

Sunday, November 21
Annual Sag Harbor Thanksgiving Service
@Christ Episcopal Church Rt. 114 & Union Street

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**December Shabbat Service Schedule**  
**December 5th Parashat Vayishlach**

**December 12th Parashat Vayeshev**  
Birchat Chodesh Tevet

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"CANORAH" Builders/Designers needed
to help build a menorah from cans of food
please rsvp asap to sign up or to get more info

CSH is joining with CHABAD of East Hampton
as well as the other East End synagogues

for the 1st Annual CHANORAH EVENT

to help benefit the Local Food Pantries
at the VERED Gallery in East Hampton, on **Saturday, December 12th at 6:00 – 7:30 pm**

There will be awards for all entries, traditional Chanukah refreshments, and a menorah lighting

If you plan to attend the event, please bring monetary or additional food donations to be added to the "CANORAH" collection.

Want to see some pretty neat stuff done with cans?
Go to **www.canstruction.org** and click on the photo-video archive.

Candle Lighting Friday, November 20, 2009 4:11 pm

Shabbat Services
Saturday, November 21st
9:30 am

This week's Torah reading: Toldot
Annual (Gen. 25:19-28:9): (Etz Hayim, p. 146; Hertz p. 93)
Triennial (Gen. 27:28-28:9): (Etz Hayim, p. 157; Hertz p. 99)
Haftarah: (Etz Hayim, p. 163; Hertz p. 102)

Toldot Musings

In Parashat Toldot the problematic relationships our founding foremothers and forefathers have which each other are laid bare for us their descendents to witness. We see the problematic relationship that two brothers, Jacob and Esau, intertwined at birth, have with each other, and how the favour of individual children by parents Isaac and Rebekah results in deceit.

So what use is a critical reading of the early beginnings of the Jewish people?

It gives us the strength to know that relationships have never been straight forward for anyone whether they are between Jacob and Esau or Isaac and Ishmael, sets of brothers who went on to father great nations, or between our own families or between communities today. Both sets of estranged brothers do to an extent, towards the end of their lives, have to overcome their differences, as whether they like it or not their lives are deeply intertwined. We too will inevitably end up having to engage with the people that we find it the most hard to talk to whether its within our family, intra-community or inter-community as we share the same blood, religion or country.

<http://www.limmud.org/publications/tasteoflimmud/5769/Toldot/>

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We should not be too quick to judge Rebekah for using trickery and advocating that Jacob do the same. Trickery is how you get ahead in the Tanakh if you're the second born or a woman and you're living in a patriarchal society in ancient Canaan. Trickery is how the underdog gets ahead. Just ask Queen Esther.

And one other point... There is no one in this room who can read Esau's plaintive cry, "Have you no more blessing for me, father?" and not be moved. The text is very sympathetic, even empathetic toward Esau and we feel with him. The Septuagint, the Greek translation of the Hebrew Scriptures, has three additional words at this point: "And Isaac was silent" increasing the pathos of the scene. Esau also presents challenges for us as parents--how we relate to the child who is *not* meant for greatness, who doesn't do anything wrong, but will nevertheless not share in the glory of his sibling. <http://www.aumethodists.org/sermons/oldsermons/toledoth.html>

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God speaks to Isaac twice. The first time, it is to tell him not to do down into Egypt as his father had done and as his son will do (26:2). This is a striking repetition of Abraham's instruction to his servant, that Isaac must not go out of the land. Isaac follows his father's footsteps when he meets King Abimelech of Gerar. Like Abraham, he pretends that his beautiful wife is his sister, lest the King slay the husband so he can marry the widow. When Isaac's servants open the wells his father Abraham had dug, God then appears to Isaac a second time and says to him 'I shall bless you . . . for My servant Abraham's sake' (26:24). Thus, he receives the blessing for his father's sake, not his own.

Abraham's descendants are blessed as a result of his willingness to sacrifice Isaac, but Isaac himself is not specifically noted; he is simply one of Abraham's descendants. Abraham never explicitly gave him a blessing. Isaac never leaves the land. He never sees clearly, never laughs (despite his name) does not find himself a wife nor choose the right son. Isaac's role is less to be a father or a husband than to be Abraham's son. He is the weak son of a powerful father and the weak father of two powerful sons. His passivity is in striking comparison to his aggressive wife. Abraham, who had agreed to sacrifice his son, Isaac, survived with his promise intact and became the Prince of Faith. Jacob/Israel, while wounded in his conflict with God survived -- a rare experience.

The only blessing Isaac receives is the weak blessing part of his being forbidden to go Egypt despite a famine (as opposed to his father and his son) and given because 'Abraham obeyed my voice' (24:5).

Rebekah is given the stronger blessing of Abraham. She is given the mission of ensuring bestowal of the blessing on the 'right' son, despite needing to deceive her husband and of favoring one son over the other and she then she saved Jacob's life.

Should we not say 'The God of Abraham, The God of Rebekah and The God of Jacob'?

http://www.moshereiss.org/messenger/03_rebekahandisaac/03_rebekahandisaac.html

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**"WHO KNEW?"** Follow up from last week's update

**One the other hand, Sabbath lights were termed a chovah (Shabbat 25b), and no benediction for Sabbath candles was ever published in the Talmud.**

The Biblical and historical background of Jewish customs and ceremonies by Abraham P. Bloch (p. 267 268)

**David Brous emailed asking: "So...whence the benediction over Shabbat candles?!"**

***Here's one answer. Other responses appreciated.***

### **Light, the Sabbath, and the World to Come**

The aggadic-mythological concept of the Sabbath finds its reflection in one of the most ancient of all Sabbath observances, the kindling of the Sabbath lights. The Mishnah (Shabbat 2:1) already presumes the practice and merely asks, "With what may the Sabbath lamp be kindled?" Various scholars have sought the source of the custom in ancient rabbinic literature, but all that the search has revealed is a number of midrashim that merely indicate the antiquity of the practice without revealing its origin. Indeed, the Midrash clearly states (Lekah Tov, Vayakhel 8), "Israel had an ancient tradition harking back to our teacher Moses to kindle the Sabbath lights." When the [Babylonian] Talmud declares the kindling of the Sabbath lights to be a mitzvah (in the technical meaning of the term ["commandment"]) (Shabbat 25b), its intent is correctly grasped by Maimonides when he writes (Mishneh Torah, Laws of Shabbat 5:1), "This is neither a permissive matter (*reshut*)...nor a commandment (*mitzvah*), but rather a duty (*chovah*)." All of which is to say that the practice is, strictly speaking, neither biblically nor rabbinically ordained.

I suggest its origin is in the same aggadic concept to which I have repeatedly referred. The Midrash, in a number of diverse sources, interprets the Sabbath lights as symbolic of the supernal light that once shone in primordial time and which will again appear in the future time. The Midrash (Bereshit Rabbah 12:6) asserts that, out of consideration for the Sabbath, God caused the sun to shine through that first Friday evening in the Garden of Eden though Adam had, by reason of his disobedience, deserved that he be deprived of that light. Thus, the Midrash (Bereshit Rabbah 11:2) interprets the verse, "And God blessed the seventh day," with the blessing of light.

When the Midrash asserts that "the light of a man's countenance all the days of the week is not to be compared to the light that his countenance reflects on the Sabbath," the statement takes on meaning if we assume that the reference is to the supernal light which Adam enjoyed through the first Sabbath and of which he was deprived only after the outgoing of the Sabbath. Finally, the

Midrash (Yalkut, Be-ha'alotkha, beginning) links the observance with reward in the messianic days, "If you observe the kindling of the Sabbath lights, I will show you the lights of Zion...as it is said, 'The sun shall no more be light for you by days, nor shall the brightness of the moon shine for you, but the Lord shall be your everlasting light.'"

**By Rabbi Theodore Friedman, Ph.D.** (1908-1992), who served for many years as rabbi of congregations in Jackson Heights, New York, and **South Orange, New Jersey.**

[http://www.myjewishlearning.com/practices/Ritual/Shabbat\\_The\\_Sabbath/Themes\\_and\\_Theology/A\\_Perfected\\_World/Jewish\\_Law.shtml](http://www.myjewishlearning.com/practices/Ritual/Shabbat_The_Sabbath/Themes_and_Theology/A_Perfected_World/Jewish_Law.shtml)

**Also check out --**

REGULATIONS CONCERNING THE SABBATH AND 'HANUKAH LIGHT

<http://www.sacred-texts.com/jud/t01/t0110.htm>

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DONATIONS

The next time you are looking for a meaningful way to celebrate a simcha, a birthday, a promotion, remember a loved one, or comfort a mourner, please consider making a donation to The Conservative Synagogue of the Hamptons.

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**Website of the Week** -- <http://www.jewishgen.org/>

Toldot -- And these are the descendents of...

**JewishGen is committed to ensuring Jewish continuity for present generations and the generations yet to come. The vision of JewishGen is to connect Jews throughout the world with their relatives and provide them with the ability to learn about their family history and heritage.**

## **Quote of the Week**

The Hebrew word for parents is horim, and it comes from the same root as moreh, teacher. The parent is, and remains, the first and most important teacher that the child will have.

-- Rabbi Kassel Abelson

It's not only children who grow. Parents do too. As much as we watch to see what our children do with their lives, they are watching us to see what we do with ours. I can't tell my children to reach for the sun. All I can do is reach for it, myself.

-- Joyce Maynard

Shabbat shalom.

Stacy

Stacy Menzer  
President  
The Conservative Synagogue  
Of the Hamptons  
PO Box 1800  
East Hampton, NY 11937  
631 725 8188  
[www.synagoguehamptons.org](http://www.synagoguehamptons.org)