



## PORTION FROM

BY RAKEL BERENBAUM

Contributor, Torah Tidbits

## THE PORTION

# Twins

My nephew recently had twin boys. It was the first time I was at a double brit mila. In the Halacha there is a dispute if to make one *bracha* for both brits or one for each brit. At the brit that I attended they solved this dilemma by having a break in between each brit. We went out of the shul, had something to eat, and then went back for the second one. The Rabbi explained that this separation helped to remind everyone (including the parents) that each child is an individual and just because they were born together and may even look alike they are individuals and might have very different personalities.

Twins are cute – dressed up in matching clothes playing happily together. There's double fun but there's also double trouble. Raising twins is not always easy starting with balancing their sleep schedule with feedings, burps and changes. Then comes the struggles about whether to put them in the same kindergarten and how to be fair and give each one individual attention. It is truly hard to raise them as individuals, while the world sees them as “the twins”?

Some famous twins in history that you might not have heard of: Alexander Helios and Cleopatra Selene (children of Cleopatra and Mark Anthony), Mark E. Kelly and Scott J. Kelly (the first astronauts), Jenna

and Barbara Bush (daughters of former U.S. President George Bush). The most famous of course are the ones we learn about in this week's portion – Yaakov and Esav.

These twins seemed to be very different even in the womb. We are told that when Rivka was pregnant “*Vitrozezu habanim bkirba* – the children clashed inside her” (25:22). Rashi explains that they each tried to run (*ruz*) and get out, but to different stimuli. When she passed the entrance of the Torah academies of Shem and Ever Yaakov would try to run out, and when she passed a Temple of idolatry Esav would try to run out.

When Rivka goes to “*lidrosh et Hashem*” to ask God what this is all about she is told “*Shnei Goyim bvitnech* -two nations are in your womb” and “*Mimeaich Yiparedu*-from the womb they are separated” (25:23), Rashi adds – this one to wickedness (Esav), and this one to his innocence (Yaakov).

This difference in character continues on after they are born. Yaakov was a scholarly man who remained in the tent. Esav was a man of action *Ish Yodea Zaid, Ish Sade*—a hunter(25:27 ). The verse uses five verbs in a row “*Vayochal, V'Yesht, Vyakam V'Yelech, V'Yivaz*”( 25:34 ) to show us how Esav runs from one activity to the other without time to think or feel spiritually. This is what enabled him to belittle the seemingly intangible *Bechora* – and sell it for a concrete bowl of red soup. He also didn't

respect his parents' wishes, and instead married inappropriate women, Yehudit and Basmat.

Yaakov on the other hand cherished the *Bechora*, and also receives two blessings from Yitchak. Nechama Leibowitz compares the two blessings that Yaakov receives from his father. The one that Yitchak gave him unwittingly, thinking he was Esav (27:28-29), was a material blessing of abundance, fatness, power and dominion.

He also gives him another one. Yitchak calls Yaakov in and blesses him before he leaves to go to Padan Aram to find a wife. This time he gives him, Birkat Avraham (28:3-4). This is the blessing of the mission of Avraham, which includes the blessing of offspring and the promise of the land. This special blessing cannot be conferred by succession but can only be granted to the one who deserves. Nechama Leibowitz explains that we see from Esav's behavior, (i.e. his marriage to the idolatrous inhabitants of the land) that he was not deserving of such a blessing. Yaakov on the other hand was.


May we continue to maintain our identity as following in Abraham's path, and be worthy of these blessings.



## RECIPE


We read about a red dish that Yaakov cooked and Esav bought so here is a recipe





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for red lentil curry that's easy to make, healthy and yummy.

## RED LENTIL CURRY

- 1 onion, chopped
- 1 cup chopped spinach
- 1 tablespoon oil
- 2 cups red lentils
- 6 c. water
- 2-3 tsp. curry powder ( to taste)
- 3 tablespoons tomato paste
- salt and pepper to taste

Heat the oil then saute the onions and spinach for a few minutes till tender. Add the lentils and warm water. Bring to a low boil. Stir in tomato paste and spices. Cook on low heat for about 20 minutes until thickened (taste to assess doneness). Serve with rice. ■