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# JEWISH NEWS

of Greater Phoenix



October 5, 2001/Tishri 18, 5762, Vol. 54, No. 4

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"Forty days before the creation of a child, a heavenly voice calls forth and proclaims: So and So's daughter for So and So's son!"

-Talmud, Sotah, 2a

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From across the room, you see someone who catches your eye. There's something about him or her, although you can't quite figure out what it is. During the course of the evening, you strike up a conversation and you feel a connection. What is it that draws you to this particular person?

Is it "love at first sight?" Is it "chemistry?" Is it lust?

I've always believed in "love at first sight." I believe in the whole concept of a "soul mate," that somehow you are supposed to be at a particular place at a particular time to meet a particular person.

However, my experiences of "love at first sight" have so far proved wrong, so now I'm left wondering if I've just watched too many romantic comedies.

Because I am no expert in this sort of thing, I decided to delve into the wisdom of our sages, and met with Rabbi Zvi Holland of the Phoenix Community Kollel to see what the Torah has to say about this.

The concept of beshert (intended one) is introduced at the beginning of the Torah, Holland explains, where the creation of the world is described. Most of us are familiar with the idea that woman was created from man's rib, but this is a misconception, he says.

In the first parsha (Torah portion), it says "And God created man in His image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them." (Beresheit 1:27) The part about God taking one of Adam's ribs and making a woman from it doesn't appear until the next chapter.

He refers to a commentary by Rashi (11th-century Bible and Talmud commentator) that says when God created the original man, man had two faces and the elements of both man and woman. But since the man and the woman elements were together as one, there was no interaction between them and they were unable to help each other.

So, in a sense, Holland explains, God broke man and woman into two pieces from the original being.

"Now, when you think about it that way, we understand that every man and every woman really has another part," he says. "God made a man and a woman as separate



beings but there's also a plan that they should get together."

According to the Talmud quote listed at the top of the article, there is an ordained mate for each person, that it's all determined before you're born. But what happens if your "predestined one" marries someone else or, sorry to be morbid, meets an untimely death? What happens to the remaining half of the whole?

"God is involved with arranging the right people for the right people," Holland says. If you or your mate make lifestyle choices profoundly different from each other, "God will still attempt and be successful (in finding you a match), if you allow it to happen," he says. "It's a tremendous game of chess."

He mentions a midrash in which a woman asks Rabbi Jose bar Halafta a question:

"How long did it take the Holy One, blessed be He, to create the world?" she asked. "Six days," the rabbi answered. "What has He been doing since then?" she queried. Rabbi Halafta replied, "The Holy One, blessed be He, is busy making marriages." (Beresheit Rabbah 68:4).

But what about "love at first sight?" Is this something we should wait for? Shouldn't there be some sense of recognition when you meet your "predestined one?"

Holland says that the feeling of love at first sight should only be taken as a hint.

"It's a present from God," he says. "It's a hint saying, 'run with this, give it a shot.' But getting married means more than that, it means a commitment to work together."

"In a lifelong relationship, there is no room for love at first sight - it's going to wear off as soon as you move in."

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