

“EXPRESS THE BLESSING”

The biblical commentator Benno Jacob writes: “Abraham had not blessed his son as Isaac and Jacob will. A man like Abraham need not bless by words; his life is a blessing for those who observe it.”

Surely it is true that Abraham’s life is a blessing. Nonetheless, Isaac learned from his father the way our children often learn from us -- not only by what he did, but by what he failed to do. Abraham neglected to bless his children, but Isaac remembered.

Love, thanks, blessing -- all should be expressed. Rabbi Akiba beautifully said that not only did God create human beings in the Divine image -- God doubly blessed us by telling us in the Torah that we were created in the Divine image. Parents, spouses, friends, should not only care for one other, but express that caring through the power of words. Abraham’s life was indeed a blessing to Isaac, but how much might it have meant to Isaac had Abraham laid his hands upon him and invoked God’s favor?

The tradition has learned from Isaac and Jacob: each Friday night we bless our children. In that sacred moment our tradition reminds us that we must make not only our lives a blessing, but our words a blessing as well.