

Parsha Ponders

Sheva Berachos | January 18, 2019 | 12 Shevat 5779

The Week of Sheva Berachos, Day #4 - Torah¹

במערבא אמרי בלא תורה...דכתיב האם אין עזרתי בי ותושיה נדחה ממני

In the West they say: [Any man who doesn't have a wife lives] without Torah...as it is written²: "Is it that I have no help in me, and that sound wisdom is driven from me?"³

As part of the Jewish wedding ceremony⁴, seven blessings known as *sheva berachos* are recited under the chuppah. As well, our Sages tell us⁵ that once a couple gets married, they are to spend the first week of their marriage rejoicing. During these seven days, the *sheva berachos* are again recited, at the end of a festive meal. Some say⁶ that these seven blessings correlate to the seven things⁷ that a man acquires⁸ when he gets married. Our Sages inform us⁹ that until a man gets married, he doesn't have joy, blessing, goodness, Torah, fortification, peace, nor is he a complete Man¹⁰. As such, it would be appropriate during this week to elaborate on each of these seven qualities, and how they relate to marriage.

The *gemarra* points out¹¹ many things in Judaism are threes. Tanach consists of three parts: Torah, Neviim (Prophets), and Kesuvim (Writings). We're considered a three-part nation, with the three forefathers Avraham, Yitzchak, and Yaakov¹². The Torah was given by a person, Moshe, who was the third child in his family, in the third month (Sivan), on the third day¹³.

We find that Yaakov is referred to¹⁴ as Yeshurun, meaning straight, since he's the middle of the three forefathers (with Avraham on the right and Yitzchak on the left)¹⁵. What this teaches us is that three represents equilibrium. It signifies avoiding any extremes and just going on the straight path. These connections between Torah and three show that if the Jewish people weren't straight in their character and behavior, they wouldn't have been worthy to receive the Torah.

¹ Based on a discussion I had on this topic with [Rav Reuven Stone](#), a close student of [Rav Yonasan David *shlita*](#), and a longtime *chavrusa* of mine

² Job 6:13

³ [Yevamos 62b](#)

⁴ [Kesubos 7b](#)

⁵ [Ibid 7a](#)

⁶ [Nachalas Shiva 12:4:3](#). See also [Levush Even HaEzer 61:1](#) and [Shnei Luchos HaBris *Sha'ar HaOsios* § קדושת הזיווג](#) 384-386

⁷ [Nachalas Shiva loc. cit.](#) points out that [Bereishis Rabbah 17:2](#) counts more than seven (it adds helpmate, atonement, life, and that he stops diminishing the Divine form), but the [Tur Even HaEzer § 1](#) only lists these seven (although he replaces joy with "a living place", see [Beis Yosef ad. loc.](#))

⁸ Interesting to note that according to the [Rambam \(Mishneh Torah Hilchos Ishus 12:1,2\)](#), when a couple gets married, besides the husband's three biblical obligations towards his wife (Cf. [Ramban](#) to [Exodus 21:10](#)), the Rabbis enacted **seven** additional obligations upon the husband

⁹ [Yevamos 62b, 63a](#)

¹⁰ [Nachalas Shiva loc. cit.](#) brings and explains how they correlate: (1) ברכת היין – Blessing (2) שהכל ברא לכבודו – Torah (4) אדם יצר את האדם – Adam (5) שוש תשיש – Peace (6) שמח תשמח – Joy (7) אשר ברא – Fortification. For some reason he leaves out the third of the *sheva berachos* (יצר האדם), and it would presumably correlate to the remaining attribute, which is Goodness

¹¹ [Shabbos 88a](#)

¹² [Tiferes Yisroel](#) Chapter 11. Cf. [Rashi ad. loc.](#) who says it refers to Kohanim, Leviim, and Yisraelim

¹³ The third day of separation between spouses, as preparation of the revelation at Sinai. Cf. [Tiferes Yisroel loc. cit.](#)

¹⁴ [Isaiah 44:2](#)

¹⁵ [Tiferes Yisroel loc. cit.](#)

Man and woman are two opposites¹⁶, sort of like left and right. Their unification through marriage creates a third element, which provides the necessary equilibrium. Before, a single man wasn't worthy to properly receive the Torah. Now that he has found his match, and in turn his equilibrium, he now becomes worthy to Torah. Just like the Jewish people had to be "three" to receive the Torah, so too a man has to get married.

Mazel Tov!

¹⁶ See Be'er HaGoleh 4:17, Chiddushei Aggados to Yevamos 63a and Gur Aryeh to Genesis 2:18 § 35