

Covenant & Conversation

FAMILY EDITION

INSPIRED BY THE TEACHINGS OF RABBI LORD JONATHAN SACKS

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THE RABBI SACKS LEGACY

Toldot: The Hero Within

DEVELOPED BY SHOSH HILL

parsha recap

After waiting a long time and praying to God, Yitzchak and Rivka are blessed with twin sons, Eisav and Yaakov. As they grow up, Yaakov becomes a scholar, while Eisav becomes a hunter.

Eisav impulsively sells his birthright to Yaakov for some red lentil soup. When Yitzchak is old and blind, he feels his life is nearing its end and wants to bless his sons. He sends Eisav to hunt and prepare a meal, planning to give him the firstborn blessing. Rivka overhears and tells Yaakov to disguise himself as Eisav. Yaakov does this, and he receives the blessing. When Eisav realises what has happened, he is heartbroken and asks his father for a blessing as well.

- → Why didn't Rivka just tell Yitzchak who she thought should get the blessing?
- → Since lying is wrong, why did Yaakov agree to trick his father, as Rivka suggested?
- → Can something good come from doing something wrong?

a closer look

הַבְּרָכָה אַחַת הִוא־לְךָ אָבִי

"Have you only one blessing, father."

(BEREISHIT 27:38)

RABBI SACKS TEACHES US:

"There is at times a tendency on the part of the Midrash to separate biblical characters into the wholly [completely] good and wholly bad, and for this there are good reasons. To serve effectively as role-models, biblical heroes must be seen as consistently heroic, non-heroes as villains. The Torah teaches a different and equally important message: Even heroes have their faults and non-heroes their virtues, and these virtues are important to God."

Source: *Toldot: Isaac and Esau (Covenant & Conversation: I Believe).*

moral matters

LET'S DISCUSS!

- → Why might it be important for the Torah to show that **even heroes make mistakes**?
- → What **good qualities** do you think were within Eisav?
- → How can knowing that even 'bad' people have good qualities help us **treat others more fairly**?