

Toldot
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Shabbat Shalom. Thank you all so much for helping me celebrate this special day. I would like to begin by telling a little bit about my torah portion. Parashat Toldot is based on how Rebecca and Isaac each had a favorite child. Esau and Jacob were their twin sons. Since Jacob was Rebecca's favorite child, she came up with a plan to help Jacob trick his father Isaac into giving him the blessing to Jacob instead of his brother Esau. It all started one day when Esau made a trade with Jacob. Esau had just gotten back from hunting, and was extremely tired and very hungry. He came inside and asked Jacob to give him some soup. "Give me some of that red stuff to gulp down for I am famished". Instead of just giving Esau the soup, Jacob made Esau swear that if he gave Esau the soup, then Esau would give him his birthright.

Later on, Rebecca overheard Isaac telling Esau to go prepare him a dish that he liked, so that he could give Esau the blessing before he died. Rebecca wanted Jacob to receive the blessing before Esau. She made Jacob wear goat skins on his arms so that he would feel hairy like Esau, she dressed him in his brother's clothes, and she told him she would prepare a meal that Jacob could give to Isaac. When Jacob went to get the blessing Isaac didn't believe him at first, but Jacob said "I am Esau your first born... pray give me your innermost blessing". Despite some suspicions, Isaac gave Jacob the blessing meant for Esau. When Esau found out, he was extremely angry and pleaded to Isaac, "bless me too father!" so Isaac gave Esau another blessing. Esau still wasn't over what Jacob had done. Enraged, he vowed to kill Jacob. Rebecca heard Esau's plan, and told Jacob to flee at once.

After reading this I realized that the little plan that Rebecca had made had a huge life long effect on the entire family. The family broke up, and were never all together again. Jacob later on had his own family as well as Esau. You may think that this problem ended for good, but the same problem carried onto Jacobs' family. One problem that could have been fixed, grew into a problem that lasted for generations. Imagine getting into a fight with a sibling and having it split up your entire family. Not many people would feel good

about that happening, but in my torah portion, neither Jacob nor Esau really showed much guilt or regret until a lot later on.

The main problem in Rebecca and Isaac's family was how each child was treated differently. Each child was favored by a different parent. Not only were they treated differently, but each son received a different blessing. Rebecca always wanted Jacob to get what she thought he deserved. I think this because in the story Rebecca went through a lot just so Jacob could be blessed with the blessing Esau was supposed to receive. Even though Esau was supposed to receive the blessing, Rebecca did not respect Isaac's promise when she came up with the plan that helped Jacob steal the birthright. Even though Esau was blessed, he was angry that he hadn't gotten the same blessing that he would have received.

In my family, my sisters and I are all treated differently, but in the way that we *need* to be treated. If the same situation happened in my family, today, it would have been dealt with differently, and we would have both eventually been blessed with a blessing of similar importance. Parents should respect promises, tell the truth, and be fair. These are all strong values for families, and they're also good rules to live by. Now that I am becoming a Bat Mitzvah, it is my responsibility to keep my promises, tell the truth, and to treat others fairly.

I would now like to take this time to thank all of my Hebrew school teachers who have taught, and helped me through out many years, and who all prepared me for this special day. I would like to thank Cantor Cohn, and Rabbi Small for working with from the very beginning of my Torah Portion, and my D'var Torah, and helping me successfully complete both. I would like to thank my mom, and dad for supporting me through out the process of becoming a Bat Mitzvah, and for teaching me about doing what is right, and being a good person. Last but not least I would like to thank my sisters Caroline and Audrey for being supportive, and for spending so much of their time listening to me practice for this special day.