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The Snake Was Jealous of Adam and Chavah

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 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.

Thus, when a connection to another is entirely physical, there cannot be real unity. Although we know that animals can also bond with each other and unite, that unity is entirely rooted in the Snake's cunning perspective; the Snake began a unity that is entirely physical and animalistic in its nature – a unity that is based on disparity.

Unity Before The Sin: Soul Connection

Let's return to discussing man himself. Before the sin, there was unity only through souls. It was clearly a deeper and more inner kind of unity than the kind of unity that can be achieved today, in which we live after the sin. After the sin, we can also unify, but it will always involve both body and soul.

When it comes to our physical body, for all practical purposes, there is no difference between a person and an animal. When testing any medicine or treatment, animals are first tested before the treatment is applied to humans. Chazal said regarding the human body, "I and my animal eat from the same source."^[1] Animals and human beings have mostly the same physical properties.

Of course, there are still physical differences. There are physical differences between animals as well. But the basic structure of the human body bears the same physical characteristics as that of animals.

Therefore, being that we have a physical body in us right now, just as an animal cannot achieve absolute unity, so does our physical body not allow for us to have absolute unity, in our marriages.

And we find in *halachah* as well that our physical unity in marriage is never total. Before the sin, there was no *tum'ah* (ritual impurity), and after the sin, Chavah's curse was that she will have to endure the impurity of *niddah* (menstruation). The concept of *niddah* does not allow for a husband and wife to always have physical connection. Uniting on a physical level is not always possible, so even when they do unite on a physical level, it can never be absolute, because its entire essence is temporary.

How, then, can a couple have complete unity (both with themselves, and then towards others)? It can be only done through their *neshamos* (Divine souls).

Unity After the Sin: Body and Soul

Based on the above, we can now understand that the purpose of marriage, which is to "become one", is essentially about achieving *achdus*, to unify. If we attempt *achdus* unity with our spouse entirely through the physical body, there is no possibility of ever getting to the purpose of marriage. But if we make sure to add the dimension of "*neshamah*" into our marriage, besides for the physical aspects which are involved - through that, we create for ourselves a tool which will allow us to build unity through it.

This does not mean that having a physical relationship alone never brings any *achdus*. There can definitely be a revelation of *achdus* there, because even animals can unite, and the Snake as well wanted to unify with Chavah. But such a unity is based on the force of evil in the world, the *Sitra Achara* (Evil Side of Impurity), which begins with unity and ends in separation. (When it comes to the side of holiness, it works the opposite way: at first there is separateness, and then we can unify the separateness.)

Through the physical body alone, there can never be absolute unity with another. Thus, if one bases his marriage through a bodily perspective, there will never be true unity and connection in his home. He might try very hard to be a good husband, and he might have wonderful thoughts all the time about his spouse, and he might even do everything possible which his body is capable of doing - but it will all be fruitless. It is because he is attempting something that cannot be done.

But if a person makes sure to use the *neshamah* (soul) in his marriage, he will have a basis for achieving *achdus* in his marriage. The soul is all one unit; at its deepest level, the soul is called "*Yechidah*", which means "individual", for it is all one unit. Through it, one can unify with his spouse.

We must emphasize here that the point is **not** to live entirely through the *neshamah* and to ignore the physical aspect. This cannot be done now, for we are not on the level of Adam before the sin when he lived in Gan Eden. We live on This World, and we are a soul within a body, so we live a double kind of existence: soul and body. **It is necessary for one to connect with his spouse both through the soul as well as through the body.** It is not possible in our current state to achieve a union of souls alone.

But the other extreme, to unify only through the body alone and to ignore the *neshamah*, is not either a feasible option. It would resemble an animal's union. There would be no revelation of unity at all, in such a connection.

We will now explain the soul connection one needs in marriage.

“A Man And Woman, If They Merit It - The Shechinah Dwells Between Them”

The words of Chazal are well-known: “A man and woman, if they merit it, the *Shechinah* (the presence of G-d) dwells between them.”^[2] The Hebrew word for “man” is “*ish*”, which contains the word “*aish*”, fire, and the word for “woman” is *ishah*, which also contains the word *aish*\fire. A man has the letter *yud* in his name, and a woman has the letter *hey* in her name. The letters *yud* and *hey*, together, form a name of Hashem, representing the *Shechinah*.

This famous statement of Chazal is usually said over in a negative way: If they do not have the name of Hashem between them, they are missing the letters *yud* and *hey*, and they are left with nothing but *aish* and *aish*, fire and fire. This is in line with the rest of the statement of Chazal, that “If they do not merit it, a fire destroys them” – their marriage will be destroyed. This is a true interpretation, but let us instead focus on a positive dimension of this statement in Chazal.

Of Hashem it is written, “*For Hashem, your G-d, is a fire that consumes.*”^[3] There is a negative connotation of fire, and there is also a positive connotation of fire; we will explain this.

The Sages say that when a husband and wife merit it, they have the *Shechinah*; the superficial meaning of this is that it is a great merit for them when they have *Shechinah* in their home. But the inner meaning of it is that the *Shechinah* will connect them together. Not only have they merited the *Shechinah* (which, in and of itself, is obviously a great thing), but they have merited to purify themselves internally, and that is why the *Shechinah* can come into their home and connect them together.

The converse is true is as well: if they do not have the *Shechinah* between them, *chas v'shalom*, there is no connection.

If the marital bond and the *Shechinah* would not be two interdependent matters of each other, then husband and wife would be connected to each other regardless if there is *Shechinah* or not in their home. But since their whole bond can only come when there is *Shechinah* between them, because it is the *Shechinah* which connects them, their connection is dependent on *Shechinah*. An absence of *Shechinah*, *chas v'shalom*, will mean that there is a lack of connection between them.

The connection which the *Shechinah* forms between husband and wife is obviously a connection of souls, not a connection of two physical bodies. When the husband is like a “fire” and the wife is like a “fire” - when they are both living through their souls - then there will be *Shechinah* between them, enabling them to connect.

Thus, being that all Jewish souls are a “portion of G-d above”; and since “*Hashem is a fire that consumes*”, the souls of both man and woman bear a resemblance to this “fire”. When they are like a

“fire” together [when they both live through their souls and not through their bodies] – the “light” (*ohr*) of their fire will be able to settle upon its “vessel” (*kli*). But if they won’t resemble this “fire” and they are just living a bodily kind of existence, they do not become a “vessel” that can hold onto the “fire” of Hashem.

The Role of Physicality In Marriage

Thus, the marital bond between husband and wife must emanate from a connection of *neshamah* (Divine soul) between them. However, the **nature of their Divine connection is revealed as well through the reality of the physical body.**

There is a concept of shining the light of the soul onto the physical body, in which the physical body is infused with the spiritual reality of the soul; there is also a concept of using our physical body to get through to the soul. But in whichever way we take, there must always be a degree of *neshamah* (soul) between husband and wife in order for the marital bond to be formed.

When we say that the physical connection alone does not form a connection and that only their souls can form a connection with each other, this is not to be understood in the same way we understand that fire and water cannot be united, in contrast to magnets which are pulled towards each other. Rather, their two souls are each a “portion of G-d above”, each of their souls are made of the “*Yechidah*” in their souls which allows for unity. The physical body, however, is a product of the Snake’s jealousy, which resulted in disparity, and that is why it cannot create unity.

Thus, the bond between husband and wife must be formed through the proper root of their connection, from their *neshamos*, from the inner source of “*ayin*”. If they have revealed the root, they can reveal *achdus* (unity) between them. If the root never becomes revealed, that *achdus* between their *neshamos* cannot become revealed either.

So we can now understand, clearly, that the *achdus* with which we want to build our home with, has a root, as well as branches, to it. The root of the *achdus* is because all souls are united, being that all souls are “a portion of G-d above”. The branch of the *achdus* is when this unity is manifested even in the physical union. But it is the final of the branches; if the “root” has never been accessed yet, one cannot get to the “branches.”

Let us now focus, then, firstly on how the root of *achdus* can be accessed and allow itself to shine in marriage. After explaining that point, we will continue, with Hashem’s help, to explain the details that branch out from this - all the way until the ‘final’ branch.

The Five ‘Partners’ In Marriage

In the opening words of this chapter, we said that before a man gets married, he has two “partners” to deal with: his body and his soul. After he gets married, now there are four “partners” – his body, his soul, his wife’s body, and his wife’s soul. And even if we look deeper, we can see that there is really a ‘fifth’ partner: *HaKadosh Baruch Hu*, Who connects their souls together. As we explained before, the *Shechinah* is what connects the souls of husband and wife together; this refers to *HaKadosh Baruch Hu*.

As we know, when you have a business partnership of five partners, one of the partners is not able to sign on a deal without the consent of his other partners. All of the partners have to be given equal ownership; there is not one of them who is completely in charge. The five partners must have a meeting together and come to an agreement before anything in the business is decided between them. If three of them decides one way and two of them do not agree, perhaps the majority will override the minority and then it is decided what to do, but the point is, that in a partnership, they

must all involve each other.

Compare this to the “partnership” of marriage, in which you also have “five partners”: the two souls of husband and wife, their two bodies, and Hashem. What happens when their two souls and the will of Hashem are not in agreement with the desire of their two bodies? The “majority” should win – the will of their two souls, together with the will of Hashem, should be the deciding factor over the will of their bodies, being that it is three against two. This “partnership” in marriage must be acknowledged.

In day-to-day life, **before** a person gets married, he is dealing with the desires of his body, versus the desires of his soul. A person needs to realize that he has two minds going on within his head! Before he decides to act a certain way, he must discern what his body wants and what his soul wants, and then decide between the two of them.

If a person only thinks he has one mind, then either he thinks he is a body without a soul, or a soul without a body. And usually what happens is that he will decide upon what his body wants.

The correct approach is for one to acknowledge both the needs of his body and his soul, the two “heads” which disagree with each other – and then decide which of them takes precedence right now.

This is the meaning behind the words of Chazal that “With the righteous, their good inclination (their soul/spirituality) rules them”, whereas “With the wicked, their evil inclination (their physical desires) rule them.” And when it comes to “the *beinonim* (the average people), both inclinations rule them”[\[4\]](#); meaning, with the average person, both the soul and the body are acknowledged.

In other words, one kind of person is mainly dominated by his soul, and his physical body subordinates itself to the will of the soul. These are represented by the righteous. By them, their ‘partnership’ can be seen as entirely owned by one owner: the soul. When it comes to the wicked, it is the opposite: their soul is enslaved to their physical body. Their ‘partnership’ is also ruled by one owner: the body.

The average person, however, has to deal with both body and soul as equal forces. It is always our *avodah* to acknowledge the view of both ‘partners’ within us – our body and our soul[\[5\]](#) – and to see what they are each “saying”. That’s all concerning *before* a person gets married. But when a person gets married, there are now five ‘partners’ to contend with!

Practically Applying This Concept

This might sound absurd when a person first hears this concept. Let us try to conceptualize this with the following practical example.

Let’s say a couple is deciding if they should buy a bookcase. They are sitting and thinking: “Should we buy it? How much is it worth it for us to spend on it?” Let’s think about this: How many viewpoints are going on here? It appears that there are only two opinions – that of the husband, and that of the wife’s. It does not seem like there are four or five opinions involved in this.

This is how it really should be (of course, you won’t find any couple doing this, because nobody is used to this kind of thinking):

(1) Firstly, the husband could think to himself, “What does my wife’s *neshamah* want – to have this bookcase, or not to have this bookcase? And what does her body want – does it want the bookcase, or not?”

(2) Then, he can think, “What does my *neshamah* want – to buy this bookcase or not? And what does

my body want?"

(3) Then, he should decide between those four opinions: if they should buy the bookcase or not.

(4) Then he can think the following (and in fact, he really should have thought about this first):
"What does Hashem want from both of us in this situation?"

In fact, two *neshamos* do not always agree, even when it comes to spiritual matters. The *neshamah* of the husband might want one thing, while the *neshamah* of the wife wants something else. Just as their physical needs differ and they can clash with each other, so it is possible for each of their *neshamos* to have different needs that are in contradiction with each other.

For example, in a case where one of the spouses needs to live a more comfortable lifestyle than the other and needs to spend some more money to make this happen, and the other spouse needs to live frugally, their soul needs can clash. How? If the one who needs a comfortable lifestyle is depressed, and he needs to spend some more money to buy certain things that will take him out of his depression, this is a soul need which clashes with the need of the other spouse, who needs to live frugally.

Here is another example that is more common on a day-to-day basis: If they both want to go on a vacation together. The wife might feel that it's not worth it to take a vacation and leave the house, because she does not feel that much of a need to get out; she feels a sense of freedom on a daily basis. Therefore, she feels that going on a vacation will be detrimental to her soul. The husband, though, might feel a little sad for whatever reason, and thus he feels a need to get out of the house a little and go somewhere, so he feels that going on a vacation will uplift his soul and make him feel more refreshed, which will enable him to shake off his stress and thus come to serve Hashem better.

If we want to define what marriage involves, it is this: there are always five "partners" that need to be dealt with in their decisions! First it should feel clear to them that there are always these five "partners" involved, and then it should be figured out what each "partner" is saying. Then we need to see how we can come to a decision. But first, it should be clear to them what each opinion is saying.

Getting Used To Thinking Before Acting

To illustrate, before a person embarks on any business venture, he first thinks about what possible gains or losses can incur. He thinks into it and takes the matter apart, and then he decides what to do. When it comes to spirituality as well, we also need to weigh out the scenario beforehand: "Think of the gain of a *mitzvah* versus the reward, and think of the gain of a sin versus its loss."[\[6\]](#)

With most people, they think only about what physical gain they will have in something. If a person is a bit spiritual, he also thinks about some of the things that his soul wants: To learn Torah, to do a *mitzvah*, and to *chessed*. These things are obviously attributed to the desires that come from the *neshamah*. But when it comes to the mundane things we do, such as eating, drinking, sleeping, and other physical needs, we usually do not connect these things with the *neshamah*.

But such a mindset is really splitting apart one's identity. This is because our *neshamah* cannot live on its own without the body; and the body cannot be alive without our *neshamah* in it. If the body and soul separate for even a moment, there is death. We are always living with both our body and soul. Sometimes our soul dominates and sometimes our body dominates, but we are always living with both.

So when a person is about to do a *mitzvah*, he should clarify to himself: "Which part of me is going to do the *mitzvah* - my body, or my soul?"

The Kotzker Rebbe zt"l told one of his *chassidim*: "When you get up in the morning, don't run to daven. First, think to yourself the following: Maybe it's better if I eat now? Why shouldn't I eat before davening? Does my *neshamah* want me to first *daven* and then eat, or the other way around? And what does my body want to do?"

It is to learn to recognize what your *neshamah* wants and what your body wants, and decide which of them will be in control. His point was that a person first needs to become aware of what's going on inside himself, so that he can have a clear perspective.

Decisions From Thought

When a person is not clear about what is going on inside himself, he lives with deep internal contradictions, and he will go into marriage like that as well. When the spouses are not clear what each of them wants, destruction ensues.

In worse scenarios, the spouses each get used to making major decisions without consulting the other. In some cases, there are even husbands who take all of their savings and invested it into stocks, and the deal cannot be taken back. He comes home and informs his spouse of his grand new deal he has just struck...

Those are more extreme examples that are not so common in most marriage. But what is more common is, when the spouses make various small decisions without each other. Even though the decisions are not that major, the problem is that the spouse has made the decision on his\her own without including the other spouse.

Of course, this cannot mean that every single last decision must be made by both of them together. Certainly he can make his own decisions when it comes to private matters that are not relevant to both of them. But if it is about something that is relevant to both of them, it is unfair to the other spouse if one of the spouses makes a decision without including the other.

True, it's not always easy to enjoin the other in decisions. Many times it is difficult to include the other in a decision. But the alternative is worse. If he decides everything by himself and he never includes his spouse in his decisions, this will create difficulty between them - no less of a problem to deal with than if he were to include the other in his decisions.

Therefore, before one is married, he has to already have gotten used to discerning his body needs and his soul needs in act, before he engages in an act. Otherwise, it will be very hard when he is married to suddenly learn how to include his spouse in his decisions. He hasn't even learned how to make decisions with himself, because he is not used to thinking before he does something. Without getting used to thinking before a person acts, he sees something in the store and immediately buys it, as soon as he falls in love with the item he is buying.

A large cause for marital discord, especially in the beginning years of marriage (and later on as well), stems from the bad habit of not including the other spouse, when it comes to making decisions.

Here is an example: The husband, let's say, was used to always spending his money on whatever he liked, as long as he had the money; whether it was his parents' spending money they gave to him, or from some other source he received it from. He always felt, "I decide what to do with my money. If I want to take a vacation, I go; if not, I don't go. If I want to buy something I want, I buy it. If I don't want it then I don't buy it." He gets married and suddenly he realizes that now he has to include another opinion in his financial situations,

So if a person wasn't used to thinking before he does things, he will have a very hard time in marriage

deciding between his and his wife's interests, which, as we explained, are really four opinions going on at once; including a fifth opinion [asking themselves what Hashem wants from them]. It is very hard to suddenly make this adjustment! But if one was already used to thinking before he did things before he got married [and he can still train himself to do so after he is married], then he can be successful.

Of course, decisions in marriage can still be more difficult than the decisions you made before you were married, when you only had to deal with your body and soul alone, and not the body and soul of another. But it will still be much easier to handle, when you have become used to thinking before you do something and discerning your own body and soul needs in the act.

Incorporating Body and Soul Into Marriage

Now we will need to explain the following point which must be made clear: When we speak about living with the *neshamah*, we must clearly define what this means.

There are two levels: to actually live with the *neshamah* revealed in your life, or to aspire for it. When a person actually lives with his *neshamah* in his life, it is because he has revealed it. He is someone who is able to live with both body and soul incorporated into his life. But most people have not actually reached their *neshamah*, and when they do identify with their *neshamah*, it is rather a desire and aspiration to live with it: "What does my *neshamah* want? How can I reveal it more...?"

There are two different orientations in life with which we can live: the path of the physical body, and the path of the *neshamah*. The body is tangible and revealed to us, so we identify with it clearly. But the soul seems to be something esoteric, something that seems more like a source of aspiration in life.

Therefore, in order to reveal it more, one needs to get used to thinking about both his body and soul, before he is about to do something. [To start, he should try this once or twice a day, and then slowly increase this practice]. Before he is about to do something, he should think: "What does the body want and what does the soul want?" Then he should extend this into marriage: "What does my body and soul want, and what does the body and soul of my wife want?" Then he needs to think (or he can do this as the first stage): "What does Hashem want me to do?"

By getting used to this, a husband and wife can slowly begin to see that there are always "five partners" involved in all of their acts. This is how a person harmonizes the body and soul - both with himself and with his marriage.

When we reflect, we can discover that all of us really know that we have a soul. We all know that our spouse as well has a body and soul. It is just that we tangibly feel our bodies, because it can be seen, whereas our souls are invisible. Therefore, the soul seems like something esoteric to us, and it seems like we cannot relate to it on a day-to-day basis - in our own selves, and surely with how we view our spouse.

Thus, the first idea we need to acquire, in order to counter our initial perception, is to become aware that there are always five "partners" in our marriage. Upon that awareness we can then act practically upon that knowledge.

Seeking Unity With The Soul of Your Spouse

As we said previously, marriage includes four beings - two bodies and two souls.

We can see clearly that there are two bodies coming together in marriage: A man decides he will go

marry a certain woman. He has certain criteria he is looking for in a spouse with regards to her physical appearance. Indeed, our Sages said that it is forbidden for a man to marry a woman until he has first seen her, lest he find something unattractive about her appearance and then be repulsed by her. According to *halacha*, he must see her before he marries her, so that she should be beloved to him; he needs to feel like he is compatible with her.

After he marries her, a husband will still have certain criteria he is looking for in his wife. He usually is interested in what he would like from her, according to what suits his nature. We are all familiar with this.

But since their union will be including two souls that are coming together, they will also need to unify their souls together. When it comes to unity between two souls, there is what to look for before marriage, as well as after the marriage, as follows.

Before marriage, when a person is looking for his prospective match, he\she needs to find a spouse that will “be on the same page” when it comes to *ruchniyus* (spirituality). This cannot be clearly spelled out, because every person thinks differently; Chazal say that “Just as all faces are all different from each other, so are all ways of thinking different from each other.” There is no such thing as two people who are the same exact in their level of *ruchniyus*. But in order to be married with each other, they must be able to think along the same lines.

It is a misconception when people think that as long as the other one feels “attractive” to you, then he\she must be “the right one”. Rather, what is needed in finding the right one is to see if the other one shares a similar kind of thinking to you.

A similar misconception that people have today is that they think that as long as the other one is physically attractive, even if he\she doesn’t think like you at all, it can work. The reason why people make this mistake is because they think that marriage is a union of two physical bodies alone.

If they would be aware that there is more to marriage than just the physical attraction, that there is something more inner and deeper than this, they would have the correct perspective. Although there are always disagreements between every couple, they can know very well that the basis of their marriage is still centered around achieving unity with each other, and that is what will glue them together.

Achdus in marriage is not some esoteric concept that cannot be made practical. It is the basis of marriage which is expressed through their everyday interactions. To illustrate, when a person learns how to become an electrician or a carpenter, if he wants to make a livelihood from this, it is not enough if he just has the title. In order for him to make money, he has to actively use his skills, every day. So too, when it comes to the unity between two spouses, it exists in potential; the only issue is, if it is actively expressing itself on a daily basis.

We are familiar with the common scenario that goes on in many homes: it is after a long day of hard work. The job takes up most of the day and keeps a person busy with it. He comes home tired and drained from the whole day, and he would like to relax. If he’s a “good husband”, he makes sure to buy something special in the store for his wife before he comes home, and then he eases up the atmosphere in the home, so that can bond with his spouse on a physical and emotional level, according to his natural abilities. This is a wonderful thing, and we do not mean to invalidate it, G-d forbid; but we must remember that unity in marriage is not created solely through the physical aspect. It must also involve a union of their souls.

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.

Incorporating Spirituality Into Practical Life

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 a couple must only talk about *ruchniyus* (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.'

Rabbi Akiva Eiger^[7] told over after his wife was *niftar*, that he would speak with her about spiritual matters, from early in the night all the way through midnight.

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.

In Conclusion

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 being affected by the Snake's jealousy, the body will be able to take on the light of the soul, which is the source of unity.

By contrast, if marriage is focused solely on the physical aspects, it becomes a connection that will lead to disparity between them, as is the nature of physicality. Such a marriage can never succeed.

It is our hope that the words here are slowly receiving more clarity. As we said earlier, we first planned to address the roots of marriage, and then we will get to explain the 'branches', and hopefully, we will cover all of the 'branches'.

[1] End of Talmud Bavli: Tractate Kiddushin

[2] Sotah 17a

[3] Devarim 2:24

[4] Berachos 61b

[5] Editor's Note: The source of this is the *sefer Tanya*, in which it is explained that each Jew needs to view himself as a *beinoni*, the level in between the righteous and the wicked; one who recognizes that he needs to deal with his good and evil inclinations as equally opposing forces.

[6] Avos 2:1

[7] One of the greatest scholars and Torah leader of the 17th century

Source: <https://bilvavi.net/english/getting-know-your-home-003-unifying-body-and-soul-marriage>