

## ***PARASHAT TOLDOT: “2 BROTHERS”***

We know the story of Isaac’s 2 sons, Jacob & Esau, and how the Torah shows Jacob as ‘*the good son*’ and Esau – well – as the rowdy one.

We know that God had told Rebecca, even before her twin sons were born, that they would be very much the opposite of each other.

And we know that Rebecca favored Jacob and disliked Esau, while Isaac liked his son Esau better, because – well – Esau was more ‘*outdoorsy*’, a hunter, more physical – all those things that Isaac himself was not.

Why is it, I wonder, that as parents, grandparents, teachers, friends or neighbors we are so surprised when we see that someone is not the same as her sister or older brother? Why do we hear people *comparing* two children, questioning if Suzie is a good musician, why her sister Bonnie can’t play a note? Why are so many of us puzzled that one boy is a great soccer player, and his brother hates sports? Isaac and Esau grew up in a home where each was compared to his brother, favored by only one parent. And that is why they fought all through their lives.

Parents must be fair and love their children, regardless of the child’s traits or interests. And we understand that children—all children—need and seek their parents’ love and respect the same as their siblings. Parents are people too, and are proud of their kids *in different ways*, but it’s their job to love and support each child: to raise up the child’s strengths, and to understand and help the child—and his or her siblings—deal with each one’s challenges. And that’s what Isaac and Rebecca *failed* to do as parents.

Amen.

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