



Getting to Know Your Family - 07 Soul Perspective In Marriage

Body and Soul

In the previous chapter we explained that in every marriage, there are two layers to the relationship; let us try to understand it deeper.

The lower aspect of the relationship, as the Torah writes, is called "*flesh of my flesh*", which alludes to the physical aspect of the relationship, the "body" part of the marriage. The higher aspect of the relationship is called "*bone of my bones*" and it refers to the spiritual aspect of their relationship, the "soul" in the marriage. Husband and wife are bonded together in two ways - through their body and through their soul.

Thus, the body has its way of connection to another, and the soul has its form of connecting. The body has its perspective, and the soul has its perspective. What is the difference between the body's perspective and the soul's perspective? How do we view through the body and how do we view through the soul?

The body's perspective is: The husband was born on a certain date of the year, in a certain city, and the wife was born on her respective date of birth and place of birth; and they met at a certain point and got married. But the perspective of the soul is about their "spiritual age" - how much they have matured in life.

If we ask a person "When were you born?" what does he answer? The body will answer, "I was born on so and so." Actually, we were all born on the 25th of Elul. The Sages said that Hashem created the world on the 25th of Elul. That is the soul's perspective.

Of course, you have a birthday and a place you were born in. But you are really much older than that. Although "the years of a man are seventy", that is only your body's lifespan. You go on to lives much more than that. That is the soul's perspective on things [it sees beyond the physical].

We will explain this concept more, but this is the general outline of the concept: our body just sees this physical life we are living in, while the soul sees beyond physical life.

Gaining A Soul Perspective On Life

To illustrate further, every day, there are people who die. A person lives, hopefully, to get to his ripe seventies and perhaps further, and then one day, he takes leave of the world, as is the way of the world. His life is over, right?

Now let's view this with a different perspective. After 70 or 80 years, when an old man is likely to die - is that the end? Or does he continue to exist? He is actually beginning a whole new level of existence!

If we think about it deeply, it's amazing how people are ignoring this reality. An old man is weak, he needs to be fed and he needs assistance, but when he dies and his soul leaves his body, he is now living a different existence. He has to go through many stages until he can get to his final reward in the World To Come. He gets escorted by the angel, he first makes a stop by his grave, then he goes to the Heavenly Court – a whole new chapter in his life is awaiting him there.

If one lived a totally “body”-kind of life, then it can be really said of him, “*Baruch Dayan Emes.*” They try to find people who will say nice *hespedim* (eulogies) about him. Then people go on with their life as usual.

If we think simply that our life ends with death, that will mean that even our present life is not being lived correctly.

Obviously, people do not like to think about this, because it's a bit scary, even very scary. But it's a reality. Adam HaRishon – is he alive still? No, he is not here anymore. Avraham Avinu – is he alive? No. Are Yitzchok and Yaakov alive? No, they are also not here anymore. What about you and I? Will any of us be here forever? If Moshiach comes in your lifetime, perhaps, because according to one opinion in the Sages, after Moshiach there will be no more death. (The other opinion in the Sages is that even after Moshiach there will be death). All of us will have to leave this place at some point.

The body's perspective is that we are born on a certain day, and we live this life as it is, unaware of the Next World. The Zohar says that “a person is on this world and thinks that's is his world, and that he will be here forever”. We all know we are going to the Next World. But most people are not living with that knowledge on a daily basis.

Even when people are by a funeral, they still are pursuing their worldly desires. How many cellphones are ringing in the middle of a funeral? Life just goes on as usual.

We need to acquire the soul's perspective. One who doesn't have it only lives the present moment, and never thinks about the past or future. He knows about the past or future, but he is not consciously aware of it. If one has no past or future that he thinks about, he has no present moment either – it can be said of him that he lives totally in a total, blissful imagination.

Seeing Beyond The Current Lifetime

We go through many life experiences, but how much of it do we really experience? The body's perspective does not offer us perspectives that contain any real experiences, only fantasy-like perceptions.

The Mishnah in Avos says, “Know from where you come, and to where you are going, and before Whom you will give an accounting.” This shows us that in order to live correctly in the present, we need to think about past and future.

If someone gets married without ever thinking about past or future, he lives totally in fantasy. Nothing can be built on a fantasy, so the home cannot be built when one lives a fantasy kind of life. It's like living in a dream – a person wakes up from it and then realizes that he has nothing from it. This is just a *moshol* (parable) of course, but it's a very true *moshol*.

One who lives without any sense of past or future, is experiencing the present through a fantasy. To illustrate, one cannot come in the middle of a *sugya* and expect to understand it, because he hasn't seen what came before it.

How many times did your “I” exist? How many lifetimes did you go through? You have been to Gan

Eden and back. We have gone through previous lifetimes, so we have each gone through millions of experiences. How many homes have each of us been through? A lot more than the amount of homes you've gone through than in your current lifetime! We've gone through many lifetimes until the current year of 5774. But most people, even though they know about these concepts, only think about their current life.

Once we gain a perspective of our soul, we begin to see ourselves in a whole different light. Let's return to discussing our topic, marriage: How many times do you get married?

From the body's perspective, this is a ludicrous question; the body's perspective is that if we get married once, we only experience marriage once. But from our soul's perspective, this is not a question. Everything is an experience, and you can keep experiencing something again and again.

One who has a body perspective doesn't care about any of these ideas, even if he hears about them. Even if he knows about these concepts, he doesn't think about it, it makes no difference in his life. But one who lives life through a soul perspective lives deeply with these concepts.

Taking this further, the wife and children you have now in your lifetime are not only the wife and children you had. But people like to think that the wife and children they know of is the only wife and children they ever had: "This is my wife. These are my children." (Some people have had more than one wife in their lifetime). But this current lifetime you live in is just one part of your story! The wife and children you have now might not even be similar to your soul root. The apartment, the *kolel*, the *chavrusa* were all different in the last lifetime.

The inner perspective on your life is to view your life as a part of your path you are on. For example, if you fly to America and you make a stopover in England, you are aware that England is only part of your journey; you don't consider yourself to be living in England for the little amount of time you are there.

When Adam ate from the *Eitz HaDaas*, sin entered mankind, and ever since then we have gone through and passed through many experiences. The word for "sin" is *aveirah*, from the word *avar*, to pass through; ever since the first sin, we have become people who are always passing through, from place to place. But people think that they are here forever wherever they are right now.

This is a perspective of the soul, as it lives in Gan Eden, as it is on its journey here on this world. If we see through the soul's perspective towards life, our whole view will change for the better, including our marriage.

Identifying With The Pain of the Newborn

Here is another example of the concept. When a baby is born, we say "Mazal Tov". We are happy. Why are we happy when a baby is born? Don't Chazal say that we were born by force? This baby didn't want to come here! Why are we happy for the baby? This is something to think about!

So when we go to a *bris*, we shouldn't just be happy for the baby; we should identify with the pain of the baby, because he was forced to come down here. He was learning Torah with the angel and then he was forced to come out of the womb. Just like we understand that going to a funeral is about sharing in another's pain – the pain of the deceased – so can we have this soul perspective when it comes to how we view the birth of a newborn, that we need to identify with his pain as well.

These are some examples of having a soul perspective.

Weddings Today

When a person lives life through a bodily perspective and not through a soul perspective, the building of his home will also be built from a “body” perspective.

To illustrate, when he gets engaged (*Baruch Hashem*), he gets wedding gifts, a new wardrobe, an apartment, furniture, home appliances (and today the standard has become that you also need a washing machine, drier, and phones) – and a person thinks that because of this, he has his home set up! This is called “preparing for the wedding”! And then the day of the wedding, a photographer comes and takes pictures of the *chosson* and *kallah* posing together in the streets, and people thinking this is how a wedding is supposed to look like.

In simple words: **this is a totally non-Jewish lifestyle!** Weddings today are like non-Jewish weddings! There are almost no more “Jewish” weddings anymore. It looks totally non-Jewish: the style of the wedding, the music, the photography, everything. This is all a “body”-oriented kind of life!

Entire months are being spent [during the engagement] are spent on wedding preparations that are all about the body, how to gratify the body and make it more presentable and honorable; each to his own. And then he starts his Jewish home which he calls a “*bayis neeman b’Yisrael*” (faithful Jewish home). But it is not in the way that a Jew is supposed to live like. If one wants to have a true Jewish home, it will not happen if he runs his lifestyle and mentalities in life like a non-Jew.

If we take a look at a lot of areas in our life – our clothing, our spending, our phones (even those with a “*hechsher*”), we can see that it’s all built on non-Jewish mentalities.

Guidance In Intimacy Matters

Even worse is much of the guidance today given before marriage about matters of intimacy, which is supposed to be holy; today, it is being drawn from the non-Jewish perspectives towards life. Holiness in a Jewish home cannot be built in this way. Even if it’s also spiced with the words of Chazal about these matters and it is then explained with inner meaning, the guidance is entirely based on the non-Jewish approach, which focuses on gratification of the body, nothing to do with the *neshamah*.

In Egypt, they had “bricks and mortar”, which represents materialism. They also had a miracle there that six children were being born at once, because their children were being born with holiness, even though they were under all the “bricks and mortar”. But today, the physicality of marriage has become like the “bricks and mortar” alone, with nothing else involved other than materialism, and this cannot produce children born in holiness.

We need to look at life always through our *neshamah*’s perspective, to live a life of the *neshamah*.

Extravagance - A Contradiction To A True Jewish Home

Weddings today are costing between \$20,000 to \$50,000 dollars. There are people in America making \$200,000 weddings, an event which lasts for one night. Now there are even weddings which go on into the morning. That exile has now come here [to Eretz Yisrael]. People are asked why they spent so much on making a *chasunah*, and the answer is: “It’s only once in my *life* that I get to rejoice like this.” But it’s not one time in a person’s *life* – it’s like a time of *death* to the person!

We need to live life through our *neshamah*, not through our body and then everything will look different. Of course, we are not entirely souls living in Gan Eden. We have a body in us too. But we need to live a life that resembles Gan Eden at least a little bit, and we can.

One who wants to live a ‘body’ kind of life and also have a *bayis ne’eman b’yisrael*, is living a contradiction. It does not go together.

The Mature Perspective To Have On Marriage

We live in this world, which is physical. But we must still have the proper perspective towards life. If one looks at marriage as a union between two souls, how can he live a life in which the soul is not present?

A person might think that before he gets married he can live a body kind of life and not have to work on himself to become more spiritual, and that after he gets married he will change and become more spiritual, and that he will begin to feel some *ruchniyus* (spirituality) after he's finished *Sheva Berachos*. This is the way of life which many people, even those who learn in yeshivah, set up for themselves. It is all a 'body' kind of life.

But if you look at life through *neshamah*, you look at everything in your life as stages that you need to go through. All areas of marriage are stages that you need to go through in life.

Rav Dessler zt"l noticed that young people are excited by weddings, while old people are not. It is because young people view the wedding as the most major event of life, so they get all excited about it. But old people have the truer perspective: they have already gone through life, so they look at marriage and realize that it was just another stage in their life. It was not everything and all that there is to life. Young people cannot relate to this.

Today in particular we see a lot of excitement about weddings in young people. People think that the wedding is the "peak" of a person's life. But it is just the beginning! Life really begins after that! The wedding is rather a stage to go through.

A *chosson* during *Sheva Berachos* is called a *melech*, a king. When the wedding is over, the *chosson* stops being a *melech*, and he instead becomes an *eved* (slave)! And he still wants to be a *melech*, even though he has lost his status...He has nothing left of his wedding.

Why? Because he thought that he had reached the apex of life with his wedding. It's well-known that the wedding is not the highest point of your life.

If one marries with the "soul" perspective and not the "body" perspective, he knows that everything he goes through is a stage. It should always be, "*Gam zeh yaavor*" - "This, too, shall pass." You start out in life as a baby, then you grow up as a child, then you are in yeshivah, then you get married, and after you get married, there are more stages to go through. They are all stages of life. So the wedding should not be viewed as the peak of your life.

In marriages today, can it be said that the husband and wife will be together in Gan Eden...? Many people wish that they won't be!

When one has the proper view towards what he goes through his life, everything will look different.

In Conclusion

The words here were not just advice. It is a change of mindset, and it is fundamental to all of life. When one has the soul perspective towards life, his marriage will change for the better. Even going to buying a table for the home will feel different, because a person will know clearly why he is buying it.

One who doesn't have a soul perspective towards life will have a very hard time making the transition to the Next World after his life ends. One has to already get used to the soul perspective here on This World. And with that, his whole outlook towards life will change totally.

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