



**The Wedding of Tears**  
**Parshas Ki-Sezeh**

In one of the summer mornings in Jerusalem, as mother was in the kitchen preparing lunch, we heard a knock on the door.

Ever since I can remember myself, our home has been open to all. However, this knock seemed hesitant.

My parents' small apartment in the Beis Yisroel neighborhood in Jerusalem served as a hub for young girls who came to be with my mother, and young men who came to learn from my father.

Mother came to the door and found a girl who was in the process of coming closer to her Jewish heritage. Mother met her at the Kotel and was very much taken by her, praising her, she told us of her efforts to return to Judaism. Mother helped her as she helped many others. They had become close and spent much time together in our home.

The young woman would share her troubles with my parents, who served as a spiritual anchor for her; she needed support, as her family turned their backs on her when she started on her new journey.

She got engaged to marry a leading student from a Jerusalem Yeshiva, himself of a similar background with my parents helping substantially in the preparations for the wedding.

On the wedding day my parents arrived excitedly at the wedding hall. My father, who was to officiate the wedding, arrived early as usual, while my mother accompanied the bride.

All were gathered, but the groom had yet to arrive. My mother understood that something had gone wrong, and quickly took a cab to the groom's Yeshiva.

She found him locked in his room and banged on the door with persistence. The groom sat crying, saying he regretted the match.

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In our weekly parsha we read of the commandment to return a lost object.

"You shall not see your brother's ox or sheep straying, and ignore them. [Rather,] you shall return them to your brother. But if your brother is not near you, or if you do not know him, you shall bring it into your house, and it shall be with

you until your brother seeks it out, whereupon you shall return it to him."<sup>1</sup>

The Ohr Hachayim learns from here the obligation on each Jew to bring his brethren closer to G-d.

The Ohr Hachayim learns from here a fundamental principle - any member of the Jewish People is obligated to bring his or her brethren closer to their Jewish roots and heritage. "The sons of G-d, righteous of the world, are required to act on behalf of G-d's nation".

He delineates this concept most wonderfully: "You shall not see your brother's ox – these are humans who are like a flock, your brother's – the meaning here is G-d, your brother's sheep – G-d's flock, straying – one who does not follow G-d's commandments is considered a stray. You shall return them to your brother. But if your brother is not near you – if he is so far from his Jewish heritage, you shall bring it into your house – this is the Beit Midrash, the study hall, you shall teach him the proper ways of life, until your brother seeks it out – until he returns to G-d, whereupon you shall return it to him – one who does so is considered as if he has returned one of G-d's lost possessions.

The Ohr Hachayim's words have been guidance for me throughout my life. I add a concept to his. And it shall be with you – how should one bring his brother closer to his heritage? By letting him know that he is equal to you, that he has the ability to achieve. Only thus, with love and brotherhood, will he come closer.

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Mother did not give up. She was a great fighter for anything of holiness, and had no plan to give up now. She spoke to his heart: "How could you humiliate someone like this? She is waiting for you! This must not happen."

He refused to hear her, and so mother vowed not to leave his door until he agreed to come with her to his wedding. She stood there for a long time, crying and begging.

Finally he relented, and after mother promised him that all their needs would be taken care of and that all would be fine, he agreed to get married.

All who stood at the wedding ceremony were moved to tears, and all prayed for the couple's success.

The bride and groom's parents did not attend the wedding, and so my parents served at their parents instead.

The couple progressed to establish a wonderful home full children, light and Torah.

<sup>1</sup> Dvarim 22:1-2.