



# A Time for SHIDDUCHIM?

An aspect of Yom HaKippurim not often addressed is that it seems to have been a *minhag* in *Klal Yisrael* to make *shidduchim* on Yom Kippur, as it states:<sup>1</sup>

לא היו ימים טובים לישראל כחמשה עשר באב וכיום הכפורים שבהן 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,<sup>2</sup> 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 commentaries see the *luchot* as a symbol of the *kiddushin* between *Klal Yisrael* and *HaKadosh Baruch Hu*. *Chazal* say the verse<sup>3</sup> בְּיוֹם הַתְּנִתּוּ וּבְיוֹם שְׂמֵחָת לְבוֹ 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’Eliyahu<sup>4</sup> 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 Soloveitchik<sup>5</sup> 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 Ne’eman BeYisrael*.

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

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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