

A PERFECT MARRIAGE

by Rabbi Pinchas Avruch

After his dream of "The Ladder", Yaakov (Jacob) finally arrived at his destination of Aram Naharayim, birthplace of his mother, Rivka (Rebecca) and his paternal grandparents, Avraham and Sara. He had left his parents fourteen years earlier but had spent the intervening years in the Yeshiva (Torah academy) of Shem and Aiver, toiling in study, preparing himself for what would become a twenty-year exile in a heathenish environment. Yaakov stood with the shepherds at the well, where as a group they would remove the stone from the mouth of the well. "And it was, when Yaakov saw Rachel...Yaakov came forward and rolled the stone off the mouth of the well and watered the sheep of Lavan his mother's brother. Then Yaakov...raised his voice and wept." (Beraishis/Genesis 29:10-11) Rashi (Rabbi Shlomo Yitzchaki, 1040-1105, the commentator par excellence, whose commentary is considered basic to the understanding of the text) explains that these were not tears of joy for meeting his destined life's-mate. Yaakov cried because he prophesied that they would not be buried together.

Firstly, what is the significance of being buried separately that Yaakov saw it as a tragedy? Further, whatever bothered him about this eventuality, how could his sense of joy not come to the fore? He came to this land knowing he would now marry and bear the children who would become the Tribes of Israel. His focus should be on the life they will share and the children they will raise. How can he focus on their deaths at such a euphoric moment?

Michtav Me'Eliyahu (collected writings and discourses of Rabbi Eliyahu Dessler (1891-1954) of London and B'nai Brak, one of the outstanding personalities and thinkers of the Mussar movement) explains that only someone with such purity of soul as our Forefather Yaakov could have cried at this ecstatic moment. Yaakov understood that if their marriage would be perfect, if they would share a complete spiritual unity, there could be no separation in the physical world. He absorbed that their eternal physical disconnection indicated there would be some lacking in their relationship.

The Talmud (Tractate Kesubos 8a) explains that Adam was originally created as a hermaphrodite, with all the spiritual and physical components of both man and woman, including the ability to reproduce. The separation of Eve from Adam was not the creation of the female gender; rather, it was a removal of the female characteristics - spiritual, intellectual and physical - from Adam. The union of man and woman became necessary for them to achieve the perfection of creation. Yaakov was keenly aware that marriage is about more than having a best friend, a partner to share in life's trials and tribulations. It is about the pursuit of spiritual excellence. He strove for that flawlessness

and was crushed by the prospect of anything less.

Have a Good Shabbos!

Copyright © 2003 by [Rabbi Pinchas Avruch](#) and [Torah.org](#)