Class # 6 - **Parshat Toldot: How to handle a promotion?**

Advanced Fellowship Parsha Class - Sponsored in memory of Alice Toby Barbanel Z”l

Rabbi Pinny Rosenthal - prepared collaboratively with Rabbi Yoni Sacks

"Chicago Fire" - an edge-of-your-seat view into the lives of everyday heroes committed to one of America's noblest professions. For the firefighters, Rescue Squad and paramedics of Chicago Firehouse 51, no occupation is more stressful or dangerous, yet so rewarding and exhilarating. In this scene Lt. Casey has just become captain over his friend Lt. Kelly Severide and  tension ensues.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7kOPynT-Thk>

1. What challenge does being promoted pose for Captain Casey?
2. What challenge does it cause for Lt. Severide?

*Isaac and the Philistines*

26:1 There was a famine in the land, aside from the [first famine in the time of Abraham](http://bible.ort.org/books/pentd2.asp?ACTION=displaypage&BOOK=1&CHAPTER=26#C508). Isaac went to [Abimelekh](http://bible.ort.org/books/pentd2.asp?ACTION=displaypage&BOOK=1&CHAPTER=26#C509) king of the Philistines in [Gerar](http://bible.ort.org/books/pentd2.asp?ACTION=displaypage&BOOK=1&CHAPTER=26#C510). ……..' 26:12 Isaac farmed in the area. That year, he reaped a hundred times [as much as he sowed], for God had blessed him. 26:13 This was the beginning of his prosperity. He then continued to prosper until he became extremely wealthy. 26:14 He had flocks of sheep, herds of cattle, and a large retinue of slaves.

The Philistines became jealous of him.

26:15 They plugged up all the wells that his father's servants had dug while Abraham was still alive, and they filled them with earth. 26:16 Abimelekh said to Isaac, 'Go away from us. You have become much more powerful than we are.' 26:17 Isaac left the area and camped in the [Gerar Valley](http://bible.ort.org/books/pentd2.asp?ACTION=displaypage&BOOK=1&CHAPTER=26#C513), intending to settle there. 26:18 He redug the wells that had been dug in the days of his father Abraham, which had been plugged up by the Philistines after Abraham's death. He gave them the same names that his father had given them.

26:19 Isaac's servants then dug in the valley, and found a new well, brimming over with fresh water. 26:20 The shepherds of Gerar disputed with Isaac's shepherds, claiming that the water was theirs. [Isaac] named the well Challenge (*Esek*), because they had challenged him. 26:21 They dug another well, and it was also disputed. [Isaac] named it Accusation (*[Sitnah](http://bible.ort.org/books/pentd2.asp?ACTION=displaypage&BOOK=1&CHAPTER=26" \l "C514)*). 26:22 He then moved away from there and dug another well. This time it was not disputed, so he named it Wide Spaces (*[Rechovoth](http://bible.ort.org/books/pentd2.asp?ACTION=displaypage&BOOK=1&CHAPTER=26" \l "C515)*). 'Now God will grant us wide open spaces,' he said. 'We can be fruitful in the land.'

26:23 From there, [Isaac] went up to Beer-sheba. 26:24 God appeared to him that night and said, 'I am God of your father Abraham. Do not be afraid, for I am with you. I will bless you and grant you very many descendants because of My servant Abraham.' 26:25 [Isaac] built an altar there and called in God's name. He set up his tents there, and his servants dug a well in the area. 26:26 Abimelekh came to [Isaac] from Gerar, along with a group of friends and his general [Pikhol](http://bible.ort.org/books/pentd2.asp?ACTION=displaypage&BOOK=1&CHAPTER=26#C516). 26:27 'Why have you come to me?' asked Isaac. 'You hate me; you drove me away from you!' 26:28 'We have indeed seen that God is with you,' they replied. 'We propose that there now be a dread oath between you and us. Let us make a treaty with you, 26:29 that just as we did not touch you, you will do no harm to us. We did only good to you and let you leave in peace. Now you are the one who is blessed by God.' 26:30 [Isaac] prepared a feast for them, and they ate and drank. 26:31 They got up early in the morning, and made a mutual oath. Isaac then bid them farewell, and they left in peace.

1. Why would the Pelishtim hurt themselves by stopping up the wells during a famine?
2. What is significant about the names of the wells?
3. Why did the Pelishtim continue to oppose Yitzchak – evenn after he moved our of town?

Rambam, Laws of Idolatry 1:3

...When the people would gather around [Avraham] and ask him about his statements, he would explain [them] to each one of them according to their understanding, until they turned to the path of truth. Ultimately, thousands and myriads gathered around him. These are the men of the house of Abraham.

He planted in their hearts this great fundamental principle, composed texts about it, and taught it to Isaac, his son. Isaac also taught others and turned [their hearts to God]. He also taught Jacob and appointed him as a teacher.

[Jacob] taught others and turned [the hearts] of all those who gathered around him [to God]. He also taught all of his children. He selected Levi and appointed him as the leader. He established him [as the head of] the academy to teach them the way of God and observe the mitzvot of Abraham.

1. What was Yitzchak’s role after his father passed away?
2. How was he different than his father?
3. How did Yaakov shift the focus of the family mission?

**Rabbi Yaakov Tzvi Mecklenburg** (יעקב צבי מקלנבורג) was a German Rabbi and scholar of the 19th century, best known as author of the [Torah commentary](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Torah_commentaries) *Haketav VehaKabbalah* (*HaKsav VeHaKabalah*).

