An aspect of Yom HaKippurim is a minhag in Klal Yisrael to make shidduchim on Yom Kippur, as it states:1

ולא היו ימים טובים לישראל כחמשה עשר באב ויום הכפרים בהן בנות ישראל יוצאות...

“There were no more joyous days in Israel than the 15th of Av and Yom HaKippurim because on that day the daughters of Israel would borrow clothes from each other...”

The Mishna then proceeds to describe in detail how the marriages were arranged. The Radak,2 in explaining the celebrations held in Shiloh during the times of the Judges, says it refers to the custom mentioned in Masechet Ta'anit regarding making shidduchim on Yom HaKippurim.

What is the connection between Yom HaKippurim and getting married?

The second luchot were given to Klal Yisrael on Yom HaKippurim. Many commentators see the luchot as a symbol of the kiddushin between Klal Yisrael and HaKadosh Baruch Hu. Chazal say the verse3 יָדְנֶנָּה בְּיוֹם חֲתֻנָּתוֹ וּבְיוֹם שִׂמְחַת לִבּוֹ is an allusion to “the day of his wedding – this represents Matan Torah.”

Since the giving of the second set of luchot on Yom HaKippurim is also a day of Matan Torah, we see thereby the strong connection between Yom HaKippurim and the institution of marriage. Jewish couples are thus given the message that their lives and households need to be conducted by the dictates of the Torah.

The Michtav M’Eliyahu4 describes the joy one is meant to experience at the conclusion of Yom HaKippurim. We have hopefully been worthy of receiving atonement and absolution due to the power of the day and through our prayers, repentance and charity. At the close of Neilah, many burst into song and dance exactly because of this feeling of happiness. An atmosphere of simcha is certainly conducive to a Jewish marriage.

Doubt causes anguish. Resolving doubt leads to happiness. On Yom Kippur, when the red string tied to the horns of the goat sent to Azazel turned white and when the Kohen Gadol emerged unscathed from the Holy of Holies, Klal Yisrael knew with certainty they had been forgiven of their sins.

There is no greater simcha than resolving doubts – clarity and absolute knowledge on Yom Kippur that we are still beloved by G-d was the background to brides and grooms finding each other.

Rav Soloveitchik5 explains why simcha is so great on Yom Kippur. Sin distances us from G-d. The aim of Yom Kippur, in washing away our sins, is to bring us in close contact with Him. True devekut with Hashem, clinging and cleaving to G-d, creates the highest human happiness. This kind of clinging is emulated when a man takes a wife and they cling to each other.

No other human could be in the Beit HaMikdash when the Kohen Gadol was doing the Avodah. The Holy of Holies is a hidden place. There is a strong component of tzniut, modesty in the Avodah of Yom HaKippurim.

This was a message Chazal wanted couples to have as a foundation in their new lives together, as they build a Bayit Neeman BeYisrael.

May the merit of many shidduchim in Klal Yisrael, Limud HaTorah, Devekut with Hashem – brought on by selicha and mechila via Yom Kippur, modesty, and above all simcha – lead to the coming of Moshiach Tzidkeinu, Bimheira BeYameinu, Amen.

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1 Masechet Ta’anit 26b.  
2 Shoftim 21:19.  
3 Shir HaShirim 3:11.  
4 Volume 1 page 266.  
5 Harerei Kedem 161.

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