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Sophia's desire to have a baby without a partner (Case Study #2) recalls our study of the Torah's command to procreate (Texts 1, 2). *Mishnah Yevamot* (Text 3) rules that the Torah obligates only men to procreate, though our discussion showed that talmudic authorities of later generations disagreed on this point. Susan Grossman's *teshuvah* (Text 10) demonstrates that no law forbids a single woman to bear or adopt a child. She encourages all Jews who so desire to build Jewish families. These considerations support Sophia if she chooses to conceive through ART.

Case Study #3—the Baby M case, which brought issues of how ART establishes parenthood to public attention in the 1980s—raises dilemmas that remain current. A number of Jewish thinkers express discomfort with surrogacy as a method of fulfilling the commandment to have children. Those who share concerns about the potential dangers pregnancy poses to the surrogate (Text 12a), about women shirking the responsibilities of parenthood (Text 12b), or about surrogacy's inherent exploitation of the surrogate (Text 12c) would oppose its use and believe the court erred in finding for the Sterns over the Whiteheads. On the other hand, other Jewish ethicists who agree with Walter Jacob (Text 13a) that couples may hire surrogates as an alternate means of procreation compare surrogacy to adoption, allowing those who assume legal parenthood to be recognized as the child's halakhic parents. Still others may be swayed by Elie Spitz's sympathy for couples' profound desire to become parents (Text 13b) or agree with John Loike and Moshe Tendler that the surrogate serves as more than an incubator for the infant (Text 13c). Such thinkers would support the Sterns in their case against Mary Beth Whitehead.

It is hard to find a middle ground between these two positions. The writers we studied who expressed concern about the surrogate mother opposed this method of childbearing, while those whose analysis focused on the infertile parents permitted it. The decision one makes may depend on which of these parties one more naturally sympathizes with.

Regarding Case Study #4, Sonoma's desire to bear a cloned version of herself so as not to introduce an unknown donor's genetic material into her family line, various Jewish ethicists argue that only gestation

in a womb creates human life (Texts 14, 15b), that cloning detracts from the required uniqueness of each person (Text 16), and that cloned babies have no genuine familial relationship to their parents (Text 17). Yosef Elyashiv goes further, contending that cloning impermissibly brings a new creation into the world (Text 18). Yet other ethicists like Menachem HaMeiri contend that Jewish tradition approves almost anything that human beings learn to do with their God-given intelligence (Text 15a). Since in practice human cloning would require a fertilized ovum to gestate in a uterus, Michael Broyde sees cloning as equally ethically acceptable to in vitro fertilization and surrogate motherhood (Text 18).

Additionally, we saw that cloning would also enable manipulation of the fetus's genes to allow parents to choose their child's characteristics. Relying on a precedent in the Talmud (Text 14), Jewish ethics might consider that an improper intervention in God's creation. Difficult problems of deciding when we are or are not playing God lie ahead.

Ultimately, then, Sonoma might find permission in Broyde's reasoning that even if fertilization happens through cloning, the child must gestate in her womb and be born in a natural manner. Our study leads to the conclusion that she could go forward if her only goal is to have a child, but not if she wants to predetermine her child's characteristics.

Hopefully this material has additionally offered us broader lessons surrounding ethical choices. Many difficult decisions are best made not in an intellectual vacuum, but when taking into account actual people and their experiences. There may also be divergent compassionate approaches to a complex matter: compassionate ethicists can reach opposite conclusions. And it is prudent to contemplate proactively scientific advances that may be on the horizon.

Two further examples come to mind. First, in 2019 scientists reported for the first time successfully editing genes in embryos to eliminate a mutation that causes serious heart disease. Not only would the editing prevent the heart condition in the embryo itself, should it develop until birth, but individuals benefiting from the editing would pass on the new genetic characteristic to their children. Gene editing thus promises the eventual possibility of preventing many diseases and disabilities before

birth. At the same time, though, it opens the door to a new form of breeding technology—eugenics. Parents might be able to predetermine their children’s attributes, selecting for height, athletic ability, certain kinds of intelligence, eventually even gender.

A second advance on the horizon is an artificial womb—an environment where a fetus could develop from fertilization to birth outside the human body. Such a device would offer a new path to parenthood for women whose wombs have been surgically removed, or who for medical reasons cannot safely carry a pregnancy. At the same time, we can imagine companies gestating infants for sale to couples wishing to adopt. It is hard to imagine a more dystopian example of playing God than creating a market in human lives. It seems we will need to continually wrestle to define the moral boundaries between helping nature and playing God.

In *Kiddushin* 30b the Talmud says, “There are three partners in a human being: the father, the mother, and the Holy One.” (See chapter 1 for discussion of this text.) Advances in technology force us to think carefully about the precise roles played by each of the three partners in creating human life.