

Tell a story
Parsha Toldot
by Julie Zhuk on 2024-11-30

The term Toldot translates to Generations. Just as Sara and Abraham were not able to have children for many years, Rebecca and Isaac struggled with this problem for a very long time as well. They did what most Jews did, and prayed for years to come. They waited patiently and finally, a miracle happened and she had a baby. Rebecca experienced a really difficult pregnancy, the children inside her body fought with each other. She was having twins and G-d told her there were two nations in her womb, they were Esau and Jacob. G-d concluded that the younger child would eventually prevail over the older one. Esau came first, Jacob was holding onto the heel of Esau's heel. G-d was aware that Esau would grow up to be a "cunning hunter a man of the field." Jacob on the other hand, would grow up to be "a wholesome man, he would be a dweller in the tents of learning."

Their father, out of the two would favor Esau, but their mother Rebecca would always in the end love Jacob. Once Esau had come back from a whole day of hunting, he was really exhausted and quite hungry as well. It was on that day, he wasn't quite thinking straight that he decided to sell his birthright to his brother Jacob, at the time Jacob had been making a delicious soup in the kitchen. It was a pot of red lentil soup. While all of this was going on, in the land of Gerar where the Philistines were living Isaac had presented Rebecca as his sister out of fear that he would be killed by someone who was jealous because she was so beautiful. In this area of Gerar, Isaac decides to farm the land. He reopens the wells that were dug up by his father and he digs a series of his own wells. While he does this over two wells there were some problems with some of the Philistines. The waters from the third he was able to enjoy in peace. We learn in this Parsha that, Esau married two women from Hittite descent. It was by this time that Isaac had grown old and blind. Since we had learned earlier in the Parsha, that Isaac favored Esau he wanted to bless him.

Knowing he was going to die soon, he wanted to do it soon. It happened that when Esau was off hunting, Rebecca came up with a special plan. She dressed Jacob up in Esau's clothing. The clothing covered Jacob's arms and neck and since Isaac was blind already he wouldn't be able to see. The clothing was filled with goatskins, the point of this was to simulate the feel of a hairier brother. Esau had more hair on his body than Jacob. Rebecca prepared a similar dish and sent Jacob over to his father. Jacob got his father's blessings, they were: "the dew of the heaven and the fat of the land" and to have mastery over his brother. When Esau returned from his hunting trip, the deception had been revealed. All Isaac could do was weep for his son and predict that he would live by his sword. Isaac also said that when Jacob would falter, Esau would give up his supremacy to Jacob.

Jacob knew that Esau was angry with him. Maybe that wasn't even the word for it, so Jacob left home. He ran off to a city called Charan. In Charan he was going to find himself a wife and build a family and continue on with his future life. Most people would think how awful that Jacob left his mother behind, but the Parsha tells us that Rebecca had really good intuition. She knew exactly what she was doing at planning this out. She knew how to make everything work so Jacob would get the blessing in the end and not Esau. This way the Jewish lineage would

continue because like the Parsha tells us what was about to happen with Isaac giving a blessing to one of the twins it was really important which one it would go to. It was not a game, it was not a charade. The blessing going to the right person Jacob was crucial.

The Parsha tells us that Rebecca had a lot of courage and commitment, and most importantly she was prepared to sacrifice everything. She was very much aware that her husband was dying and what was at stake with the Jewish people after Isaac would no longer be around. She had come up with this plan not on some kind of a whim, but for the Jewish continuity and for an assured eternity, so the Jewish people can continue today into the present time as of 2024. What happened at the end of the Parsha to Esau is he married one more woman her name was Machalath. What we know of this woman is she was the daughter of Ishmael.