

## **MACHON PUAH**

### **A Good End**

Last time we discussed the danger of multi-fetal pregnancy and brought a tragic case with disastrous results. This is only one part of the entire picture and other cases will have a completely different outcome.

One of the Puah Rabbis recently told me a story of a couple who had turned to him after two years of infertility. He reviewed their case and referred them to a fertility specialist who treated them. A few months later the couple called to tell him that they were pregnant, with triplets! The couple's initial joy was tempered after several doctors told them that this was not a blessing but a big problem. The doctors who they went to were all in agreement that the woman needed to undergo a fetal reduction in which one fetus or more would be removed in order to enable her to deliver at least one healthy baby.

The couple were very torn between their desire to have a family, and, if possible, as many babies in one go as they could have, and, on the other hand, the doctors' emphatic warnings. In the end, despite all the advice that they were given, the couple decided to leave everything as is and not to interfere with the pregnancy. They were able to find an expert doctor who was willing to monitor the pregnancy.

As the pregnancy continued there was more and more tension as the doctors kept telling them what a mistake they had made. But the ultrasound scans and the other tests showed that everything was proceeding without

any problem. One doctor told them that despite all the tests the children had a good chance of not surviving the pregnancy and if they were born they would all have serious problems.

The couple was adamant that they had made the right decision and eventually the woman delivered three healthy children.

This story presents a different reality than the previous one and it is as likely to happen if the pregnancy is well managed and the woman's medical history supports her ability to carry such a pregnancy. The key is having a specific medical assessment performed by an expert for each case. Often a couple will be directed to terminate a pregnancy for a variety of reasons, but an expert may have a different opinion in the individual case and specific circumstances. Therefore it is essential in such a case for a couple to seek out expert advice and only then make their decision together with an expert halachic authority.

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