

Chapter 5

QUESTION

Should a pair of Siamese twins joined at the side undergo an operation that will sever them?

Physicians say there exists a 10% chance that one or both will die.

Response

No. Rav Moshe Feinstein ruled that even if there exists a fraction of one per cent chance one can violate the entire Torah to save the person. Human life trumps all laws. Certainly, it trumps the inconvenience and problems of

being a siamese twin. However Torah law will be flexible and accommodate the twins.

They will grow up joined.

When they are ready to marry Jewish law is the following. They can either marry two different men or else if they can not find two men ; but only one man who is willing to marry both sister, the following can be done.

One man can not marry two sisters. However if they have a common law marriage one man can have a common law marriage with two sisters.

“ Aishe oviv asura avol anuses oviv muteres Anosos oviv muteros- One is forbidden to have sex with your father’s wife but not with a the mistress of your father.” Aruch Hashulchon

Even Hoazer 15:6,14.

The same law applies to all the forbidden relationships as two sisters.

The patriarch Jacob had a common law marriage with four sisters. Rachel Leah were sisters . Bilan and Zilpah were half sisters to Rachel and Leah. In that period of history it was common practice to have one man marry all the sisters. In that manner a father would insure that all his daughter would be taken care of. Once the two families discovered each other that they were a good match the families would marry all their children to each other. If there did not exist enough men of marriageable age who could support their daughters then one man would marry all the daughters. The family of the daughters would pay a dowry to have the husband assume responsibility to provide food clothes and shelter for all the daughter who now were his wives. Some time the husband would have to work for his father in law to compensate

him for the loss of the extra hands that his daughters provided. That is the story in the Bible Beraishis -Genesis of the patriarch Jacob working 14 years for the hands of Rachel and Leah.

See my book 10 chapter 12 on internet for legal citations for Hallacha Jewish law about common law marriages.

The patriarch Abraham married Sara his half sister. Prior to the giving of the Torah at Mount Sinai it was permitted to do this.

Possibly in those jurisdictions that common

law marriage is not recognized a common law marriage with two sisters is legal.

Chapter 6

A couple got married .after several years the marriage broke up. The couple got a civil divorce ;but not a Get -a Jewish divorce. The woman began dating a man who had recently