



November 21, 2020

ה כסלן תשפ"א

**Parashat Toledot** תולדות Genesis 25:19-28:9

Stone – p 124      Hertz – p 93      Etz Hayim – p 146

**Haftarah** מלאכי א – Malachi 1:1-2:7

Stone – p 1137      Hertz – p 102      Etz Hayim – p 163

Shabbat ends – 5:26 PM

## **TRADITIONAL CONGREGATION**

Rabbi Seth D Gordon – Rabbi.Gordon@yahoo.com

Rabbi Ephraim Zimand z"l, Emeritus

Marian S. Gordon, Executive Director – tradcong@sbcglobal.net

### **DAILY SERVICE TIMES—until further notice**

Sunday—8:30 AM

Tuesday—6:30 PM

Thursday—7:00 AM

*Shabbat*—9:30 AM

### **Board of Directors:**

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*Traditional Congregation welcomes new members. If someone you know  
would like to receive membership information, please contact  
Chris Brown, Membership VP, at 636-288-5356*

## IN THIS WEEK'S PARASHAH—TOLEDOT

Isaac is, perhaps, the least understood of our three patriarchs. He allowed himself to be sacrificed by his father – although God, in His mercy, stopped it. He had to have his father's servant find a wife for him. Who needs someone to find a wife for him at age 40? And Isaac lived his life avoiding conflict and confrontation. Whereas Abraham stood up to the four kings that captured his nephew Lot, and Jacob wrestled with the angel, Isaac – whenever there was a confrontation – just picked himself up and left.

The Torah (Gen. 26:13) tells us, *Vayigdal ha-ish*, “and the man (Isaac) grew great.” He became very wealthy with flocks and cattle and wells. One day, Avimelech, King of the Philistines, said to him: *Leych meyi-imanu ki atzamta mimenu m'od*, “Jew, go away. You are more successful, stronger than we can stand.”

So what does Isaac do? He leaves...he moves on. He settles somewhere else, digs a well and finds water. The people come and say: “Get out of here; that's our well”...and Isaac moves again and again. Why?

Because Isaac looked death in the face when his father was about to sacrifice him, he didn't let the small stuff (or even the great stuff) get to him. He would rather let others take what is his than risk facing death again. “Life is too precious,” he reasoned, and so, when threatened, he gave others what they wanted.

Isaac goes back to one of his father's old homes in the valley of Gerar, where he finds that the Philistines have stopped up the wells that his father Abraham had dug. He opens the well of his father and digs a new well and finds a *b'eyr mayim chayim*, “A well of living water.”

But the herdsmen of Gerar protest and threaten Isaac saying, “The water is ours.” But Isaac is not discouraged. He digs another well and another. He had to dig seven wells until they left him alone to live in peace. So he called that last well, *B'eyr Sheva*, “the seventh well,” for it was the seventh that he had dug (Sforno).

What accounted for his great persistence? I think that, after two or three times of people taking what I worked hard for, I might have given up. But God had made Isaac a promise and he held on to that promise that God put in his heart (Gen. 26:3): “I will be with you and bless you and to your children I will give all of these lands.” And later God repeats the message and prefaces it with: (Gen. 26:24): “Fear not for I am with you.” If God put that promise in his heart, God will certainly make it come true.

Here's the master lesson in all this: If we are able to intuit what is our proper path in life, what we should be doing with our lives, we should not fear, we should go for it, no matter how many obstacles are thrown in our face.

From this story of Isaac, the number seven became a symbol of perseverance, and Beer Sheva, a well of inspiration, courage and determination not to give up on our *shlichut*, on our path in life.

I counted the obstacles that Jacob, Isaac's son, encountered in finding his path and they also came to seven: the purchasing of the birthright; the stealing of his father's blessings; fleeing to Mesopotamia alone; working seven years to marry Rachel; fleeing back to Canaan with his 12 children and four wives; wrestling with the angel where his name was changed to Israel; and confronting his brother Esau as he returns. You might make an even longer list if you follow his life carefully. But neither Isaac nor his son Jacob gave in to despair. They persisted until they were able to fulfill their holy mission in life.

When we are faced with obstacle upon obstacle in life, we can call upon their strength to persevere, for we are the children of Isaac and Jacob. And just as God gave Isaac and Jacob the strength to persevere, He'll give it to us as well, if we ask for it.

It took Winston Churchill three years to get through the 8th grade because he couldn't pass English – of all things! Ironically, he was asked many years later to give the commencement address at Oxford University. His now famous speech consisted of only 3 words: “Never give up!”

Calvin Coolidge once wrote:

*Nothing in this world can take the place of persistence. Talent will not; nothing is more common than unsuccessful people with talent. Genius will not; unrewarded genius is almost a proverb. Education will not; the world is full of educated derelicts. Persistence and determination alone are omnipotent. The slogan “press on” has solved and always will solve the problems of the human race.*

Look deeply inward to try to find your path, what it is that you need to do with your life. When confronted by obstacles, call upon God to give you the strength of Isaac and Jacob to persevere and you will – even if you'll need to try over and over again seven times. As King Solomon teaches (Proverbs 24:16): “For a righteous man falls seven times and rises up again.”

***Shabbat Shalom! Rabbi Mark Kunis***

*Rabbi Kunis is a former President of the Atlanta Rabbinical Association, a founder of MORASHA, The Rabbinic Fellowship of the Union for Traditional Judaism and former President of the Federation of Traditional Orthodox Rabbis. He has been a leading Jewish Leader and Theologian for many years and is the author of **Dancing With God: How to Connect With God Every Time You Pray.***

# Jewish Community Winter Outreach Donation Drive



## **Needs:**

Underwear, socks, boots, coats, hats,  
gloves, blankets, pillows, towels,  
washcloths, toiletries

For More Information or to volunteer please contact Jack Selgel - [jsselgel@jcrctl.org](mailto:jsselgel@jcrctl.org)

**Do you have winter items for donation??**  
**Traditional is a drop-off site!**

Please pack your donations in plastic bags  
and leave them on the student desk or  
in the bin located outside  
at the Administrative Entrance.

Underwear and socks must be new;  
other items can be used but must be clean  
and in good condition.

Thank you for helping fellow St. Louisans  
stay warm this winter!



JEWISH FEDERATION OF ST. LOUIS  
**Women's**  
PHILANTHROPY



## Share **HANUKKAH HUGS** this holiday season!

Women's Philanthropy and Jewish Family Services are collecting new, unwrapped gifts for children who are in need.

### Everyone has something to give!

- **Adopt a child (ages 2-18), or family of children, to fulfill their Hanukkah wishes**  
Please email WP@JFedSTL.org to be paired with a child or family. We will share their Hanukkah Wish Lists with you. Reach out to your friends and family to work together to fulfill this mitzvah!
- **Donate toys, books, gift cards, etc. for our Hanukkah Hugs "Store"**  
Your generous donation will be distributed by volunteers to Hanukkah Hugs recipients
- **Donations of Hanukkah wrapping paper, gift bags, cards, and tape are also needed**

**Please donate on or before November 30**

**Gifting is easy and will warm your heart!**

**The following options are available for gift drop off:**

- Shop online at either of the two links below or the store of your choosing and send your gift directly to the Jewish Federation of St. Louis, 12 Millstone Campus Drive, St. Louis, 63146, Attn: Jessica Wax
- Put your gifts in the collection bin at the Jewish Federation of St. Louis.
- If you have a gift donation that you would like picked up from your home, email WP@JFedSTL.org and we can arrange a pick-up.

**If you have shopped for a specific child/family please put the identification number on the gifts or bag so we know to whom to distribute it.**

**Email Women's Philanthropy at WP@JFedSTL.org with any questions.**



[Amazon Registry](#)

[Target Registry](#)

*Can you or someone you know use a good meal?*

Crown Center can help! They have fresh and frozen kosher meals for ages 60+ at very low cost, and they can be delivered within a 5-mile radius of Crown Center. If you or someone you know would benefit from this—or if you'd like to make a donation to help defray costs for others—call 314-991-2055.







TRADITIONAL CONGREGATION  
INVITES YOU TO A

# *Drive-Thru* **Chanukah Celebration!**



Join us for a physically  
distanced event from the  
comfort of your car.



*Lighting of the Chanukiyah*  
*Music piped in through*  
*your car radio*



*Refreshments to go!*

Sunday, December 13, 2020  
4:30 PM



12437 Ladue Rd in our  
West Parking Lot

Donation \$10/person

Tell your family & friends!

**[Register Here](#)**



[www.traditional-congregation.org](http://www.traditional-congregation.org)

314-576-5230

[tradcong@sbcglobal.net](mailto:tradcong@sbcglobal.net)

**[Click here to Register](#)**

or go to [www.traditional-congregation.org](http://www.traditional-congregation.org)

## PRAYER

Why do I pray?  
Because prayer invites me to an adventure in human values.

*Why do I pray?  
Because prayer opens the door that leads to all humankind.*

Why do I pray?  
Because prayer inspires me to be one with the Parent of the universe.

*Why do I pray?  
Because I am frail and need strength; I am troubled and need comfort;  
and being proud, I need humility.*

Why do I pray?  
Because having entered the world as a Jew by birth,  
I want to leave it a Jew by worth.

*Why do I pray?  
Because prayer respects my mind, purifies my heart,  
exalts my spirit and sanctifies my life.*

Why do I pray?  
Because prayer leads me out of myself into the broad places  
where all mortals live,  
and unto the high places where truth and righteousness abide.

*Why do I pray?  
Because prayer leads me out of "spiritual poverty."  
Just as there is material poverty in food, clothing and shelter,  
so is there spiritual poverty where the deficiency is in spiritual things such as  
prayer, knowledge of Torah, observance of the mitzvot,  
and the practice of good deeds.*

*From Morrie Matlof (adapted)*

## THOUGHT FOR THE MOMENT OF SILENCE

It is better to deserve without receiving than  
to receive without deserving.

*Robert Ingersoll*