

Parsha Ponders

Sheva Berachos | January 20, 2019 | 14 Shevat 5779

The Week of Sheva Berachos, Day #6 - Shalom¹

רבא בר עולא אמר בלא שלום דכתיב וידעת כי שלום אהלך וגו'

Rava the son of Ulah said: “[Any man who doesn’t have a wife lives] without peace, as it is written²:
“And you shall know that your tent will be one of peace...”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.

Every *shidduch* and subsequent marriage is something new and special. It’s not like the creation of a new human being. That’s simply part of nature. A *shidduch*, the Maharal explains, is beyond nature¹¹. Their meeting is a pretty normal occurrence, but the fact that they develop a relationship is a miracle¹². This is because Man and Woman are two opposites, and without Hashem’s help, they couldn’t coexist¹³.

We see Hashem is involved from the fact that the Hebrew word for Man, איש, and Woman, אשה, share two letters in common. The unique letters spell י-ה, the two-letter name of Hashem. He’s behind the scenes, bringing them together. However, that is only if the two merit this Divine help. This is the

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 5:24](#)

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 – Adam (5) אשר יצר את האדם – 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 [Be’er HaGoleh 4:17](#)

¹² [Rav Moshe Shapira’s](#) explanation of the [Maharal](#), heard from [Rav Stone](#)

¹³ [Chiddushei Aggados to Yevamos 63a](#) and [Gur Aryeh to Genesis 2:18 § 35](#). [Rav Stone](#) used the *gemarra* in [Sotah 17a](#) to prove this. It says that if a couple merits, they have the Divine Presence between them. If not, a consuming fire will destroy them. These two extremes are due to their opposing nature, which will either sync harmoniously or end up in disaster

meaning behind Woman being an עזר כנגדו, a helpmate opposite him, for Man¹⁴. Rashi says¹⁵ that if he merits, then she's an עזר, a helpmate. If not, then she's כנגדו, opposite him. This is because a Woman is the opposite of a Man. Only if they merit the Divine assistance needed will they help each other in harmony, otherwise they will be opposite each other¹⁶.

The Maharal understands *shalom* as two opposites meeting in the middle. When two things are the same and come together, that's not considered *shalom*. We see this idea in our daily prayers, where we say עושה שלום במרומי, He who makes peace in the heights¹⁷. This refers to *shamayim*, or the heavens. Why wouldn't there be *shalom* in *shamayim*? Chazal say¹⁸ that *shamayim* is comprised of אש and מים, total opposites. If Hashem didn't make *shalom* between them, they couldn't coexist¹⁹. The fire would consume the water, or the water would extinguish the fire. So too with a newly married couple. With Hashem's help, they experience *shalom*, as their two opposite natures are brought together.

Mazel Tov!

¹⁴ Genesis *loc. cit.*

¹⁵ *Ad. loc.*, quoting Yevamos *loc. cit.*

¹⁶ Chiddushei Aggados and Gur Aryeh *loc. cit.*

¹⁷ From Job 25:2

¹⁸ Chagigah 12a

¹⁹ Sefer HaManhig II *Sha'ar HaShalom*. See also Rashi to Job *loc. cit.*, Midrash Tanchuma *Vayigash* § 8, and Yerushalmi Rosh Hashanah 2:4