

TWINS: PARTNERS OR ENEMIES?

PART 1

YISROEL DOV LEVENE

UNUSUAL TWINS

The Gemora (Sanhedrin 91b) concludes that the evil inclination enters a person upon birth. The Yetzer haTov only enters a child when they become an adult, at Bar/Bas Mitzva. Yet, we find that Esav pulls to go and do avoda zora and Yakov pulls to get out to places of kedusha whilst still inside the womb. How is this?

There are two types of twins – identical and non-identical. Identical twins share a unique close relationship with each other. They are like two parts of one as opposed to two separate parts. We find that Yakov and Esav are non-identical twins; they happen to be born at the same time but are not intrinsically connected. They have totally different appearances – Esav is red and hairy and Yakov looks like a normal baby. It would follow that they would be totally unconnected. Chazal tell us, however, that this difference was intended to bring their different natures to complement each other.

SPECIAL APPEARANCES

Every person looks different since appearance is an outward expression of their unique inner spiritual make-up. Usually, differences manifest as the child gets older with the development of the intellect. Esav's birth was truly exceptional – he was born unnaturally red with his body covered with hair, something that is only found on an adult – hence he is called Esav, 'made', since he was born fully complete. Redness is a sign of desiring to spill blood. In itself this nature is parev; it can be used for the good, such as with the actions of a shochet, surgeon or mohel, or it can be used for the bad – e.g. a murderer. Hair comes when people grow older and expresses the capability of being a mashpiya, someone who can impact others.

Their unique characteristics determined where their bechira level was to take place. But it was their unique natures, as opposed to the evil or good inclination that was revealed by the twins pushing to get out of the womb when passing places of taharah or tumah (Gur Aryeh, Toldos, 25:22).

THE IDEAL PARTNERSHIP

When Odom sinned, he caused the world to descend into physicality, and evil mixed together with good. To rectify this, two functions are needed – firstly, the separation from evil and from being totally involved in the physical, and then the focus on cleaving to the spiritual. These two parts are *Sur Mayra* and *Asai Toiv*.

In a partnership, two people come together to achieve one goal. Yakov and Esav were meant to have been a partnership, with *Esav* taking *Olam Haze*, the involvement in the battle to remove evil, and *Yakov* taking *Olam Habo*, the undisturbed focus on doing good, totally immersed in the spiritual. (Tana D'bei Eliyohu Zuta, 19:3). An indication of this can be seen in the Torah's description, (Toldos, 25:27), of *Esav* as an "*Ish Sodeh*", a worldly man who busies himself outdoors with matters involving *Olam Haze*. In contrast, *Yakov* is "*Ish Tam Yosheiv Oyholim*", sitting indoors only concerned with learning and attaining *Olam Habo*.

OLAM HAZE & OLAM HABO

To truly fathom the functions of each, a brief analysis of the differences between *Olam Haze* and *Olam Habo* is required. *Olam Haze* is a corridor that leads the way to *Olam Habo* (Pirkei Avos). This world, where both evil and good operate, requires us to work to overcome the temptations of evil. *Olam Habo* is the place of reward, where just good operates. In order for the work of *olam haze* to exist, there must be leeway to choose between good and evil. Therefore, *Esav's* portion of *Olam Haze*, involved taking evil and showing its superficiality, which would then connect to *Yakov's* part of *Olam Habo*, where the true good is revealed - i.e. the two tasks required for regaining man's status before the First Sin.

Esav was meant to have busied himself in attending to all the physical needs of this world for the sake of *Yakov*, who would then be able to entirely devote himself to spiritual pursuits. As such, the world would live in harmony and would achieve its *tachlis*. (cf. Avoda Zora 2b-3a how the *Goyim* will claim in

the future how they actually did carry out this function by making bridges, bathhouses, etc. solely for the sake of *Bn'ei Yisroel* to have an easier time focusing on their spiritual pursuits!). Had this been the case, then this very same conceptual partnership between *Yissocher* and *Zevulun* would not have been needed. The name *Esav* is from the verb of “doing”, i.e. in this world to do and work and build in order to overcome evil.

BROKEN PARTNERSHIP

Esav not only refused his side of the partnership but actively sought to oppose the goal of the partnership to the extent that his grandson became Amalek, the antithesis of Jews, where *Kishe ze kom ze noifel*, they are like scales when one side goes up the other goes down and they cannot co-exist – the balance between good and evil. Thus, the completion of any lasting rectification of the world is only possible after the utter destruction of *Esav* and his opposing ideology and involvement in evil. As a result, *Yakov* himself must carry out both parts of the rectification of the world.

Thus, the battle of these twins is the battle of the world. The fight between *Yakov* and *Esav* is being continued throughout the generations by their descendants until a final outcome is reached. This explains the naming of the Jewish Nation as “*Yisroel*” as this name symbolises how the Jews will be the ultimate victors over *Esav* as seen by this name being given by the vanquished Sar Shel Esav, Esav's Angel.