

Rabbi David Ingber on Coming Out

[Youtube Link](#)

(0:04 - 0:23)

When I was a little boy, my mom used to read stories to us at night. And a couple of years ago, I shared my favorite book with the community, Torah. Those who know the story, it's a story about a little boy named Ira who has a teddy bear.

(0:24 - 0:41)

Anybody remember the name of the teddy bear? That's right, Fufu. And Ira lives in a home where his next door neighbor is on the same porch. It's his best friend, and he wants a sleepover party.

(0:42 - 0:49)

There's only one problem. See, Ira's got a teddy bear named Fufu. Wow, you guys did not say that together.

(0:50 - 1:03)

If I'm up here saying Fufu, you can say Fufu too, OK? Ready, one more time. Ira's got a teddy bear named Fufu. Well, he doesn't want his friend next door to find out that he goes to sleep with a teddy bear named Fufu.

(1:04 - 1:11)

So he goes to his dad. He says, dad, they're going to laugh. And he says, they won't laugh, said my father.

(1:12 - 1:18)

He goes to his mother and says, mom, he's going to laugh. He won't laugh, said my mother. And then he went to his sister.

(1:21 - 1:30)

They'll laugh, said my sister. I decided not to go. That's the book, until finally, he goes over to his friend's house.

(1:31 - 1:33)

And they have their play. It's like their play date. They have their sleepover.

(1:34 - 1:44)

They're looking at stamps and cards and all kinds of wonderful things that little boys look at in that little story. And next thing you know, the light goes off. And he hears a drawer open.

(1:46 - 2:02)

And his friend takes out a furry looking thing. And Ira says, what's that? And he says, oh, nothing. His teddy bear's name is Tata.

(2:06 - 2:13)

Down Ira goes, next door. He won't laugh, said my father. He won't laugh, said my mother.

(2:13 - 2:29)

He'll laugh, said my sister. And Ira says, he won't laugh. The things that we keep hidden, the things that we think that we can't share, the things that we say, if they would know this, then forget it.

(2:30 - 2:56)

I'm not going to tell them about that, or I won't show that. In the 12-step program, which is one of the holiest religious movements without a religion, comparing our insides to someone else's outsides and vice versa. A tradition, I say it's not religious because it doesn't espouse any particular religious tradition, but it does believe in a higher source.

(2:56 - 3:20)

And according to many sociologists, it is indeed a movement. And it's a great healing, that notion that you can look at someone else's outsides and know your own insides, or vice versa, judge your own outsides as someone else's inside, that distance between the inside and the outside. Deception is a big theme in this week's reading.

(3:22 - 4:14)

Tomorrow morning, we'll read about the ultimate deception, the story about Jacob and his brother Esau, and how Jacob, who's called the heel man, grabbing onto his brother Esau's heel as he comes out of the womb, who sells, who buys a sold birthright, and who is going to have a really difficult time getting his father's blessing, you know? Faith, trusting his intuitions, trusting our own intuitions. In this past week, in our Bateman graduate, our study together on Tuesday evenings, we talk about faith and doubt, a dialectic between faith, believing, and doubting. And we looked at some sources about Amalek, the arch enemy of the Jewish people, and how they're associated with a certain kind of doubt.

(4:15 - 4:52)

There's healthy doubt, the kind of doubt that cleanses or purifies faith, the kind of doubt that Rav Kok said is, kfirah shehi hoda'ah, v'hoda'ah shehi kekfirah, the kind of doubt that has us questioning immaturity of belief, immaturity of faith, immaturity of relationships, the kind of doubt that corrodes in a healthy way, that helps to prune. And the other kind of doubt, which we discussed this past Tuesday night, sefek, the kind of doubt that comes when we're in a good place, and it shakes the foundation. It destabilizes us, and we say, hmm, what's going on here? The corrosive element of doubt.

(4:53 - 5:25)

In the Jacob story, that famous story about deception, the story of having to receive the Father's blessing through trickery, through crookedness, there's a moment in the story that I think is so, so important for us. It occurs after we're told in chapter 27 that Isaac has become blind. He thinks it's best now for him to bless his children before he dies.

(5:25 - 5:36)

He calls out to his son, Esau, the older one. Rivka, Rebecca, hears this call. She shomat v'daber Yitzchak el Esav beno.

(5:37 - 5:57)

She hears that, and she goes to her son, Jacob, and she says to him, hinei shamati et avicha medaber el Esav achich. I heard your father speaking to your brother Esau, your twin brother. He told him to bring him delicious delicacies so that he may bless him before he died.

(5:58 - 6:14)

Now I say to you, Rebecca says, listen to my voice, that which I command you today. Now you go and you prepare, and you bring the delicacies to your father as he has requested. And here's the moment.

(6:16 - 6:25)

Vayoma Yaakov el Rivka imo. And Jacob says to Rebecca, his mother, hinei esav achi ish sa'ir. My brother Esau is a hairy man.

(6:26 - 6:36)

Va'anokhi ish halak, and I am a smooth-skinned man. Oolai yimusheni avi. Vayiti be'enav kim ta'atea.

(6:37 - 6:47)

Perhaps my father will touch me, feel me. And I will be in his eyes as a trickster. He'll think that I'm a trickster.

(6:47 - 6:55)

I'm a deceiver, I'm a magician. He can't trust me. Ve'eveti alai khalava lo bracha.

(6:56 - 7:08)

And I will bring a curse on me instead of a blessing. Oolai yimusheni avi. Perhaps, oolai, the word oolai in Hebrew is perhaps.

(7:09 - 7:21)

It appears most frequently in the Abraham story when Abraham is bargaining with God and says, God, maybe there are 50 in the city, 40 in the city. Oolai, oolai, oolai. Oolai, the word oolai, maybe.

(7:22 - 7:33)

What's the maybe? Where Jacob says to his mother, Rebecca, I can't bring these delicacies. Oolai yimusheni avi. What does that mean? Oolai yimusheni avi.

(7:34 - 7:47)

What does it mean? Perhaps my father will touch me. There's a much bigger problem than his father touching him. What's the bigger problem that Jacob should have said to his mother, Rebecca? He didn't lie.

(7:47 - 7:50)

He's not gonna say anything to him. Let's say he doesn't say anything. Let's say he just says hello.

(7:52 - 8:00)

Deception is clear. Deception is an issue here. But what's a bigger issue than maybe my father will touch me? Maybe my father will hear me.

(8:03 - 8:11)

Hi, dad, it's David. Hi, dad, it's Jacob. Presumptive, we presume that his father can hear his voice.

(8:11 - 8:23)

Is that a safe assumption, that his father would recognize his voice? Maybe it isn't. Maybe his father has never heard his voice. Maybe Jacob's father has never heard his voice.

(8:26 - 8:53)

Maybe, maybe, oolai yimusheni avi is, maybe the oolai says, like Saba Kabbalah to Mecklenburg, maybe the oolai of maybe is not maybe, but I wish he would. The word in Hebrew, oolai, there's another word, I hope he doesn't, which is pen. Pen yimusheni avi.

(8:53 - 9:09)

Oolai yimusheni avi says this one particular commentator means I hope, I pray that he would touch me and know it's me. He won't know from my voice. He doesn't know my voice.

(9:09 - 9:19)

He's never heard my true voice. He doesn't know my true colors. I haven't been his chosen one.

(9:19 - 9:30)

He doesn't look at me in the way that he looks at Esau. I'm not that one. And so I hid it away, my voice, and now you're telling me to bring this gift to him and so that he will bless me.

(9:31 - 9:35)

I want you to bless me. Please bless me. Please see me.

(9:38 - 9:57)

Please touch me, hug me. What do I have to do, Dad, for you to see my true colors? Maybe I have to dress like my brother, but that's for Rebecca to decide. Jacob never says that.

(9:58 - 10:16)

Jacob never asks for that clothing. That's Rebecca's push. Our tradition teaches us that of all of the things that we, as those who want to be on the way, should emulate about God.

(10:16 - 10:42)

God is, in our tradition, one who cares for the sick, one who picks up the downtrodden, one who argues for the orphan. Our God, says the tradition, Chotamo shel haKadosh Baruch Hu emes, the signature of God, where God rings His ring, His stamp. Chotamo shel haKadosh Baruch Hu emes, to be truthful, to be honest.

(10:44 - 11:00)

Our God is a God who hates lies. Our God is a God who hates lies, says the Talmud. The story of a rabbi in the Talmud who, after the destruction of the temple, could not bear to speak to God in the way that the rabbi said he should speak to God.

(11:00 - 11:14)

The tradition said that you should say, Ha'el haGadol ve'haNorah. Ha'el haGadol ve'haNorah. God who is great, God who is sublime, God who is awesome, and every rabbi in the tradition was genuflecting before that God.

(11:15 - 11:32)

And along came one rabbi in the Talmud and said, I can't say that. I can't say those words. The temple is destroyed, and if I lie in my prayers, God's ultimate value is not obedience, but truth.

(11:33 - 11:41)

Ha'el haGadol ve'haNorah, no, not for me. Chotamo shel haKadosh bochu emes. God is a God of truth.

(11:43 - 11:55)

And here is Jacob about to pull off the great deception. And about, right before it's about to happen, he has one last chance. He says, you know, u'lai yimusheni avi.

(11:56 - 12:05)

Let me go to my dad now. Let me try this truth. I want him to discover who I am.

(12:07 - 12:28)

Because I don't want to lie. I remember as a young man how brutal it was to live in a world where people judged others from the outside. I wanted more than anything to be loved like all of us.

(12:29 - 12:51)

I remember specifically in high school how the only way that I could be loved was by being a good athlete. And I would look at all of the theater people and all those involved in the arts and I'd say, ah, but I was good at athletics and not so great at arts. And that role that I played stuck with me for so long.

(12:53 - 13:14)

It was so hard to find my voice because forget about my father, I don't even know if I had ever heard it myself. So many people who are so afraid to speak the truth about their experience in relationships with their wives, with their husbands, with their partners. So many people who are saying, well, I, maybe you'll find out now who I am.

(13:16 - 13:39)

Please catch me in my lie because it hurts too much for me to be lying. There came a time, said Anais Nin, a day came when the risk to remain tight in a bud was more painful than the risk it took to blossom. The day came when the risk to remain tight in a bud was more painful than the risk it took to blossom.

(13:40 - 14:00)

Yaakov, I wish I could be there and say to you, listen, I know Rebecca is about to tell you to go wear Esau's clothing and that's really beautiful. There's a lot of Torah about that, but listen, take a risk, take a risk, Jacob, because your deception now is going to come back. It'll come back with Leah and with Rachel.

(14:00 - 14:08)

It will come back. You will get caught in lies and you, Yaakov, are titeh emes, Yaakov. You are truth, Jacob.

(14:10 - 14:31)

The pain of being a bud will be overwhelming and you will have to bloom at some point. Risk showing your true colors, please. Maybe that's why you eventually gave your beloved son, Joseph, a coat of many colors, who knows? True colors.

(14:33 - 15:06)

I want to dedicate tonight's d'var Torah to all of those, wherever they are, who are daring to come out and to tell people about their true colors. To my dear friend, Abby, and all of the teachers everywhere who have the strength, the courage, the power of doubt that says, maybe, maybe this bud, maybe it's time to bloom. May truth prevail.

(15:19 - 17:21)

Y'all rise, huh? ♪ Decide to be discouraged or realize ♪ ♪ I can take courage in a world full of people ♪ ♪ And you can decide to be wrong ♪ ♪ And the darkness inside you can make you feel small ♪ ♪ I see your true colors shining through ♪ ♪ I see your true colors, that's why I love you ♪ ♪ So don't be afraid to let them show your true colors ♪ ♪ Your true colors, your true colors are truthful like a rainbow ♪ One more time. ♪ So I see your true colors, I see your true colors, that's why I love you ♪ ♪ So don't be afraid to let them show your true colors ♪ ♪ Your true colors, your true colors are beautiful like a rainbow ♪ ♪ Hashei Bota, Hashei Bota, El Leva Becha, El Leva Becha ♪

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