

BASHERT IS BASHERT

By Ozer Bergman

"[Avraham] said to the senior servant ... 'Go to my native land, to my birthplace, and obtain a wife for my son Isaac.' 'But what if the girl does not want to come back with me to this land?' asked the servant" (Genesis 24:2-5).

Just in case some review is necessary, let's start with this. *Bashert* is the Yiddish word for "destiny" or "destined." For example, a newly-engaged couple is often told, "You two are so alike! He/she must be your *bashert!*" or, "The two of you are *bashert!*" When no matter what you've tried, something happens—or doesn't—somebody is likely to tell you, "*Bashert* is *bashert* (i.e., it was just meant to be that way)."

As far as I know, the *shidduch* (marriage) crisis still exists. It's worse than sad. It's devastating and a theological problem no less challenging than the Holocaust, on a par with Pharaoh's decree to kill Jewish babies, may God spare us. In lieu of a *dvar Torah* attempting to solve this challenge (because I've tried and could not), I offer some renditions of Reb Noson's prayers to find one's *bashert*. Because these are loose renditions, feel free to amend or modify as you like. If you wish to pray for someone in particular, the formula is: "___ (name), the son/daughter of ___ (mother's name)."

May every Jew who needs to get married, soon marry his or her *bashert*, and may they build a *bayit ne'eman b'Yisrael* (a faithful house in Israel) and raise their children *l'Torah, l'chuppah u'l'maasim tovim* (to Torah, to the wedding canopy and to doing good deeds). Amen.

✽

Dear God, please have pity on us and all Jews, and prepare for our sons and daughters proper matches, made in Heaven. Although we have sinned, let there be no mix-ups and no mismatches.

Instead, let each person marry the one Heaven made just for him, in particular [specify person(s) you are praying for]. Please, always lead us on the true path so that we merit making good and proper matches, honestly, in accordance with Your will (LT #2).

✽

Dear God, please have compassion on every Jew who is having difficulty finding his/her marriage partner, in particular [specify person(s) you are praying for]. Help each and every one of them! Save each and every one of them, soon! Bless each to find his/her true perfect match, quickly, easily and soon, with no more delay or pain or suffering!

*We don't know what to do anymore! We're totally out of suggestions and ideas on how to find a *shidduch* for the people we know, or how to pray for them. You know how hard it is for a person to find a proper match, a good fit. People are so different, sometimes so totally different it's like trying to split the sea! The only way to do it is with great *da'at*, which we can get only from hearing the *tzaddik* who brings together words and concepts from all over the Torah to reveal new insights. But who is he?! Where can we find him?!*

Our eyes look to You and You alone. Compassionate One Who makes matches, have pity on Your people and help all who need to get married, in particular [specify person(s) you are praying for]. Please, match each couple so they fully complement one another, a marriage made in Heaven, swiftly and speedily, for each and every one (LT #45).

✽

*One and only Lord, Who sees to the final generation of mankind, Who is full of compassion and runs the world with kindness—have mercy! Have pity on our Jewish young. Teach us how we are to find the true match for each of our dependents. In the merit of the great *tzaddikim*, give us the privilege and help we need to make the matches we need to make. May we marry off our children*

SIDEPATH

Reb Noson related:

For a long time I encountered great difficulty in my Torah studies. I would enter the study hall filled with enthusiasm and intending to devote all my energy to my studies. But no sooner had I begun than inevitably something would happen to divert me from my intentions, distract my concentration and deflate my determination. And no matter how determined I was, each day brought a new diversion. ... I was ready to give up.

But then I talked to the Rebbe. He told me that when it came to studying Torah, "A little is also good!" Hearing this changed my attitude totally. Afterwards, whenever I couldn't study as much as I desired, I was still satisfied and content with whatever I had managed to accomplish. This way, I was able to counter my difficulties in studying. By grabbing a little bit here, a little bit there, I eventually developed into a serious student (*Aveneha Barzel*, p. 78).

soon. May they and their intended have a good mazel, a good, long life together. May they be truly in love with each other and live in peace and harmony, just as You want every couple to.

May each and every one of Your people, the Jews, succeed at guarding the foundation of Judaism, remaining modest when facing the greatest human temptation. May each Jewish couple have sons and daughters—generations of offspring, forever—all of whom will live good, long lives worshipping You (LT #45).

*A gutn Shabbos!
Shabbat Shalom!*

Based on *Likutey Tefilot* II, #2, 45

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A FAIR DEAL

By Yossi Katz

Sarah, our first matriarch, passes away at the age of 127. Abraham, her loving husband and life partner in spreading monotheism throughout the world, immediately throws himself into the task of finding the appropriate burial ground for his righteous wife. He sets his sights on the Cave of Machpelah, resting place of Adam and Eve and the gateway through which all souls ascend to the Garden of Eden.

In order to procure the rights to this holy place, Abraham must assume ownership from a shady character named Efron. Abraham asks the locals, who have absolute respect for Efron, to serve as brokers and arrange the payment.

When Efron is approached about the sale, he responds by saying before all the locals, "The property is yours!" One would expect this to be a moment of consolation for Abraham. But instead, Abraham insists on paying the full value for the cave and the field in which it lies. Without losing a beat, Efron takes full advantage of this offer and charges Abraham a whopping one million shekels for the property (Rashi on Genesis 23:16; *Bava Metzia* 87a). Abraham readily agrees to this amount.

Why didn't Abraham agree to Efron's original gift of the field for free? And why did he end up paying the exorbitant amount that Efron quoted? Couldn't he at least have negotiated for a fair price?

The Cave of Machpelah was no ordinary place. It was the gateway to the Garden of Eden; Abraham knew this was the place where Sarah's soul would arise and join with the Divine. Precisely here, Heaven and earth are bridged and an awesome level of God's Providence is revealed. But the Other Side of Evil would not allow Abraham to exploit these powers for the good. Therefore, it made sure that the keys to this holy site were in the hands of the lowly Efron.

Abraham needed the right battle plan to rescue this property and return it to the Side of Holiness. The weapon he used was money. Money is the ultimate show of power and control, blinding its possessor into thinking that he is the end-all and be-all who holds fate in his hands. So Abraham bribed Efron with an exorbitant amount of money, in effect giving the Other Side a taste of its own medicine. Efron got what he thought would make him all-powerful, but the

Why did Avraham pay a whopping one million shekels for the Cave of Machpelah?

ultimate prize went to Abraham. The Cave of Machpelah, the place where Heaven and earth meet to reveal God's true rulership in every detail of our world, was brought back to the Side of Holiness.

How does this relate to us? As we travel the path to spiritual growth, we arrive at powerful destinations. These new levels can help us rise and experience new awareness and closeness to God. However, the Other Side constantly sets up roadblocks and does everything to keep us away. The forces of evil make it seem as if it's just not meant to be—things are going to end up the same way they always do. Do you really think you can change? Do you really think your life can improve?

But God does just the opposite and beckons to us. Realize there is holiness here—realize that you and God can have an entirely fresh and better relationship than yesterday or the day before. God is here and there is no such thing as nature or habit. You must only realize that God is truly in charge, and anything that pushes you away from Him is but another ploy of the Other Side. Throw away all your doubts and worries, and persevere in your spiritual desires, so that you, too, will merit a taste of the Garden of Eden.

Based on *Likutey Halakhot*,
Hilkhot Periviah V'Reviah

KITZUR L" M WEEKLY

17 — "It happened as they emptied their sacks" (Genesis 42:35)
(continued)

12. From this, each person can readily understand for himself how much he needs to take pity on himself, when he remembers the exaltedness of his [innate, spiritual] root. He might say to himself, "I am from the seed of the Jewish people who are above all the worlds and who were God's 'first thought' [when He set out to create the world]. What a degraded state I am in now! And God forbid—God forbid! —who knows what is in store for me in the future? For the Evil One wants to destroy me, God forbid." In this way, a person will take pity on himself and will strive to return to God.

13. At the time that this good starts to return to its place, it is still closely attached to and bound up with the gentiles. Consequently, [when it leaves,] it also tears off with itself some of their evil. This phenomenon manifests itself in the form of proselytes who come to convert. They represent the evil that was torn off with the good, when the good returned to its place. For it is impossible for the good to return by itself, due to the great tightness of the bond by which it is connected and attached there, so it is inevitable that it will also tear off with itself some of the evil, [too]—and this evil is the converts.

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