



Ohr Yerushalayim News

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News This Week

מזל טוב

Mazel Tov to Mr & Mrs Bernard Levy on the birth of a granddaughter, born to Mr & Mrs Eli Baron.

Mazel Tov to Rabbi & Mrs Barry Katz on the birth of a grandson, born to Mr & Mrs Chaim Emmanuel.

Birthday Kiddush

Avi & Dena Stern invite the Kehilla to a Kiddush at their home, 3 Linksway from 11.30am to celebrate Moshe's birthday.

Homeward Bound

Rabbi Label Lam (Torah.org)

Avraham expired and died in a good old age, old and satisfied, and he was gathered to his people. (Breishis 25:8)

Here we discover a fascinating set of facts that are not nearly as morbid as one might think at first glance. There three ways or better yet three stages to what we call dying. Imagine a car driving on the highway. The car breaks down. Then the driver gets out of the car. Then he gets a hitch a ride home.

These are the three steps mentioned explicitly in the verse. "Avraham expired", that is his body ceased functioning. He "died" means that his body and soul separated. The word, "vayamas" (he died) may have its etymological roots in the word "yamoosh" which means "removed". The soul is effectively removed from its identification with the body. Then "he was gathered up to his people" which tells us that he entered into Olam Haba-the world to come!

The big question that the Chovos HaLevavos struggles with is, "Why does the Torah not tell us more about Olam Haba?" Wouldn't that be a fascinating topic!? Amongst the many answers offered in the Gate of Trust is that Olam Haba is not an absolute guarantee based upon the specific performance of a certain number of Mitzvos! It's not a business deal- a quid pro quo! No, it's a relationship! How is the relationship measured?

A relatively newly married man struggling with Shalom Bais (peace in the home) approached his Rabbi for some advice. The Rabbi asked him if he had ever gotten his wife a bouquet of flowers on Erev Shabbos! He looked at the Rabbi curiously and admitted that he had not.

Then the Rabbi uncorked the first new big idea. "Make sure to get your wife fresh flowers every Erev Shabbos!" "That's it!" queried the newly wed. "No!" the Rabbi insisted. "You must write personal note and or tell her something nice and flattering!" The poor young man looked at the Rabbi with bewilderment. "I have no idea what to say or recite!" The Rabbi then offered some nice not entirely cliché phrases that just might reach the desired mark. "Why am I the luckiest man on the face of the earth!?" "You are wonderful!"

Dutifully the student scouted out and selected an elegant bouquet prior to Shabbos and he chose a choice phrase that pays to recite at the appropriate moment. The moment arrived when he approached his wife on the eve of the Holy Shabbos and he presented the flowers. Her heart practically melted with joy and then she looked at as if right on cue and waited for him to say something, just as the Rabbi had predicted. He looked squarely in her direction and told her the following, "The Rabbi said I should say you are wonderful!"

Her smile collapsed into a sudden frown and he was almost back in the doghouse as before, but he did merit with the flowers a nice Shabbos dinner. Thinking about the words we pray momentarily before we say them may just add jet fuel of intentionality. Instead of saying, "The Men of the Great Assembly said I should say..."

The Chovos HaLevavos explains that Olam Haba is based on heart. The intoxicating flavor of this world is gifted for the external aspects of the Mitzvos but Olam Haba is hinging on the longing of a heart homeward bound!

Match Made By Heaven

Rabbi Pinchas Winston (Torah.org)

I will adjure you by G-d, the G-d of the Heaven and the G-d of the earth, that you will not take a wife for my son from . . . Bereishis 24:3

The Akeidah was over. Sarah was gone. It was time to find a wife for Yitzchak. The first thing Avraham Avinu does after burying and mourning his beloved wife was send his trusted servant Eliezer back to Padan Aram in search of a shidduch for Yitzchak. Had Avraham Avinu actually been allowed to sacrifice Yitzchak then his life's work would have literally gone up in smoke.

Is finding a soul mate an easy thing to do? The Talmud says the following about the topic:

Rav Shmuel bar Rav Yitzchak said: When Resh Lakish elucidated [the subject of] Sotah, he said the following, "They only pair a woman with a man according to his deeds . . . (Sotah 2a)

According to this, it is not so much an issue of finding one's soul mate as it finding a good shidduch. Every Friday night families sing "Aishes Chayil" just before Kiddush because it lists all the traits of a valorous woman from a Torah perspective. According to Resh Lakish, how many of those traits a man's wife will have at marriage will depend upon his own spiritual worthiness at the time.

The following however seems to indicate that even this is not sufficient to make the finding of one's "correct" spouse a simple matter:

Rabbah bar Bar Channah said in the name of Rebi Yochanan: It is as difficult to pair them as the splitting of the Red Sea . . . (Sotah 2a)

The Week Ahead

פרשת ח"י שרה	שבת מברכין כסלו
Candle Lighting	4.12pm
Mincha	4.17pm
Seder HaLimud	8.40am
Shacharis	9.00am
סוף זמן ק"ש	9.35am
1st Mincha	1.30pm
Rov's Shiur	3.28pm
2nd Mincha	3.58pm
סעודה שלישית	following
Maariv & Motzei Shabbos	5.18pm
Ovos uBonim	6.33pm
Sunday	7.15am / 8.20am
Mon	6.45am / 7.10am / 8.00am
Tues / Wed	6.45am / 7.20am / 8.00am
Thurs / Fri ראש חודש	6.00am / 7.00am / 8.00am
Mincha & Maariv	4.05pm
Late Maariv	8.00pm

Indeed, it says that even the great Aharon HaKohen did not marry his soul mate (Sha'ar HaGilgulim, Ch. 8), though this had to do with his soul mate and not a lack of merit on his behalf. It also did not mean that he did not have a great marriage with his wife Elisheva either. He did.

The Talmud, however, continues:

It is not so! Rav Yehudah has said in the name of Rav: Forty days before the creation of a child, a Bas Kol goes out and proclaims, "The daughter of So-and-so is for So-and-so." (Sotah 2a)

This implies just the opposite. According to this opinion shidduchim are set in motion even before a couple is born, long before they even have a chance to accumulate sufficient merit to find each other. Matchmakers are just the ones who merit to be Heaven's messengers to complete the "deal." All a person has to do, according to this, is not do anything to ruin it, especially after the couple has married, as the Talmud concludes:

There is no contradiction. The latter statement [about the pairing of a couple prior to birth] refers to a first marriage and the former [about difficulty finding one's soul mate], to a second marriage. (Sotah 2a)

There is no difference of opinion after all. Everyone agrees that when it comes to one's first marriage, the shidduch was made in Heaven and in progress from before birth. It is just a question of going through the motions to make it happen and minimize the need for a miracle. Minimize, but not eliminate.

Should a person have to marry a second time, it is a different story. This is discussed in detail in Sha'ar HaGilgulim, which has a different take on the above gemora as well:

Know that when a man is new, that is, it is his first time in the world, then his soul mate is born with him, as it is known. When it comes time to marry her they make it possible for him [to do so] quickly, free of any trouble whatsoever. However, if this man committed a sin and needs to reincarnate because of it . . . and [therefore] his soul mate will also reincarnate . . . when it comes time to marry her, they will not make it possible for him [to do so] quickly, but after much trouble. (Sha'ar HaGilgulim, Ch. 20)

In other words, though the Talmud explained itself as talking about the marriage to two different wives, the Arizal explained the Talmud to be talking about the same wife in two different lifetimes. In the first lifetime they will meet each other with the least amount of trouble. In the next lifetime, it will be more difficult to find one another, if at all, and the Arizal explained why:

Since he returned because of some sin there are "accusers" who want to prevent her from him, causing them to fight. With respect to this it says, "It is as difficult to pair them as the splitting of the Red Sea." (Sha'ar HaGilgulim, Ch. 20)

Why did the person have to reincarnate in the first place? Though there are a couple of reasons for reincarnation, one of the main reasons is that the person sinned and died before fixing it up through teshuvah. Consequently, he has to do rectify his sin in his next lifetime.

This does not sit well with the angels who are supposed to help him find his zivug, his soul mate. They figure, "Why should we help a person who sinned and had to reincarnate to fix it up? In fact," they apparently say, "let's make it as difficult as possible for him to find his soul mate the second time!" How much more so must they say this if a person has to reincarnate multiple times.

Rav Chaim Vital, in the name of his teacher, brings a proof for this explanation from the Talmud itself:

It is in the manner mentioned because it is called the "second pairing," that is, she is his real soul mate, but [since] they were already paired another time in a former life, now, in this reincarnation, it is considered to be the second pairing. The woman herself is the original one, but it is the second pairing. This is why it does not say "second pair," but rather the "second pairing," which refers back to the pairing and not the woman. (Sha'ar HaGilgulim, Ch. 20)

Thus, even the language of the Talmud suggests that this is the explanation, at least on the level of Sod. It continues in Sha'ar HaGilgulim:

This will explain why sometimes a man marries a woman quickly and without any difficulty or fighting, and sometimes he does not marry a woman except with much arguing until they are married. Only after they are married do they achieve peace and tranquility, indicating that she is

indeed his soul mate, but that it is the second pairing. If she was not his soul mate, there would not be peace after he married her. (Sha'ar HaGilgulim, Ch. 20)

When a man and woman date one another they rarely think about much more than the here and now. People talk about "matches made in Heaven" and "soul mates," but the bottom line for most people is whether or not things are going smoothly. It's hard to imagine a couple breaking off a shidduch that is going well because of some suspicion that they might not actually be soul mates.

That's good, because there is no guarantee that a person will even find his or her actual soul mate this late in history. On the other hand, it is not so clear cut that a person should end a shidduch after encountering some rough waters on the assumption that they are not meant for each other. That may not be the case. It just may be the result of meeting each other for the second, third, fourth, or who knows many times.

How is someone supposed to know if the person he or she is getting along with is in fact the "right" person, or that the person they are fighting with is not the "wrong" person?

It's simple: Consult a prophet. If you can't find one, then take a lesson from this week's parshah and Eliezer's tactic:

[Eliezer] said, "O G-d, the G-d of my master Avraham, please cause to happen to me today, and perform loving kindness for my master, Avraham. I am standing by the water fountain, and the daughters of the people of the city are coming out to draw water. And it will be [that] the young girl to whom I will say, 'Lower your pitcher and I will drink,' and she will say, 'Drink, and I will also water your camels,' You will have designated for Your servant, for Yitzchak, and through her may I know that You have performed loving kindness with my master." (Bereishis 24:12-14)

Though it is true that we are not supposed to test G-d, we can enlist His help. We can pray to him to help us meet someone who is kind and respectful, and we can ask G-d to help us sort out the emotional issues. Love is not the only one who is blind sometimes, and not every couple that has a rough start has a rough end. People change over time, or very little at all.

Eliezer may have had an ulterior motive when setting up his little shidduch test, perhaps indicated by the cantillation that usually suggests hesitation. He had hoped, at one point in time, that his own daughter would merit to marry the son of his master. Avraham explained that it was not possible, since they were Canaanite descendants.

What Eliezer was really indicating with his test was that matching people is a very major thing with very major consequences, far more and too big for which another human can take responsibility. This is also the purport of the following Midrash:

A Roman aristocrat once asked Rebi Yosi bar Chalafta, "In how many days did your G-d create the world?"

He answered, "In six days."

She then asked, "What does G-d do since the days of Creation?"

He answered her, "He sits and makes couples, the daughter of So-and-so to So-and-so . . ."

She told him, "That is His occupation? Even I can do this. I have many servants and handmaids, and I can quickly pair them."

He said to her, "It may be simple in your eyes, but in the eyes of G-d it is like splitting the sea!"

Rebi Yosi bar Chalafta left. What did she do? She took 1,000 servants and 1,000 handmaids and stood them in [two] rows. She said, "So-and-so should marry her, and she should marry him," pairing them all in a single night.

The next day they came to her with bruised heads, black eyes, and broken legs. She asked them, "What happened to you?"

A female would say, "I don't want him!" and a male would say, "I don't want her!"

She immediately sent for Rebi Yosi bar Chalafta and said, "There is no G-d like your G-d. Your Torah is truthful, praiseworthy, and beautiful." (Bereishis Rabbah 68:4)

There are several questions that should be asked on this midrash. The main point though is clear: G-d is the Master Matchmaker. It requires His help to arrange it, and His help to constantly maintain it throughout the years.