

consanguinity goes without saying. Our Sages recommend that one should always look for the daughter of a learned man, of a man in whom the public has shown its confidence by entrusting him with communal office, above all, of a man whose daughter can be expected to have learnt practical wisdom from the example of her father. Marriage with the daughter of a brother, and still more of a sister, is particularly recommended. Do not marry into a family in which some disease has become endemic, *i.e.*, has been transmitted twice. In choosing a wife you have to look for physical no less than for moral and mental soundness, in order that she also may be capable of enduring the hardships and burdens of founding and maintaining a household (see E.H. 3).

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KIDDUSHIN AND NISSUIN

קידושין ונישואין

*When a man taketh a wife, and marrieth her . . .* DEUT. XXIV, I.  
*Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife, and they shall be one flesh.* GEN. II, 24.

That group of human beings whom birth or conditions of life have 529  
linked together in such a way that they apply in common the maximum quantity of material and spiritual assets to the attainment of the maximum number of Divine objectives, *i.e.*, who carry out the task of life jointly in their circle, is called a 'household.' The administration of the household is, however, twofold. It consists first in acquiring the largest possible quantity of useful assets, both material and spiritual, such as the property of the home; in protecting the home and representing it to the outside world; and in the general direction of the employment of those assets for the purposes of the household; and secondly, in the wise day-to-day use of what has been acquired, in distributing it fairly among the members of the household, and in continually watching over the individual members and their training for their life's task. The first is the task of the husband, the second of the wife.

If, therefore, the founding of a home is the highest task of life—because 530  
the welfare of the people and of humanity flowers only in and through the home and it is there that the younger generation is brought up for God, and because there is the temple where the fear and love of God and trust in God are planted and cultivated and realized in actual life—then



that task can be performed only by man and woman together, neither by the man alone nor by the woman alone. For that reason God planted in the human breast the love of man for woman and of woman for man, in order that man and woman should unite for the true end of life, to carry out together the task of life which they can only half fulfil singly, in order, as the Sages say, to become together a 'human being' in the true sense. Therefore the man leaves the parental home and attaches himself to his wife in order to found a family, and they become a single being; and therefore the wife clings to the husband and willingly subordinates herself to him. Such a union of man and woman for the true purpose of life is called 'marriage,' and it is of the making of such a marriage that the law speaks.

531 There are two sides to marriage: one, the union of husband and wife for carrying out the purpose of life, the other the accomplishment of that purpose by means of the home. Corresponding to these two aspects are the two steps by which a marriage is concluded, *kiddushin* and *nissuin* (קידושין ונישואין). *Kiddushin*, consecration, which signifies the exclusive dedication and transference of the woman to the man, achieves the personal union of the husband and wife; *nissuin*, taking to oneself, the reception of the wife into the husband's house, signifies the joint performance of the life task through the home.

532 (1) *Kiddushin*: Wherever it is desired to impress on an object a stamp which shall give it a place in human society, this is effected by means of the word which expresses the significance that that object shall henceforth bear for mankind. And just as Adam gave names to all creatures and, as he named each with reference to himself, so its name remained, so now, too, man dominates the world, that is to say his world, through the word, impresses his stamp on all beings through the word, and therefore must pay supreme attention to the character which has been given to things by man's word. All law is based on notions and the words that express them. Nevertheless, in most cases the fleeting word must be reinforced by some visible action which in its turn embodies and holds fast the word. The word is fixed for all time either through being written down (שטר), or—as in the case, for instance, of the transference of a commodity by one person to another—through acceptance of payment (כסף) or some symbol representing the payment (חליפין); or thirdly through some act corresponding to the character which the object is henceforth to bear (משיכה חזקה) (see para. 346).

Here too, where a human being is to receive a new character, where the woman is to dedicate herself exclusively to the man and the man to the woman, this dedication is accomplished through the word and through an act embodying the word.