

# A Seal Upon Your Heart: Love and Romance in the Jewish Tradition

Text Sheets

KOACH Shabbat 2008

<p><b>Gen. 1</b> 26. And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth.</p> <p>27. So God created man in His own image, in the image of God created He him; male and female He created them.</p> <p>28. And God blessed them, and God said to them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves upon the earth.</p>	<p><b>בראשית פרק א</b></p> <p>(כו) וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים נַעֲשֶׂה אָדָם בְּצַלְמֵנוּ בְּדְמוּתֵנוּ וְיִרְדּוּ בְדִגְתַּת הַיָּם וּבְעוֹף הַשָּׁמַיִם וּבַבְּהֵמָה וּבְכָל הָאָרֶץ וּבְכָל הַרֹמֵשׁ הָרֶמֶשׂ עַל הָאָרֶץ: (כז) וַיִּבְרָא אֱלֹהִים אֶת הָאָדָם בְּצַלְמוֹ בְּצַלְמֵם אֱלֹהִים בָּרָא אֶת הָאָדָם זָכָר וּנְקֵבָה בָּרָא אֶת (כח) וַיְבָרֶךְ אֹתָם אֱלֹהִים וַיֹּאמֶר לָהֶם אֱלֹהִים פְּרוּ וּרְבוּ וּמְלֵאוּ אֶת הָאָרֶץ וּכְבֹשׁוּהָ וּרְדוּ בְּדִגְתַּת הַיָּם וּבְעוֹף הַשָּׁמַיִם וּבְכָל חַיַּה הָרֶמֶשׂ עַל הָאָרֶץ:</p>
<p><b>Gen. 2</b> 18. And the Lord God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a help to match him.</p> <p>19. And out of the ground the Lord God formed every beast of the field, and every bird of the air; and brought them to Adam to see what he would call them; and whatever Adam called every living creature, that was its name.</p> <p>20. And Adam gave names to all cattle, and to the bird of the air, and to every beast of the field; but for Adam there was not found a help to match him.</p> <p>21. And the Lord God made Adam fall into a deep sleep, and he slept; and He took one from his ribs, and closed up the flesh.</p> <p>22. And the rib, which the Lord God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her to the man.</p> <p>23. And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man.</p> <p>24. Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave to his wife; and they shall be one flesh.</p> <p>25. And they were both naked, the man and his</p>	<p><b>בראשית פרק ב</b></p> <p>(יח) וַיֹּאמֶר יְקֹוֹק אֱלֹהִים לֹא טוֹב הָיְתָה הָאָדָם לְבַדּוֹ אֲעֲשֶׂה לוֹ עֵזֶר כְּנֶגְדּוֹ: (יט) וַיִּצַּר יְקֹוֹק אֱלֹהִים מִן הָאָדָמָה כָּל חַיַּת הַשָּׂדֶה וְאֵת כָּל עוֹף הַשָּׁמַיִם וַיִּבְאֵר אֶל הָאָדָם לִרְאוֹת מַה יִּקְרָא לוֹ וְכֹל לְאֲשֶׁר יִקְרָא לוֹ הָאָדָם נָפֶשׁ חַיָּה הוּא שְׁמוֹ: (כ) וַיִּקְרָא הָאָדָם שְׁמוֹת לְכָל הַבְּהֵמָה וּלְעוֹף הַשָּׁמַיִם וּלְכָל חַיַּת הַשָּׂדֶה וּלְאָדָם לֹא מָצָא עֵזֶר כְּנֶגְדּוֹ: (כא) וַיִּשְׁלַח יְקֹוֹק אֱלֹהִים תְּרַדְמָה עַל הָאָדָם וַיִּישָׁן וַיִּקַּח אֶחָת מֵצִלְעֵי תַּיִו וַיִּסְגֶּר בָּשָׂר תַּחְתְּנָה: (כב) וַיִּבֶן יְקֹוֹק אֱלֹהִים אֶת הַצֶּלַע אֲשֶׁר לָקַח מִן הָאָדָם לְאִשָּׁה וַיִּבְאֶהָ אֶל הָאָדָם: (כג) וַיֹּאמֶר הָאָדָם זֹאת הִפְעַם עֵצָם מֵעֵצֵי וּבָשָׂר מִבָּשָׂרִי לֹא אֵת יִקְרָא אִשָּׁה כִּי מֵאִישׁ לָקַחְתָּהּ זֹאת: (כד) עַל כֵּן יַעֲזֹב אִישׁ אֶת אָבִיו וְאֶת אִמּוֹ וְדָבַק בְּאִשְׁתּוֹ וְהָיוּ לְבָשָׂר אֶחָד: (כה) וְהָיוּ שְׁנֵיהֶם עַרוּמִים הָאָדָם וְאִשְׁתּוֹ וְלֹא יָתֵב שָׁשׂוּ:</p>

wife, and were not ashamed.

After God created Adam, who was alone, God said, **"IT IS NOT GOOD FOR MAN TO BE ALONE" (Genesis 2:18)**. So God created a woman for Adam from the earth, as God had created Adam himself. God called her Lilith. Unfortunately, Adam and Lilith began to quarrel. She said, "I will not lie on the bottom during sex," and he said, "I will not lie beneath you. I want to be on top. After all, you are fit only to be in the bottom position, while I am meant to be in the superior one." Lilith answered, "We are equal to each other! Were we not both created from the earth?" Alas, they would not listen to one another. When Lilith saw this, she pronounced God's Ineffable Name and flew away. The Alphabet of Ben Sira, ca. 700-1000 CE

בראשית פרק כד

(ג) וַיֵּצֵא יִצְחָק לְשׁוּחַ בְּשׂוּדָה לְפָנֹת עָרֵב וַיִּשָּׂא עֵינָיו וַיֵּרֶא וְהִנֵּה גַמְלִים בָּאִים)

(ד) וַתִּשָּׂא רִבְקָה אֶת עֵינֶיהָ וַתִּרְא אֶת יִצְחָק וַתִּפֹּל מֵעַל הַגָּמֶל)

(ה) וַתֹּאמֶר אֶל הָעֶבֶד מִי הָאִישׁ הַלְזֶה הַזֶּה לֵךְ בְּשׂוּדָה לְקַרְאֲתָנִי וַיֹּאמֶר הָעֶבֶד הוּא אֲדֹנָי וַתִּקַּח הַצְּעִירָה

וַתִּתְקַס

(ו) וַיִּסְפֹּר הָעֶבֶד לְיִצְחָק אֶת כָּל הַדְּבָרִים אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה

(ז) וַיְבָאָה יִצְחָק הָאֵלֶּה שָׂרָה אִמּוֹ וַיִּקַּח אֶת רִבְקָה וַתְּהִי לוֹ לְאִשָּׁה וַיֵּאֱהָבֶהּ וַיִּנָּחֶם יִצְחָק אַחֲרֵי אִמּוֹ)

And Isaac went out walking in the field toward evening and, looking up, he saw camels approaching. Raising her eyes, Rebekah and alighted from (lit. fell off) the camel. She said to the servant, "Who is that man walking in the field toward us?" And the servant said, "That is my master." So she took her veil and covered herself. The servant told Isaac all the things he had done. Isaac then brought her into the tent of his mother Sarah and he took Rebekah as his wife. Isaac loved her and thus found comfort after his mother's death. Genesis 24:63-67

שיר השירים פרק ח

שִׁימְנֵי כַחֲתָם עַל לִבְךָ כַחֲתָם עַל זְרוּעֶךָ כִּי עֲזָה כַּמּוֹת אֶהְבֶּה קִשָּׁה כַּשֶּׂאֱוִל קִנְיָה רִשְׁפִּיהָ רִשְׁפֵי אֵשׁ שֶׁלֹּהֲבַתֶּיהָ

(ז) מִיָּם רַבִּים ל' א' יוֹכְלוּ לְכַבּוֹת אֶת הָאֶהְבָּה וַיִּנְהָרוּת ל' א' יִשְׁטְפוּהָ

Let me be a seal upon your heart, like the seal upon your hand. For love is fierce as death, passion is mighty as She'ol; its darts are darts of fire, a blazing flame. Vast floods cannot quench love, nor rivers drown it. Song of Songs 8:6-7

<p>Talmud, Sotah 17A</p> <p>R' Akiva expounded: 'Man &amp; Woman – if they merit - the Holy Presence dwells in their midst, if they do not merit - then a <b>fire</b> consumes them.'</p>	<p><b>תלמוד בבלי מסכת סוטה דף יז עמוד א</b></p> <p><b>דריש ר"ע: איש ואשה, זכו - שכינה ביניהן(י-ה), לא זכו - אש אוכלתן</b></p>
---	---

משנה מסכת אבות פרק ה

כל אהבה שהיא תלויה בדבר בטל דבר בטלה אהבה ושאינה תלויה בדבר אינה בטלה לעולם איזו היא אהבה: התלויה בדבר זו אהבת אמנון ותמר ושאינה תלויה בדבר זו אהבת דוד ויהונתן

When love depends on achieving a certain goal, love vanishes when that goal is achieved; but a love which is not dependent on any goal, never vanishes. What is an example of a love which is conditional? The love of Amnon for Tamar. What is an example of unconditional love? The love of David and Jonathan. Pirkei Avot 5:18.

**Tur, Even HaEzer, siman #1** (13<sup>th</sup>/14<sup>th</sup> century)

HaShem desired the benefit of His creations and knew that it was **not good for man to be alone** and therefore made for him an "Ezer-K'negdo." Furthermore, **the intention of the creation of man was so that he would be fruitful and multiply** and this is impossible •without a mate and therefore God ordered man to bond with his mate that God made for him. **Therefore every man is obligated to marry a woman in order to be fruitful and multiply.** As anyone who does not engage in this mitzvah is as if he has shed blood . . . and as if he has diminished the Image of God . . . and causes the Shechinah to depart from Israel. And anyone that dwells without a woman dwells without good, without a blessing, without a home, without Torah, without protection, without peace. Rabbi Eliezer said: "any one that does not have a woman is not a man."

<p><u>Exodus 21:10</u></p> <p>If a man takes another (wife)– food, clothing, and conjugal rights must not be withheld from the first one.</p>	<p><u>שמות פרק כא פסוק י</u></p> <p><b>אם אחרת יקח לו שארה כסותה וע נתה ל' א יגרע:</b></p>
---	--

**Maimonides, The Book of Women, Chapter 14** (12<sup>th</sup> century)

**Halacha 1:**

The conjugal (sexual) rights mentioned in the Torah are **obligatory upon each man** according to his physical powers and his occupation. How so? For the men who are **healthy and live in comfortable and pleasurable circumstances**, . . . the conjugal schedule is every night; for the **laborers**, such as tailors, weavers, masons, and the like, their conjugal schedule is twice weekly, if their work is in the same city, and once a week if their work is in a another city; for the **donkey drivers**, their schedule is once a week; for the **camel drivers**, once in thirty days; for the **sailors**, once in six months; . . .; it is the practice of **the learned** to have conjugal relations each Friday night.

**Halacha 2:**

**A wife may restrict her husband in his business journeys, so that he would not otherwise deprive her of her conjugal rights. Hence he may not set out except with her permission.** Similarly, she may prevent him from exchanging an occupation involving a frequent conjugal schedule, for one involving an infrequent one . . .

### **Talmud, Brachot 62a**

Rav Kahane went and lay down under the bed of Rav (who was his teacher). Rav Kahane heard Rav talk, laugh, and have intimate relations with his wife. Rav Kahane said to himself, "is the mouth of my teacher like one who has never before tasted food?" Rav heard his student, and said, "Kahane! Are you here?! Get out! This is not proper behavior!" Rav Kahane replied, "This too is Torah, and I need to learn."

### **Talmud, Nedarim, 20a,b**

Rabbi Yochanan ben Dahavai said: The Ministering Angels told me four things:

Why are people born lame? Because their parents overturned their table;

Why are people born mute? Because they kissed "that place";

Why are people born deaf? Because they spoke during sexual relations;

Why are people born blind? Because they looked at "that place."

But this contradicts the following: Imma Shalom was asked: Why are your children so exceedingly beautiful? She replied: because my husband "converses" with me neither at the beginning nor at the end of the night, but only at midnight; and when he "converses" he uncovers a handbreadth and covers a handbreadth, and acts as though he is compelled by a demon. And when I asked him: What is the reason for this? He replied: So that I may not think of another woman and have it be that our children come to "mamzerut"

There is no difficulty: one case refers to matters of sexual relations, the other refers to other matters.

**Rabbi Yochanan** said: The above is the view of Yochanan ben Dehavai, but our Sages said: the *halacha* is not as Yochanan ben Dehavai, but rather anything that a man wants to do with his wife he may do; a parable: like meat that comes from the butcher - if he wants to eat it with salt, roasted, cooked or boiled - so he eats it.

### **Nachmanides, Iggeret Ha-Kodesh, (The Holy Letter) Chap. 6 Conjugal rights (13<sup>th</sup> century)**

**...You ought to engage her first in matters that please her heart and mind and cheer her in order to bring together your thought with her thought and your intention with hers.** And you should say such things some of which will urge her to passion and intercourse, to affection, desire and love-making, and some which will urge fear of heaven, piety and modesty You should **attract her with charming words and seductions** and other proper and righteous things as I have explained. And to not possess her while she is asleep because the two intentions are not one and her wish does not agree with yours.. Finally.. .do not hasten to arouse your passion until the woman's mind is ready and engage her in words of love **SO that she will begin to give forth seed first** and thus her seed would be like matter and your seed like form, as it is said, "when a woman gives forth seed and bears a male child..."

**Our** ladder of holiness in regard to sexual activity must reflect the notion that the greater the love, the higher the holiness. Certainly sex between two close and intimate friends is higher on the ladder than sex between anonymous strangers. Sex with one's exclusive lover is higher still. The highest level of holiness is reserved for the most permanent relationship: marriage. Within the marital relationship, love and sex are intimately tied together. Sex is a way of expressing love; love is a way of sanctifying sex.

*Does God Belong in the Bedroom, Rabbi Michael Gold*

**Sex** is one of the gifts God has given us by creating us as we are. Like all of our faculties, we can use it for good or for bad, and Judaism provides us with instruction for channeling our sexual energies toward good purpose. Marriage and family are that purpose, for in that context the individual and the community can attain all of the benefits from both. At the same time, in our day, when we have many people who are single and others who are openly homosexual we affirm their value as human beings as and Jews... May each of us enjoy this gift within the guidelines of Judaism so that our sexual activities can bring not only pleasure and companionship, but also wholeness and holiness; and may each of us be able to say of someone special what the lover says in the Bible: "This is my beloved, this is my friend" (Song of Songs 5:16). **Rabbi Elliot Dorff, Pastoral Letter of the Commission on Human Sexuality of the Rabbinical Assembly**