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TWO PEAS IN A POD

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The twins have always been looked at with interest, and in the past with some superstition. Even ancient myths tell stories about them. In some cultures, twins are symbols of a miracle. Should the birth of twins be considered a miracle or it is nothing more but a biological process?

Twins are two or more offspring born as a result of a single pregnancy after a short time after each other, in humans and those mammals whose females usually give birth to a single child. Twins are identical and dissimilar.

Monozygotic twins are formed from a single zygote, which is divided into two or more parts at the stage of fragmentation. They have the same genotypes. Monozygotic identical twins are always of the same sex and have a very large portrait similarity.

A special group among identical twins consists of unusual types: two-headed (usually non-viable) and xyphopag («Siamese twins»).

Also, there is a special type of twins – «royal twins». They combine the features of identical and dissimilar twins. Semi-identical twins can be of different sexes.

Heterozygous twins develop when two egg cells are fertilized by two sperm cells. They are no more alike than brothers and sisters. Fraternal twins may have different fathers. Mixing the genotypes of heterozygous twins can lead to chimerism.

The factors that influence the frequency of twin births are currently poorly understood. On average, twins make up about 2 % of all newborns.

In general, the phenomenon of Gemini is no less interesting for studying and examination than the mystery of the structure of the Universe.

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