

Eliyahu Zuta 3

It is said further of God: *Is it not at the word of the Most High that evil and good befall?* (Lam. 3:38). How can one say such a thing? Do not only measures of good come from Him? You must therefore conclude: Good does not come to him who does evil, and evil does not come to him who does good, but good comes to the good, and evil to the evil. And the proof you can see for yourself. Generally men marry for one of four reasons: A man may marry for the sake of satisfying his lust, he may marry for the sake of money, he may marry for social status, or he may marry for the sake of Heaven. When a man marries for the sake of satisfying his lust, a stubborn and rebellious son will spring from him. When a man marries for the sake of money, in the end he will be dependent on others. When a man marries for the sake of social status, in the end the men who are members of the family into which he weds will make nothing of the children he fathers. But when a man marries for the sake of Heaven, he will have sons who will deliver Israel in time of trouble.

And the proof that the man who marries for the sake of satisfying his lust will have a stubborn and rebellious son? He is the man whom Scripture addresses in the verse *and you see among the captives a beautiful woman and you desire her and would take her to wife* (Deut. 21:11). After he has taken such a woman to wife, people begin to criticize him [for having married her only for the sake of satisfying his lust]. And because of the criticism people direct at him, he goes and weds another wife, as is intimated in the next passage in Deuteronomy, *If a man has two wives*, etc. (Deut. 21:15). Because he weds another, he comes to love one and hate the other, as Scripture goes on to say, *one loved and the other unloved* (ibid.), and because he loves one and hates the other, there will issue from him [by the hated wife] a stubborn and rebellious son.

And the proof that he who marries for the sake of money in the end will be dependent on others? So it was with the sons of Eli the priest who married wives not suitable for them. In the end Eli's sons had to depend on other kinsmen. As Eli was told: *And all the survivors of your house shall come and bow low to him for the sake of a money fee and a loaf of bread, and shall say, "Please assign me to one of the priestly duties, that I may have a morsel of bread to eat* (1 Sam. 2:36).

And the proof that when a man marries for the sake of social status in the end the men who are members of the family into which he weds will make nothing of the children he fathers? So it was with Jehoshaphat king of Judah, who upon seeing that Ahab king of Israel had seventy sons, said: Isn't this person sure to inherit the world? There-upon Jehoshaphat went and arranged to have his son [Joram] wed Ahab's daughter [Athaliah], as is said, *Jehoshaphat made a complete union with the king of Israel* (1 Kings 22:45). And the proof that the [surviving] children who sprang from Joram, Jehoshaphat's son, were made nothing of? The verse *When Athaliah [of Ahab's prestigious family into which Jehoshaphat had his son wed], the mother of Ahaziah, learned that her son was dead, she promptly killed off all who were of royal stock. But Jehosheba, daughter of King Joram and sister of Ahaziah, secretly took Ahaziah's son Joash away from among the princes*

who were being slain (2 Kings 11:1-2). Indeed, but for the covenant the Holy One made with David, Joash too would have been slain at that time, and the line of David would have ceased to be.

And what else is the [sorry] requital of these—of the man who marries for the sake of satisfying his lust, the one who marries for the sake of money, or who marries for the sake of social status? Go and find the answer to the question by considering two men, one poor and one rich, both from the same Tribe, both from the same neighborhood, and both from the same family. The rich man should have engaged in friendly give-and-take with the poor man, [such as arranging marriages between their children]. But he did not do so, even though Scripture says, *Have we not all one father? Did not one God create us? Why do we break faith with one another, profaning the covenant of our ancestors?* (Mal. 2:10). [So much for weddings entered into for improper motives.] But Malachi, going on [to speak of intermarriage], says, *Judah has broken faith; abhorrent things have been done in Israel and in Jerusalem. For Judah has profaned what is holy to the Lord – what he desires – and espoused daughters of alien gods.* (Mal. 2:11). Their requital, therefore, was that no offspring at all were left of them. [Indeed not only Israel but Judah as well] forsook the seed the Holy One proved out of the nations that speak the seventy languages of the world and went and cleaved to those whom it was not fitting for them to marry, as is said, *May the Lord leave to him who does this no descendants dwelling in the tents of Jacob and presenting offering to the Lord of Hosts* (Mal. 2:12). This means [that if a Jew marries a non-Jew], he will have no offspring wakeful among the Sages and none responding among the disciples: none wakeful among the Sages—none, that is, who in the academy inquires to the point about a matter of Halakah; and none who answers properly among the disciples. And if the Jew is a priest, he will have no son bringing an offering unto the Lord of hosts.

On the other hand, what is the proof that when a man marries for the sake of Heaven he will have children who deliver Israel in time of distress? Go and draw the right inference from the example of Aramram who married for the sake of Heaven: from him there issued Moses, Aaron, and Miriam who caused Torah and commandments to flourish in Israel. Go and draw the right inference from the example of Boaz son of Salmon, son of Nahshon, son of Amminadab, who married for the sake of Heaven: from him in the end there issued David and Solomon his son who caused Torah and commandments to flourish in Israel. Of them, of the likes of them, of those who resemble them, and of those who pattern their deeds after them, Scripture says, *For as the new heaven and the new earth which I will make shall endure by My will – declares the Lord – so shall your seed and your name endure* (Isa. 66:22).