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Parsha Toldat: Protecting Generations of Jews to Come



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Parsha Toldat: Protecting Generations of Jews to Come

This week's Torah portion, Toldat: Genesis 25:19 - 28:9, describes the duplicities and intricacies unfolding in the second generation of Israel. Sarah has died at age 127 from the stress of the Binding of Isaac when he is 37 years old. Three years later Isaac marries Rebecca, and the couple remains childless for 20 years, when they produce twin boys, Esau and Jacob. The portion describes the pre-born twins as contentious, and their personality conflict becomes perhaps the most infamous sibling rivalry in history!

The twins are 15 years old when Esau exchanges his birthright for a meal of lentil stew. This is the day that their grandfather, Abraham, dies at age 175. Jacob is cooking the tempting stew for his grieving father. Esau's hunger and youthful impatience leaves him vulnerable to Jacob's manipulation and pressure, thus resulting in the poor decision which increases the resentment and distrust between the siblings.

The animosity between the two twins explodes when they are 63 years old on the day that Rebecca arranges the deception of Isaac. In order that her favorite son, Jacob, receive Isaac's blessings instead of the eldest Esau, she has Jacob masquerade as Esau to receive the blessing. The portion ends with Esau's furious vow to murder his twin, causing Jacob to flee to their uncle's home in Charan, where he will marry the two sisters Rachel and Leah.

Jacob was a righteous man acting according to Divine guidance. The blessings bestowed upon him promise a successful life, abundant in progeny, health, fortune, respect, security, and real estate in the land of Israel. G-d blesses him in all these ways, guaranteeing future Jewish generations to come.

Children are a gift from G-d, created by G-d and in His image.

Psalm 127:3 reads, "Behold, children are a heritage from the LORD, the fruit of the womb, a reward." And Psalm 139:13 reads, "For You formed my inward parts; You knitted me together in my mother's womb."

The bestowal of this gift requires immense parental and community responsibility, effort and perspective. It requires that we put the care and protection of defenseless children in the womb ahead of our own desires; that we speak out for them and care for them though we be attacked, ridiculed and ostracized; that we choose right action even in wrong circumstances.

What better way to show appreciation and love of G-d than this?

Gevalt! It IS alive before It's born!

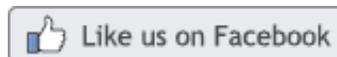
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