

D'var Torah - Toldot 11/22/2025

- Rabbi Matan Peled

Shabbat Shalom to everyone, and a warm welcome to our guests in today's service.

Our Torah portion this week is taken from the book of Genesis, chapters 25-28. Parashat Toldot tells us the accounts of Issac and Rebecca - יצחק ורביקה, and yes, like the rest of the book of Genesis, it contains A LOT of drama in it, but also very important values and messages on how to live out lives and be a beacon of light to others.

As Jews, we read the whole Torah in a one-year cycle, or in a triennial cycle to allow us to dwell in and focus on the values and messages that the five books of Moses teach us regarding our lives today.

The text of the Torah - Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy crosses space and time, and I am astonished over and over again how relevant it is to our lives today in the Jewish year of 5786, or 2025.

Here is a little synopsis of the portion:

There is a famine in the land, and Issac wants to go down to Egypt in order to save himself and his family. GOD asks him not to go, to put his trust in the divine, and promise him that GOD will be with him and he and his offspring will prosper.

Rebecca and Isaac have twins, the smooth-skinned Jacob, whom Rebecca favors, and the hairy Esau, whom Isaac favors. After returning from a hunting trip, Esau asks his brother for some lentil soup, but Jacob tells him he must trade him his birthright. Years later, when Isaac is old and blind, Jacob tricks their father into giving him the firstborn blessing. Jacob leaves home, fearing his brother will retaliate, and finds a wife at his uncle Laban's house.

As I said, A LOT of drama!

But, if we put the drama aside, and focus on GOD's promise to Issac, we find incredible teachings and blessings that are happening to the nation of Israel and the Jewish people up to this very day.

One of those promises can be found at the beginning of the portion.

Genesis 26, verses 2-5

וַיֵּרָא אֵלָיו יְהוָה וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלָיו מִצְרַיִם שְׁכֵן בְּאֶרֶץ אֲשֶׁר אָמַר אֵלָיִךְ:
יהוה had appeared to him and said, “Do not go down to Egypt; stay in the land
which I point out to you.

גֹּר בְּאֶרֶץ הַזֹּאת וְאֶהְיֶה עִמָּךְ וְאֶבְרַכְךָ כִּי־לֹךְ וְלִזְרַעְךָ אֶת־כָּל־הָאֲרָצַת הָאֵל וְהִקְמַתִי אֶת־הַשְּׂבִיעָה
אֲשֶׁר נִשְׁבַּעְתִּי לְאַבְרָהָם אָבִיךָ:

Reside in this land, and I will be with you and bless you; I will assign all these
lands to you and to your heirs, fulfilling the oath that I swore to your father
Abraham.

וְהִרְבֵּיתִי אֶת־זִרְעֶךָ כְּכּוֹכְבֵי הַשָּׁמַיִם וְנָתַתִּי לְזִרְעֶךָ אֶת־כָּל־הָאֲרָצַת הָאֵל וְהִתְבָּרְכוּ בְּזִרְעֶךָ כָּל־גּוֹיֵי הָאֲרָץ:
I will make your heirs as numerous as the stars of heaven, and assign to your heirs
all these lands, so that all the nations of the earth shall bless themselves by your
heirs—

לְעֵקֶב אֲשֶׁר־שָׁמַע אַבְרָהָם בְּקוֹלִי וַיִּשְׁמַר מִשְׁמִרְתִּי מִצְוֹתַי חֻקּוֹתַי וְתוֹרָתִי:
inasmuch as Abraham obeyed Me and kept My charge: My commandments, My
laws, and My teachings.”

Indeed, we as Jewish people hold the value of Tikkun Olam, or repairing the
world, as one of the key aspects of our covenant with GOD. We work tirelessly to
do our part, small as it may be, in order to create a better world for all to live in.

I wanted to share with you just some of the blessings that came out of Israel in the
past years.

- **Self-Driving cars:** Did you know that the technology that made it possible
all started in Israel by a company named MobileEye.
- **USB Stick:** First called Disc On Key (And still does in Israel), this
technology that allows for detachable internal memory was developed in
Israel by by Dov Moran and his company, M-Systems. This key-shaped
device was released in 2000 and was a revolutionary, portable storage
solution that eventually replaced the floppy disk and helped pave the way for
modern mobile storage.

- **PillCam:** A swallowable camera capsule that allows doctors to examine the gastrointestinal tract.
- **Stent:** The first flexible stent was developed in Israel, saving millions of lives.
- **ReWalk Exoskeleton:** A wearable robotic exoskeleton that enables people with paraplegia to walk.
- **BabySense:** A non-contact baby monitor that detects breathing movements.
- **SniffPhone:** A device that can "sniff out" diseases by analyzing volatile organic compounds in a person's breath.
- **Drip irrigation:** A system for delivering water directly to plant roots, a major contribution to modern agriculture.
- **Modern cherry tomato:** Israeli scientists developed the modern, sweet, and firm cherry tomato.
- **Watergen:** A company that generates drinking water from the air using atmospheric water generators.
- **Solar energy:** Israel has become a leader in solar technology, particularly in energy storage and solar water heating.
- **OrCam MyEye – 2010:** Portable artificial vision device that allows the visually impaired to understand text and identify objects through audio feedback.

And more and more.

I wanted to thank my congregation for all you do in your personal and professional lives for making this world into a better place and for being Menches - "Good people" in Yiddish.

May all of us continue to do Tikkun Olam and continue to go from strength to strength.

I wanted to invite you to ask any questions that you might have about our service, which takes through thousands of years of Jewish sacred text like the Torah, Rabbinical texts from the past 2000 years, and other, more contemporary Jewish literature.

Yashar Koach ישר כוח and Shabbat Shalom!