

CONNECTING WITH SOULMATES

The Sages teach us that when the souls were originally formed they were comprised of both male and female. Prior to entering the world these two aspects of the soul split and are separated. 1 During man's initial entry into the world, his soulmate comes with him. When the time for him to marry arrives, she will be given to him immediately without any impediments. 2 The Talmud references this initial unification of the soul down here on earth as their Zivug Rishon - or this couples' first union. It is this; our first scenario which is the initial marriage of soulmates that is predetermined at conception. As our Sages have taught "Forty days 3 before the formation of an embryo, a heavenly voice proclaims: the daughter of this one is destined to marry this one." 4 It appears to us as if this reality is not so noticeably apparent in our lives where we often witness impediments in the process. Our Sages assumed that we recognize this and therefore provided us with three additional Rabbinic statements and or suggestions regarding marriages. It behooves us to analyze each one of these - as each represents an alternate reality - reflective of one's relationship with his soulmate during a particular life cycle. Finally we hope to place the search to find Rivqah on behalf of her soulmate Yishaq into one of these four categories. Doing so - will assist us to appreciate the Torah message in the narrative.

THE SECOND SCENARIO - DIFFICULT TO PAIR AS SPLITTING THE SEA

The Talmud cites an apparent contradictory teaching. "It is difficult to pair (a man and woman) for marriage as it was to split the Sea of Reeds." 5 Since one's mate is apparently determined from the time of conception, why is it so difficult to pair them later on? The Talmud resolves the inquiry. The first idea that matches are determined at conception was said exclusively regarding their initial union - loosely translated as their first marriage. The second idea that matchmaking is as difficult as splitting the sea was said exclusively regarding the second union - loosely translated as the second marriage. 6 The reality is that man often sins during his sojourn here, requiring him to come back to this world for rectification in the secret of Gilgul - or transmigration of souls. In this second scenario we reference the verse "And if his wife shall go out with him" connoting that his soulmate descends back into this world to assist him in his rectification. When the time comes for him to marry, she is not given to him without accusations from above. This manifests itself as impediments in finding his soulmate to marry. He is subject to this due to faulty behavior in a prior lifetime. 7 Hence, the union is said to be challenging and is termed as difficult as splitting the sea. The Talmud call this a second union - A reunification of soulmates who did not properly complete their task together during their initial time on earth. The union is not termed Zivug Shenit - a second mate; but rather Zivug Sheni - a second union between soulmates. We often see couples who encounter difficulties in finding each other but live harmoniously together once married. 8

THE THIRD SCENARIO - PAIRING ACCORDING TO DEEDS

There Is a third scenario to be learned from another apparent contradiction found in a parallel narrative in the Talmud. "When Rish Laqish would open his lecture on Sotah he would say - They (the heavenly court) pair a woman for a man in marriage only in accordance with his deeds." 9 Why if pre-determined at conception would a woman be prepared for a man only according to his deeds? The Talmud is teaching us here that failure to make spiritual correction in ones' initial lifetime does not guarantee a second chance to unite with one's soulmate in future incarnations. Namely, if he does not advance himself spiritually, there is the possibility he will not merit to even marry his soulmate. Hence, his fate in this matter will be judged according to his deeds. For he is forewarned that if ones' deeds are not satisfactory someone else may take his chosen mate.

THE FOURTH SCENARIO - HIS SOULMATE DOES NOT DESCEND WITH HIM

There is a fourth scenario which occurs due to the spiritual law that while women often return to this world in soul transmigration - it is not absolutely necessary for their spiritual correction. 10 Hence, it is possible that a male will not meet his predetermined mate because his female counterpart did not descend into this world. In this case he will be paired with a female whose mate was not meritorious. The Zohar advises concerning one whose deeds are proper but with a female soulmate who has not descended where he should search for a worthy mate. It is regarding this scenario to which our Sages teach us - "One should sell his possessions in order to marry a daughter

of a scholar.” 11 For her soul is likely elevated due to the proper thoughts of her father during conception.” 12 The Zohar explains that all souls who returned from their prior incarnation without the company of their soulmate may preempt another in mercy through prayer by marrying the other’s soulmate. 13 Concerning this the Sages were aroused to declare that Nisu’in - marriages are not to be carried out on the Mo’ed but one may carry out Qiddushin - Halakhic engagement - on the holiday. The reason offered is that - lest another one whose soulmate has not descended with him (but may have enough meritorious deeds to marry his friends soulmate) preempt him through mercy. 14 An exception is made to the rule disallowing engagements on the holiday for fear that by the delay, another man will marry one’s intended soulmate. Correctly the Sages have termed his competitor as “another” - meaning a stranger who is not the soulmate of this woman. 15

YISHAQ AND RIVQAH - A SECOND SCENARIO

Rivqah’s brother Lavan responds to Eliezer’s proposal that she marry Yishaq by declaring “the matter stems from Hashem”. 16 Simply it was evident from the order in which matters occurred that a higher power was involved here. This match was in the domain of Hashem’s celestial forces in which they had no ability in which to interfere! It is easy to assume that Lavan himself and his descendants (Bilaam) 17 are the ultimate antagonists of the nation of Israel! What moved them to see the matter so clearly in that they lost any ability to intervene and prevent to holy marriage of Yishaq and Rivqah? It appears to me that their union fits into that of the second scenario taught above. Yishaq would have to find his soulmate from a previous lifetime. He would be able to remove any impediments in marrying her if he would raise himself spiritually. Once he can accomplish a personal elevated ascent - his soulmate would be granted him with little or no possibility of failure. The Midrash 18 reveals that Lavan’s statement attributing the matter to Hashem was in reference to what occurred three years prior on Har HaMoriyah. Yishaq for his willingness of self sacrifice at the Aqedah raised himself spiritually. He thereby succeeded to clear the way for his soulmate Rivqah to descend in preparation to unite in marriage once again. Lavan realized that Avraham at that time had been advised that Rivqah had been born 19 and the reunification between her and his son had been set in motion. Any attempted opposition would turn futile. Once Yishaq ascended spiritually through the act of the Aqedah, his future meeting with his soulmate was secured above which even Lavan had to readily admit. The Torah makes a concerted effort to equate the time of the Aqedah with the birth of Rivqah. In fact it should be noted that the minor tractate Soferim 20 goes so far to tell us that Rivqah was three years old at the time of her marriage. No doubt to synchronize her spiritual birth with the spiritual ascent of her husband. It appears to me that most of us come into this world facing the second scenario. It is likewise incumbent upon us to elevate ourselves spiritually to remove the impediments we initiated and left uncontested from prior incarnations. In this matter, we can seek out our soulmates with relative ease, wherein even our accusers will proclaim - That the matter has extended from Hashem!

Shabbat Shalom

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