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[Home](#) > Rosh Chodesh Mazal - 005 Sivan | Twins

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Sivan, Twins and The Giving of The Torah

The *mazal* of Sivan is *te'umim* - twins (as is well-known).

That will imply that the receiving of the Torah, which took place in the month of Sivan, is connected with the *mazal* of *te'umim*\twins. In other words, the Torah is [somehow] revealed to us through the concept of "twins" [which we will soon explain].

The Jewish People Are 'Twins' with Hashem and with the Torah

The simpler understanding of this matter is because there is a verse, "*Open [your heart to Me], My sister, My dove, My love, My perfection.*"^[1] The word for "My perfection", תמתי, is interpreted by our Sages to mean תאומתי, "My twin." In other words, Hashem refers to the Jewish people as "twins" with Him, so to speak. Chazal explain that Hashem is saying to the Jewish people, "I am not greater than you, and you are not greater than Me." So there is a relationship of "twins" between the Jewish people and Hashem.

In addition to the 'twin' relationship that the Jewish people have with Hashem, there is also a 'twin' relationship between the Jewish people and the Torah. How do we see this? Chazal state the word "*Beraishis*" refers to the Jewish people, who are called "*raishis*", the beginning; therefore, the world was created for the sake of the Jewish people. Chazal also interpret the word "*Beraishis*" to refer to the Torah - "for the sake of the Torah, which is called "*raishis*", the beginning. So both the Jewish people and the Torah are called "*raishis*", the beginning, for which the world was created for; in this aspect, we can understand that the Torah and the Jewish people are 'twins' with each other.

So there are two aspects of the 'twin' relationships between the Jewish people and Hashem: One aspect of it is the Jewish people are called 'twins' with Hashem Himself, and the another aspect of it is that the Jewish people are 'twins' with Hashem's Torah.

Is Sivan Connected With The Number 3 (The Third Month) Or The Number 2 (Twins)?

Here is a question. The Gemara explains that the Torah was given in the month of Sivan because it is the third month of the year, for the number 'three' represents permanent establishment, thus the Torah was given in the third month of the year to show that it is firmly established into the Jewish people. So the month of Sivan is connected to the number three. But if the month of Sivan contains the *mazal* of "twins", that would imply that Sivan is linked with the number two, for twins are two people, not three!

This apparent contradiction of what Sivan is about, is a matter that needs understanding. In order to reconcile this matter, let us try to understand a little about the concept of twins, and with the help of Hashem, we hope to draw these matters as close as possible to our own souls, so that we can each practically act upon these matters in our own life.

“Twins” In The Side of Holiness and In The Side of Evil

The first time that the Torah mentions twins is regarding Yaakov and Esav, whom the Torah says explicitly about them that they were *te'umim*, twins. Later the Torah writes about the twins born to Yehudah, who were Peretz and Zorach. However, by Esav, the Torah spells the word *te'umim* without the letter *aleph* (והנה תומים בבטנה), whereas by Peretz and Zorach, the Torah spells it fully, with the letter *aleph* (והנה תאומים בבטנה). The reason for this is to show that Esav was a wicked twin, whereas Peretz and Zorach were both righteous twins.

So there are two kinds of twins mentioned in the Torah – a pair that was a mixture of good and evil, and a pair in which both were righteous. Yaakov and Esav were twins that were a mixture of good and evil. Yaakov was the good part of the pair, and Esav was the evil part of the pair. The twin pair of Peretz and Zorach were both righteous, and they are the root of the revelation of our righteous Moshiach, who descends from their father Yehudah.

Peretz and Zorach represent the holy manifestation of twins. The word *te'umim* (twins) contains the letters of *Urim U'Tumim* [the source of the Divine inspiration contained in the breastplate of the Kohen Gadol]. Chazal explain that the '*Urim*' refers to Zorach, and the "*Tumim*" refers to Peretz.

Twins (In Holiness) Represent Temimus\Wholesomeness

What lies behind the concept of 'twins' on the side of holiness?

The Gemara^[2] explains that the word "*Urim*" refers to a power that would "illuminate" the words of the breastplate (by explaining what it meant^[3]), and the word "*Tumim*" refers to a power that would "complete" its ruling (and render if a certain decree was irreversible^[4]). The word "*tumim*" is from the word *temimus* (wholesomeness), which implies something that is completed. This is referring to the holy trait of *temimus*, and this is represented by the *tumim* of the *Urim V'Tumim*, which is represented by the holy pair of twins that came from Yehudah.

Yehudah admitted his error about the episode with Tamar, when he said, "*She is more righteous than me*" [This implies the *temimus* of Yehudah and Tamar]. The birth of Peretz and Zorach, who came from the union of Yehudah and Tamar, were the holy pair of twins who descended from Yaakov, who was called *ish tam*, "wholesome man", referring to his trait of *temimus*. Yaakov is the holy kind of twin; his trait of *temimus* is the holy aspect contained in the concept of *te'umim*\twins. Tamar gave birth to a holy set of twins, who had the quality of *temimus*.

So there are two kinds of twins. There is a pair of twins like Yaakov and Esav, a pair that was a mixture of good and evil, where one 'side' was good and the other 'side' was evil. There is a pair like Peretz and Zorach, where both of the 'sides' were good. Tamar's birth of Peretz and Zorach was the revelation of *temimus* upon both 'sides' of the twins. This symbolizes that there are two kinds of *temimus*. There is a higher kind of *temimus*, which is perfected, and there is a lower kind of *temimus*, which is the impaired level.

The Root of Twins

Although the first pair that the Torah mentions explicitly as "twins" was Yaakov and Esav, they were not the first twins in history. The root of all "twins" began with Kayin and Hevel – they were the first

twins in history. (There is actually a dispute in the words of Chazal if they were twins or not. Here we are going according to the opinion that they were twins).

However, upon deeper analysis, there was actually a pair of twins who preceded them. The Zohar explains, according to one opinion, that Adam and Chavah were originally created back-to-back with each other (*dav partzufin*). According to this opinion, the first pair of twins was actually Adam and Chavah.

The Torah says, “*Man and woman He created them*”, so Adam and Chavah, the very root of all twins, represent the perfected level of twins, where the “two” twins are really one. They are the ‘subtle’ root of all twins.

Based upon this insight, the root of the design of Creation began with twins, for Adam and Chavah (in one unit, in their original form) are the root of all creations. So ‘twins’ are the design of Creation itself. This gives us the key to understanding the matter of twins.

The original pair of ‘twins’, Adam and Chavah, were eventually separated from each other. Adam was put to sleep, and then Hashem split them apart from each other, so they became two separate beings. The fact that Adam and Chavah became split apart from each other was actually the root of how Adam and Chavah later became separated later on, when Adam separated from her for 130 years, after the sin with the *Eitz HaDaas*.

Twins Either Complete Each Other (In Holiness) Or Oppose Each Other

In retrospect, the twins Peretz and Zorach revealed a kind of ‘twins’ who are inseparable from each other. Unlike the twins Yaakov and Esav, who battled each other and went their own separate ways, the twins Peretz and Zorach were a pair of twins who did not separate from each other. Rather, they both completed each other. Peretz and Zorach represent the *Urim V’Tumim*, as Chazal explain, and both the *Urim* and *Tumim* are needed to complete each other.

There is no opposition with the *Urim V’Tumim*; they each complete each other. In contrast, the pair of Esav and Yaakov are opposing forces to each other. The Sages said, “It is a well-known *halachah*, that Esav hates Yaakov.” They represent the warring forces of good and evil with each other.

Adam and Chavah were created *dav partzufin* (back-to-back), according to an opinion in the Sages; which made them the first twins in history. Hashem created woman as an *eizer k’negdo*, a helpmate opposite man. Chazal explain that if a man merits it, his wife helps him, and if he does not merit it, his wife opposes him. The twins Peretz and Zorach were a pair that helped each other, whereas Yaakov and Esav opposed each other.

The word “Peretz” is from the word “*poratz*”, to break open, and this power exists both for holiness and for evil. The Serpent is referred to as the one who “breaks the fences of the world”, which is evil, but there is also a “Serpent” in the side of holiness, such as the ability of royalty, for “a king can break fences, and no one can protest him.”

Peretz and Zorach were a holy pair of twins, for they were both good; on the side of evil, the “*Eitz HaDaas*” was like a blemished set of twins, for it was good and evil mixed together.

Twins: Opposites Born Together

Throughout the Torah, twins possess opposite natures from each other. In the side of holiness, twins are two opposites of the same root, and when they unite, they reveal their root, which is one [and conversely, in the side of evil, twins oppose each other and they reveal disparity between them].

Yaakov and Esav were opposites of each other. When Rivkah went to acquire about her pregnancy pains to Shem and Ever, she received a prophecy that two nations were growing inside her, who would always oppose each other; when one will rise, the other one will fall, and vice versa. Peretz and Zorach were also opposites of each other, but their opposite natures served to complete each other. Chazal also revealed that each of the twelve sons of Yaakov (besides for Yosef) was born with a twin sister, and the Ramban writes that each of the brothers married a different twin sister.

All of these twins (Yaakov and Esav, Peretz and Zorach, and the twelve sons of Yaakov with their sisters) were two people who are born together who have opposite natures. Twins are therefore not just two people who were born together, but two people who are opposites of each other, who are born together. This actually contains the secret of *temimus* [which soon will be explained].

When Hashem told Avraham to offer up his son Yitzchok as an offering, Yitzchok became sanctified with the status of an "*ayil temimah*", "a perfect ram". Hashem had said to Avraham, "*Take now your son*", which symbolized a complete contradiction, for Avraham was being told to give his beloved son as an offering. Since it was a situation of contradiction, it revealed *temimus* [a perfect, simple faith in Hashem], thus Yitzchok became an "*ayil temimah*" from this.

Yaakov is the "*ish tam*" (wholesome man), he was a *tamim* (perfected), whereas Esav was the antithesis of this. For this reason, the Torah spells the word *te'umim* by Yaakov and Esav without the letter *aleph* (תומים), which connotes a breach in their twin relationship; for they were opposing forces of each other, and they did not complete each other. In contrast, Peretz and Zorach were born with opposite natures of each other, but they were two opposites who revealed that they were from one root (Hashem; in particular, the secret of the oneness of Hashem, which binds all of Creation together).

When There Is An Absence of Oneness, Darkness Descends

Man was given woman as an *eizer k'negdo*, a "helpmate opposite him", to help complete his existence. Chazal say that when they merit (to help each other), there is *Shechinah* between a husband and wife, and if they do not merit, a fire consumes them; in other words, when they are just opposing each other, they are missing the oneness between them.

A person must reveal and connect to the oneness of Hashem, in order to connect to the Torah and to the Jewish people, for it is this oneness which is needed in order to bind everything together. Without this element, it is said, "*Those who grasp Torah do not know Me.*" Without connecting to the oneness of Hashem, a person does not merit the benefits of Torah, and instead, the Torah becomes "like deadly poison to him", similar to how a husband and wife are harmed when they do not reveal the oneness of the *Shechinah* between them.

When a person does "merit" it, though, the Torah becomes to him "like an elixir of life." This is a person who connects himself to the oneness of Hashem, who reveals this oneness, and then he can have a genuine connection to Torah and to the Jewish people. To be more specific, when a person reveals how all "three" aspects of "Hashem, Torah, and Yisrael" are really all "one"^[5] - that is where the true level of receiving the Torah lies.

What does it mean that if a person does not merit it, the Torah becomes like deadly poison to him? How can it be that the Torah, which is called a "Torah of life", should be the very thing that harms a person?

The inner understanding of this matter is because "death" is really a situation of spiritual descent. The lowest place one can descend to is called the "*tehom*" - the lowest depths, which the Torah

describes in the beginning of Creation: *"Darkness that covered the surface of the tehom (deep)."* If one learns Torah but he is not connected to the oneness of Hashem, that is really a deadly poison itself.

When a person learns Torah without reaching the very first root of the Torah, which began from *"Anochi Hashem"*, and instead he is only connected to the second root of the Torah, which is *"Beraishis"*, he will descend to *"the darkness that covers the surface of the deep"* – the *"tehom"*. He will not reach the light of the Torah; he will not reach the *"Toras Hashem Temimah"* (the *"Torah of Hashem is perfect"*). He will not reach the light that was contained in the *"Urim V'Tumim"*; he will not reach the level of 'twins' which Peretz and Zorach were. Instead of reaching a place filled with light, the person [who learns Torah without connecting to Hashem's oneness] will instead reach a place that is *"darkness that covers the surface of the deep"*!

If a person learns Torah and he does not of the difference between a Torah that is connected with *"Anochi Hashem"* to a Torah that is disconnected from *"Anochi Hashem"*, he is found in the dark, because he has become so dulled from his situation.

Hashem had to force the Jewish people to accept the Torah; He suspended the mountain above them in the air and said, *"If you will accept it, good; if not, there you will be buried."* This is because the Torah opposes a human being's nature, when it becomes *"deadly poison"* to him, when he learns it without being connected to the oneness of Hashem. He doesn't have the power to accept the Torah when he lacks the connection to oneness. But when Hashem forced us to accept the Torah, we were given the ability to reveal *"Anochi Hashem"* through learning the Torah.

The Jewish people and the Torah are both called *"raishis"*, the beginning. If so, there are two *"beginnings"* to Creation - and this is a contradiction. There cannot be two beginnings; there can only be one beginning to Creation! After all, if a baby is born with two heads, he will surely die; so too, if the world has two beginnings, it cannot survive. Indeed, if a person thinks that there are *"two beginnings"* – if he thinks that both Torah and the Jewish people are both beginnings of the world, – this is the perspective which causes one's Torah learning to become like *"deadly poison"* to him.

But if one reveals how *"I am the First, and I am the Last, and besides for Me, there is no god"*, this connects him to *"Anochi Hashem"*; and then all contradictions will be answered. He will be able to perceive how the two *"beginnings"* are not in contradiction with each other [and that they actually complement each other; for they have one root].

The natural, superficial perspective of people is that they feel they can have a connection with Torah without necessarily building a connection with Hashem; they think that a Jew has a connection to Torah even without a connection to Hashem, and that connection to Torah doesn't require a connection to Hashem. But such a perspective causes one's Torah learning to become like *"deadly poison"* to him.

Oppositions In Our Life: Dealing With The "Twins"

Now let us try to make these matters more practical in our life, as much as we can.

Every person goes through all kinds of *"contradictions."* People face contradictions in their own personality, between themselves and their spouses, between themselves and their children, and with others. But all of these *"contradictions"* with others are really like the concept of *"twins"* [who are born with opposite natures of each other, whose higher purpose is really to help each other and complete each other].

Every contradiction you face is really like a *"twin"* you are born with, whom you need to reconcile

with, who will ultimately help you and complete you, when you are aware that the oppositions that come your way are really helping perfect and complete you. And when a person does not 'merit' it - when he doesn't merit having this perspective - he descends into the "darkness that covers the depths".

In whatever opposition or challenge we meet up with, either they will be like "twins" to us, who help and complete each other (**תאומים**) or they will be to us like "twins" who oppose each other (**תומים**), who are missing the letter *aleph* in their name [implying a lack of revealing the oneness of Hashem in the situation]; such situations will only oppose us, like the pair of twins in which only one of them is good. Or, even worse, it can be a situation of total "*tehom*" (the depths).

If a person is having a hard time viewing a challenge, he should see how he can go from the lower level of "twins" (**תומים**) to the higher level of "twins" (**תאומים**), which is spelled with the letter "*aleph*" - in other words, he should seek to reveal Hashem in the situation, by trying to see how Hashem is involved in the picture. Then a person can be connected to Hashem in any situation he finds himself in.

This is the secret of the letter *aleph*, which implies *emunah* (faith in Hashem), and the first letter of the words "*Anochi Hashem*", the very root of the Torah and of Creation. When a person reveals the "*Aleph*" (the One) in his situation, when he reveals *emunah* in the situation, he can then deal with any situation.

In Conclusion

These are surely very deep words, as it always is with the way of Torah. But the perspective has been outlined. How to act it upon practically is a lengthy discussion for itself, but the general idea has been said here.

May we merit to receive the Torah - directly "from the mouth of Hashem".

[1] Song of Songs 5:2 [translation here follows the Artscroll].

[2] Yoma 73b

[3] Rashi (ibid)

[4] Rashi (ibid)

[5] Editor's Note: This seems to be the Rav's answer to the question brought in the beginning of this *derashah*: Is the power of the month of Sivan because of the number 3 (it is the third month of the year since Nissan) or because of the number 2 (twins)? The 'twins' in the month of Sivan really require a third point to complete the pair, for a person must have a connection with Hashem, Torah, and Yisrael.

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