

**From:** [David Kraemer](#)  
**To:** [Covid Affiliate Archives](#)  
**Subject:** FW: One Person's Response to Communal Fear 6.29.20  
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**From:** Morris Allen <mojo210al@icloud.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, June 29, 2020 8:57 AM  
**To:** MOJO210AL <MOJO210AL@aol.com>  
**Subject:** One Person's Response to Communal Fear 6.29.20

FAVORITE MIDWESTERN SUMMER SAYINGS: *"Knee High by the 4<sup>th</sup> of July"* and *"Rain before 7, Sun by 11"*. As a result of rain before 7 today, no WAGON WHEEL CENSUS. (For those unfamiliar with the first saying—it relates to the height of corn.)

As a result of no walk [this morning](#), I am forced to reflect on three days up north. There is nothing more soothing for my soul than spending 3 days looking out onto Lake Superior. Well, maybe 7 days. Our stay at this little 80-year-old cabin was a throwback to an earlier time of what it was like to go to the Lake. No luxurious interiors and the best amenities were an open window with a two-speed fan. It was, however, very clean and socially distant from the other guests and it afforded Phyllis and me an opportunity to spend shabbat reading on a deck (distantly) overlooking the Lake and hearing nothing but the birds and an occasional insect buzzing into your ears—only occasionally. Oh, and the few cars on the scenic highway that divided us from the Lake itself. But I digress....

My friend Bob Feldman(zl) used to always say that he came to shul for the horizontal connections and not the vertical one. He would have found the challenges of shul during livestream/zoom to be particularly trying. For those of us who find both the vertical and horizontal connections to be significant, I have to say that the absence of the horizontal connections as a result of shul going virtual have severely impacted the vertical one as well. But even the absence of shul doesn't stop the power of Shabbat and the impact it has each week on my life. And every week when I spend Shabbat afternoon reading, I do so with an interest in connecting the words I am reading to the Torah itself, either the portion we have just read in shul or another one of the 54 "weekly" sections by which Torah is divided. As I read a fascinating piece in the July/August Atlantic this past Shabbat, I found myself thinking about the twins of our tradition—Jacob and Esau. The article was about the Romanian orphans that came into our consciousness some 30 years ago. Kept in institutions with little care, Melissa Fay Greene, told the story about one such individual- named Izidor. I encourage everyone to read the piece—it is great writing and an important piece to ponder. One paragraph jumped out at me, however, and touched my longing for connecting Shabbat reading to sacred scroll of our tradition. The connection was not to the faux-populist Korach which formed the basis of this past week's reading, but to a portion which describes the twins of our tradition— Jacob and Esau. I have always been fascinated by the Torah's telling of their story. Sharing the same genetic make-up of one another, their fate is very different from one another. I have always been

fascinated by the fact that one brother was a home dweller and the other was a hunter, a child of the field. I once heard a fascinating insight from an OB/Gyn who told me that he felt that Jacob suffered from TTTS—a process whereby the stronger twin takes more of the fetal fluid in utero from the “weaker” twin. That, he said, explained the situation. Particularly because the “stronger” child usually has a ruddier complexion—capturing Esau’s description in Torah. Who knows, he might have made a correct diagnosis on twins born long before the diagnosis itself was understood and named.

For me, in a very different light, the following sentence jumped out at me—**“Neural pathways thrive in the brain of a baby showered with loving attention ; the pathways multiply, intersect and loop through remote regions of the brain like a national highways system under construction.”** And in that one lyrical sentence, I came to realize that while it has been an unbelievable challenge for many parents these past few months with their children at home all the time, for those parents particularly with toddlers, these months have been gifts for those children that they might have never otherwise received. In the midst of the challenges of having to juggle work and child care, to figure out how to meet the needs of a two year old and a pressing legal matter or a telehealth visit with a patient, parents have provided their children something that the “normal” daily pattern of their life before Covid did not always provide for—constancy of parenting for most of the hours of any given day. The difficulty that these parents encountered cannot be dismissed at all. But the gifts that many of these children received as a result will potentially be evident for years to come. With neural pathways being developed like a well-funded highway system connecting regions with other regions of the brain, the blessings of these months might not be evident for years to come. But with any good infrastructure program—the results are the gifts of one generation to the next. Every generation hopes that the generation which follows it will have opportunities they themselves never had. We build the future while standing on the shoulders of those who came before us. I hope that for all those parents who felt that their children were at times a burden, some of whom even took to social media to label their children in unthinkable ways, that they reconsider the gifts they have provided. These months have been trying and will probably continue to be trying—but there is always a silver lining to challenge if we are just sensitive to seeing it, to sensing it and connecting it to the texts we read both sacred and mundane. Tomorrow I hope to walk again—Maybe by 11 today—but by then, I’ll be deep into work and the Lake will simply be a memory to hold onto once again. Morris

Sent by my iPad