



## TOLDOT

In this week's parsha of Toldot, we read about the birth of the famous set of twins, Ya'akov and Esav.

Shortly thereafter, we read about how Esav came home from a busy day of hunting, and he was starving. His brother Ya'akov was busy cooking a pot of lentil soup, and when Esav rudely demands some, Ya'akov decides that he will sell it to him in exchange for the birthright.

As a side note, Esav was actually born first, but in Judaism, the "Bechor," the first-born son, is considered to have a holier status. In fact, the original "plan" was that the people who were destined to perform the services in the Bet Hamikdash were the first-borns, NOT the Kohanim. Why the switch? That, we will, G-d willing, discuss at a later time.

Esav went right along with the "deal," and he commented, "Behold, I am going to die, so of what use to me is the Birthright?" What did he mean by this? He was not going to die right then; Ya'akov WAS going to give him some food!

The answer is that Esav was only concerned about the here and now. He had no regard for the future, not in his own life and certainly not for Olam Habah (the world to come). While it was true that the birthright would have special significance for the future, Esav (who was NOT stupid) knew that it would be meaningless in his lifetime, and was therefore more than willing to give it up. Ya'akov, on the other hand, recognized deeply the significance that this would have on the future of the yet-to-be-born Jewish nation, and valued his treasure greatly.

This is one of the marks of a Jew. We recognize that the actions that we take NOW are not only for the present; they have the potential to effect the future as well, perhaps long after we are gone. We must follow the shining example of our forefather Ya'akov, and NOT of our impatient "Uncle Esav."

Shabbat Shalom,  
Rabbi Cohen