



תיקון מדת הקנאה

FIXING JEALOUSY

COLLECTION OF TALKS
ON THE TOPIC OF JEALOUSY
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1 | *Practical Guidance On Jealousy*¹

1- Overcoming “Jealousy Attacks”

Q

Shalom, honorable Rav. My entire soul and life lays in this question. The dominant element which I identify in my soul is water, and it is also the character trait which is destroying my marriage. I was on a trip with my husband in a certain place and some girls passed in front of him who were immodestly dressed. I exploded in anger at my husband [because I was jealous that he was looking at them], and my anger was totally out of proportion. Hashem should have pity on me over my situation, because I cry and I curse [when I get angry as a result of being jealous]!

(1) What is the root of the intense jealousy that I felt? (2) How can I fix this trait? (3) What is the way of *teshuvah* which the Rav recommends, in how I can repair my anger and my cursing, which resulted from my jealousy?

A

(1) Jealousy is the result of a distance from one’s own self. The more one becomes connected to his true “I”, the less he will become jealous. (2) Build your own inner, truthful world, reach your individually unique quality, and connect to it. More specifically, identify your greatest weakness and repair it. Through this, your soul will attain a balance. On a practical level, work on loving other people, with the belief that every person has his own individual quality. (3) Each day, bless another person, from deep in your heart, and from love.

2- Dealing With A Jealous Child

Q

We have 2 daughters who were born to us, one after the other (Baruch Hashem). Our older daughter is 1 year and 10 months, and our younger daughter is 9 months. Ever since the younger daughter was born, our older daughter has been having “jealous” outbursts, with incessant crying and by making very specific demands, to get exactly what her younger sister is getting. We think this will only be a passing stage, but in the meantime, our home is becoming thrown out of balance. How should we react to these outbursts that our daughter is having at such a young age?

A

You need to relate to her in a deep, genuine relationship with her which will touch upon the deepest point in her soul. You need to give to her in several ways, and to give to her things that are appropriate for her age.

2 | *How To Stop Being Competitive*²

Rav Chaim Vital writes in *Shaarei Kedushah* that the element of water is the root of desiring pleasure, and the traits which result from this are jealousy (*kinah*) and envy (*chemdah*).

Envy (*chemdah*) means to desire something which isn't yours, such as being envious of another's wife or home. Envy can also be a desire for something you don't own; it can even be towards something which is ownerless. **Jealousy** (*kinah*) is a different result of desire. It is to be envious of something which belongs to another, when it is currently in the possession of another. There are two kinds of envious desires.

One kind of envious desire is when a person wants something that another has and he doesn't want the other person to have it. Another scenario of envious desire is that a person wants something that another has and he is fine if the other person has it too, as long as he has it. In another scenario of envious desire, a person wants to be the sole owner of something.

If a person is jealous of another, yet he is fine if the other person has what he wants, this is permitted jealousy, and it is called *kinas sofrim* ("jealousy of a Torah scholar. The negative, detrimental kind of jealousy is when a person is jealous of another and he doesn't want the other to have the thing he wants.

The kind of jealousy we are discussing here is rooted in the trait of desire, which comes from the element of water in the soul. In the second kind of jealousy, a person is being destructive to another because of his jealousy, for he doesn't want the other to have what he wants. This kind of jealousy is rooted in the element of **fire**, because the nature of fire is to be destructive. In contrast, when a person is jealous of something because he desires it, and he is fine if the other person has it too, such jealousy is a desire rooted in the element of **water** (On a more subtle note, though, all jealousy implies that the person doesn't want the other to have it).

Let's explore more deeply into these kinds of jealousy.

² *Fixing Your Water. 020. The Desire For Competition*

The Desire for Competitiveness

Often, children act competitive with each other, and we can also see adults who act competitive with each other. Where does the nature of competitiveness come from?

Sometimes it can stem from the trait of jealousy which each person can have, or, it can come from being raised in a competitive kind of environment in which he was encouraged to have *kinas sofrim*.

When one is jealous of something simply because he wants it, this is a kind of desire. But when one is competitive with another, he will feel a desire to harm another in the process of getting what he wants, and this comes from fire in the soul. It appears simply like a desire for something, and therefore, the person will harm another who gets in his way.

But the deeper way to understand it is that the person derives pleasure from the very challenge and competitiveness with another; it is not simply out of a desire to obtain what he wants.

The desire of jealousy simply appears to be “I want something for myself”, which makes it seem like any other kind of desire; but it is really a pleasure derived from being competitive with another.

Anyone can recognize the competitiveness in our world today, in which people are not only pursuing their goals, but they are enjoying knocking down others in the process. The ‘goal’ aspect is another factor of the desire, but the main joy they are having is being derived from the satisfying feeling of knocking others down in the process.

As an example, many people love to engage their time in competing with others in sport-like events, and they derive joy from the very challenge with others.

It’s possible that a person is competitive with another even if the other is not aware of the competition. This nature usually manifests either as a result of a person’s upbringing to be competitive, or you can see it in the many people of the world who love to engage in competitions with others, and they will spend a lot of their time in trying to defeat others.

Desire is not an evil trait by essence, because as we know, every trait can be used for either good or evil. With a dominance of fire-of-fire-of-water in the soul, however, a whole new kind of evil is awakened in the person. When a person wants to be competitive with another, he enjoys being in a challenge with another, and that means he will step on another and hurt another in order to get

what he wants. This is clearly the classical example of what it means to have bad *middos*, and nothing good can be said about it.

At its worst level, this nature of competitiveness is called “*loimed al menas l’kanter*”, one who learns Torah in order to antagonize others, of which *Chazal* say that “It is better had he not been born”. The desire for competitiveness will cause a person to chop down others who gets in his way.

Desire comes from water, and competitiveness comes from fire, and water and fire contradict each other, yet that is the depth of this evil desire, in which a person engages in a contradictory kind of force.

There are even people, *Rachmana Litzlan*, who are full of inner turmoil in themselves, and they derive enjoyment from their own inner contradictions, and that’s how they deal with their internal anxiety. But usually, most people turn their competitiveness outwardly, towards others, and they enjoy the very competition with others.

If you know about the wars fought in history, you’ll discover that in all of these wars, both sides were mainly interested in the competition itself. Even when people fight to protect their boundaries or because they wanted something, their main joy was derived from the very fight itself. Hundreds and thousands of people are prepared to die in war, all because they are enjoying the satisfying feeling of knocking others down.

Challenges That Are Holy

The truth is that competition with others is inevitable. We just have to know how to use this ability properly. The issue is if we are using this ability properly or not: If we are being competitive with others in order to bring others down and feel victorious, or if we can just do what we have to do without trying to bring another down.

To illustrate, the *Gemara* says that if a father and son or a teacher and student engage in learning Torah together, at first they become like enemies to each other as they argue with each other (and this is the way it should be, because the *Gemara* says that one should learn with a *chavrusa*, and not learn alone; this is not a coincidence, for it is the preferred method of learning), and in the end, they love each other. In other words, there is a good-natured and friendly kind of competitiveness when people learn Torah with each other, and this is the way it should be.

Our understanding in Torah can only come to us when we learn with a *chavrusa*. But this will involve some feeling of competition that comes along with it. We need to know how we should approach this reality.

In a situation where a person is learning alone, for whatever reason (and indeed, the *Ramchal* says that every person should have a little time each day where he learns with just himself³), although he won't face competition with a *chavrusa*, he will still encounter contradictions and questions in his learning, so there is no way to avoid the idea of opposition in our Torah learning. Therefore, he will still have to know how to deal with them, when they inevitably come.

If a person just learns superficially, his mind is working, but his heart is not in it, so he although he will be aware intellectually that there are questions and contradictions, the questions he encounters in his learning don't bother him. But when a person is alive from his learning, the contradictions in his learning that he encounters really bother him, and he feels like his own self is being contradicted. The soul grapples with dealing with the contradiction.

Usually, a person like this who encounters contradictions in his learning [in *Gemara* and in *Tosafos*], will be really bothered by it. Either his mind will be logically bothered, or his heart deep down will feel unease, at the contradictions he comes across.

A large amount of people are dealing all day with the power of opposition, and they enjoy the feeling of being opposed. Here is an example of the concept: There are people who like very spicy foods. The inner reason for this is because the person enjoys dealing with such a challenge! It's a kind of contradiction that one can deal with, and there is a certain enjoyment derived from this.

There are many more examples as well we can give that illustrate the concept.

External and Inner Pleasure of the Soul

Now we will say the following very deep point: it is the external layer of our soul that enjoys oppositions and contradictions, while the inner layer of our soul which enjoys it when things are kept simple and calm.

3 For more on this concept, refer to the derasha of 48 Ways_ 020_Feeling Hashem In Your Learning

In terms of the elements of the soul, the inner layer of the soul enjoys **water-of-water**, which flows continuously and calmly; the external layer of the soul enjoys **fire-of-water**, which is the nature to enjoy opposition, challenge, competition, and contradictions.

Thus, a person should try to reflect deeply into himself and ask himself what he mainly enjoys in life: Does he mainly enjoy it when things are flowing smoothly and the situation is calm, or does he mainly like it when there is something unpredictable and challenging going on?

A healthy soul enjoys it when things are going smoothly and all is calm and well. This is because the inner nature of the soul enjoys calmness, and it recoils from opposition.

If a person has a destructive nature – when his fire-of-water-of-water is very dominant - this is a clearly evil trait; he will derive his main vitality in life from being competitive with others. Of such people, *Chazal* say that “it is better had he not been born”.⁴ On a deeper note, such a person is really destroying himself through his own destructive nature.

The *Ramchal* writes in *Mesillas Yesharim* that “nothing is sweeter than revenge”. This is not an exaggeration, as we know that the *Ramchal* was very precise with his words. Why indeed is revenge so enjoyable to a person? It is because the soul enjoys the very competitiveness, not the goal of what the person was trying to get. The enjoyable part is the other person has been harmed, and when this desire becomes actualized, it is the feeling of revenge.

However, as we are explaining, it is only the external layer of the soul which enjoys the ideas of competition, opposition, and ‘sweet revenge’. In fact, it is the totally external and superficial part of the soul.

In the future, at the very end of the End of Days, Hashem will take revenge against the other nations. Because we are very close to the End of Days, there is a dominant power of revenge which is becoming manifest in Creation - but it is being used in the wrong place and for the wrong reasons. For this reason, “revenge is sweet.” A person might be aware of this consciously, but even if he’s not consciously aware of it, he still be enjoying it subconsciously.

Revenge is a dramatic example of this emotion, but even if one doesn’t come to take revenge, he still has a nature to enjoy bringing others down. Every person is familiar with this feeling. If one

⁴ This refers to one who is “*loimed al menas l’kanter*” - one who learns Torah in order to challenge others

allows this desire to go unfixed, his own destructive nature will get out of hand and it will eventually 'destroy' his own life.

As we explained, it is only the external layer of the soul which enjoys revenge and competitiveness with others. The inner layer of the soul, however, derives enjoyment when things are flowing along as they should, when there is simplicity, and not when there are any kinds of contradictions going on. It enjoys being reminded of *emunah* (belief and faith in Hashem); it enjoys the 'regular flow' of things, when things are calm.

When a person lives a very physical kind of orientation, he mainly enjoys feelings of revenge. When he reveals his soul more, his source of enjoyment changes: he will only enjoy a situation in which things are flowing along with simplicity, and he will recoil from situations that are unpredictable that involve challenge with others.

Thus, every person needs to become aware of these two sources of pleasure in himself: the pleasure in defeating others, and the pleasure in simple calmness. Then, he needs to ask himself which of these pleasures he mainly enjoys in his life.

Here is an example: a person is reading *Sefer Tehillim*, and he reads about the wars that Dovid *HaMelech* fought. What is he mainly enjoying as he says these words? Is he enjoying the fact that Dovid won all these wars, or he is mainly enjoying the more calming parts of *Tehillim*? When you deeply reflect, you can feel how the matters described in *Tehillim* really envelope your entire soul. There are 'wars' in your life, and there is also calmness in your life. Ask yourself which of these aspects you enjoy more.

If one becomes aware that he mainly enjoying war and strife in his life, he needs to separate from these superficial kinds of emotional pleasure, and instead try to begin tasting internal kinds of emotional pleasure, by focusing on matters of simplicity and by deriving enjoyment from them.

This doesn't mean that one should stop arguing with his *chavrusa* when he is learning. He should just try not to argue with his *chavrusa* for the sake of trying to defeat him.

The Negativity We Find Ourselves In Today

When it comes to our Torah learning, we encounter contradictions and questions. [We have already explained that the perspective towards this should be, that although questions and

contradictions are an inevitable part of our life that we run into (and certainly when we learn Torah it is this way), still, our main enjoyment should not be derived from situations of question and opposition, rather from situations in which things are kept calm and simple.]

As we discuss this concept, we should also be aware of the following. In our current times, there is a lot of *machlokes* (dissension) today, lots of “*Daas Torah*” issues, and so forth. Dwelling on all of these issues - and deriving vitality from them - causes the soul to mainly get enjoyment in life from all of these negative kinds of thoughts.

Most people in the generation are mainly getting enjoyment when they reflect into these negative situations. It could even be that as a person is speaking about the “Torah perspective” on a certain situation, he’s getting vitality from a sweet feeling of knocking down others, and this is an unhealthy source of vitality.

When he comes upstairs after 120, and he did many mitzvos and spread a lot of Torah knowledge and he always made sure to speak against wicked people, they will tell him in Heaven that his intentions were all for the sake of knocking down other people....

When a person discovers himself enjoying revenge, even if it’s within his Torah learning or if it pertains to speaking negatively about situations of the world (even if it’s a true perspective), still, he is running away from his inner place of in his soul of simplicity, and he is involving himself in the outer layer of his soul, which enjoys strife.

How to Derive Pleasure from Simplicity

In order to access your inner place of pure simplicity, you can take a *possuk* or statement of *Chazal* that awakens your *temimus* (earnestness) and *peshitus* (simplicity), and repeat the words simply, or you can contemplate it simply. Be consciously focused on trying to awaken your *temimus* and *peshitus* as you do so.

The more you get used to this, the more you will feel yourself deriving enjoyment from the simplicity of it, and it will calm you down from all the negativity going on in the world that you hear about.

The Situation of Strife in Today's Times

If one doesn't know how to derive pleasure from *temimus* and *peshitus* – and indeed, most of the world right now is like this, steeped very deep into the fire-of-fire-of-water in their souls – then even if he learns all day is in a yeshiva or Kolel, he is being enveloped by a pleasure in negativity.

The inner light of Torah is hidden deep in the soul, and one cannot access the light of Torah if he mainly derives enjoyment from negativity (even if those negative thoughts are true “Torah perspectives” about current events). This is the meaning of how “Torah comes from Eretz Yisrael” – the source of Torah comes from a place which is pure, innocent and strife-free.

In the generation today, the dissension going on today has reached its greatest depths of evil; it is the depths of the evil ‘50th Gate of Impurity’! On the second day of Creation, the idea of strife was created (because Hashem separated the upper waters from the lower waters), and Gehinnom was also created then; the connection is, that the ideas of strife and Gehinnom are interconnected. Gehinnom is fire, and strife came from the separation of the waters; when this fire and water are combined, there is fire-of-fire-of-water - a desire for strife.

In the End of Days, there is strife everywhere; nothing is untouched by strife. In the future Hashem will be One and that oneness will put an end to all the disparity, but until then, there is much disparity, and it only increases.

There are people whose entire lives are centered around strife and controversy with others, as if it's the greatest *mitzvah* in the Torah. This is all because the world right now is deep into the fire-of-fire-of-water, otherwise known as *machlokes*/strife. And since the entire Creation is right now steeped in it, the generation derives vitality from it (whether a person is consciously aware of this or not), and this is a negative kind of vitality.

Surviving the Negativity of This World

In order to repair this very deep kind of problem that envelopes us right now, we need to go in the opposite direction.

We need to learn how to derive vitality from our inner simplicity, to connect ourselves to the simple belief in Hashem, to connect ourselves to the Torah, which is called “*Toras Hashem Temimah*, “the Torah of Hashem is perfect.”

Of course, when we learn Torah, we see that there are contradictions in what we learn, in the words of Abaye and Rava, and when we have to argue in learning with others. But if we make sure to connect ourselves to our inner simplicity in our soul, we will gain a wonderful balance in our soul, of both pleasure from simplicity as well from the contradictions and arguing we encounter in the words of Torah we learn, and the balance of these two acts together will provide us with true and inner vitality.

Without gaining vitality from simplicity, it will be impossible to survive this current world (at least in this current lifetime we are in).

It used to be that there were a few issues of *machlokes*, but today, each person struggles with all kinds of *machlokes*, such as thoughts of “What type am I? What type of *shidduch* is for me?” There are always two sides in whatever situation we face today. We are inevitably forced into these kinds of situations. How can we deal with the challenges? How do we make sure to be above all the pettiness we go through?

The answer is that if you derive vitality from an inner source in yourself, the place of simplicity (*temimus*, or *peshitus*) in yourself – and if you make sure to make it into your main source of enjoyment – you will have a chance of surviving all the strife (or at least some of it) that surrounds you.

So one needs to enjoy simplicity, as well as to derive enjoyment from the contradictions he comes across in his Torah learning, and together, with the balance of these two abilities, a person will be able to deal with all the competitiveness and challenges he has to deal with inevitably on this world. He will be able to pass through them, back and forth, and be guarded by his power of *temimus/peshitus*.

This is actually a deep spiritual light which Hashem has given us to be able to survive and protect ourselves as we are in this dark exile; the light of our *peshitus/temimus* can shine away all the darkness of exile we face, and this inner light we contain in ourselves is the power that can help us truly bind ourselves with Hashem and survive the dark times of *machlokes/strife* that now envelopes our people.

3 | *Repairing Jealousy*⁵

Jealousy – A Trait Rooted In The Element of Water

Previously, we discussed the trait of *chemdah*, envy. In this lesson we will discuss Rav Chaim Vital's words that one of the branching traits of the element of water is the negative trait of *kinah*, jealousy. The Torah describes it as “*the jealousy of a man of his friend.*”⁶

Jealousy Results From Hatred

The opposite of loving another person is when one is jealous of another person. The Sages teach that when one loves a person, he cannot be jealous of that person, but when one hates another person, he is able to become jealous of the other person.

As an example, the Torah says that the brothers hated Yosef and they became jealous of him: “*His brothers saw that it was he whom their father loved from all his brothers, so they hated him*”, and soon after the Torah says, “*And his brothers were jealous of him.*”⁷ This shows us that hatred of another leads to jealousy of that person. Another example is that the *Gemara* says that eating *pas Shacharis* (bread in the morning) enables a person to avoid jealousy that day, because it helps a person be more loving towards others.⁸ Hence, jealousy is the opposite of love. Through jealousy, a person is able to hate the other person.

The Difference Between Jealousy and Hatred

Although jealousy is a result of hatred, there is also a way to understand how jealousy differs from hatred itself. Hatred comes from the element of earth in the soul⁹, whereas jealousy comes from the water in the soul.

⁵ *Understanding Your Middos.034. Water. Jealousy*

⁶ *Koheles 4:4*

⁷ *Beraishis 37:4 and 37:11*

⁸ *Talmud Bavli Bava Metzia 107b*

⁹ *Refer to Understanding Your Middos_010_Earth-Hatred*

What is the difference between jealousy and hatred? With either hatred or jealousy, a person doesn't love the other person. So, for all practical purposes, why are they not the same thing?

When a person hates someone, he wants to destroy the other person. But when a person is jealous of another, he doesn't want to get rid of him - he just wants to lower the other's status. As an example, when someone is enemies with another person, he hates the enemy, and he will want to get rid of the enemy. A person who is jealous of another person doesn't want to destroy the other person or get rid of him, he just wants to lower the other person somehow.

We will soon elaborate further upon the trait of jealousy. But the basic outline is that love, which comes from water, is opposed by hatred, which comes from earth. And, love, which comes from the element of water, is opposed by jealousy - which also comes from the element of water.

Evil Jealousy vs. Holy Jealousy

Now let's explore more into the trait of jealousy.

There is evil jealousy and there is holy jealousy. The *Gemara* says that holy jealousy is called *kinas sofrim*, "jealousy of Torah scholars", and that such jealousy increases wisdom.¹⁰ What is the holy jealousy of *kinas sofrim*, and when is jealousy not in the category of *kinas sofrim*?

Simply speaking, *kinas sofrim* means to be jealous of another's Torah wisdom which the other has reached, where I want to reach the comprehension in Torah that another has reached, whereas unholy jealousy is whenever a person is not being jealous of another's Torah wisdom and comprehension, and he is just simply jealous of the other person.

The Inner Workings of Jealousy

But let's explore this further. Let's say Shimon is jealous of Reuven, either because he is jealous of Reuven's material accomplishments or acquisitions, or because Reuven has more spiritual accomplishments. Shimon is therefore jealous that Reuven is standing at a higher plateau. Shimon sees Reuven as being on a higher level (whether that higher level is in materialism or in spirituality).

¹⁰ *Talmud Bavli Bava Basra 21a*

We find two opposite concepts: *hadragah*, step-by-step progress, and *hishtavus*, equilibrium, a term mentioned in *sefer Chovos HaLevovos*. With the view of *hadragah*, everyone is standing at a different level, and there are differing levels of people. With the view of *hishtavus*, though, is everyone at an equal standpoint. Jealousy is therefore the viewpoint of *hadragah*.

When a person sees another person ahead of him, at a higher step than him, he becomes jealous of the other person. Jealousy doesn't happen simply because Reuven is above Shimon. It is because, in Shimon's mind, he is really supposed to be above Reuven. Shimon thinks that Reuven is supposed to be below him.

Examples of Being Jealous of Another's Status

We can give a few examples to bring out this point.

How does jealousy take root? The *Gemara* states that there are two people whom no one is jealous of: A father is never jealous of his son, and a *rebbe* (Torah teacher) is not jealous of his student.¹¹ If not for this fact, there would really be a natural jealousy, even for one's own child or student! This is because the father thinks that he is supposed to be above his son, and that his son should remain below him, and the father might feel that the child is taking his rightful place. Logically speaking, a father should be able to become jealous of his son, if he ever feels that his son is becoming "higher" than the father. [But, Hashem made it that a father cannot become jealous of his son, and that he wants his son to be more accomplished than he.]

Here's another example. The root of jealousy in the Torah is when the 12 sons of Yaakov were jealous of Yosef. The *gematria* of the word "Yosef" is *kinah* (jealousy),¹² because the story of Yosef and the brothers teaches us about how to understand jealousy. The brothers were jealous of Yosef because they felt that he was taking away their place.

Yosef's birth came about through his mother Rachel's jealousy of Leah. The Torah says that Rachel saw that Leah was having children while she remained barren, and Rachel became jealous of Leah. Why was she jealous? Because Rachel knew she was the main wife of Yaakov, and she also knew that each of Yaakov's wives would have at least three sons. When she saw that Leah had her fourth

¹¹ *Talmud Bavli Tractate Sanhedrin 105b*

¹² *Cited by the Chida*

child, Yehudah, she became fearful that she would no longer be the main wife of Yaakov, because now Leah had bore Yaakov more than three children. That meant that Rachel would not have as much children as Leah. Therefore, Rachel became jealous because she felt that Leah had taken her rightful place of being the main wife of Yaakov.

The Torah says, “*And Rachel was jealous of her sister.*”¹³ Yaakov had given Rachel the special signs before he married Rachel, to make sure that he wouldn’t be tricked into marrying Leah first, because he considered Rachel to be his main wife, and he wanted Rachel to become his first wife. Now that Leah was having more children, Rachel felt that Leah was taking her rightful place as being the main wife of Yaakov. Therefore, she grew jealous of Leah.

Not only did Rachel feel that her status of being the main wife was being threatened, but she also was afraid that Leah would be taking away Rachel’s portion altogether, when Leah was having more and more children while she was remaining with no children. Leah was supposed to be the secondary wife to Yaakov, while Rachel was supposed to be the main wife of Yaakov. But now Leah kept bearing more children – which meant more of the 12 tribes – and now it seemed that Leah was becoming the main wife of Yaakov, and that Rachel would only become a secondary wife to Yaakov. Understandably, then, Rachel became jealous of Leah.

Similarly, Chazal state when a person gets married and then takes a second wife, if the first wife is a minor and the second wife is an adult, the first wife won’t become jealous of the second wife. But if the second wife is younger than her, then the first wife will become jealous of the new wife, because she thinks that the husband must have found something unusually better in this new wife, who is even younger than her. The first wife, who is a minor, is jealous of the new wife, who is also a minor, because she feels that the new wife will take away her rightful place.

Thus, to summarize the idea, *kinah* (jealousy) does not mean that a person at a lower level is “jealous” of a person on a higher level. If the person on the lower level agrees that the person on the higher level is supposed to be there, he won’t become jealous of him, because he is aware of where he stands and he is aware of where the person stands, and he agrees that the other person is supposed to be higher than him. The other person’s more important status wouldn’t make him jealous. Rather, *kinah* (jealousy) only happens when a person sees that another person is not supposed to be at a higher level than he, and he feels that the other person is taking his rightful

¹³ *Beraishis 30:1*

place – when, in his mind, he feels that he is supposed to be at a higher, better position than the other person, and that the other person is supposed to be at a lower, less prestigious position than him.

The Depth of Jealousy: When Another Person Uses Me To Go Higher

On a subtler level, jealousy is even deeper than the above explanation.

Jealousy does not just come from someone else being of higher and better status than me, but because the other person has climbed above me, and he has used me as a rung in order to go higher.

We can see this clearly from Rachel’s jealousy of Leah. Rachel wasn’t jealous of Leah simply because Leah got to marry Yaakov first (taking her rightful place), but because Leah got to marry Yaakov only by means of bypassing Rachel. Rachel felt as if Leah had climbed over her, using her as a stepping stone in order to get to marry Yaakov. Thus, the deeper way to understand jealousy is that the other person has climbed over me in order to get higher than me. When the lower level feels that it has been used a stepping stone for the higher level, that is when the lower level becomes jealous of the higher level.

The Difference Between Evil Jealousy and Good Jealousy (Kinas Sofrim)

Based upon the above, let us now try to understand the difference between *kinas sofrim*, which is when jealousy is holy, and unholy jealousy that is not *kinas sofrim*.

Chazal state, “*Kinas sofrim* (jealousy of Torah scholars) increases wisdom.”¹⁴ We have so far explained that jealousy is only possible from the viewpoint of *hadragah*, “steps”, when we view people as being on different levels than each other. From the viewpoint of *hadragah*, one is jealous of another person for being on a higher level than he (when, in his mind, the other person doesn’t belong there). In contrast, from the viewpoint of *hishtavus* (equilibrium), everyone is equal to each other, so there is no possibility for jealousy.

What is *kinas sofrim*? If I see that the other person has climbed over me and risen above me, and I realize that I can do the same thing and also rise higher than the other, such jealousy is *kinas sofrim*.

¹⁴ Talmud Bavli Bava Basra 21a

Just like another person has risen above me, so I can rise above him. That is the constructive jealousy of *kinas sofrim* – the fact that “I can do it also”. However, this doesn’t simply mean that “Just as the other was successful, so can I be successful.” That is a superficial perspective. It is rather that just as I see that another person can climb over me and rise above me, so do I have the power to climb and rise above the other.

That is the constructive jealousy of *kinas sofrim*, and it is only this kind of jealousy which increases a person’s wisdom. Why? The fact that another person is wiser and more learned than me doesn’t bother me, and it is not enough to make me jealous of him. But if the person became better than me only by rising over me, that inspires me to grow just like him, because I see that he only got to where he is because of climbing over me. If he was able to rise above me, so I can rise above him – this is the empowering and constructive jealousy of *kinas sofrim* which leads to good results.

It’s not simply that I want to rise above him now, it’s that I want to rise to his level. Why do I want to rise specifically to his level, and not to anyone else’s? It is because the other got to where he is only through rising over me. This is the good, holy kind of jealousy that is *kinas sofrim*, which leads to constructive growth.

What is the evil kind of jealousy that is not constructive and which doesn’t increase wisdom? When is jealousy not in the category of *kinas sofrim*? This is when a person wants to rise higher only because he wants the other to be knocked down and be lowered from where he is.

Thus, with holy jealousy, I want to rise higher than another person but I am fine if the other person stays at his current level. But with unholy jealousy, not only do I want to be higher than the other, but I want the other to be lowered.

In Summary

In summary, jealousy becomes evil either when I want to be better than another person (as opposed to just being equal with him), or, when I want the other person to be lowered, (so that I can be higher better than him). Either of these two kinds of jealousy is not being constructive, and they are not in the category of *kinas sofrim*.

Therefore, the constructive kind of jealousy, *kinas sofrim*, is when I want to rise higher to another person’s level, so that I can also be on his level, where I am equal with him. In contrast to this, if I

want to rise higher than another person because I don't want the person to be at that higher level, or when I want the other person to be lowered from where he is, this is evil jealousy and it would not be *kinas sofrim*.

How Jealousy Is Rooted In The Element of Water

Where do we find the very first roots of jealousy? As mentioned, jealousy is rooted in the element of water. Where do we find a connection between jealousy and the element of water?

On the second day of Creation, when Hashem split the waters of the world, He made two divisions of water – the Upper Waters and the Lower Waters. The Sages teach that the Lower Waters became jealous of the Upper Waters.¹⁵ Jealousy therefore comes from the very idea of division. Only on the second day of Creation was there now a division, and only from then on was jealousy possible. The Lower Waters were jealous of the Upper Waters for getting the higher status. The Lower Waters were jealous of the Upper Waters only because it felt that the Upper Waters had taken its rightful place.

This is like the teaching of the Sages that “a craftsman hates only those who are in the same craft as he.”¹⁶ Jealousy is only possible when there is viable competition between two people who are both in the same area. If another isn't competing with me in something, I can't be jealous of him just for being better at something than I am. But if the other is better than me at something that I'm also good at, that is where I can become jealous of the other.

We don't find that the land became jealous of the skies and heavens for being above it. This is because the land doesn't see the skies and heavens as competition. The land therefore didn't feel that the skies are taking its rightful place. But when the waters were split, the Lower Waters were jealous of the Upper Waters, because it reasoned that it belonged with the Upper Waters, and now that it had been placed on a lower level, it was jealous of the Upper Waters for taking its rightful place, because it felt that it belongs on the same level as the Upper Waters.

Thus, the root of jealousy is in the second day of Creation, when the waters were split. At its root, jealousy is holy. The Sages teach that the Lower Waters cried because they wanted to be placed

¹⁵ *Tikkunei HaZohar: 5*

¹⁶ *Midrash Tanchuma Beraishis 8*

closer to Hashem.¹⁷ The Lower Waters weren't crying that they weren't placed higher than the Upper Waters, they just wanted to be on the same level as the Upper Waters, so that they could be just as close to Hashem as the Upper Waters were. Such jealousy is the epitome of *kinas sofrim*, which is constructive and holy.

However, even though this was the holy jealousy of *kinas sofrim*, it still came about through *machlokes* (dissension), for the Lower Waters were arguing that they deserve to be placed higher. The Sages teach that the second day of Creation was when *Gehinnom* was created, and elsewhere this was also the day when *machlokes* was created.¹⁸ Therefore, even the jealousy of *kinas sofrim* ultimately cannot repair jealousy. We will soon explain why, as follows.

Kinas Sofrim Is Not The Completely Repaired Kind of Jealousy

What is at the root of *kinas sofrim*?

The Gemara says that when the Serpent saw Adam being served wine from the angels, it grew jealous of Adam's special status.¹⁹ According to a different view of the Sages, the Serpent became jealous of Adam and Chavah's marriage. The Serpent wanted to kill Adam, as a result. This is because, as explained earlier, jealousy is when a person wants to be higher than the other and therefore he wishes to lower the other person. This is not *kinas sofrim*, but evil jealousy.

Chazal teach that *kinas sofrim* increases wisdom. How does wisdom come from *kinas sofrim*? It came as an after-effect of the first sin, which was caused by the Serpent. When Adam and Chavah ate from the *Eitz HaDaas*, they received the "daas of the Serpent". This impaired level of *daas*, the "daas of the Serpent", became the very level of *chochmah* (wisdom) which we all have nowadays. Hence, even our *chochmah* comes from a source of jealousy, the jealousy of the Serpent which brought about the sin.

The *Mishnah* at the end of Tractate Sotah says that in the era preceding Mashiach, "The wisdom of scholars will rot."²⁰ The depth of this is because the wisdom of today, which includes even *kinas sofrim*, is only on the level of the "daas of the Serpent", which is an impaired level of *chochmah*, and

¹⁷ *Tikkunei HaZohar*: 5

¹⁸ *Tractate Pesachim 54a, Beraishis Rabbah*: 4

¹⁹ *Talmud Bavli Sanhedrin 59a*

²⁰ *Talmud Bavli Sotah 49a*

which will eventually be replaced in the times of *Mashiach*, when we will receive the holy level of *daas*. Had Adam and Chavah not sinned by listening to the Serpent, the wisdom of people would not have been ruined. Just as a carcass rots, so does the wisdom which comes from *kinas sofrim* rot. Once Adam and Chavah sinned, the Serpent had an effect on our wisdom and now even the wisdom of scholars can rot, even the wisdom of Torah scholars which increases wisdom. That very wisdom can eventually rot, because it is ultimately affected by the impaired “*daas* of the Serpent”. These are the words of our Sages.

Evil jealousy is when the lower level wants to bring down the higher level, or when it wants to rise above the higher level. This ruination can also be seen in the jealousy of the Lower Waters towards the Upper Waters. When the Lower Waters wish to be higher than the Upper Waters, or when the Lower Waters wish for the Upper Waters to be lowered, that is the evil jealousy which is not in the category of *kinas sofrim*.

Repairing Jealousy

Now that we have seen the roots of holy and unholy jealousy, what is the root of repairing jealousy? [First we will go through the following introduction and then we will see how jealousy is repaired].

Examining The Jealousy of The Brothers Towards Yosef

As mentioned earlier, the *gematria* of the word “Yosef” is *kinah*. We therefore learn about how to repair jealousy by examining the story of Yosef and the brothers.

Let us examine the brothers’ jealousy of Yosef. When Yosef told his brothers of his dreams, that the sun and moon and stars were all bowing to him, he interpreted it to them to mean that his brothers and his father and mother would all bow to him, that he would be higher than them. The brothers became jealous of him as a result.

Yehudah was especially jealous of Yosef. Later, when the brothers went down to Egypt, there was an argument between Yehudah and Yosef [when Yehudah didn’t realize yet that the viceroy of Egypt was really Yosef]. We know that Yehudah comes from Leah, and Yosef comes from Rachel. On a deeper level, it is explained that Yehudah’s argument with Yosef in Egypt was really an argument of,

“Who is the more important one? Is it Leah, or Rachel? Is it Yehudah, who comes from Leah, or is it Yosef, who comes from Rachel?”

Yehudah told Yosef [before he found out that this viceroy was really Yosef] that Yosef was no longer important, because Yosef had been sold to Egypt. Yosef responded to Yehudah that Yehudah was also no longer important, because Yehudah had also gone down to Egypt, when he had been demoted from his royal status, after the sale of Yosef, which he was responsible for. It is explained at on a more inner level, this was really an argument between Yosef and Yehudah about who is more prominent.

When Yosef was sold, this was really the actualization of the brothers’ jealousy of Yosef. The brothers were afraid that Yosef would become higher than them and that they would be lowered than him, so they “lowered” him, by selling him to Egypt. At first they threw him into a pit, when they first lowered him, and then they lowered him further by selling him to Egypt.

Concerning a person is jealous, the Sages teach, “Jealousy makes the bones rot.”²¹ Why do the bones rot through jealousy? It is based on the following concept. The Sages reveal that Yehudah and Yosef each represent two very fundamental concepts in Creation. Yehudah represents the concept of the *etzem*, the “essence” of Creation, whereas Yosef represents *tosefes*, the “addition” to Creation. Yehudah was trying to reveal the *etzem*, the essence, while Yosef’s task is to reveal *tosefes*, addition. Yehuda’s role was to reveal the *etzem*, the essence of Creation, represented by Hashem’s four-letter name of *havayah*, and Yosef’s role is to reveal *tosefes*, the addition to Creation. Therefore, on a deep level, we can explain that Yehudah was jealous of Yosef because Yosef represents the “addition” to Creation, which “adds” to the essence of Creation – something that diametrically opposes what Yehudah stands for. Therefore, on a deeper level, jealousy makes the bones rot, meaning that Yehudah’s jealousy of Yosef caused his “bones”, the *etzem*, to “rot”, as it were.

As explained earlier, evil jealousy is either when I wish to rise above another or when I want to lower the other. When the brothers were jealous of Yosef, they wanted to rise above him and not be below him. When Yehudah was jealous of Yosef, he wanted to lower Yosef, because he wanted to lower this “addition” upon his “essence.” Lowering another person is for the sake of lowering the

²¹ *Mishlei 14:30*

person to where I think he belongs to. When Yehudah was jealous of Yosef, he wanted to lower Yosef, not just to rise higher than Yosef, but to lower this addition from upon his essence.

How was this jealousy repaired? When Yehudah approached Yosef, they both recognized their royal status. Yehudah's coming towards Yosef is a hint to the union of the two different royalties of Yosef and Yehudah.

The True Repair For Kinah/Jealousy Is Through Nikayon/Being Cleansed By Hashem

Kinah usually refers to “jealousy”, but it is a term in the Torah which can sometimes mean “anger”, and it can sometimes mean “revenge”. The Torah says that Hashem is a “vengeful G-d”, a *Keil Kanei v’Nokeim*, the “Almighty Who avenges His anger”.²² This is the holy trait of *kinah* (vengefulness) of Hashem. What is this holy kind of *kinah*? When Hashem uses His trait of *kinah* to take revenge, this is not simply the trait of revenge, *chas v’shalom*, as a person who takes revenge when someone wrongs him. What is this trait of revenge that Hashem uses, which is called *kinah*?

Reb Pinchos Koritzer²³ said that revenge and jealousy have the same root. The Hebrew word for revenge is *nekamah*, and the Hebrew word for jealousy is *kinah*, which both have the same root letters, *kuf* and *nun*. This forms the root of the word *nakeh*, to “cleanse.” This is one of the 13 *middos* of compassion of Hashem, “*nakeh*”, when Hashem cleanses from sin.²⁴ Hashem takes revenge on sinners through His lofty *middah* of *nakeh*, which is out of His compassion for the sinner. He is taking revenge on the sinner in order to “cleanse” that which angers Him. Through Hashem’s revenge, which is a result of His *kinah*, the person who angered Hashem can become cleansed (*menakeh*).

Therefore, the trait of holy vengefulness (*kanaus*) is rooted in the concept of *nikayon*, to “cleanse”. As explained earlier, holy *kinah* (jealousy) is not simply *kinas sofrim* (the jealousy of Torah scholars), for *kinas sofrim* is a result of the sin, which turned our *daas* into “*daas* of the Serpent”. The true repair for *kinah* is not *kinas sofrim*, which comes from the Serpent, but *nikayon*, “cleansing”. The implication is that we need to be “cleansed” from the very trait of *kinah* itself –we need to rid ourselves entirely from any trace of jealousy.

²² *Nachum* 1:2

²³ *Sefer Imrei Pinchos*

²⁴ *Shemos* 34:7

Two Ways of Cleansing Ourselves From Jealousy

How do we “cleanse” ourselves completely from jealousy? What exactly do we need to be cleansed from? There are two aspects to this:

(1) The first aspect is that each person must be willing to accept his place and not wish to take over another person’s place. [This is essentially by having *emunah* that each person receives his rightful portion from Hashem, and that one else can take away what is coming to him.]

(2) The second aspect of it, which was mentioned earlier, is to use the trait of *hishtavus*, to feel “equal” with everyone else. This is the outline, and soon we will explain each of the

Simply speaking, the way to repair evil jealousy (which is either when a person wishes to be higher than another person, or when a person wishes to lower another person) is, through *kinas sofrim*, for Chazal teach that *kinas sofrim* increases wisdom. The “wisdom” that a person gains through *kinas sofrim* is that a person wishes to be on the same level as the Torah scholar – he wants to be at the same level as the other, but not higher than the other. This repairs his jealousy.

However, besides for this simple approach, there are also two deep ways to repair jealousy, as follows.

Emunah and Hishtavus

One way is when each person realizes that he needs to stay in his place and that he should not try to take another person’s place. To give an example, the Sages teach that a father does not become jealous of his son, and a *rebbe* does not become jealous of his *talmid*.²⁵ This is because the father or the *rebbe* doesn’t try to take away the child’s or student’s place. He has the *emunah* that Hashem gives everyone their rightful place, and that each person is where he is supposed to be.

This concept can also be understood in terms of the trait of *hishtavus*, to feel “equal” with everyone else. When Yehudah approached Yosef and they each recognized their royal status, they felt that they were equals, and they weren’t trying to take the other’s place. When a person feels that he is at *hishtavus* with another, he will not be jealous of the other.

²⁵ *Sanhedrin 105b*

The Depth of The Gemara's Advice To Avoid Jealousy Through Eating Pas Shacharis or Garlic

Chazal advise two different foods to eat which get rid of jealousy. The Gemara says that eating garlic erases a person's jealousy.²⁶ Elsewhere, the *Gemara* also says that if a person eats *pas Shacharis* (bread in the morning), he won't be jealous the day.²⁷ Let's explore the depth of these two different methods of advice – eating *pas shacharis*, and garlic. Besides for the simple understanding of this advice, there is also deeper meaning in this.

The *Gemara* says that a father isn't jealous of his son and a *rebbe* isn't jealous of his student. These each represent two different ways to remedy jealousy. The father isn't able to view his son as equal to him, because the very idea of a father is that he is above the child, and he recognizes his authority over the child. If a parent would forego his status, the child wouldn't respect him, and the child wouldn't be able to fulfill the *mitzvah* of honoring parents. A father isn't able to feel that his child is equal to him. How then does he avoid being jealous of his son? It is because the father has a love for his child. When there is love, there cannot be jealousy towards him.

With the relationship between a *rebbe* and a student, however, we find that although the student is normally on a lower level than the *rebbe*, sometimes there can be a *talmid chever*, “a student colleague”, who is able to argue with his *rebbe*. A *rebbe* is able to view his student as a *talmid chever*, giving him equal status.

Whereas the father's love for the child doesn't allow for hatred - which prevents the father from being jealous of his child - the *rebbe* isn't jealous of his *talmid* for a different reason. It is because with a *rebbe* and a *talmid*, there can be *hishtavus* (equality) between them. A *rebbe* doesn't become jealous of his *talmid* when he considers his *talmid* to be equal to him.

(The root of every *rebbe* and *talmid* is with Moshe and Yehoshua. At the end of Moshe's lifetime, Moshe gave over the leadership reigns to Yehoshua, considering him to be his equal.)

The *rebbe-talmid* relationship shows us a deeper way to fix jealousy [in contrast to the father-child relationship, which shows us how love overpowers jealousy]. It is about revealing *hishtavus*. When there are no differing levels of status (*hadragah*) and there is instead *hishtavus*, it isn't possible to have jealousy towards another. A *rebbe* who considers his *talmid* to be equal to him is not able to be

²⁶ *Bava Kamma* 82a

²⁷ *Bava Kamma* 107b

jealous of him. *Chazal* teach, “The honor of your student should be precious to you”²⁸, meaning that a rebbi should be careful with his student’s honor because he should view his student as having equal status with him.

Now we can explain the depth behind the *Gemara’s* advice to avoid jealousy by eating *pas Shacharis* or by eating garlic. These each represent the two different ways to avoid jealousy.

Regarding garlic, the *Gemara* says elsewhere that a person should eat garlic on *Erev Shabbos* in order to increase his seed,²⁹ which will help him fulfill the *mitzvah* of bearing children. This is because a father’s love for a child prevents the father from being jealous of him. Hence, eating garlic also prevents jealousy, because the garlic represents the *mitzvah* to bear children, a hint to the love of a father for his child - which doesn’t allow for jealousy.

The other way to avoid jealousy is through eating *pas shacharis*. Without getting into all the details of this, eating *pas shacharis* is connected with the concept of *hishtavus*, which removes jealousy. Hence, eating *pas shacharis* prevents jealousy, just as *hishtavus* repairs jealousy. This represents the idea that a *rebbe* isn’t jealous of his student, which is because of the concept of *hishtavus* – the deeper way to repair jealousy.

In Conclusion

To summarize, evil jealousy is when I want to be above another or when I want to lower another. The constructive kind of jealousy, *kinas sofrim*, is when I want to rise to another’s level and be parallel with him.

We repair evil jealousy either through love for another, or through desiring *hishtavus* (equality) with another. According to what we have explained here, there is really a deeper way to use the concept of *kinas sofrim*. With the idealistic jealousy of *kinas sofrim*, a person is spurred on to rise to another person’s level – not because he wants to become higher and better than another person, but because he wants to be parallel to him. Therefore, from a deeper perspective, *kinas sofrim* really brings a person to *hishtavus*, because the person desires equality with the other person.

²⁸ *Avos* 4:15

²⁹ *Bava Kamma* 82a

The first way to repair jealousy, which is through love, is a power within our Creation, because our Creation contains the perspective of *hadragah*, the recognition of a hierarchy system, in which there are differing levels of people. A father is clearly the authority over his son, and he cannot become jealous of his son because he loves him, but even though he loves him, he still recognizes that he is on a different level than his child.

The second way to repair jealousy, which is *hishtavus* (equality), is actually using a power from above Creation, because *hishtavus* can only be revealed completely by Hashem, Who is above Creation. On our own level, we find that *hishtavus* is able to exist between brothers, who are able to feel “equal” with each other. That is the deeper way to overpower negative jealousy.

We find that even Hashem puts Himself at an “equal” level with the Jewish people, so to speak. In *Shir HaShirim*, we say of Hashem, “*You are my Sister, my Beloved, my Dove, my Twin.*”³⁰ The *Midrash* states that Hashem says, “We are ‘twins’. I am not greater than you, and you are not greater than me” (so to speak). This is the concept of *hishtavus*, a perspective that comes from above Creation, which we are able to use on our own level in order to repair the trait of jealousy.

Through using these two abilities together – loving another person, and desiring equality with another person – one uproots evil jealousy. This, in turn, leads a person to be “cleansed” by Hashem. The word *menakeh*, “cleansed”, is from the word *kinah* (jealousy), a hint to how a person can become “cleansed” by Hashem from all evil jealousy - and in its place, to reveal holy love and holy *hishtavus* (equality) towards others.

³⁰ *Shir HaShirim* 5:2

4 | *Repairing Jealousy – On A Deeper Level*

*Physical Bitterness (Death) and Inner Bitterness (Jealousy)*³¹

At the death of Agag, it was said, “*I have removed this bitterness of death.*”³² In Koheles it is written, “*I have found woman to be bitterer than death.*”³³ What kind of ‘woman’ is this referring to? Rashi explains that the term “woman” here is an allegory for heresy. Let us understand the depth of this matter.

There is a verse that says, “*The rotting of the bones, is jealousy.*”³⁴ From here we can see that there are two forms of death. There is the simple kind of death, which is when the soul departs from the body, and the body is then buried in the grave. There is also a kind of ‘death’ which destroys the body from within: jealousy, which causes “rotting of the bones.” Jealousy causes the bones to rot, placing the body in a situation where it is devoid of the soul.

Death came as a result from the sin of Adam, which began with jealousy. The Sages say that Adam in Gan Eden was being served meat and wine by the angels, and the Serpent watched all of this taking place and he saw all of the honor that Adam was receiving, and it grew jealous.³⁵ This motivated the Serpent to entice Chavah to eat from the *Eitz HaDaas*, which the Torah says was “*desirous to the eyes.*” Thus, jealousy is the root evil trait, and lustful desire is the branch that stemmed from it.

So there are two kinds of bitterness, which are the two kinds of death. One of them is the punishment of death that came to mankind as a result of eating from the *Eitz HaDaas*, which was lustful desire. Another form of bitterness (or death) that came to mankind was a result of the jealousy that led to the first sin, and as it is written, “*Rotting of the bones, is jealousy.*” The actual sin was a lustful desire, but its deeper root came about through jealousy.

³¹ a segment from the derasha of Pesach_07_Maror In-Depth

³² Shmuel I: 15:32

³³ Koheles 7:26

³⁴ Mishlei 14:30

³⁵ Sanhedrin 59b

Rectifying Bitterness Through Bitterness: Rectifying Jealousy

The Gemara in Tractate Pesachim says that *chazeres* we eat the Pesach *seder* is called *chasa*, a vegetable which starts out “soft”, with a sweet taste, and ends with a “hard”, bitter taste. This also bears a similarity to the *Eitz HaDaas*, which was a grapevine, according to one of the opinions in the Sages. A grape is soft on the outside and it contains hard seeds on its inside [hence it starts with a soft taste and ends with a hard taste]. Eating of the *Eitz HaDaas* was in the category of lustful desire, for its grapes were sweet-tasting. The punishment for partaking of this lustful desire was death, which is a form of “bitterness”. How is this lustful desire rectified? When it is returned to sweetness.

This is the deeper reason of why there is wine in the *charoses*. The sin of Adam and Chavah began with sweet-tasting grapes, which ended in bitterness, for it caused death to come to the world [and it is rectified when we return this bitterness to sweetness, by dipping the *maror* into the sweet-tasting *charoses*]. All of that pertains to the aspect of lustful desire that was contained in the sin, where man was lulled after sweetness.

On the other hand, however, the *Mechilta*³⁶ teaches that the most bitter-tasting tree is the olive tree, which Moshe sweetened the water in Marah with, according to one opinion in the Sages. The olive itself is also bitter-tasting, and even after it is prepared for consumption, it still cannot be sweetened. It is ‘rectified’ through extracting its oil, when it is crushed. One of the herbs that were crushed for the *Ketores* was *mor-dror*³⁷ [myrrh], a bitter-tasting herb. The Midrash³⁸ compares Avraham Avinu to *mor-dror*: “Just as *mor-dror* is called “the head of all the spices”, so is Avraham Avinu “the head of all *tzaddikim*”...and just as anyone who gathers this myrrh will have bitter hands, so did Avraham embitter himself and endure suffering.” Avraham Avinu suffered in his life, and this was the repaired kind of “bitterness” that rectified the impaired “bitterness”. It rectified the jealousy [of the Serpent]. Later we will explain more about this matter.

³⁶ *Mechilta Beshalach* “Vayisa” 1

³⁷ *Shemos* 30:23; see Ramban *ibid*

³⁸ *Shir HaShirim Rabbah* 1:59

“Bitterness” And “Jealousy” In The Torah

Let us reflect on where the concept of “bitterness” is mentioned in the Torah, in order to understand the matter of how “bitterness is rectified through bitterness”.

The first time that the Torah mentions “bitterness” is with regards to Esav. Yaakov used “trickery” to procure the blessings from Yitzchok so that they wouldn’t go to Esav, which the verse calls “*mirmah*”, similar to the word “*merirus*”, bitterness. When Esav realized that the blessings had been given to Yaakov, the verse says: “And he cried out a great and very bitter scream, and he said to his father, “Bless me also, my father.” Esav didn’t just want the blessing; he said “bless me, also”. The word ‘also’ is a hint to his jealousy, which is the root of all ‘bitterness’.

Yaakov and Esav had already been fighting before birth, of who will inherit This World and the Next World. This is the root kind of “jealousy” of the world.

The second time in the Torah where jealousy makes an appearance is by the brothers and Yosef, when the brothers were jealous about Yosef’s dreams. Later, when Yaakov gave the blessings to his sons, he cursed their jealousy. Although Yosef was punished with being ensnared by Potifar’s wife, for indirectly causing his brothers to be jealous of him - which showed that the brothers were justified in their jealousy towards Yosef and that Yosef was getting what he deserved - still, it was the jealousy of the brothers which fueled the jealousy further, and for this they are blamed for their jealousy.

The word “*Yosef*” has the same *gematria* as the word “*kinah*” (jealousy); the bitterness which the brothers felt towards him was due to their jealousy.

The bitterness of Esav towards Yaakov, and the bitterness of the brothers towards Yosef, has not yet been rectified. Esav will be judged in the future³⁹. As for the jealousy of the brothers towards Yosef, the Ten Martyrs were killed in order to rectify their sin of jealousy, and in spite of this, the rectification is still not complete yet.⁴⁰

Later, the Torah uses the term “bitterness” with regards to the bondage in Egypt. “*And they embittered their lives, with difficult labor, with mortar and bricks.*”⁴¹ The Jewish people were

³⁹ *Ovadyah 1:21*

⁴⁰ *Midrash Mishlei 1:13*

⁴¹ *Shemos 1:14*

‘embittered’ in Egypt. We also know that Miriam spoke disparaging words about Moshe [because deep down she was jealous of his high spiritual level]; let us analyze this.

When the verse says that “*they embittered their lives*”, the *Tosafos* says that this is an allusion to the birth of Miriam, who was born at that time, thus she is called “Miriam”, from the word *merirus*, “bitter.” Miriam spoke disparage about Moshe to Aharon, when she noticed that Moshe had separated from Tziporah. She was really jealous of Moshe, for she said to Aharon, “*Does Hashem only speak with Moshe? He also speaks with us.*” Here is where we see that Miriam had *merirus*, bitterness, for she was jealous of Moshe’s level.

Another place in the Torah where “bitterness” is mentioned is with regards to the *sotah*, the wayward wife who is suspected of adultery, who must drink the “bitter waters”. She must drink these waters due to the “jealousy” that her husband has towards the man whom she was seen acting improper with.

Regarding the episode of the “Bitter Waters” at Marah, the Zohar explains that all of the husbands suspected their wives of adultery in Egypt, thus Hashem commanded Moshe to make all of them drink, both the men and the women, the bitter waters.⁴² Hashem commanded Moshe to take a piece of wood with Hashem’s Name on it, and to throw it into the water, which sweetened the water for them to drink.⁴³ Thus the people “passed a test” in Marah, for they had been cleansed of any suspicion of adultery from Egypt. The test in Marah therefore stemmed from their servitude in Egypt, which had come about through jealousy, for the Egyptians were jealous of the growing population of the Jewish people and thereby wished to get rid of them.

The Three Kinds of Bitterness: Lustful Desire, Jealousy of Another, and Jealous of Hashem

As we explained, the inner implication of “bitterness” is linked with *kinah*, jealousy, as opposed to *taavah*, lustful desire. We began to explain that the root of jealousy began with the Serpent. Chazal explain that the Serpent became jealous of Adam and Chavah when it saw them in marital relations, which in turn caused it to have a lustful desire for Chavah.⁴⁴

⁴² Zohar Naso 124b

⁴³ Targum Yehonasan Beshalach 15:25

⁴⁴ Beraishis Rabbah 18:6, brought in Rashi

There was also another kind of jealousy that the Serpent had, which we mentioned earlier: it was jealous of the honor that was being accorded to Adam, when it saw that Adam was enjoying a feast of meat and wine prepared by the angels.

There was also a third kind of jealousy that it had, which represents the depth of its jealousy: it wanted to be like G-d. The Serpent told Chavah, “*You can become like G-d, and know of good and evil.*” Here we see that the Serpent was not only desirous of Chavah, and not only was it jealous of Adam – it was jealous of Hashem, so to speak. It was angry that there is only one Creator of the world; it wanted to calm its jealousy that it had towards Hashem, Who is One and Whom there is none other like. It wanted to be comparable to Hashem, to “be like G-d”, and that is why it said to Chavah that “Just as Hashem creates worlds, so can you create worlds.”⁴⁵

The “bitterness” that came to Creation is rooted in the jealousy of the Serpent towards Hashem. All “bitterness” therefore comes from the “Serpent” which has become absorbed into man’s bloodstream ever since the first sin.

Thus, there are several different kind of “bitterness”. One kind of bitterness came about as a result of lustful desire. This kind of bitterness is reflected in the statement that “A person does not leave the world with half of his desires fulfilled.” A second kind of bitterness is jealousy; earlier we brought the verse “*And I have found woman to be worse than death*”, and the connection between woman and death\bitterness is because woman is always jealous that she is not the same level as man, who is more connected to his Root.⁴⁶ The third kind of bitterness is another kind of jealousy: when a created being is jealous that it is not the Creator, so to speak.

The Jealousy of the Lower Waters Towards The Upper Waters

There is an amazing insight of the *Ohr HaChaim*⁴⁷, which was surely said through *ruach hakodesh* (the holy spirit), as follows.

The *Gemara* says that when preparing the bitter waters for the *sotah* to drink, a bitter substance was placed into the water, to give it a bitter taste.⁴⁸ However, the *Yalkut Shimeoni*⁴⁹ brings that it was

⁴⁵ *Tanchuma, parshas Tazria, 9*

⁴⁶ *Editor’s Note: It seems that this was Miriam’s jealousy towards Moshe.*

⁴⁷ *Ohr HaChaim, parshas Naso, 5:15*

⁴⁸ *Sotah 20a*

the paper with an inscription of Hashem's Name on it which was placed into the water, which made it bitter. The *Ohr HaChaim* explains this as follows:

“It is known from the inner dimension of Torah that every creation yearns and desires to connect to its Creator. The lower waters wept and were bitter over the fact that it was placed at a greater distance from Hashem⁵⁰....Hashem desired to place His dwelling on the lower realms⁵¹, but the sins of man prevent this. When He will be able to place His dwelling on the lower realms [in the future], there will be no need for Him to dwell above, and the lower waters will no longer need to cry and be jealous that it is not higher.

“When the *sotah* sins, this prevents the *Shechinah* on High from dwelling below. Thus when she drinks, the water feels her sin, and it feels that she [in her sin] has caused it to become distanced from the Creator [for her sins bring destruction to Creation], and its pain is awakened, so it cries. Its bitterness is awakened, and this itself is what causes her stomach to explode and her thigh to fall.” In other words, the waters are always bitter, for they have been made into the “lower waters” of this world, where they cannot be as close to Hashem.⁵² Through the sin of a *sotah*, the *Shechinah* is distanced from this world, and this awakens the bitterness of the lower waters, who are sad that they have become distanced from Hashem. This is the ‘bitterness’ contained in ‘the bitter waters’ that the *sotah* drinks, and this ‘bitterness’ is what kills her [if she is guilty of sin].

The depth of the above words of the *Ohr HaChaim* is not simply that the lower waters are jealous of the upper waters; it is not that they want to be closer to Hashem. Rather, the lower waters have a desire to be *miskalel* (to integrate) with the King, so to speak - meaning, they want to be recognized as the ‘first’ in Creation.⁵³

49 *Yalkut Shimeoni Bamidbar 5:23*

50 *Beraishis Rabbah 5:4*

51 *Tanchuma, parshas Naso, 16*

52 *Tikkunei HaZohar 19b*

53 *Editor's Note: This seems to be the concept of "hiskalelus" (integrating with the Creator) on the side of evil, for it is not a desire to integrate with Hashem for the purpose of the closeness, but for the purpose of being recognized by all of Creation as the most important. This also seems to be the evil desire for kavod (honor), which was manifest in the Serpent; we also find this with regards to Amalek, who is called "raishis", "the first", for Amalek wants to be recognized by Creation as the most honored, and therefore they are at war with Hashem, Who is the true First (and with Hashem's chosen people, the Jewish nation, who are also called the First).*

Holy Jealousy: The Desire To Integrate With Hashem

How, indeed, can a person reach *hiskalelus* (integration) in the Creator?

As we have seen, there is an evil side to jealousy, which is the “*rotting of the bones, is jealousy*”, which is “*bitterer than death*”, but there is also a holy jealousy. Hashem is called “*Keil Kanei v’Nokem*,” He is an “Almighty Who is zealous and vengeful”. When one returns Creation to the *Ein Sof* (Infinite) of Hashem where it all came from, this is the inner and holy root that is behind the ‘jealousy’ a created being can have towards Hashem.

There is a hint to this from the words of the Sages, that when the dove came back to Noah with an olive leaf, the dove was teaching Noah a lesson, that it prefers to be kept alive through bitter food, where it will be sustained by Hashem, rather than eat sweet foods that are prepared by people.⁵⁴ A person sweetens bitterness through sweetening it, but the Creator ‘sweetens’ bitterness through bitterness. The olive is bitter, and it is fit for consumption only after it has been crushed, whereupon its bitter taste is removed [when its oil is extracted]. This shows us that the way to rectify “bitterness” which results from lustful desire is through “bitterness” – just as the olive must be crushed in order for it to be fit for consumption.

However, that only concerns bitterness that comes from lustful desire, which came after the sin. The root of the sin began with jealousy, and such “bitterness” is only rectified **through being nullified**. Hashem desires the Jewish people even though they are “small”⁵⁵ – and the depth of this is that Hashem desires a Jew especially when he makes himself “small”, when he nullifies himself totally, and then he becomes integrated with the Creator. This is how “bitterness” is rectified through “bitterness.” This was the bitterness that Avraham Avinu had to go through, represented by the spice of myrrh which he is compared to. This is the rectification of the *maror* which is achieved through chewing the *maror*, which essentially nullifies the *maror*. This nullification rectifies jealousy, and it represents the holy jealousy [a desire to integrate with Hashem, which is achieved through self-nullification].

The sin of man was a lustful desire, but the jealousy itself which brought about this desire was not a sin. **Jealousy is rather the very nature that Hashem has designed man with. It is upon a person to use jealousy for holiness, by being ‘jealous’ of the Creator, so to speak – to desire to**

⁵⁴ *Erwin 18b*

⁵⁵ *Devarim 7:7*

integrate one's being with Him, and, through this yearning, to become integrated with the Creator.

A Deeper Understanding

Going deeper, there are two root sins in Creation. The sin of Adam was a lustful desire, which caused death to come upon mankind. But there was an earlier sin: there were many “kings of Edom” who were all destroyed by Hashem (these kings are mentioned in *Parshas Vayishlach*⁵⁶), for they each said, “I will rule.”⁵⁷ This was jealousy, and it was the root of all sin.

Holy jealousy is to be ‘jealous’ of the Creator, in the sense that one feels “bitter” that he is not the Creator – in other words, a bitterness that one isn’t yet integrated with the Creator. [This is the holy use of the Serpent’s jealousy of Hashem. If the Serpent would have desired to nullify itself and become integrated with the Creator, it would have used its jealousy of Hashem for a holy purpose]. This is the depth of the lesson that the dove conveyed to Noach, that it prefers to be sustained through bitterness – it prefers that “bitterness” should be rectified through “bitterness”, which causes one **to feel nullified (*bittul*) to Hashem, which in turn can lead one towards integration (*biskalelus*) with Hashem.** (As a side note, we should know that the traits of jealousy, conceit and anger all bear the same root.⁵⁸)

Lustful Desire Vs. Jealousy

When mankind was cursed with death ever since the sin of Adam, this was not simply a death sentence upon Adam; rather, it meant that death would be a slow, drawn-out process.

Until the *Avos*, death happened suddenly, without any warning. The *Midrash* explains that Avraham asked for death to be preceded by aging, Yitzchok asked that death be preceded by suffering, and Yaakov asked that death be preceded by illness.⁵⁹ Yaakov *Avinu*’s beauty was a resemblance of Adam HaRishon’s beauty⁶⁰, so just as Yaakov revealed illness to the world, so was

⁵⁶ *Beraishis* 36:31

⁵⁷ *This is discussed in many Chassidic works; see Me’ohr Einayim parshas Vayeitzei*

⁵⁸ *Bamidbar Rabbah* 9:11

⁵⁹ *Beraishis Rabbah* 65:9

⁶⁰ *Bava Metzia* 84a

there a degree of illness by Adam, in the sense that death is called “illness”. Death is really a slow process, for even when Adam was cursed with death, he did not die that day. Rather, every day in a person’s life is part of the long, drawn-out process of death.

The slow process of death can be compared to when a person has a lust for something; a desire slowly kills a person, with the more he attaches himself to it. “He who wants a hundred, wants two hundred.”⁶¹ A person desires to connect more and more to his desire, and the more he connects himself to desire, the more ‘dead’ he becomes. Being half-dead is the same as being dead entirely.⁶²

Thus, Yaakov *Avinu* asked that illness should precede death, which slows down the process of death. This resembles lustful desire, which is a slow and drawn-out process of “death” for a person.

Jealousy, however, is a rapid process. Its destruction is instant. Haman became enraged when Mordechai didn’t bow to him. This was anger, and it is brought in our Sages that anger stems from jealousy.⁶³ Haman said, “*All of this is not worth anything to me*” – this realization did not come upon him slowly. It was a very quick reaction, and it was a destructive attitude of “Either everything, or nothing.”

Thus, desire is a slow process that eventually causes destruction, whereas jealousy is quickly destructive. **The holy use of jealousy, the desire to integrate with the Creator, is also a quick “destruction” [in the positive sense]: it is a complete self-nullification, where man becomes completely integrated with the Infinite.**

From The Bitterness of Gehinnom Comes Self-Nullification & Integration With The Creator

Hashem’s Reality is broken down into smaller amounts when it comes to the experience of created beings and people. The Sages teach that “A day of Hashem lasts 1000 years.” In other words, whatever is “one” for Hashem becomes “a thousand” for a person. **Jealousy, at its root, comes from the “oneness” of Hashem, where there is the all-inclusive unity (*achdus*).** Desires, however, are rooted in disparity, where there is no unity; where there are a myriad of details.

⁶¹ *Koheles Rabbah* 1:13

⁶² *Bava Kamma* 65a

⁶³ *Rashi in Iyov* 5:2

In the future era of *Moshiach*, the “holy jealousy” will be revealed, in which the entire Jewish people will feel a burning love for Hashem. It will be a state of nullification to the Creator. The trait of jealousy that exists in our current era, however, leads a person towards a sense of emptiness. When used for evil, jealousy brings a person into a negative, empty state. The Zohar says that “*Marah* (which means bitterness) is *Gehinnom*.”⁶⁴ The trait of lustful desire also leads a person into a negative, empty place.

But the holy kind of emptiness that a person can reach, through “holy jealousy”, is when the jealousy is causing a person to feel the bitterness that is as bitter as *Gehinnom*, and from this emptiness, a person is led to nullify his existence to the Creator, and to become integrated in Him.

When a person is having true *merirus* (bitterness) - which is parallel to the bitterness felt in *Gehinnom* – he can then **reach a state of “death” and connect to the One Who rules the world.** The word *emes*, truth, is from the letters “*aleph meis*”, “one, death”, an allusion to how “**death**” [self-nullification] enables one to reach the “*Aleph*”, the One Ruler, Hashem.

The word “*mar*”, bitter, has the same *gematria* as the word “*Amalek*”, who “recognizes His master and intends to rebel against Him.” On the other side, on the side of holiness, is the one who recognizes his Creator and he chooses to integrate with Him.

This is the depth of the matter of how “bitterness” that rectifies “bitterness”.

In Conclusion

Thus, the complete rectification of “bitterness” is not through dipping the *maror* into the *charoses*, which rectified bitterness with sweetness, but through chewing it with one’s teeth - rectifying the bitterness through “bitterness”.

The depth of repairing the “bitterness” of the *maror* is the “holy jealousy”, to have a burning love for Hashem, like a rising flame, and to become integrated with the Creator.

⁶⁴ Zohar Pinchas 222a

5 } “Snake’s Jealousy” & How It Infected Marriage

*The Snake Was Jealous of Adam and Chavah*⁶⁵

Man is comprised of a *guf* (body) and a *neshamah* (Divine soul). Before marriage, a person already has to deal with two ‘partners’ – his body and his soul. After he gets married, now there are two bodies and two souls that he has to deal with. Let’s explain the depth behind this and how it actually affects us.

There is love which stems from our physical body, and there is love which comes from our soul. Each of these loves is vastly different from each other.

Before the sin of Adam, when he was in Gan Eden, he was only a soul, covered with *kosnos ohr* (skin coverings). After the sin, the physical body which we recognize came into existence, which resembles the *kosnos ohr* of Adam that covered the soul.

The root of the sin began with the act of the Snake to tempt Chavah. The sin did not begin with Adam, nor did it begin with Chavah. It began with the Snake. What did it want with Chavah? The Sages state that the Snake was jealous of Adam and Chavah [so it desired to take her for itself, as a mate]. Thus, the roots of the physical body began with the jealousy of the Snake.

The rule is that the ‘roots’ build the ‘branches’ - whatever is in the ‘root’ becomes transferred to the ‘branches’ that grow from it: since the root of the sin began with the Snake’s jealousy, its result, which is the physical body, is then also connected with the Snake’s jealousy.

There is a well-known question: what was the Snake thinking? If it wanted to cause Adam to eat from the tree and die, Chavah will also die. So either way, it will be left without a mate. What, then, was it trying to do?

Understandably, the words of *Chazal* are not to be understood simply. The Snake did not want to simply “marry” Chavah. Rather, it wanted to cause Chavah to think like it. It wanted her to have its perspective, the perspective of the Snake, which is associated with cunningness (*armimus*), as the *possuk* says, “*And the Snake was cunning, from all of the beasts of the field.*” By contrast, the holy kind

⁶⁵ segment from *Getting To Know Your Home_03_Unifying Body and Soul In Marriage*

of thinking, *daas d'kedushah*, is about *achdus*, unity. The Snake, which had the opposite agenda, wanted *pirud*, disparity, in Creation.

Thus, the jealousy of the Snake was rooted in its desire to cause disparity, between Adam and Chavah. The physical body we know of, which came into existence as a result of the sin, is thus stemming from the Snake's jealousy: a desire for disparity.

The Snake's Effect on Marriage

We are speaking about how to build the Jewish home, and in other words, of how husband and wife can attain *shalom* (peace) in marriage.

When we want to get to the deep understanding of a matter, we need to get to the root of it, and from the root we can see the branches. The first marriage in the world was the marriage of Adam and Chavah. The first attempt at disparity that took place in the world was the Snake's attempt to cause disparity between Adam and Chavah.

After the Snake tried to carry out its agenda, disparity entered, and ever since then, the entire bond of marriage has never been the same. *Chazal* state that after the sin, Adam separated from Chavah for 130 years. This was all a result of the Snake's doing. It succeeded in causing disparity between the first couple of the world, Adam and Chavah – enough to cause them to separate for 130 years.

Before the sin, when Adam lived as a soul in Gan Eden, there was no physical body yet. He had some kind of garment on top of his soul which was spiritual, not physical. It was a point in time in which *achdus*/unity was solely achievable through the soul, and not through the body, for there was no body yet. The disparity that entered creation, caused by the Snake, from its jealousy of Adam and Chavah, is what began all physical orientation. In fact, the very fact that Adam and Chavah received physical bodies after the sin, was already a kind of disparity, in and of itself – enough to cause them to be separated for 130 years.

Thus, before the sin, Adam and Chavah were united entirely through their souls, and after the sin, a new [and lower] level of unity was created: unity through body and soul together. There is also a lower kind of unity than this, which is when there is nothing but connection through the body and not through the soul; but such a unity is an animalistic kind of connection to another. (An animal

can also connect with its mate. There is a concept of marriage by animals, as we see from the fact that the animals came in coupled pairs, to the Ark of Noach.)

So altogether, there are three levels of unifying: **(1) Unity before the sin**, in which there was only union of souls; **2) Unity of the physical body**, which is an animal's level of unity. **3) Unity after the sin**, in which both the body and the soul are involved in achieving unity.

Unity of animals cannot achieve an absolute level of unity. The reason for this because an animal is entirely physical, and all physicality is rooted in sin; and sin began with the Snake's jealousy. The jealousy of the Snake began the concept of disparity.

The Snake wanted to cause disparity between Adam and Chavah, and it also had the agenda of uniting with Chavah. So its first agenda was disparity, and after that, it wanted unity. Had the Snake gotten what it wanted and Adam would die right away, it would be able to unite with Chavah; such a unity would have been based on its desire to cause disparity. It would have never achieved real unity with Chavah, because its desire for unity with her was all stemming from disparity, and such unity cannot be real unity.

.... Unity based on physical connection alone between them does not last; unity between spouses is only achieved when their souls come together. If their marriage is based on physical appearance and personality attraction alone (which is also a kind of physical attraction), and this is the only thing they experience together, their union is based on a perspective of disparity - the perspective formed by the Snake.

It is for this reason that we see, to our horror, that there are spouses who abandon their marriage simply because they fall in love with another person, who seems to be more attractive than what they have in their own marriage. Why does this happen? It can only happen when the marriage was based on physical factors alone. As soon as one of them finds another who comes across as more attractive – whether it is in how the person acts, or due to how much money he/she has, etc., the marriage is abandoned in favor of this more attractive person.

We find something peculiar. There are couples who get divorced, yet they can still remain on good terms with each other afterwards. How do we explain such a thing? The true answer to this mystery is because this couple must have never understood the nature of their relationship when they had been married. Therefore, the relationship between them is still able to continue.

We all believe and know that we possess a Divine soul in us, and we all know in our minds that husband and wife are two souls meant to become one in marriage. But when it comes to making this concept practical in day-to-day life, we find these matters to be somewhat esoteric, as if it is more like a lofty speech that you hear before you get married. After marriage, the idea of a “spiritual bond” between husband and wife often becomes a forgotten topic, pushed away in some back corner of the mind. It is not made practical in their daily interactions, and the connection that a husband and wife feel to each other is then based entirely on the physical.

Here is a common example of what the average conversation looks like in a non-spiritual marriage. It is dinner time. What are the husband and wife talking about with each other? It is usually about the bank account, what to buy and what not to buy, how to raise the kids, etc.

Why are the conversations like this? It is simple. If a person lived a totally “body” kind of life before he got married, then he doesn’t suddenly transform when he gets married and become spiritual. (There are no open miracles performed these days). When a person is involved all day with his physical concerns, when he comes home as well at the end of the day, he returns to discussing his physical concerns: the bank account, the papers in his filing cabinet, writing down important events on his calendar, etc.

But if a person is already used to the concept of identifying the two aspects to his existence – his body and his soul – then when he comes home at the end of day, he is also involved with both body and soul. If a person is already identifying his existence throughout the day as being both body and soul, he will know that when he comes home he is not entirely a body. The correct identification a person must have for himself, in marriage, is: “I have a soul, and my wife has a soul. I have a body, and she has a body.” Together, they are acknowledging that they each deal with this double kind of existence.

We do not mean that a couple must only talk about *ruchmiyus* (spirituality) together. That is not the point; in fact, there were only rare individuals who were capable of living on such a level. We are describing a far simpler and more basic point: that when a couple gets married, they should know that their union will be including not only their bodies, but their souls as well.

The soul dimension should be given at least 2% of their attention in marriage. They can do more than that too, but as a basic minimum, they must know and be aware that they will need to unify with their souls.

If they do not build together any unity of the soul with each other, and it is merely a physical connection with each other, then their entire sense of unity with each other will be built on a perspective that creates separateness, the “jealousy of the Snake.” In some extreme cases, there are couples who even come to feel jealous of each other’s successes! One of them gains a promotion, and the other spouse feels like he is now inferior to his spouse, which he cannot handle.

Why do such things happen in a marriage? It is when their entire bond is physical, which means that it is rooted in the “jealousy of the Snake.” And the bond they feel to each other begins to weaken and fall apart.

But if the union between them is built on truth, even if they feel jealous of each other sometimes, the basis of their marital bond will remain and keep their bond strong.

How To Build The Soul Connection In Marriage

In today’s generation, marital counseling is a big practice. There is much being taught about “*shalom bayis*”, “marital peace.” Indeed, there are many problems in marriage today, and counseling is needed for many people. But the issues do not actually begin with “*shalom bayis*” (marital peace). The issues begin with a lack of understanding towards oneself.

If one is aware of his body and his soul and he is used to identifying with both of them, he can be helped in marriage as well. But when there is a lack of awareness towards **body and soul** within oneself, it will be even more difficult to get along with the body and soul of another.

This is true whether one is leaning towards more of a very physical orientation in life, or even if he leaning towards a very spiritual one. When he is lacking proper awareness of *either* his body or soul in his own life - he won’t be able to build the home either.

If most people look deeply into their marital issues, they would discover that the spiritual bond between them is sorely lacking, almost non-existent.

[Let us point out the following misconceptions about the spiritual bond in marriage, however]. There are some couples who think that becoming spiritual together means to learn two *halachos* every day with each other. We don’t mean to degrade this, *chas v’shalom*. It is very constructive. But learning together every day is not enough to form a soul connection with each other.

Why? Because they are merely doing external actions together. Of course, they might feel a connection to each other from it, because they are doing something together. But we can compare this to a father learning with his child. They might be doing something together, but it won’t be enough to form an inner connection between them.

We can understand that if a person learns two *halachos* every day, this alone will not bring him to discover his own soul and live with it. As proof, there are people who learn much more than two *halachos* each day, but it doesn’t cause them to reach their soul. It is a long way to get to the soul – it is a task that takes hard work and perseverance, on a continual basis.

In marriage as well, forming a soul connection with each other does not happen in a day or two, generally speaking. It takes many years. Just as physical growth spans several years, from infancy to adolescence, then comes marriage, children, and marrying off his own children, *b'ezras Hashem* – and then becoming a grandparent – so, too, the deep bond between a couple takes time to develop. When a couple gets married, at first there are no children yet; and later comes the children, which further develops their bond.

If a person is married for 10 or 15 years and he works for a living, his home becomes nicer looking as he brings in the money to afford renovations. He has children in between, and he makes sure to take care of their needs. But the question is, is he also building a soul connection with his spouse? If he is, he is someone to be praised. But if all he has done in all those 10-15 years is that he earned a living and brought up the children (and he has a nice pension waiting for him), but he didn't work hard at building a soul connection with his spouse – it's as if he's holding onto a bunch of 'branches' that are disconnected from their 'root.'

Let us repeat and emphasize that the point is not that one speak with his wife only about matters of the soul. Not at all! What we mean is that just as a husband needs to take care of his wife's physical needs (and she must take care of his physical needs), so must he help her in her spiritual needs. This does not happen in a day or two; it takes many years of first getting to know each other's different natures, slowly becoming familiar with each other's personalities, until the spiritual dimension of their relationship can begin. It takes time.

Eventually, the spiritual bond between them must become a topic of interest to them; and it should become the central topic between them. The spiritual side of their marriage must become as important as a topic to them no less than the other important topics that are discussed in their home. It doesn't mean that they should advise each other in what to do in their respective lives. When each of them is coming home from a long day of work or from anywhere else, they want to relate their experiences to each other, and they are not seeking advice. They each want to be heard by the other one. That is part of their "partnership" – each of them is not just looking for "advice."

Their spiritual situations must also include the other. Of course, a wife cannot become included 100% in her husband's spiritual work, just as it is not possible for them to be physically included with each other 100%. A man cannot come home and tell his wife every last thing that happened to him that day for the last 8 hours. But what he can do is to give her a basic outline of what he experienced that day, and to that extent, he includes her in what goes on in his life. Along with this, they need to **talk** with each other about their spiritual bond. They must not do this in a forced manner; it should feel natural for them, like anything else in life they do.

They must speak of their experiences with each other. If a person was away the whole day on a trip, and he comes home and doesn't tell her anything about his trip, clearly something is wrong. If

he is not relaying his experiences to her, either he has no experiences, or it is because there is a deep blockage between him and his spouse [which must be discovered and addressed] that is preventing him from having conversations with her.

To summarize what we have been through so far, man is comprised of body and soul. The union of marriage is that two souls and two bodies are coming together. If the soul of husband and wife are revealed in the marriage and they are included in each other's spiritual lives, they have the deep root for unity between them. Even the physical aspects of marriage will then become more meaningful. **Instead of the body being infected by the effects of the "Snake's jealousy" on marriage, the body will be able to take on the light of the soul, which is the source of unity.**

6 } Lower Waters Jealousy Towards Higher Waters⁶⁶

There are two abilities in man that contradict each other: *tefillah* (prayer, which means that I am insufficient and I need something to complete me), and *someiach b'chelko*, “being happy with one’s lot”. These two abilities contradict each other, because if I pray, I am not happy and sufficient with what I have, and if I am happy with what I have, I see no reason to pray, because there is nothing that I lack that I am trying to fill.

Simply speaking, the Sages said that “One who has a hundred wants two hundred”, and therefore person cannot be *someich b'chelko* as long as he wants something that he doesn’t have right now. But if a person gains the ability to equalize himself to others – in the sense that he feels that what he has is equal to what others have, and that what others have is equal to what he has – then he sees no reason to want anything that others have, for he realizes that he really does have what he sees in others. This is the deep attitude that is behind the power to be *someiach b'chelko*.

If I want something, I can realize that whatever I have is really *equal* to what another has - and then I will no longer want what others have. I can only pray for something I want when I am unaware that I really have what another has; once I realize that I have what others have, I see no need to pray for it.

The desire in a person to have anything else that he doesn’t yet have is a lack of *someiach b'chelko*. It is a lack of understanding that whatever I have is really *equal* to what another has.

The Sages teach that when Hashem split the waters on the second day of Creation, the Lower Waters became “jealous” of the Upper Waters. The Lower Waters thought that the Higher Waters were more important, so the Lower Waters became jealous. The Lower Waters essentially perceived that the Upper Waters have something that they don’t have. A person always wants the other half of what he is missing, which seems to not be in his possession. Either he will fight to get it (which is evil), or he will pray to get it (which is holy).

However, there is a deeper perspective than the above that one can have. If one “equalizes” himself with others, if one realizes that all that he has is equal to what others have, and that the same is true vice versa - he realizes that the half which others possess is also a part of him. He is not lacking anything. This is the depth of being *someiach b'chelko* - being happy with what you have.

⁶⁶ segment from “*Mazal of Rosh Chodesh_012_Kislev.The. Bow*”