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Parshat Toldot

Rabbi Ian Lichter

Rabbi Ian Lichter is the Assistant Rabbi of Great Neck Synagogue in Great Neck, NY

Parshat Toldot contains the significant dialogue between Yaakov and Eisav that captures the spiritual nature of each man. The verse tells us ויזד יעקב נזיד, that Yaakov is cooking lentil soup when Eisav approaches. The Midrash Rabbah (25:29) explains that Eisav asks Yaakov why he is cooking the soup, to which Yaakov responds by telling him that Avraham had died. The Midrash explains that Eisav was dumbfounded, unable to come to terms with the idea that Avraham Avinu, such a holy presence in his life, should succumb to such an end. It was such a startling experience for Eisav that it became the catalyst for moving away from Godliness. It was in his mind a tragedy that could not be comprehended and therefore warranted further distance from God.



Similarly, the Gemara in Sanhedrin (37a) tells us about the life of Rav Zeira who was living in a neighborhood with *Baryonai*, rebel rousers or trouble makers, engaged in evil acts. Rav Zeira made attempts to bring them closer to the teachings of Torah with the hope that they would one day begin the process of *teshuvah*. Colleagues of Rav Zeira urged him to stop wasting his time trying to bring these *Baryonai* closer, but he persisted. The Gemara recounts when Rav Zeira died, the *Baryonai*, like Eisav were astounded. Who will pray for us now, they cried out. In their despair, they ultimately recognized the path to *teshuvah*. Taking these two accounts to mind, one draws an incredible lesson. Eisav could not comprehend the death of Avraham and responded by giving up on his traditions. The *Baryonai* responded to the death of Rav Zeira, the one who cared for them, by recognizing the power that was latent within themselves. While Eisav descended to a life of materialism and spiritual emptiness, the *Baryonai* were compelled to be awakened to *teshuvah*.

The message for us is deepened by learning about the destruction of the Beit HaMikdash. In the *Kinot* on *Tisha B'Av*, we relate that Titus pierced the *parochet* in the Beit HaMikdash, leading to the *parochet* to drip blood and thus Titus claiming a victory over God. Conversely, the Gemara in Gittin (56a) tells the story of the Roman general Nero who shot arrows in all directions, only to see all of them land in Jerusalem. He knew the Beit HaMikdash was destined to be destroyed but turned to God and refused to be the tool of the destruction. He

would eventually convert to Judaism. Here we are told about two generals, each experiencing a miracle potentially providing a path to Godliness; the *parochet* drips blood and the arrows all point to Jerusalem, yet Titus was invigorated only to produce more evil while Nero was aroused to seek God.

I believe it is clear, that with every challenge and sense of pain, our reaction to our situation is what defines us. It is what we make of the miracles and experiences in our own lives that will lead us to either divest or invest in our traditions of Torah and mitzvot. Once again, our brothers and sisters in Eretz Yisrael were challenged by the arson fires that ravaged too much of the land this past week. But we trust their spiritual makeup, because we have seen it many times over, that this somber and serious tragedy will lead our people to feel closer to God as the Rock of Salvation. It's always what we make of it. The lives of Eisav, neighbors of Rav Zeira and Nero paint a clear picture home.

Upcoming Event



RELIGIOUS ZIONISTS OF AMERICA-MIZRACHI
Invites you to a special presentation

The Contemporary Significance of the State of Israel: Reshit Zemichat Geulatenu?



Rabbi Dr. Jacob J. Schacter
Senior Scholar, Yeshiva University's Center
for the Jewish Future
University Professor of Jewish History and
Jewish Thought, Yeshiva University

Congregation Rinat Israel
389 W. Englewood Ave, Teaneck, NJ

Tuesday, December 13th
7:30 pm

Introducing the New RZA-Aryeh Fellowship!

The RZA-Aryeh Fellowship is a new initiative of the RZA-Mizrachi to strengthen the mission of Religious Zionism. Fifty college and graduate school students from around the country have been invited to spend their winter-break in Israel where they will be studying Torah and attending intensive seminars devoted to Religious Zionism education. Upon their return the Aryeh Fellows will focus on their year-long Manhigut (leadership) projects designed to bring the message of Religious Zionism back to communities across America. We are excited to profile a different "Aryeh Fellow" each week.

Meet Yardena Sultan-Reisler



My name is Yardena Sultan-Reisler and I'm really excited have the opportunity to be an RZA Aryeh Fellow! I'm from Silver Spring, Maryland and went to Berman Hebrew Academy then continued my studies in Midreshet Lindenbaum.

Learning and living in Israel was amazing. Finally, I was getting to know a place I had only heard about, learned about, dreamed about, and now I was able to make it my own. By the end of the year, I mastered navigating lines in the Gemara and the streets of Jerusalem. I made lots of friends and I feel blessed to have learned from great teachers. I will always cherish these memories.

I've been a camper and now a counselor in Camp Stone, a Bnei Akiva camp, for many years. Shabbat in camp is the perfect balance between amazing singing, crazy dancing, and candy. It's a place that means a lot to me. During the schoolyear, I was able to channel my passion for Israel into Bnei Akiva sniff in my Jewish community. I started going to sniff from when I was in 3rd grade and eventually, I was a madricha for all of high school.

I'm currently back in the U.S. at the University of Maryland and hope to do some kind of health major. Since I've been in college, I have been looking to get involved and devote my time and effort towards a program which will give me the ability to continue to include Israel throughout my time in college and beyond. I know that being a part of RZA will help me do so and I'm looking forward to collaborating with my friends in leadership projects through the RZA Aryeh Fellows.

Join us for Yom Yerushalyaim!



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THIS YEAR IN JERUSALEM

FOR A MEGA-MISSION OF A LIFETIME
Be Front and Center, Celebrating 50 years of a reunited Jerusalem

over Yom Yerushalayim

MAY 22-25, 2017

Dear RZA-Mizrachi Friends,

We very much look forward to having you take part in our Mizrachi World Movement's "This Year in Jerusalem" Mega-Mission over Yom Yerushalayim. Our aim is to bring thousands of people (including rabbinic and community leaders) from hundreds of communities from across the global Jewish community to learn, experience and celebrate together at this

momentous time in Jewish history.

Please see below a personal invitation from Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks, one of the global leaders of the mission, inviting you to join him on this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity.

More details about the program can be found at the following link - www.mizrachi.org/YY50 - including the draft schedule, highlights, pricing options and booking procedure.

Please note the following:

1. There are 10 hotel options, with a price range depending on hotel choice. Each hotel package includes breakfast, lunch and dinner (excluding Wed evening). The hotel packages also include the entire 4 day program at discounted rates.
2. There is also an option for people who are not staying in hotels - if they have their own accommodation - to join for the 4 day program, at a cost of \$630 per person. It does not include hotel, breakfast and dinner, but does include transport from central meeting points to and from all the venues, lunch each day, and participation in the full program.
3. For those shuls/communities/groups who wish to bring missions and want to extend their trip either before or after our 4 day mission, that can also be arranged by contacting us at YY50@mizrachi.org, and we - together with our partners - will put together a tailor-made package for your group.

Looking forward to celebrating together – in Jerusalem – on this historic occasion.

With excitement and anticipation,

Rabbi Gideon Shloush
Mizrachi – Religious Zionists of America

Rav Doron Perez
Mizrachi World Movement



POINT OF VIEW

The Predictable Supreme Court

Expected and Anticipated

From the time of Aharon Barak, we are continuously being exposed to rulings by the Supreme Court of Israel that greatly upset the nationalistic public in general and the religious people among them in particular. I am referring to rulings on the subject of religion and the state, settlement activity in Yehuda and the Shomron, the army and security, personal rights, giving preference to personal rights and freedom of expression as opposed to national rights, Jewish morality, and faith in the traditions of our fathers. This is in addition to judicial activism and the attitude that "everything is subject to judgement," which has led to legal interpretation of laws in a way that is different from the original intent of the lawmakers, including the cancellation of various laws.

What follows is a very small number of examples. Religion and the state: Rulings related to the IDF Chief Rabbi and rapid conversions which begin in Israel but are completed hastily abroad; Settlements: The destruction of Amona and similar settlements; The IDF: Prohibiting a routine where enemy civilians are sent to knock on doors of suspected terrorists who are their neighbors; Security: Preventing expulsion of terrorists and their families and preventing keeping hostages from Lebanon in order to help in the attempt to free Ron Arad; Morality: Allowing the broadcast of pornographic material and permitting single-sex couples to adopt a child. I can discuss this last issue based on my personal experience – In the year 2001 I joined with the late Shulamit Aloni to ask the Supreme Court for an injunction against the Council for Cable and Satellite Broadcasts to force them to block the broadcast of the Playboy channel even though it was prohibited by an explicit law. Our plea was rejected on the basis of "freedom of expression." As a result of another request of mine for an injunction, asking for equal rights for religious education, I made a decision **never to turn to the Supreme Court again on such subjects, since the results could reliably be predicted in advance.**

Actually, the reactions of the rightist and religious communities to such rulings are also well known in advance. Proposals to change the situation by such tactics as modifying the composition of the committee for choosing judges or the majority needed in the committee to make a decision might indeed make a difference for a short time, as long as the coalition remains in power. But if the regime is replaced the situation will revert to where it was before. And attacks on the Supreme Court decisions by politicians are also to be expected, but they will not bring about any real changes.

We cannot allow this to continue! How can we put a square peg into a round hole? The religious Zionist approach requires us to preserve the strength of the State of Israel, including following the laws and strengthening the national enterprises. There can be no doubt that the Supreme Court should be included in these desires. Any action undermining the court impinges on our existence as a democratic state, and it is an act that threatens to saw off the branch of sovereignty on which we sit.

What can we do? Well, I have an answer: **We must establish a Supreme Court for constitutional issues.**

Judges for Law and Judges for Legal Principles

Supreme Court judges are chosen for their legal expertise and for the tone of their judgements. They are not chosen based on their political outlook or their way of life and their beliefs. This is very good, in order that both sides of a case will trust that their rulings will be based on justice, with no interference from the world outlook of the judge.

However, these judges also serve as the Supreme Court, which also makes rulings based on world outlook – politically left or right, religious or not, faith, and morality. But they were not chosen in a proper way to enable them to fulfill this role!

What we should do is make two separate courts, one a High Court for Appeal and the other a Supreme Court of Justice. The Appeals Court will be chosen as the Supreme Court is chosen now, but they will no longer have the authority to cancel or modify the laws. Instead, a new court will be established which will have all the authority that the Supreme Court has today with respect to judging the constitutionality of laws, including interpreting the laws and

repealing them. This is not a novel idea. In most of the existing democracies today there is a constitutional court which is separate from the appeals court. We have been taught, "If somebody tells you that there is wisdom among the other nations, believe it (but if somebody tells you there is Torah among the other nations, do not believe)" [Eicha Rabbati 2:13]. Yitro taught his son-in-law how to organize a justice system. Why shouldn't we learn today from the other nations how best to organize a High Court for Constitutionality?

The judges of the constitutional court will be chosen by a nominating committee made up of representatives of the public, who will be a majority of the members. They will be appointed by MK's and the government in proportion to the results of elections for the Knesset. Other members of the committee will be chosen by existing judges and the Israel Bar Association. The minimum criterion for being nominated as a judge on this court will be excellence in matters relating to law / spiritual morality / academic credentials / social experience. In this way, **the High Constitutional Court will faithfully represent a cross-section of opinion in the nation**, for the glory of the justice system. There are other details that remain to be worked out, but this is the only way to renew the faith of the people in its court system.

As Shabbat Approaches

Fanaticism and Tolerance

By Rabbi Mordechai Greenberg, Rosh Yeshiva, Kerem B'Yavne

In an essay in the book "Orot" about the disputes on opinions and faith, Rav Kook explains his approach to the issues of fanaticism and tolerance. On one hand there is fanaticism, which believes that its approach and its religion are absolute and immutable truth, and which denies that any other movement has any truth to it at all. As opposed to this, there is a more tolerant viewpoint which believes that all of the movements have some basis of truth, and that by gathering together the items of truth in all the different movements we will be able to achieve absolute truth and there will be peace in the world.

Rav Kook claims that both of these approaches are erroneous. We, in Judaism, do not merely have part of the truth, which would mean that we are in need of additional information from an external source to complete our knowledge. At the same time, we do not subscribe to the infectious fanaticism which claims that we exclusively possess absolute truth and there is nothing left to learn from others. "It is a bad sign for a party if it thinks that it alone is in possession of a living source of all wisdom and honesty – and that everything else is empty and void of any meaning." [Igrot Re'iyah volume 1, page 17].

Here is the correct way of looking at things: Judaism does indeed include everything, but it does not deny that others also have parts of this whole. Even more than this, the power of every movement and every ideology stems from its specific point of truth. If it did not have at least one absolute truth it would not exist at all. The sages taught us that "falsehood cannot continue to exist." [Shabbat 104a]. Falsehood has no way to stand up. All the letters of "*sheker*" stand on a single leg, as opposed to truth, "*emet*," all of whose letters stand on a solid base of two legs. It is therefore important to reveal the elements of truth in every movement in order to know how to struggle against the movement. Only something that is totally false must be eradicated from the world. But if it has at least one element of truth there must not be any attempt to destroy it, because if you do so you are fighting against truth, and any such action is doomed to failure.

And for this reason Rav Kook felt that it was wrong to struggle against secular Zionism in a bitter fight to the end, as others did, since it is based on some true ideas. Some people said: If they move to Eretz Yisrael we will not do so. If they speak Hebrew, we will speak Yiddish. Rav Kook disagreed with these ideas. He insisted that the issues supported by Zionism are words of Torah which also obligate us. Therefore we must show our appreciation for the positive elements of truth in their approach and only afterwards argue against the falsehoods.

Rav Kook gave similar advice to parents in Russia whose children were caught up in the Communist movement. He said we should tell them that we appreciate their demands for

social justice, because this is based on the Torah and on Judaism, and that there is no need to move away from Judaism in order to embrace the concept of socialism.

This can also help us understand Rav Kook's analysis with respect to Eisav: "Let me tell you my opinion regarding foreign beliefs. The light of Yisrael should not try to destroy them, just as we do not intend to cause general destruction of the world and of all its nations, but rather to mend their ways and raise them up... The words of the GRA are enlightening: 'I had hatred for Eisav' [Malachi 1:3]. The hatred was for the things that had been added on. But the main thing, his head, was buried together with the great people of the world.'" Even Eisav had a point of truth which was put to rest near the Patriarchs.

ZIONIST CHASSIDISM

Material and Spiritual Blessings

By Rabbi Rafi Ostroff, Head of the Religious Council of Gush Etzion

How could it be that Yitzchak, one of the Patriarchs of our nation, did not see that Eisav was trying to fool him? This question is asked by the Zohar, among many others. After all, the Patriarchs were supported by the Shechina – the Divine Presence – and they were able to call on the holy spirit to guide them. Why didn't Yitzchak understand Eisav's true nature? The Zohar replies that G-d hid this from him so that Yaacov would be blessed in a Divine spirit and not as a result of Yitzchak's opinion.

The Rebbe of Husiatyn writes the following about this approach:

However, once the Zohar itself wrote that "There are seventy faces to the Torah," everybody else also has permission to explain this matter in his own different way.

The Rebbe continues with the following idea: Yitzchak knew Eisav's character very well, and the fact that he was not at as high a level as Yaacov. And based on this the Rebbe asked three questions:

(1) How could Yitzchak love Eisav?

(2) Why did he want to give the blessing to Eisav?

(3) After he found out that Yaacov had taken away the blessing, why did he feel such great fear? There certainly was a reason to be upset, but why did he feel fear that made him think that the entrance to Gehennon was open underneath him, as is noted by Rashi?

And the Rebbe of Husiatyn replied to these questions in sequence:

A person must make it his habit to bring love for other people into his heart, even including those who stray from the proper path. We must teach ourselves to love the good traits of every person. Eisav was outstanding in his performance of the deeds of honoring his parents, so much so that the Zohar declares that no other person ever honored his parents like Eisav did. In the end, the extra measure of love given to those who move away from the correct path can influence them and bring them back to proper behavior.

Yitzchak wanted to give Eisav material blessings. From the beginning he wanted to give the spiritual blessings to Yaacov, but he wanted Eisav's material blessing to be linked to a Divine blessing, since he understood the danger of giving material blessings without any link to G-d. This answers the second question above, and it also explains the reasoning behind the third question.

Yitzchak felt a great fear when he saw the great danger that might come to the world if the material blessing would not have any spiritual links, as the Rebbe writes:

... For "from the fat of the earth" [Bereishit 27:39] without any link to the tree of life can lead to the result, "you shall move on the power of your sword" [27:40].

The Secret of Transforming Evil into Good

The Rebbe wrote the following in 5700 (1940):

The evil, the robbery, and the wars, the destruction and the ruin, which we see from these nations which are called "Eisav," since they come from his roots, have come about because they are steeped in the "fat of the earth" without any links to "the tree of life." However, in the end a general mending will come about, as is indicated by the SHELAH, commenting on what the sages said, "Eisav's head lies in Yitzchak's bosom. This is the secret of bringing the evil back to the good, just as the swine will eventually be purified.

That is, there is hope that even the worst evil can return to become good. And this is our hope for the other nations of the world.

Red-Haired with Beautiful Eyes

The Rebbe of Husiatyn wrote the following in 5704 (1944):

The sword is the special art of Eisav, but it has happened that Yaacov too was forced to use the sword. However, permission to make use of the skill of Eisav depends on one condition: that the leaders of the nation concur. See the Midrash: "Admoni – red-haired: When Shmuel saw that David had red hair he was afraid and he said – this one spills blood too, like Eisav. But the Holy One, Blessed be He, replied, he has beautiful eyes – He only kills with permission of the Sanhedrin." [Midrash Rabba Toldot.] But if one kills without the permission of the leaders of Yisrael he is like Eisav. Isay this paying special attention to the events of our time.

In this statement the Rebbe was referring to the assassination of Lord Moyne, the British minister of state in the Middle East. He was killed in Egypt by Eliyahu Chakim and Eliyahu Beit Tzuri, who were members of the Lehi. They acted under orders of Yitzchak Shamir (who eventually became the Prime Minister of Israel) in reaction to his anti-Zionist actions and the fact that he refused to allow refugees from the war in Europe to enter Eretz Yisrael. The assassination led to a harsh dispute among the local population about the opposition to the British during the Second World War. Can this teach us what might have been the attitude of the Rebbe towards yet another murder that took place during the month of Cheshvan by men who took hold of the sword of Eisav?

THE ROOTS OF FAITH – Basic Tenets of Jewish Philosophy

What is the Purpose of Time and Space?

By Rabbi Oury Cherki, Machon Meir, Rabbi of Beit Yehuda Congregation, Jerusalem

Philosophers and scientists have expended large efforts on the question of defining the concepts of time and space. This matter has concerned many people, because after all time and space define the limits of man's world. Some of the philosophers toyed with the idea of whether time and space are objective (Descartes) or subjective (Berkeley). Modern science has adopted an approach that time and space are directly related to mass (Einstein). One proposal is to view time as an interface between mankind and the world (Bergson). Another question that has been brought up is whether time and place have minimum values, a concept similar to "atoms" (Arab philosophers called "Mutkalmin" by the Rambam), or are a continuum (Aristotle). Thus, mankind has studied these two concepts in an attempt to find definitions which will satisfy their intellectual curiosity.

However, one subject has not been discussed at all. Why do time and space exist? The sages of Yisrael did indeed discuss this matter, but from the moral standpoint and not necessarily as a scientific pursuit.

Space is what gives us the ability to separate between one person and another. If we were not separated by space, we would feel as if we were one and the same personality. Such a state would not allow the development of mutual reactions between different people, and there would thus be no basis for the concept of morality. That is what the sages meant by the

statement, “Nothing exists that does not have its own place” [Avot 7:3]. Without rules for the relationship between one person and another, it would be impossible to observe the command, “Love your neighbor as yourself” [Vayikra 19:18], which Rabbi Akiva declared was the main principle in the Torah— and in such a case the entire world would become Gehennom (Levinas).

Time is what makes it possible to acquire the privilege to exist. If not for time, we could not insist on the requirements of judgment, because mankind is so puny that he cannot stand up against the eternity of G-d. This is certainly true in the case of a prophet who sinned. The Ramchal explains that time was given to the sinners so that they will be able to rectify what they have distorted. Even if no sin has taken place, time is necessary in order to establish a basis for a personality and to acquire the privilege of existence. This is the essence of the Divine trait of mercy (“*rachamim*”). The name comes from the word for a womb (“*rechem*”), a place which has been given to the living creatures so that during pregnancy they will develop the tools to allow them to cope with the external world after they have been born.

We can conclude that since the justification for the existence of time and space is in essence a moral approach, the need for them depends on a moral requirement. Therefore, after mankind acquires the right to exist the concept of place will no longer be needed and all the souls will be united through mutual love. This is explained in the Tanya (Chapter 12)— that all of the people of Yisrael are a single soul which appears in separate bodies. In addition, the world will rise up above the continuum of historical time, and it will reach the level of the upper world. That is eternal life.

NATURE AND THE TORAH PORTION

Twins

By Dr. Moshe Raanan, Herzog College and the Jerusalem College for Women

“And behold, there were twins in her womb” [Bereishit 24:24].

In the majority of human births one child is born, although at times twins or even more than two children are born together. The worldwide frequency of the birth of twins used to be about one in eighty-eight births, but due to fertility treatments the average number of twins has almost doubled, and today the frequency is about one in forty births.

In our sources the births of twins are recorded both in the Tanach and in the literature of the sages. In addition to Yaacov and Eisav about whom we read in this week’s Torah portion, we have the two sons of Tamar – Peretz and Zerach. “And behold, when she gave birth, there were twins in her womb” [38:27]. Another set of twins mentioned in the Torah but not explicitly is Kayin and Hevel. We are told, “And Adam knew his wife Chavah. And she conceived, and she gave birth to Kayin. She said, I have received a man from G-d.” [4:1]. And then, even though we are not told that she became pregnant again, it is written, “And she continued to give birth to his brother, Hevel ...” [4:2]. Evidently the two were born from the same pregnancy.

Fraternal Twins

All twins are two children born from a single pregnancy, but there are different types. The most common type is what is known as “fraternal twins.” These are the result of impregnation of two eggs by two separate sperm cells, with the fertilized eggs becoming attached to the womb at the same time. The genetic relationship of such twins is like any regular brothers and sisters.

It is possible that because they are the same age and they developed at the same time in their mother’s womb they are similar in some ways, due to environmental effects. From the description in the Torah we can conclude that Yaacov and Eisav were indeed fraternal twins, since they were very different in external appearance. “And the first one came out red, like a

hairy garment, and they called him Eisav" [25:25].

There is another set of non-identical twins in the Talmud: "Yehuda and Chizkiya were twins, one finished taking shape at the end of nine months and the other finished taking shape at the beginning of seven months..." [Yevamot 65b].

Fraternal twins can be subdivided into three categories: (1) A boy and a girl - For statistical reasons, this group is about 50% of all non-identical twins. (2) Two girls. (3) Two boys.

The probability of having twin girls is slightly higher than the probability of twin boys, even though in individual births boys are born on the average at a rate of about 5% higher than girls. The proportion of boy or girl sets of twins is different for different countries. In the United States boy twins are more frequent by a factor of 1.05, while in Italy the factor is 1.07. On the other hand, the rate of deaths in the womb is greater for boys. However, since the danger of death within the womb is greater for twins than for single births, more twin girls are born on the average.

Research has shown that genetic factors are responsible for the rise in births of non-identical twins, but this is connected only to the mother, since the father has no influence on the rate of eggs being released in the ovary. The number of non-identical twins increases with the age of the mother. Women who are 35 years old give birth to twice as many fraternal twins as younger women.

Identical Twins

Identical twins are different in principle than fraternal ones. They can either be two boys or two girls. Identical twins have almost the same exact genetic makeup because they both develop from the same fertilized egg (as a result of an encounter between the egg and a single sperm cell). It is clear that the following passage in the Talmud is a reference to identical and not fraternal twins, who might be very different from each other: "To what can this be compared? It is like twin brothers in a city, one appointed the King, while the other became a bandit. The king commanded that his brother be hanged. All the people who saw him declared, The King is hanging! So the King commanded them to remove his brother from the gallows." [Sandhedrin 46b].

The latest theory about the mechanism that leads to the birth of identical twins is that they originate during the development stage of the fetus known as a blastocyst. This is formed about the fifth day after fertilization, when it is about 0.1-0.2 mm in size and contains about 200-300 cells. It consists of an inner cluster of cells from which the fetus will develop and an outer layer enveloping the fetus, all filled with liquid. This outer layer eventually develops into the placenta. (Note that this is the stage which is the preferred one for planting a fetus in the womb for in vitro fertilization.)

Identical twins are created when the blastocyst "collapses" for reasons that are as yet unknown, and the cluster of embryonic cells splits into two halves which are genetically the same. The two halves continue to develop independently.

In spite of the fact that they are very similar genetically, it turns out that such twins are not exactly the same, because of environmental factors. Even in the womb the twins develop somewhat differently. For example, they do not have the same fingerprints.

The mechanism described above evidently does not correspond to the following description in the Talmud: "Two brothers were twins, since they started out as 'one drop' that separated into two..." [Yevamot 98a]. The term "one drop" (*tipa*) is usually a reference to the part that the father plays in giving birth, while as we have seen modern science suggests that the separation takes place in a more complex structure which was created by the two parents – the fertilized egg.

For more information in Hebrew and for pictures, and to regularly receive articles about plants and animals linked to the Daf Yomi, write e-mail to: raananmoshe1@gmail.com



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