Friedman, Rabbinic Intern
Rabbi Dr. Michael & Zehava Atlas, Youth Rabbi & Director
Rabbi Yehuda Chinskey, Teen Rabbi
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https://gnsdinner.org/

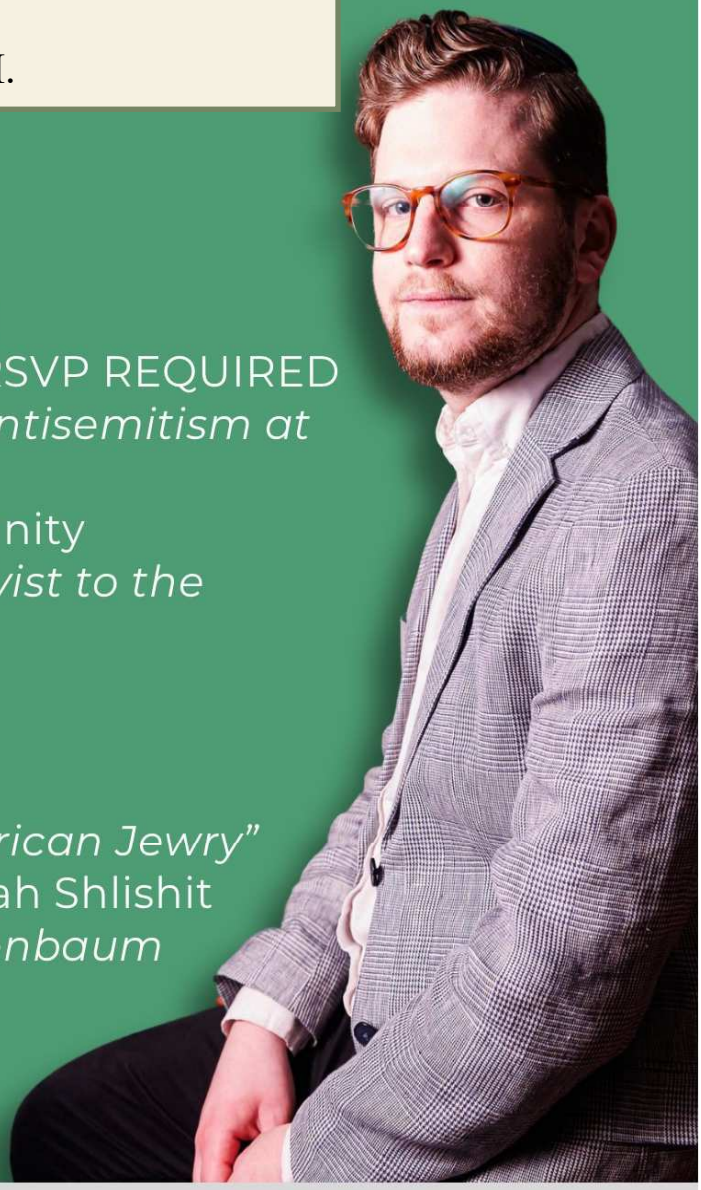
GREAT NECK SYNAGOGUE

SHABBOS KESTENBAUM

SCHOLAR IN RESIDENCE

DEADLINE FOR RESERVATIONIS
TUESDAY NOVEMBER 26 AT 5 PM.

November 29 - 30



FRIDAY NIGHT

4:15 Mincha, Kabbalat Shabbat
5:30 Dinner in the Ballroom - RSVP REQUIRED
"Suing Harvard: The State of Antisemitism at America's Ivy Leagues"
7:30 Oneg open to the community
"My journey from Student Activist to the Republican Convention"

SHABBAT DAY

9:00 Shacharit
"Israel, Anitsemitism and American Jewry"
4:00 Mincha followed by Seudah Shlishit
Open Q&A with Shabbos Kestenbaum

Shabbos Kestenbaum is a student activist and the lead plaintiff against Harvard University, alleging pervasive and systemic antisemitism. He is a regular contributor on national media, has testified in front of the United States Congress multiple times, and lectures internationally on Jewish communal issues.

TO REGISTER GO TO
https://www.gns.org/events/shabbos-kestenbaum/

GREAT NECK SYNAGOGUE

CHANUKAH TOY DRIVE

Let's donate for the children of Chai Lifeline!
Please drop off NEW and unwrapped Toys and Games
at the locations below Nov 18 - Dec 18.

For requested Toys & Games, please visit
www.toydrive.chailifeline.org

Drop-off locations:

Hauptman Home	Rosenberg Home	Geft Home
81 Maple Drive	9 North Clover Drive	5 Ridge Drive East

GNS YOUTH ANNUAL

LOAVES OF LOVE

WE WILL BE MAKING SHABBAT PACKAGES FOR IDF SOLDIERS
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EVERYONE WILL MAKE 2 CHALLOT. ONE TO TAKE HOME & ONE TO PASS ALONG TO SOMEONE ELSE!

TO SPONSOR A SHABBAT PACKAGE FOR SOLDIERS VENMO $18 TO @VIVIAN-KRON

FRIDAY 11/29 ~9:45-11:15
BRAUN YOUTH CENTER
1ST-5TH GRADE GIRLS
MEMBERS $10 NONMEMBERS $15
SIGNUP BY 11/24

CHANNUKAH LUNCH & LEARN

ONE KENSINGTON GATE

**"Beyond Sufganiyot and Latkes:
Understanding the Essence of Chanukah"
Rabbi Moshe Genack**

**MONDAY, DECEMBER 23
AT 12:30 P.M.
IN THE BRAND NEW
COMMUNITY ROOM!**

RSVP is required to Diane Rein at drein@verizon.net

Sponsorships are strongly encouraged in honor or in memory of a loved one at $36, $72, $100 and $180 levels.

We are looking forward to a wonderful event!

Host Committee: Roslyn Dicker, Leslie Kahn, Joan Katz, Gerry Traub and Roselin Wagner.

GNS RUNS ON TEFILLAH

THANKSGIVING
Parent-Teen Minyan

NOVEMBER 28
9:00 BRAUN YOUTH CENTER

WIN 2 JETS TICKETS !
(MUST BE GNS MEMBER TO WIN TICKETS)

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MACCABEATS

SUNDAY NIGHT
IN HONOR OF CHANUKAH
DECEMBER 22

GNS youth

DETAILS TO FOLLOW

ANNOUNCEMENTS

IF YOU KNOW OF SOMEONE WHO IS MOVING INTO THE GREAT NECK AREA PLEASE LET THE OFFICE KNOW.

ONE KENSINGTON GATE CHANUKAH LUNCH 'N' LEARN

Please join us on Monday, December 23rd at 12:30pm for a Chanukah Lunch 'n' Learn with **Rabbi Genack** titled, "Beyond Sufganiyot and Latkes: Understanding the Essence of Chanukah." It will be held in the brand new community room! RSVP is required to **Diane Rein** at drein@verizon.net. Sponsorships are strongly encouraged in honor or in memory of a loved one at $36, $72, $100 and $180 levels. Thank you very much to our wonderful Host Committee: **Roslyn Dicker, Leslie Kahn, Joan Katz, Gerry Traub and Roselin Wagner**.

SISTERHOOD THANK YOU

Sisterhood would like to thank our Chairperson **Cindy Ludwig** and her team **Vivian Kron** and **Judy Lillien** on a most successful Chanukah Boutique. It drew people from all over Great Neck as well as Suffolk County and Queens. Thank you to **Lauren Hyman, Samantha Kron, Hindi Lunzer** and **Pam Toledano** who helped with the Sisterhood Gift Shop throughout the day. Thank you **Dario** and crew as well for all the amazing help through the day. Stay tuned for the "Bake for our emergency personnel" coming in December to show our appreciation for all they do for our community. Details to follow .

GNS BIKUR CHOLIM & GNS CONNECTIONS - SPONSOR CHANUKAH GIFTS AND YOUTH VOLUNTEERS NEEDED TO MAKE DELIVERIES

For Chanukah, GNS Bikur Cholim and GNS Connections are planning to distribute beautiful gifts to members of our shul that could benefit from our outreach. We are excited to be partnering with the GNS Youth Department so that our pre-school, lower school, bar/bat mitzvah students, middle school students, and our high school students (having a drivers license is a bonus!) volunteer to make deliveries (could be used for high school chesed hours) . We strongly encourage sponsors for these gifts ($18/gift and there are about 50 recipients). Please contact **Diane Rein** at drein@verizon.net if your youth member would like to participate to make deliveries and/or if you would like to be a sponsor. For sponsorship payment, please either venmo to @vivian-kron or mail check payable to GNS Sisterhood to Great Neck Synagogue, 26 Old Mill Road, Great Neck, NY 11023. Delivery times are flexible any time before Chanukah. Thank you very much.

UPCOMING

November 28: Thanksgiving Parent-Teen Minyan
November 29: Shabbos Kestenbaum: Scholar In Residence
November 29: Loaves of Love
December 4: Chaverim
December 15: Annual Dinner
December 18: Chaverim
December 22: Maccabeats
December 23: Chanukah Lunch and Learn

MAZAL TOVS & COMMUNITY NEWS

Mazal Tov to **Debbie & Hal Chadow** on the birth of a grandson, **Amichai Yeshaya (Micah Shai)**, born to their children **David & Joelle Chadow**.

Mazal Tov to **Jamie & Michael Katz** on the birth of a granddaughter, born to their children **Ziona & Jason Katz**. **Mazal Tov** to grandparents **Joan & Henry Katz**.

Mazal Tov to **Joseph & Farahnaz Sameyah** on the engagement of their daughter **Laura** to **Pouya Golshirazian** of Massachusetts.

Mazal Tov to **Stacey & Jonathan Brisman** on the Bar Mitzvah of their son **Benjamin.**

To sponsor a Friday Night Nosh call the office 516-487-6100.

GNS ANNUAL DINNER

The GNS Dinner on December 15 honoring the **Kagans**, **Kules** and **Twerskys** is in full swing. To make reservations, place ads or buy raffle tickets please go to **www.gnsdinner.org.** Don't miss out. Reserve early.

YAHRZEITS

Saturday, 29 Cheshvan
Jeffrey Kaufman for David Lawson Kaufman
Sunday, 30 Cheshvan
David Khalili for Menachem ben Mordechai
Gloria Faizakoff for Burton Cohen
Marty Hoffman for Benjamin Karbowitz
Stephen Karbowitz for Benjamin Karbowitz
Leo Goldstein for Avraham Goldstein
Judy Hoffman for Benjamin Karbowitz
Monday, 1 Kislev
Esor Ben-Sorek for Feiga Royza Winer
Liz Ort for Lawrence Suss
Joseph Hecht for Pinchas Hecht
Tuesday, 2 Kislev
Carol Karbowitz for Leopold Schwartz
Lynn Steinberg for Leopold Schwartz
Michal Malen for Rhoda Arond Hoschander
Arthur Kirsch for Ruth Kirsch
Cindy Ludwig for Florence Gelber
Wednesday, 3 Kislev
Cindy Ludwig for Frank Gelber
Tony Berkowitz for Barney Berkowitz
Moselle Berkowitz for Lawrence Steven Kerben
Thursday, 4 Kislev
Michal Rosenzweig for Claire Khazzam
Friday, 5 Kislev
Jerrald Weinstein for Doris Weinstein
Benjamin Lunzer for Julius Peter Lunzer
Lili Weiss for David Buch