D'var on *Parshat Toldot*
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*V'eyleh toldot Yitzchok ben Avraham,*
are the first words of this *parshah*.
"This is the story of Isaac son of Abraham,"
*Etz Chayim* translates it.

But just a few verses back
there's an identical line with just the name changed,
*v'eyleh toldot <u>Yishmael</u> ben Avraham,*
which *Etz Chayim* translates as
"This is the *line* of Ishmael son of Abraham."

So which is it – *line* or *story*?
Robert Alter translates it as *lineage*
or what earlier translations called *begettings*.

The lineage of Isaac.
the patrimony of Isaac.

I want to focus on both of those this morning:
the story of Isaac
and what he begets,
what he leaves behind.

A couple of weeks ago David Kuperstock
took us through the *Akeidah*
through Abram's eyes.

Now let's change the perspective,
the point of view,
swivel the camera around
from the top-down view
of Abram looking down
at his son bound on the altar,

and instead look up
from that son's perspective,
see the world through Isaac's eyes,
the eyes of a man who would go blind.

* * *

This is Isaac's *parshah*.
By next week, the story is Jacob's –
Isaac makes no appearance at all –
and in the *parshah* after that
all we see of Isaac is his death.

Already here, this week, Rebecca and Jacob and Esau
threaten to overtake the narrative.
But if Isaac has any moment in the limelight,
it is this one: *v'eyleh toldot Yitzchok ben Avraham*.

Who is Isaac?
Let's start with the broadest facts:

He is the longest lived of the patriarchs,
the only one who never leaves Canaan,
the only one to marry only one woman,
the only one whose father never blesses him.

That last fact is key, I think,
to both Isaac's *story* and to Isaac's *lineage*.
He is the boy unblessed by his father,
but also the first man to bless his own boys,
leaving behind a legacy of troubled blessings,
the first blessings spoken by a Jew,
blessings ripe with the errors of beginning.

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The central story of this *parshah*
is the battle for the blessings,
the *Thrilla in Kehilla*:
Two brothers, one bracha!

Two brothers, one bechora!
Who will emerge victorious?!?

Like so many of us here,
I've read this *parshah* each year
for many years,
and one thing always troubles me deeply.

It's in the midst of the central scene,
the stolen blessing,
right after Jacob tricks his blind father Isaac
into giving him his twin brother Esau's blessing.

Esau, ignorant, comes in holding the dish
that his father asked for,
the good boy who did the special chore,
expecting his blessing:

And "Isaac was seized with a very great trembling
and he said,
'Who is it, then, who caught game
and brought it to me and I ate everything
before you came - and blessed him?
Now blessed he stays.'

When Esau heard his father's words,
he cried out with a great and very bitter outcry,
and he said to his father,
'Bless me, too, Father!'

And he said,
'Your brother has come in deceit
and has taken your blessing."

"Bless me, too, Father!"
Esau says, holding the meat he hunted down for his father.

But Isaac has none to give:
"Your brother has come in deceit and has taken your blessing."

Then comes what is, to me,
one of the most plaintive questions in the Torah:
“Have you not kept back a blessing for me?”

Isaac answers –
a troubling answer that we’ll return to in a moment –
but one that ends with
“For you, then, what can I do, my son?”

This father, Isaac, our father,
feels empty – he has nothing to offer.
He has somehow used up all he has with Jacob.

Esau presses on again, a third entreaty:
“Do you have but one blessing, my father?
Bless me, too, Father.”

And with that third entreaty,
that double line that ends each time with “Father,”
“Esau raised his voice and wept.”

It’s hard still to read this,
this umpteenth time,
and not be moved.
Not be disturbed.

Why must the world be like this?
*Why does Isaac think*
*he has only one blessing to give?*

Why does it take the tears of his hunter-son,
his son’s triple entreaty,
for Isaac to find any blessing *at all*
for his favorite son?

Isaac does respond to that third entreaty,
digging deeply into some extra store
he did not know he had,
but even then,

the thing he calls a blessing is hard news:
“By your sword shall you live
and your brother shall you serve.”

This may be a blessing,
but it’s not so far from a curse.

Why does Isaac feel
he has only one real blessing to give?
How can this father,
this patriarch, one of *the* fathers,
one of *our* fathers, our avot,
see blessing as a limited resource,
a dwindling commodity?

What is it about blessings,
or about the Torah’s notion of blessings,
or Isaac’s notion of blessings,
that so constrains him?

Must blessings be so narrow?
And if this is a blessing –
“By your sword shall you live
and your brother shall you serve” –
then what exactly *is* a blessing?

* * *

To answer that,
we need to go back further,
to where blessings begin.

Before we get to human blessings,
the blessings of a person, a parent,
we should ask where *any* blessings began.

The first *brocha* of the Torah
comes from G-d.
G-d blesses “the great sea monsters,
and every living creature that crawls,

with which the waters swarmed,
according to their kind,
and every winged fowl."

G-d blesses them, saying,
"Be fruitful and multiply,"
*P'ru urvru.*

Whatever blessing is,
it does not need a human being on either side,
as subject or object.

G-d repeats this blessing of fruitfulness
A few lines later,
To the unnamed first man and woman
in the first chapter of *Breishit*,
the first of the two creation stories:

"And G-d created man in His image,
in the image of G-d he created him;
male and female He crated them.
G-d blessed them and G-d said to them,
be fertile and increase"

And the third blessing
recounted in the Torah,
a few lines later still,
is an ethereal blessing,
the most abstract blessing possible:
"*vayavarech elokim et yom hashvi'i*"
"and G-d blessed the seventh day."
An invisible G-d blessing invisible time.

So we come to the end
of the first *parshah* of the Torah, *Parshat Breishit*
unsure of what blessing is.

If we know anything of it,
it's what we've already assumed about it:
that it means a promise of future goodness,

not just a hope of future goodness,
but some way of projecting power into the future –
a totem of future good.

The first two blessings connote fruitfulness:
"G-d blessed them and G-d said to them,
be fertile and increase"

The third does not.
The Sabbath does not multiply, or gain abundance:
It is simply blessed.

So here in the text,
in these first three instances,
we've seen the word blessing
used in ways that may seem contradictory:

blessing as a prelude to fertility and increase – to *p'ru urvu*
and blessing as a marker of ceasing, of stopping:

To multiply and to pause,
to build and to break:
both can be *brochos*.

So what *is* a *brocha*?

* * *

The first blessing uttered by a human
Comes in the next *parshah*,
In *Noach*, after Noah's drunken escapade,

when the bad son Ham
doesn't lower his eyes
at his father's nakedness
(or whatever that connotes).

Noah begins with curses –
"cursed be Canaan,
the lowest of slaves

shall he be to his brothers,"

Then he turns to a blessing –
but a blessing of G-d, not people:
"Blessed be the L-rd,
the G-d of Shem;
let Cannan be a slave to them."

G-d will be blessed,
Noah seems to be saying,
for making his grandson –
Canaan is Ham's son –
a slave to his other sons.

There are two peculiarities
in this first blessing
spoken by a human.

First, that Noah curses Canaan, not Ham,
And conversely, that he blesses G-d
for making Canaan – not Ham –
A slave to Ham's brothers.

Why his grandson, and not his son?
Maybe he feels the particular ignominy

of being both shamed by a son
and ashamed of a son:

of his son simultaneously embarrassing him
and being an embarrassment.

So he visits the curse –
and blesses G-d for, he hopes, enforcing the curse –
on the son's son,
letting him feel what it's like
to have a cursed son.

We see, already, the vindictiveness
of this blessing:

this effort to drag G-d
into the business of family revenge,
a business that here harms
not just the wrongdoer
but an innocent grandson.

The second peculiarity of this blessing
intensifies that theme:
In offering this first human blessing,
Noah uses a strange name for G-d:

"Blessed be the L-rd,
the G-d of Shem;
let Cannan be a slave to them," he says.

The G-d of Shem.
Not "Blessed be the L-rd," full stop,
not "Blessed be the L-rd, my G-d,"
not "Blessed be the L-rd, G-d of my father Lamech,"
not "Blessed be the L-rd, G-d of Adam,"
but "Blessed be the L-rd, the G-d of Shem."

Shem, his son.
The G-d of his son.

He calls on the G-d of one of his sons
To enforce a curse
visited on one of his grandsons
As punishment for the crime
of another of his sons.

And he calls this a blessing.

Is it a blessing?
Is it what the Torah thinks of as a blessing?
Or is it just what Noah thinks of as a blessing?

It is so different from G-d's blessings,
From the blessings G-d gives to the first people,
the blessing of fruitfulness

or the blessing of time, of the seventh day.

* * *

The first time that G-d blesses
someone by name
is in the next parshah, *Lech L'cha*
when G-d speaks to Abram
for the first time.
G-d promises that when
Abram leaves everything he knows
and travels to the promised land,

"I will make you a great nation
and I will bless you
and make your name great,
and you shall be a blessing.
And I will bless those who bless you,
and those who damn you I will curse,
and all the clans of the earth
through you shall be blessed."

After the string of curses
that begins with Adam and Eve,
and carries on to Cain and Noah and his grandson,

This is the first blessing of a man with a name.
And it's not just a single blessing,
but a spurt of blessings:

"I will *bless* you . . .
you shall be a *blessing* . . .
I will *bless* those who *bless* you . . .
all the clans of the earth through you shall be *blessed*"

5 brachas in 2 verses.
A font of blessings.

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After this font of blessings,
G-d begins to bless more freely,
promising to bless Sarah and Isaac and Ishmael,
and there are passing blessings by people as well:
Melchizedek blesses Abraham.

Let's travel past those, though,
To the next crucial blessing:

The blessing G-d gives atop Mt. Moriah
when Abram took the cleaver to slaughter his son,
and the angel stopped him.

the angel's voice calls to Abram
from the heavens, and G-d speaks:

"that because you have done this thing
and have not held back your son,
your only one,
I will greatly bless you
and will greatly multiply your seed,
as the stars in the heavens
and as the sand on the shore of the sea,

*and your seed*
*shall take hold of its enemies' gate*."

This is the first time that dominion,
military power, enters the notion of blessing.

It is as if the cleaver
has caught the eye of the blessing,
transforming it, making it martial.

In the glint of that knife,
fruitfulness is not enough.

But militarized as the blessing is,
it still comes mixed,
promising not just martial victory

but also fruitfulness,

fruitfulness of the sort we saw earlier:
of G-d's promise to the unnamed first humans
in the first creation story,
the promise of fertility and increase, of *p'ru urvu*.

paradoxically, the willingness to destroy
everything that matters,
everything that one loves,
can lead to a blessing –

a complex blessing
of both multiplication and death,
of self-replication and destruction.

This is not the pure vengeance
Of Noah's blessing;
Not the unadulterated revenge of those words,

And it is not the pure blessing of fruitfulness.

It is a complex blessing:
A blessing made complex
by a world where there *are* enemies,

and by a world where fathers
aim to strike the balance
between what they believe to be right –
the voice of G-d –
and what they love.
And where the balance they seek
is sometimes poised at the tip of a cleaver.

* * *

And what does it look like
From underneath that cleaver?

What does it look like to

the thirtysomething Isaac
bound to the altar
looking up not just at his father,
but beyond
to the heavens.

The midrash gives us an answer.
Rashi quotes from the Tanchuma
In explaining why Isaac was blind
When he blessed Jacob and Esau.
Here's what he says:

"When Isaac was bound on the altar
and his father wanted to slaughter him,
at that moment,
the heavens opened up
and the ministering angels saw and wept,
and their tears came down
and fell into his eyes;
therefore, his eyes dimmed."

Picture him immobile there,
looking clearly at what
was about to befall him.

His blindness is delayed,
but it is inevitable.

He is a man whose
"ashes were as though heaped on the altar,"
as Rashi puts it,
a man who has seen his own death,
his own sacrifice to his father's greater good.

Or as Avivah Zornberg puts it:
"His awareness of death
Fills every moment of life."

We see that on the day

that he chooses to bless his sons.:
“Look, now, I am old,
And I don’t know the day of my death . . .
Let me bless you, before I die”

How long does he live after saying that?
An hour?  A day?  A week?
Sixty years.
He lives sixty years
after his deathbed speech.
Death fills every moment of his life.

* * *

If his experience under that cleaver
kept death always in his mind,
and if that experience too
drove him to a post-traumatic blindness,
then what drove him to bless his boys?

Did Isaac hear G-d’s blessing
of his father Abraham,
the promise of both fruitfulness and dominion?

Was he still there,
did he stick around
after his father dropped the cleaver?

And if he was, could he hear anything
after what had just happened?
and was G-d’s voice even audible,
or directed only to his father?

We don’t know.

What we do know is that
when he walks up Mount Moriah,
Isaac has never heard G-d’s voice.

And from the time he walks down Moriah,

many years pass before he hears G-d's voice.

He descends the mountain to find his mother dead,
perhaps from grief at what she has just learned.
The stranger Rebecca is brought to him
and he takes her into his mother's tent,
and in his mother's tent he takes her,
and there he loves her,
and is consoled for his mother's death.

This is the first time, by the way,
that word *love*
is used in the Torah
to describe the relationship
between a man and a woman:

Love with a stranger in a dead mother's tent.
And this love is *yinachem*, comforting,
a word related to the word for womb.

But love doesn't conquer all.
If Isaac is the subject of this first romantic love,
he was the object
of the only previous use of the word love,
the very first mention of love in the Torah:
"Take your son, your only one,
Isaac, whom you love."

We know what follows from that first-ever love:
the trip up the mountain,
the binding, the raised cleaver.

Being loved is dangerous,
Isaac knows, better than any of us,

but he will not shy from loving:
He will burrow into the grief of his mother's tent,
and there, with a stranger,
will build the first romantic relationship
on which the Torah bestows the word "love."

* * *

If he did not hear the blessing of
fruitfulness and dominion
that G-d gives to his father Abraham,
Where did Isaac learn it?

It came with Rebecca.

When Rebecca says she will go
with Abraham's servant to marry Isaac,
Laban says:
"O sister!
may you grow
into thousands of myriads;
may your offspring
seize the gates of their foes."

More than one commentator
has noted the parallel
between the blessing that Laban gives Rebecca
and the blessing that G-d gives Abraham
after the *Akeidah*:

Again we see the pairing
of a blessing of power, of dominion –
seize the gates of their foes –
with a blessing of fruitfulness, of *p'ru urvu*.

But what's important here
is not just the parallel,
but the difference:

A blessing that G-d gave
in the extraordinary moment of the *Akeidah*

is now being offered
not by G-d but by a person,

and not in the extraordinary moment of the *Akieidah*
but in an ordinary moment of leave-taking,
of a sister leaving home to get married.

That complex interweaving of multiplication and death
is now a blessing uttered by human mouths.

This is the moment when the notion
of the human power to offer a blessing of dominion
first entered the Jewish people.

We still don't know what a blessing is,
but we know that the idea that a person
can give a blessing of dominion, of martial victory,
begins with Laban,
and enters the Jewish people through Rebecca.

* * *

At some point Isaac must learn of blessings
from this woman he loves,
must learn of blessings of power and dominion,
blessings of fruitfulness.

But for Isaac, the years after Moriah,
after his mother's death,
were filled with silence,
not blessings.

We get a sense of him from his first meeting with Rebecca:
He is strolling alone in the fields at dusk
as a caravan approaches.

In the caravan, Rebecca asks who the solitary man is.
The servant answers her,
then goes to Isaac and tells his tale.

Isaac says nothing in all of this.
He walks alone as the dark gathers,
he listens to an old man,

he takes a veiled stranger into his mother's tent.

In this world of silence and darkness,
G-d has never spoken to him.

The Torah tells us that after Abraham died,
when Isaac and Ishmael came together
to bury their father in the cave
where their mother too was buried,
G-d blessed Isaac.

The text offers nothing more –
nothing about the content of that blessing,
or what it means –
and it does not say that G-d spoke to Isaac.

And we have no record of Isaac himself speaking at all
since that climb up Mount Moriah.

We see him speak only
after twenty years of marriage,
twenty years of Rebecca's barrenness,
when he pleads with G-d
"on behalf of his wife, for she was barren."

G-d "grants his plea,"
but does not speak,

and even with this granted plea,
it's clear that Isaac isn't getting quite what he wished for:
the children struggle in the womb,
and his wife falls into despair:
"Then why me?"

Only after Esau spurns his birthright,
does G-d speak to Isaac,
when the famine has driven Isaac to Abimelech.

G-d's first words to Isaac are a prohibition:
"Don't go down to Egypt!"

But then the words become more positive:
"Sojourn in this land so that
I may be with you and bless you,"

and then the promise of fruitfulness returns:
"for to you and your seed I will give all these lands
and I will fulfill the oath that I swore
to Abraham your father,

and I will multiply your seed like the stars in the heavens
and I will give to your seed
all these lands,
and all the nations of the earth
shall be blessed through your seed."[1]

There is nothing here about seizing the enemies' gates.

For Isaac, the blessing is simpler:
of fruitfulness, not of power and dominion.

G-d repeats that blessing later, saying
"I will bless you and I will multiply your seed
for the sake of Abraham My servant."

Isaac, the only one of the patriarchs
to have only own wife,
the only one of the patriarchs
to have no concubines,
is the one blessed with pure fruitfulness.

* * *

[1] Lest Isaac think his own worth warrants such attention, G-d makes clear why he will give this blessing: "because *Abraham* has listened to my voice and has kept my charge, my commandments, my statutes, and my teachings."

This is the Isaac of the deathbed speech,
the Isaac blinded by his ordeal on Moriah,
the Isaac who knows from his beloved Rebecca
that people can offer blessings of fruitfulness
and blessings of dominion.
The Isaac who received neither from his father.

Now he will make up for what his father lacked.

He will reward Esau, whom he loves.
His favorite son.
The son who loved him back.
Who *did* for him.
The meritorious son.

*This* son will get blessings not only of fruitfulness,
the half-blessing Isaac got from G-d,
but of dominion too, of power:
This boy, this bowman,
this true son,
will be a leader, a conqueror.

Of course it goes awry.
Rebecca, who knows the blessing of dominion
better than Isaac,
also knows how to trick a man
blinded by his own trauma:
a man who looks back
when he should look forward.

She will switch the boys,
maneuvering Jacob into the special spot
where Isaac gives him the blessing of dominion.

For that is the blessing he gives:

"May God grant you
from the dew of the heavens and the fat of the earth,
and abundance of grain and drink.
*May peoples serve you,*

*and  nations bow before you.*
*Be overlord to your brothers,*
*may your mother's sons bow before you.*
*Those who curse you be cursed,*
*and those who bless you, blessed.*"

(It sounds almost like a Scorcese film there,
or the Godfather.)

Now we understand why Isaac
thinks he has no blessing to give:

Only one can hold dominion.
In a blessing of power,
there is only one winner.

And that winner now is Jacob.
Isaac's desire to give the blessing
that his father never gave him,
that not even G-d gave him,

has led him to create a world
that is the opposite of what he wanted.

These are dangerous blessings,
these blessings of dominion.

Esau presses on three times,
as we've seen, ending with his most plaintive cry:
"Have you not kept back a blessing for me?"

Only then, pressed to reach deeper,
does he remember that he has
a blessing of fruitfulness to give,

but with his words of dominion
already loosed, he must offer too
the curse of servitude:

"Look, from the fat of the earth be your dwelling

and from the dew of the heavens above.
By your sword shall you live
and your brother shall you serve.
And when you rebel
you shall break off his yoke from your neck."

Both blessings,
the blessing of Jacob and the blessing of Esau,
have the blessing of fruitfulness –
the dew of the heavens and the fat of the earth –
but dominion cannot be shared:
One dominates, one serves.

* * *

There's a midrash in *Breishit Rabbah*
Explaining a passage in *Chaye Sarah*
That says simply
"After the death of Abraham,
G-d blessed his son Isaac."

Abraham didn't bless him,
so G-d did.

Why didn't Abraham bless him?
the midrash wants to know.

It tells the story of a king who owned an orchard
and leased it to a tenant.
Two trees grew there,
entwined together:
One of vital potions,
one of deadly poisons.

The tenant farmer knew
that if he watered one,
the other would also be watered;
if he deprived one of water;
the other would also be deprived.

He chose to do nothing:
“I’m just a tenant here.
I’ll finish my lease.
Then let the owner decide what to do.”

So it was with Abraham,
the midrash tells us:
He didn’t know how to bless Isaac
without also blessing Ishmael and the sons of Qeturah,
And he didn’t know how to not bless the others,
And bless Isaac.

(As with many older midrashim,
there’s an enmity against Ishmael
and the other sons,
but let’s set that aside,
and focus on the deeper point.)

So Abraham decided that he’d done his part,
fathering his boys;
he was just a tenant on this earth,
after all,
and it was up to G-d to do the rest.

Abraham, caught in the tension between
equality and merit,
chose equality:
Leave all his sons unblessed
rather than bless those not deserving of blessing.

Isaac ends up getting Abraham’s blessing,
but not from Abraham; from G-d.

And so Isaac has no personal experience
of human blessing,
of a father blessing his son.

When he feels his death day near
(though it’s sixty years away)
he wants to do what his father did not:

He will bless his children,
with his own hands,
and not a half-blessing, but a full one:
of fruitfulness *and* power.
So he, unlike his father,
and unlike that tenant farmer,
must choose between merit and equality.

He chooses merit:
He will not worry about giving different gifts;
he will give what is merited:
The greater blessing to the greater son: Esau.

Unschooled in blessings, untaught by his father,
a novice at blessing:
He fails miserably,

not just because he blesses
who he doesn't want to bless,
and curses who he meant to bless,

but because he sows enmity
between his only sons,
a deep hatred between his twins.

By the end of the chapter,
Rebecca has plotted against her son;
Esau is crying and enraged, planning murder;
Jacob has fled to Laban –
of all people –
the first man to offer a blessing of power
to this family.

A blessing that is tearing this family apart.

Is there no middle ground?
No way to bless a child
without dividing a family?

No way to have merit
without sacrificing equality?
No way to have equality without sacrificing merit?
No way to water the vital tree,
but not the deadly one?

* * *

What we often forget is that these two blessings
are not the only blessings of the *parshah.*

When Rebecca tells Jacob to run,
and Rebecca tricks Isaac a second time,
creating the cover story for Jacob's escape,

Isaac summons Jacob
not just to tell him to go to his uncle Laban,
but *to bless him too*:

"Isaac sent for Jacob and blessed him."
"May G-d bless you,
make you fertile and numerous,
so that you become an assembly of peoples.
May He grant the blessing of Abraham
to you and your offspring,
that you may possess the land
where you are sojourning,
which G-d assigned to Abraham."

Where did *this* blessing come from?

Isaac had said moments ago
that he had no blessings left,

And then pressed by Esau,
found only a meager blessing.

How now has he found this generous blessing still to give?

Some would say that he never really wanted
to give Esau a blessing,
that he was not tricked by the ruses,
but tricking himself,
finding a way to empower a younger son
who by rights should not have had the power.

Maybe.
But for me, there is a deeper explanation.
Isaac has learned
that the blessing of fruitfulness
is not limited.

It is not like the blessing of dominion,
Which requires the dominant and the submissive.
The blessing of fruitfulness can be shared by all,
Can be given again and again and again.

And now – after his violent shaking,
after learning how he has been deceived –
he still has in him the blessing of fruitfulness.
He will bless his sons, no matter what,
and he will do it freely, not through deceit.

Isaac now turns away
from one tradition of blessings –
the tradition begun by the hung-over Noah
who offered a blessing-curse to Canaan,
that half a blessing that the cleaver-wielding Abraham
receives at the *Akeidah*,
the one that Laban says aloud,
and sends in Rebecca's ears
to the Jewish people.

He turns toward
the other tradition:
the blessing of fertility and increase,
the *p'ru uvru* blessing offered to the first people,
the other half of the oddly twined *Akeidah* blessing,
the tree, perhaps, of vital potions.

*This* is Isaac's lineage:
*v'eyleh toldot yitzchok.*

Isaac will still bless –
He will not be the father his father was.
But his ordeal has taught him -
the anger about to tear his family apart has shown him –
what blessings of dominion can do.

They were a beginner's mistake, perhaps,
the first Jew's clumsy efforts
at blessing his children.

That is Isaac's *story*:
*v'eyleh toldot yitzchok.*

* * *

We haven't given up on blessings.
We still bless our children every Friday night,
invoking Ephraim and Manasseh,
Isaac's great-grandchildren.
Or at least we *say* we bless them.

We still lay hands on them,
as if there is some power in those hands,
as if a magic emanates from our fingers.

But what we say are not words of power,
not even words of fruitfulness.

In our thousands of years,
we have moved to words of hope, of supplication:

"May G-d bless you and keep you.
May G-d shine His face on you and be gracious.
May G-d turn his face to you and give you peace."

These are not even blessings,
in the sense that Isaac used them:
they are not professions of power
to alter the future,
they are devoid of dominion of all sorts.
They are hopes,
hopes that we put in G-d's hands.

Hopes of safety and generosity,
of light and peace.

We've come a long way from Isaac,
from his story and his lineage.

*These* blessings –
Our hands on our children's heads on Friday night –
These are our story, our lineage, our *Toldot.*

Shabbat shalom.