



Mother and Father: the Two Messiahs in Every Home

In the Torah's inner dimension, marriage symbolizes the unification of the *sefirot* of foundation and kingdom, personified by Joseph and David. As every Jewish home is another tier in the building of Jerusalem and the redemption (for "the son of David does not come until all the souls are depleted from the body")¹ we can compare the man and woman to Mashiach the son of Joseph and Mashiach the son of David, respectively. Together, they strive to bring their own personal redemption and the redemption of the entire world.

Mashiach the son of Joseph—who aims with his excessive self-confidence to redeem the Nation of Israel—is constantly in danger of dying. Mashiach the son of David must pray for him and if needed, revive him from the dead with his prayers. Similarly, the man tends toward overwrought self-confidence. He initiates projects and launches new enterprises full-speed ahead—even when those projects are not realistic. Even in the case of a learned man attempting to apply the Torah that he has learned, prior to the true and complete redemption, reality is not always flexible enough to make his initiatives succeed. When the man fails, he is liable to shatter and totally collapse, feeling that he is unsuccessful, a failure, and that God does not desire his overtures. He may even decide that he will do nothing more. The woman, with her power of prayer, must pray for her husband so that he will not break. And if he has broken – she prays that he will rise up again. She encourages him, reminding him that God is pleased with his actions and that he should continue with his efforts.

Due to his nature of rectified lowliness, Mashiach the son of David is less pretentious, so there is no danger that he will collapse when he comes face to face with reality. His close contact with lower reality, however, is liable to cause him sadness and even despair. From time to time, though, he needs a shot of confidence in joy in the arm; it is Mashiach the son Joseph that is responsible for providing this encouragement. Similarly, a woman is naturally inclined to sadness and melancholy (particularly following the curse of Eve – "You shall bear children in sorrow"²) but does rise to take action to the best of her ability. Her slow-paced rectification and the difficulties that reality presents, however, weigh heavily upon her and are liable to cause her to despair.

¹ *Niddah* 13b.

² Genesis 3:16.

True, she is not so prone to collapsing; she has tremendous responsibility to run her household and goes from one task to the next. But the gloom and sadness are difficult for her to bear. In addition, they are fertile ground for the cultivation of weaknesses and shortcomings. Thus the man is commanded to make his wife happy. He encourages her and awakens joy and thanksgiving in her heart for all the good that God gives her. This joy is the fuel for all of her blessed and productive action.

Before marriage, each of the partners is alone. The only way that they can deal with hardship and crisis is with the power of faith, the belief that everything that God does is for the very best. The ultimate purpose of their lives together as a couple is to build confidence in God's visible and revealed good. They cultivate active confidence in God, which builds their home and rectifies reality. The husband and wife encourage each other as needed—as they progress down the path to the true and complete redemption.

The wife enlivens the spark of Mashiach the son of Joseph in her husband by revealing to him that God is happy with his initiatives and actions. "God will find joy in His actions"³ (ישמח הוי' בַּמַּעֲשָׂיו). The husband brings joy to the spark of Mashiach the son of David in his wife by lifting her spirit so she can see the myriad details of the goodness that God gives, thereby fulfilling the complementary verse, "Israel will find joy in its Maker"⁴ (ישמח ישראל בַּעֲשֵׂיו). Fittingly, the identical word in both verses, "will be joyous" (ישמח) is an anagram of Mashiach (משיח)!

³ Psalms 104:31.

⁴ Ibid. 149:2.