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NEWS & VIEWS

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Blog Edition

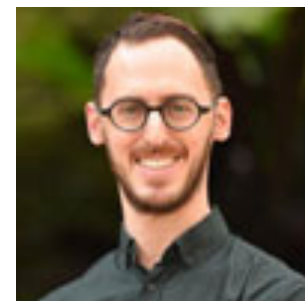


Posts from this [Hebrew College-hosted blog](#) are published weekly in [Patheos](#).

Closed Wells, Closed Hearts

Parashat Toldot (Genesis 25:19-28:9)

By Rabbi Adam Lavitt, Rab` 12
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A man in an elevator repeatedly presses the close button as a woman outside shares her story of sexual assault. [T'ruah](#) recently convened a group of rabbis and cantors in conversation with Ana Maria Archila, one of the women who confronted Senator Jeff Flake in that powerful moment. During our conversation, someone spoke about Dr. Ford's courage, and the cautious optimism they felt leading up to the hearing. And then the silence after Kavanaugh was confirmed, the way many of us shut down.

Shut down. Stopped up. As Isaac becomes successful and powerful, the Torah tells us, a group of people called the Philistines stop up the wells Abraham, Isaac's father, dug. After many years of providing water to people and their flocks, the wells are shut down. Driven by self-interest, the Philistines threaten the public good. In response, both Isaac and the Philistines sort themselves into ideological camps. They decide one side should have power over the nation's resources, regardless of the societal cost.

The fight for control of the wells suddenly becomes a zero sum game. The Targum, a 1st century translation renders "closed up" into the Aramaic *tmunim*. Being driven by self-interest, "chokes up (*matametem*) the heart." As we sort ourselves into ideological camps, "us" and "them", we close our hearts to each other. We lose access to our collective purpose and vision. As we fall for this "us" versus "them" narrative, we shut down spaces essential to a vibrant democracy, beginning with our hearts. We cry out to each other, like Archila's fellow protester did, "Look at me!", but feel painfully invisible to each other.

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NEXT WEEK!

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Ta Sh'ma: Fall Ordination Programs

Open House & Day of Learning

Nov. 12 | Hebrew College

[Information and Registration](#)

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9:30 a.m. | \$100 per person

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with Rebecca Kobrin

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Co-sponsored by [Jewish Genealogical Society of Greater Boston](#) and Hebrew College

Dec. 16 | 3:30 - 5:30 p.m. | Free

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