

Hashem G-d said, "It is not good that man be alone; I will make him a helper corresponding to him." (2:18)

Sforno focuses on the concept of *eizer k'negdo*, "a helper corresponding to him" and interprets it as being the defining point in the relationship between husband and wife. He explains that "it is not

good that man be alone." The intended purpose in creating man in the image and likeness of Hashem will not be realized if man has to occupy himself alone in order to supply the needs of life. He must have a helper that is equal to him in image and likeness, so that the helper is able to appreciate his needs and meet them at the proper time. *Sforno* adds that *negdo*, "opposite/corresponding to him," implies that when an object is placed on one side of a scale, the object on the other side of the scale will be of equal weight, so that they are truly opposite each other on a straight line. Otherwise, one will go up as the other goes down. Additionally, since it is written as *k'negdo*, with the "kuf" prefix, the Torah is teaching us that she should be like him, but not fully equal to him. Otherwise, she could not be a helper. Yet, since both equally fulfill the roles destined for them, they are equal in weight, striking a harmonious balance.

Sforno teaches us that a woman's goal and purpose is to help, a service which in no way minimizes her significance or equality. Indeed, without her, the goals of a marriage and the future of *Klal Yisrael* could never be realized. Man, therefore, should seek a wife who will enhance his own qualities – regardless of her financial and ancestral roots. *Nachlas Tzvi* cites the *Olelos Ephraim* who explains the *pasuk*, "Therefore man should leave his father and mother and cling to his wife" (*Bereishis* 2:24), that one should reject the notion of investigating the father's and mother's *yichus*, pedigree, and rather cling to his wife – investigate her personality, character and spiritual/moral qualities. Likewise, a woman should seek the same in her husband. Only then will the *pasuk's* promise, "and they shall become one flesh," be fulfilled. There is more to marriage than money. One who seeks only financial status benefits from neither.

Horav S.R. Hirsch, z.l., in his *Choreb*, exhorts the young man to seek a wife who will truly be his *chavrusah b'chaim*, "learning partner in life." She should be his *lebensbagleiter*, "life's companion," sharing with him in every aspect of life. Anyone who has ever studied in a *yeshivah* understands the crucial importance of a good *chavrusah*. They must match and enhance each other so that both grow in Torah. It is a unique relationship in which each challenges, yet enriches, the other. So, too, is a wife a *chavrusah* in the subject of life.

In regard to the need for a man to have a helper, the Torah says, "It is not good that man be alone." *Rashi* comments, "So that they should not say that there are two authorities; Hashem is unique in the higher realms, and He has no mate; and this one, man, is unique in the lower realms and has no mate." This seems like an altogether new reason for the creation of woman. Interestingly, *Rashi* omits *Chazal's* statement in the *Talmud Yevamos* 62, "One who lives without a wife, lives without Torah, without joy, without blessing, without peace, without food, etc." Why does

Rashi seemingly ignore *Chazal's* stated reason?

Horav Sholom Schwadron, z.l., suggests that the above reason needs some clarification. Why do *Chazal* say that one who is not married lacks good or joy? Perhaps he is half a person who does not have complete good and complete joy, but, he certainly does have something. Why do *Chazal* insist that he has nothing?

Furthermore, if the sole purpose of the creation of woman was to fulfill a deficiency within man, to enable him to achieve completion, why did Hashem not simply create him complete, without deficiency and without shortcoming? Why was man fashioned in such a manner that he would need an *eizer k'negdo*?

This leads *Rav Schwadron* to submit that the underlying reason stated by *Chazal* that "people" might think that there are two authorities in the world is a reference to man himself. If he would have been created self-sufficient, without any need for a partner as helpmate, he might conjure in his "self-sufficient" mind that he is the "man" – there is no other authority but he.

Regrettably, this is human nature. If one lives alone and has no one else about whom to care or to consider, he will invariably begin to think that he is it. Slowly this attitude will regress to the point that one positions himself as an "authority," a god. Indeed, after awhile, he even believes it!

However, if man is created with a deficiency – one that can be ameliorated only through the assistance of another human being, he will consequently learn to care and empathize also for the needs of his fellow man. He will then not become haughty and think that there are two authorities, because now he will realize that he is merely nothing more than flesh and blood. *Chazal* allude to this when they say that without a wife one is missing good, joy, blessing and Torah. When one is led by his heart's desire, other true concepts of joy and blessing elude him. In other words, man's need for a helpmate is what catalyzes the true benefits of blessing, good, joy and Torah.

Rashi's stated reason is the source of the benefits stated by *Chazal*.