

Parasha Perspectives

At the end of Parashat Toldot, the Torah tells us of a strange episode that transpires between father and sons. Isaac knows that his end is approaching, and, following in the footsteps of his father Abraham, decides to choose one of his two sons to carry on the family legacy and receive the blessing he received from his father. Isaac chooses his elder son Esau to receive this blessing, but Rebecca intervenes and sends Jacob instead, disguised as his older brother. Isaac blesses Jacob, and it is he who becomes the father of the Jewish people.

Knowing how the story ends, and using our 20/20 hindsight, we must ask a few questions about this story. First, why did Isaac choose Esau to receive Abraham's blessing? He was a wild man, a man of the field, whom the midrash describes as idol worshipping and evil. What did he do to deserve such an honor? And second, was Isaac really fooled by Jacob's disguise? How could a blind man, whose other senses must have been highly refined, not know that it was his younger son who came to him? And finally, if he did know that it was Jacob, why did he go ahead and bless him when he originally intended to bless Esau?

The answer to these questions lies in a statement that Isaac makes to Jacob. When Jacob appears before his father, Isaac asks a number of questions and makes observations in an attempt to verify the identity of the son before him. He comments, "How did you prepare the meal so quickly?" "Your arms are hairy like Esau's." "You smell of the field like Esau." However, the key to answering our questions is when Isaac observes: "הקול קול יעקב והידיים ידי עשו" - "The voice is the voice of Jacob and the hands are the hand of Esau." Jacob manages to disguise his skin and his scent, but he can not disguise his voice. Surely Isaac must have known from this that his son Jacob had come for the blessing!

This statement is not just an observation about the facts that Isaac was hearing and feeling; rather it is deeper than that. Let's return to our first question: Why did Isaac want to bless Esau in the first place? Because Esau showed that he was one to take action. He did not sit on the sidelines, in the tents like his brother. He had the strength to take initiative and fight for what he wanted. While he lacked the intellectual and spiritual strengths of Jacob, Isaac felt that Esau's qualities would make for a better leader nonetheless. However, what Isaac realizes when Jacob come to him is that Jacob had developed these very qualities. He had acquired for himself "the hands of Esau," the ability to take action and initiative for what he believed he deserved, while at the same time retaining the "voice of Jacob," the spiritual and intellectual strengths that he had developed over the years.

Did Isaac really not know that Jacob had come for his brother's blessing? I believe that Isaac knew exactly who was in front of him. And if so, why did he not save his blessing for Esau, the son for whom it was originally intended? Because Jacob proved, through his "deceit" of his father, that he too had the strengths of a leader that Isaac saw in Esau. Once Isaac saw that his younger son had both the "hand of Esau" and the "voice of Jacob," he knew that it was he who would become the father of the Jewish people for all future generations.

By: The Editors

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The Mount Sinai Keshar

November 20-21, 2009 • 4 Kislev, 5770 • Parashat Toldot

Shabbat Schedule

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| Candle Lighting | 4:16 p.m. |
| Mincha | 4:21 p.m. |
| New(ish) Oneg | 8:30 p.m. |
| Shacharit | 7:00, 9:00 a.m. |
| Kri'at Shema before | 9:16 a.m. |
| Rabbi Schwartz's Gemara shiur | 3:00 p.m. |
| Mincha | 3:55 p.m. |
| <i>Seuda Shlishit following Mincha</i> | |
| Shkia | 4:33 p.m. |
| Maariv/Havdala | 5:20 p.m. |
| Family Pajama Party | 6:30 p.m. |
| Ice Skating Outing | 7:30 p.m. |

**Tefilla Schedule
Week of November 22nd**

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| <i>Shacharit</i> | |
| Sun., Thurs. | 7:30, 8:30, 9:00 a.m. |
| Monday | 6:45, 7:20, 8:00 a.m. |
| Tues., Wed. | 7:00, 7:30, 8:00 a.m. |
| Friday | 7:00, 7:30, 8:00, 9:00 a.m. |
| <i>Mincha/Maariv</i> | |
| Sunday -Thursday | 4:15 p.m. |
| <i>Next Shabbat, Parashat Vayetzei</i> | |
| Candles | 4:12 p.m. |
| Mincha | 4:17 p.m. |

Gabbaut Notice

The shul will be starting a **10 p.m Ma'ariv**, Sunday-Thursday beginning the Sunday after Thanksgiving, Nov. 29th. For details please see Akiva Stechler.

Sponsorships

The **ERUV** is sponsored **anonymously** thanking everyone involved in the Eruv from the beginning to where we are today and thanking G-d for all His blessings.

The Eruv DOES extend across Broadway, but does not extend into Fort Tryon Park. If you are not sure where you can carry, please contact the rabbi or a member of the eruv committee.

The **KESHER** is not sponsored.

SEUDA SHLISHIT is sponsored by David Fried in commemoration of shloshim of grandmother, Chaya Peril Bat Dov.

Rabbi Schwartz's Office Hours

Monday: 9:00 -10:00 p.m. .

Welcome New Member

Shlomit Cohen



Mazal Tov!

- Selig and Rachel Davis on the birth of their daughter, Sarah Levana
- Rabbi Yehuda and Chani Hilewitz on the birth of a grandson in Israel



HATZOLA
(212) 230 - 1000

This Week at Mt. Sinai

Sunday:

Shiur with Rabbi Angel, 7:00 p.m. on Sefer Daniel.

Monday:

Women's Aerobics, 7:30 p.m. Contact: Anat Coleman, (212) 740 2740.

Women's Basketball, 9:00 p.m. Contact: Susanne Goldstone, susqhb@gmail.com.

Tuesday:

Shiur with Rabbi Forman, 8:30 p.m. 2nd shiur of 4 on the story of Yosef.

Women's Basketball, 9:00 p.m. Contact: Elie Appleson, elie.appleson@gmail.com.

Wednesday:

Men's Basketball, 8:00 p.m. Contact: Daniel Falik, daniel@danielfalik.com

Class with Rabbi Schwartz will not be meeting this week.

Motza'ei Shabbat:

Men's Basketball, 6:00 p.m. Contact: Daniel Falik, daniel@danielfalik.com

Board Update

Meeting of November 18th, 2009

- Yossi Mandelbaum resigned as Treasurer. Steven Schwartzberg will take his place.
- The locks downstairs will be replaced and the doors re-hung where needed.
- The board voted to approve a contract for the social hall renovation. The cost will be \$40-60K above the amount already raised. Donations are welcome and encouraged. The work is expected to start around the end of the year.
- Despite rising costs, the board voted to retain the same dues structure for the coming year, recognizing that many of our members are struggling financially.

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(212) 544 - 0042**

Under the Vaad of Riverdale

New(ish) to the Heights?

Come learn more about the community and meet other new members at an intimate **Friday Night Oneg this Shabbat!** Open to members and non-members who have been in the community for about a year or less.

*At the home of Reina Potaznik:
590 Ft. Washington, Apt. 6E
8:30 p.m.*

Hope to see you there!

Pajama Party!

The Family Pajama Party is this Motzei Shabbat, November 21.

Parents and children under 5 are invited for food, music, and fun in the social hall starting at 6:30. \$10 per family for members, \$13 per family for non-members.

*For more information please contact
the Family Life Committee at
familylife@mtsinaishul.com.*



Ice Skating Outing



**Ice Skating in Bryant Park
This Saturday night,
November 21st from
8:30pm-11:00pm.**

\$12 skate rental, otherwise free. Bring a lock for a free locker (otherwise locks cost \$9 and bag check is \$7 - \$10).

A group will be meeting at 7:30 PM inside the 184th St A Train station to take the subway together, or meet the group at the rink. Bring friends – see you on the ice! For more information contact Sefi or Rebecca at events@mtsinaishul.com.

Meet the Matchmaker at Mt. Sinai

Mt. Sinai Jewish Center, in collaboration with YUConnects, is hosting "Meet the Matchmaker at Mt. Sinai – A Networking Night to Connect with Matchmakers from the NY/NJ Area". This is an excellent opportunity to meet several matchmakers one-on-one.

For Men: Tues. Dec. 1, 8 – 10:30 PM
For Women: Tues, Dec. 8, 8 – 10:30 PM

Both events will be held in the social hall.

*For questions about the event, please contact
Aliza Abrams (alizaabrams@gmail.com) or
Rachel Neuman-Fryman (rnfryman@gmail.com)*

Chanukah Toy Drive

Mt Sinai is getting involved again with **Chai Lifeline's Honey Engel Toy Drive**. November 23 through December 18th. Please drop off new and unused toys for children (infant -teens) in the shul or your local building rep.

*If you have any questions
or would like to volunteer
please contact Yehudis
Isenberg and Ariella
Furst rellee71@aol.com*



Tizku Le-mitzvot!

Save the Date! Dec 19th
Chanukah Panoply Extravaganza!

Interested in helping to plan the annual shul Chanukah party? Contact Aliza and Rebecca at events@mtsinaishul.com.

