

GRIEVING

DEALING WITH LOSS

In *Parashas Chayei Sarah*, Avraham *Avinu* mourns Sarah and eulogizes her. He had spent a large part of his life together with Sarah, and the time had now come for Sarah to leave the world. It was now time for them to part ways, and there was eulogizing and weeping over her.

We have no comprehension of the greatness of Avraham *Avinu*,

who is called the “great man amongst giants.” But by the law of nature which Hashem has decreed upon mankind, as a result of the first sin, there are times of our life where we enjoy connection with others, and at a certain point, there comes a parting of the ways, and we see the root of this concept from the fact that Avraham eulogized and wept

over the loss of Sarah. In our own life, we need to reflect truthfully: How must we view loss? How should we react to losing our loved ones and our close friends? At some point, we all have to deal with loss, where there is a disconnection from the other whom we were close with.

EXTERNAL LOSS AND INTERNAL LOSS

There are external and inner kinds of loss.

External loss is when we lose an object or possession that was valuable to us. Some people take these losses very hard, if it was something that was very dear to the person. Sometimes people have a hard time leaving behind the house that they liked

so much. A teenager might feel homesick when he has to leave town for *yeshiva* and he misses the home and the family. Going deeper, sometimes a person has to leave behind friends with whom he was close with.

But the most painful losses we go through, as we see from *Parashas Chayei Sarah*, are the

loss of a close relative. Losing a father or mother makes a person feel somewhat lonely, for the parent has gone away, and the child is left here on this world, apart from the parent who has gone.

Let us analyze the root of this and see the proper attitude we need to have towards this.

RELATIONSHIPS ARE NOT FOREVER

There are all kinds of connection we have on this world. We start out in life as children, where our first connections with people are towards our parents and our siblings. At that point, however, we have no *daas* (mature understanding) to be aware of these connections. We are born into these connections, but we are not initially aware of the connection. When a loss of a loved one finally arrives, it can hit a person very

hard. But there are other connections which we choose to enter. When we get older and we gain some *daas*, we are aware of the force of connection to others. We think of how to enter into these relationships.

In any connection to another that we enter, we must know that all of these connections are temporary. We must first realize that just as we enter into a rela-

tionship, so will we have to take leave of the relationship one day.

This thought needs to come before taking the action of entering the relationship. If a person has already begun the relationship without being aware that it is not forever, that is already his first mistake. The sensible way to enter into a relationship - whether it is an external connection, such as moving into a house or

buying new clothes, or some other possession, or whether it is an internal connection, such as our friends and family – we must be aware, to start out with, that just as there can be connection, so can there be disconnection. Sometimes a relationship ends

forcibly, and sometimes it ends willingly. But any connection\relationship we enter is not forever. How much time will the connection last? Usually, we do not know how long. We usually cannot predict when it will end. But what we do know is that it is

not forever. The time will come one day when the relationship or connection will end. This awareness applies to one who has become a *bar daas* (sensible, thinking person) who can reflect and understand this.

OUR PRIMARY SOURCES OF CONNECTION: TO HASHEM, TO TORAH, AND TO THE INNER SELF

Let us elaborate further upon this point.

Every person needs connection. A true, perfection connection is only attainable with Hashem and with His Torah – for those who merit it. An additional important connection we have on this world is towards our *self*.¹

Some people hear about this concept and they are puzzled: What does it mean to become connected to your *self*? Are our hands chopped off, G-d forbid,

that we need to piece them back together and become more “connected to our *self*”? What does it mean to have a connection with your *self*?

But the answer to this is because we are comprised of a body and a soul, an outer layer and an inner core. The outer layer of our self is more revealed in our life. Our inner layer is hidden from us, when we start life. The more a person has exertion, prayer, and clarity [about his inner world], he enters more with-

in himself, and he finds his true “I”, which is at first very hidden from a person. When one finds his true and pure “I” (which is not a place of selfishness, but a place of selflessness), he discovers a deep connection to himself. This is a constant connection to his actual essence.

These are the true connections one needs to form on this world - a deep connection to Hashem, to His Torah, and a deep connection to oneself.

SUPERFICIAL CONNECTION TO OTHERS VS. GENUINE CONNECTION TO OTHERS

If one does not solidly have these three connections, his power of connection will be drawn outward, towards superficial things which are outside of himself. He might become very connected to the various desires of This World, or even to friends or neighbors, or to his family members – but the quality of the connection he has with others will usually not be genuine. It will instead become a

kind of dependency, where he is hanging onto others in order to have some kind of connection, because he doesn't feel secure within himself. Since he is not anchored enough to Hashem, to Torah, and to his inner self, instead he will connect to that which is outside of him.

The result will be, that when the day comes where he experiences a loss of another whom he

had been close with, he will feel like he cannot continue to exist. He had built his life on a ‘foundation’ that wasn't truthful. He had attached his reason for existence on factors that were outside of his self, and this had become the ‘foundation’ of his life. He becomes dependent on others, on his surroundings, on his friends, or on his family members. When he loses whatever he had attached his existence to

¹ Editor's Note: The Maharal says that there are three relationships we have on this world – man's relationship between himself and Hashem; man's relationship with others; and man's relationship towards himself.

– whether it is a close friend, or a family member – he will feel: “What is my life worth?”

Grieving over the loss of a close friend or beloved family member might feel to the person like a high level of “*ahavas Yisrael*” to the person, but most of the time, it is not actually stemming from *ahavas Yisrael*. It is usually stemming from an absence of a secure, deep connection to Hashem, to Torah, and to his inner self; he replaced this void by connecting to that which is outside of him. It might seem to him like a praiseworthy trait of love for another, but it is usually coming from a deep internal void that he was trying to fill.

In contrast, the proper way for a person to fulfill his need for connection is by having a deep connection *to* himself, and *within* himself; and to be connected to his root, which is Hashem and His Torah. And one also needs to have a deep connection to all other souls in the Jewish people, which is *ahavas Yisrael*. It takes

time and effort to acquire each of these connections, and each of them require a separate discussion. But this is the outline: one needs a deep connection to Hashem, to Torah, and to his inner self.

In order to connect to others, it cannot be based on the recognition and experience of others which we are familiar with. It is not like that at all. True connection to others is only when we have a genuine *ahavas Yisrael* (love for the souls of the Jewish people). **We need to have a love for *Klal Yisrael*, and upon that, we can base our relationships with others.**

The basis of connection we have others must not be based on the fact that the person sits in the same row or bench of the *beis midrash* we learn in, or on the fact that he is our *chavrusa*, etc. These are all external, superficial reasons to love others. Of course, if that leads to an inner connection with another, then the external aspect of the connection

certainly has its place. But the root of our connection to others needs to come from pure *ahavas Yisrael*. This means that one needs to feel connected to the general whole of *Klal Yisrael*, on a collective level, and also to each Jew separately, on the individual level.

When this is the basis, connections with others can be formed, and they will be genuine. Connection to others needs to be securely based on connection with Hashem, Torah, and oneself, and pure *ahavas Yisrael* to others; then our relationships with others can thrive and they are real.

If these conditions are met, the external aspects of our connection to others are then joined with their root; the *nefesh he-behaimis* (the animalistic layer of the soul) and the lower soul² which is contained in the body, is then joined together with the deep and true dimension. That is the true way life is supposed to look like.

WHEN THE CONNECTION IS SEVERED: HOW THERE CAN BE CONSOLATION AMIDST GRIEF

When a person only connected to others superficially, and then he goes through the loss of a parent or a friend, the entire connection will be gone. This leads to great sadness and inconsolable pain. But if one made sure to connect to others through pure *ahavas Yisrael*,

upon experiencing the loss of a loved one, whether it is death or separation from another, the deep connection will continue to exist.

[To explain this on a deeper level], the “garment” of the relationship has been severed, but

not the connection itself. The deep love formed from our *ne-shamah* (Divine Soul) will continue to exist, after the external aspects of the love cease. There will surely be pain, and even great pain, upon the loss of the other person; but the very root of the connection with the oth-

² *nefesh tachtonah* (“lower soul”) – the lowest part of the soul, which is attached to our physical body; it includes our basic emotions.

er will remain intact. As long as a person is not connected to Hashem, Torah, and to his inner self, he will be shaken to the core upon experiences the loss of a loved one.

Only after one feels a connection to Hashem, Torah and to the inner self can one have a genuine connection with others, which does not come from a need for dependency and from an inner void, but from the depths of the soul that he has been connected to from beforehand. Connecting to others needs to stem from that very depth of connection that a person enjoys with Hashem, Torah, and to his own *pnimiyus* (inner world) and the love for every

neshamah in *Klal Yisrael*.

If that is the root of a person's connections, he will be able to enjoy genuine connections and friendships with others, and even when the external aspects of the relationship become weakened, he will still be able to maintain his ability to connect. But even more so, as we are explaining, even the relationship itself to the other will remain.

The external aspect of a relationship also has its place, and it is not to be invalidated; we are not ethereal beings right now living in Heaven, with no physicality. We have physical bodies right now, for our souls are con-

tained in a body as we live here on this earth. Part of our relationships with others includes the external, physical aspect of it, and this is necessary in the relationship. This is especially the case with how we feel close to our parents, which is usually more of a physically related and with less emphasis on a soul connection with them.

But the point being conveyed here is that when we make sure to form a spiritual connection to another, it will always remain, and even when the other takes leave from us, it will not be a total parting of the ways.

ETERNAL CONNECTION WITH ANOTHER

Herein lays the deep perspective towards life.

Avraham came to eulogize Sarah and weep over her. Chazal say that it takes time to grieve, cry, and mourn. But if a person did not yet develop the areas of connection which we explained until now [to Hashem, Torah, to one's own *pnimiyus*, and *ahavas Yisrael* to others] and he is trying to mourn the loss of another, as Avraham did for Sarah – it will be too difficult for a person to digest the pain of the loss.

Avraham cried over Sarah, but it was not like how the average person cries over such a loss. Even as Avraham cried over

the loss of Sarah and he buried her in *Kiryat Arba* in *Chevron*, he was not mourning in the individual sense; it was not simply that Avraham was crying on a 'private' level over the loss of the individual who was "Sarah". Rather, Avraham and Sarah were connected to each from the depths of their *neshamos*, from their innermost. Since that was the quality of their connection, even when Sarah took leave of the world and Avraham had to bury her, it was not simply the end of their relationship. The "garment" of their relationship had ended – the physical parts of their relationship, which were temporary – had now gone.

But their inner connection was formed and it continued to remain.

Even more so, Chazal tell us that Avraham was with Sarah in his lifetime, and then he experienced a temporary absence of Sarah in the years that he survived her (which lasted 10 years), and after Avraham was *niftar*, they were once again together [in Heaven]. Whatever separation occurred between them after Sarah's demise was only temporary. The connection soon returned. Connection to another isn't for this world only – it is also in Heaven; and later it can return on this world as well,

with *techiyas hameisim*³. From the deeper perspective which we are explaining here, when it comes to all of the connections we have on this world with others, if these connections are only on an external\superficial level, they don't return after they are severed. But

if our connections to others were inner and truthful, even if we lose those connections, it is only the outer "garment" of the connection we are losing, and not the connection itself. The loss is only temporary. We may have to wait until *techiyas hameisim* and

Olam HaBa until the connection returns, but it will definitely return, and on a more purified and inner level. Therefore, all of our losses and severed relationships with others are but temporary.

DEEP NECHAMAH (CONSOLATION) DURING MOURNING

There are some people who receive *nechamah* (consolation) over the loss of a loved one when they believe in *techiyas hameisim* (the revival of the deceased), of which it is said, "Awaken and rejoice, those who dwelled in the earth". But from a deeper under-

standing, what gives a person the true *nechamah*? It is only when a person had an inner connection with the other person. The external aspects of the relationship go lost, and the inner aspect of it remains, for it is constant and eternal. When a person realizes

after some time that the inner connection is still there, his soul is calmed from this.

Without reaching this perspective, a person is bereft after a loss, and his pain is inconsolable.

TASTING THE "EITZ HACHAIM" ON THIS WORLD

Ever since Adam ate from the *Eitz HaDaas*, death was decreed upon man. Besides for the curse of death which was now placed on man, there was a more inner kind of damage that came to mankind. Now the world would be a place of *alma d'piruda* – a "world of separation" – not only is there death, but all of our life contains so many forms of severed connection. The sin of Adam caused the greatest pain to come to all of mankind.

How much suffering people go through due to severed relationships with others! The pain is tremendous. Every day, there are severed connections; there

is *pirud*\separation. The *pirud*\separation experienced on this world is one of the deepest forms of pain which the body and soul go through, and all people in the world experience it. The *pirud* that began with the sin of Adam has caused pain, upon pain, upon pain.

But when a person merits a little bit to partake of the "*Eitz HaChaim*" on this world, which contains eternal life – when a person connects to Hashem, Who is "the Almighty, the King, Who lives forever", and when a person connects to the "Torah of life", and when a person connects to the deep part of himself which

is called the "*Chayah*" (vitality)⁴, which is eternal, and when a person connects to the root of the *neshamos* of *Klal Yisrael*, who can never cease (as Chazal say, that "the congregation cannot die") – when one is connected to there, he is partaking of the *Eitz HaChaim* on this world, on some level. An entirely new perspective will be revealed to him, on how he will view connection with others and loss of others.

³ revival of the deceased

⁴ The five parts of the soul (from lowest to highest levels) are called *Nefesh*, *Ruach*, *Neshamah*, *Chayah*, and *Yechidah*; these terms are first mentioned in *Devarim Rabbah* and are explained further in *sefer Nefesh HaChaim*, *Derech HaShem*, *Tanya*, to name a few.

THE PROPER WAY TO GRIEVE

When some people go through a loss, they would rather have *hesech hadaas* (“taking the mind off it”) in order to avoid thinking about the loss, and in this way, they save themselves from experiencing the pain of the loss. But if someone wants to live truthfully, he knows that this is not the attitude to have towards loss. He will not bury his head in the sand. Instead, he is well-prepared for the loss long before it happens, by attaining clarity on how to live. He knows

that dealing with a loss cannot be worked upon as he’s actually going through the loss. Rather, it is about knowing how to connect to others in the first place, long before we wonder about how to grieve over the loss of the connection to the other. When a person connects to others in the right way when they lived, the loss of the other person will be experienced in an elevated manner.

The holy Sage Rabbi Eliezer

HaGadol told his son on his deathbed: “My son, I am going to bliss with Hashem.” His time had come to leave the world, and as he was taking leave of all that was external, his inner connections were strengthening. As he was dying, he became more aware of the bliss he was heading towards. On a similar note, the Sages state that when Avraham was tying his son Yitzchok to the Altar, all of the love that he had for Yitzchok was ready to be given towards Hashem.

USING OUR POWER OF CONNECTION

The power in a person to connect is always intact, and the only question is how we will use it, and what we will reveal it towards.

When one uses the power of connection correctly and as it should be, his entire life will look different. When the time comes in which he must experience the loss of connection with the other, whether it is a small level of disconnection from another

(which happens often in our life), or whether it is an actual parting of the ways with another - which can be very difficult to go through, and a painful part of life, which we have to endure until the time comes when “death will be swallowed forever”, when “Hashem will wipe away the tears from all faces” – when these times of loss inevitably arrive, we can truly merit the meaning of the verse, “*And the living shall*

take to heart”, in the sense that the connection with the other is always alive. The more we elevate our power of connection and we use it as it should, a person becomes closer and closer to Hashem, to the holy Torah, to his own self, and to the depth of all other *neshamos* in *Klal Yisrael*, in his love for them. Then even the external aspects of our relationships with others will be improved.

IN CONCLUSION

May we merit from Hashem that it be fulfilled with us the verse, “*And death will be swallowed forever*”, when “*Hashem will wipe the tears from all faces*”, when there will no longer be

severed connections from others - whether they are small losses or big losses to the person; and may the most complete, deepest connection of all be revealed, when all *neshamos* of *Klal Yisrael*

together will become attached, together, to Hashem, and to His Torah.

שיחת השבוע 009 - חיי שרה -
חיבור ופרידה

Q & A [FROM BILVAVI Q&A ARCHIVE]

APPROACHING MARRIAGE

QUESTION:

1) Can a 21-year old bochur start shidduchim (*dating*)?

ANSWER:

As long as he can remain immersed in his learning and he won't be having sinful thoughts, and as long as one's age isn't making it harder for him to be considered for a shidduch, one is allowed to wait on starting shidduchim

QUESTION

2) What tools does a bochur need before starting shidduchim, especially with regards to where he's holding in his learning and in his maturity in general?

ANSWER

Before marriage, it is ideal if a person first has a strong connection to his Torah learning, to the point that he knows he can hold strong in his learning after he gets

married when he will have more responsibilities on his mind. He also needs to be able to come out of himself so that he can be able to connect with another human being. And he also needs the ability to be able to build together a life of being together with another person.

TU B'AV

QUESTION:

I listened to two wonderful derashos of the Rav about Tu B'Av, and Baruch Hashem, this has given me much meaning and inner content to this day, which I never had much knowledge or connection to. I heard many points the Rav said about Tu B'av, such as the fact that it is the "light of the future", the festival of the future which shines even now, that it is a day of absolute unity, a day of baseless love (*ahavas chinam*), etc.

QUESTION 1:

My main question is: What is the inner avodah on this day, and how can I connect to this day on a practical level? Which action can I do, together with an inner thought, so that I can connect to the light of Tu B'Av? Especially since it is barely recognizable on this day of how great this day is, and the world behaves as usual on this day, and it is just that we don't say Tachanun. Besides for this, I do not see anyone doing anything for this day. Understandably, not saying Tachanun isn't enough to connect to the festival of Tu B'Av. Is it that when I don't say Tachanun I should concentrate on the power of absolute unity found on this

day, and connect to this concept through inner, deep focusing, as the Rav has said, that it is a day of ahavas chinam? Or should I just daven for shidduchim for others, as many do – and I should do so with added inner concentration? What exactly is the avodah of this day, on a practical level, so that I can connect to the inner essence of this awesome day, the light of the future, the festival of Tu B'Av?

ANSWER 1:

Firstly one should identify where the power of ahavas chinam (*baseless love*) is, in his personal soul. Going further than this, one should focus [*on this*] with

inner, deep concentration, as phrased in the question. Finally, one should actualize the potential of this love, on a practical level in the areas of prayer and action, from a desire to expand his love. These are the three garments of the soul – thought, speech and action.

QUESTION 2:

I also want to know: Is the power of ahavas chinam (baseless love) on Tu B'Av the same thing as the power of "unconditional love", or is it a different power?

ANSWER 2:**QUESTION:**

1- Is it possible for me to receive general guidance [from the Rav] on the topic of shidduchim [finding a spouse]? What are the important things I need to place emphasis on, when I am doing research, and when I am on a date? What is the spiritual perspective I need to have, and what are the appropriate feelings and compatibility that a couple require? 2- On a related note, our generation faces a challenge in the area of

It [ahavas chinam – baseless love] is a higher power than "unconditional love". The gematria of ahavah (love) is echad (one) as is well-known. There are [altogether] three levels: 1) Conditional love, 2) Unconditional love, 3) Echad – oneness.

QUESTION 3:

I also want to know: We find several times throughout the year in which the light of the future shines even now. Examples include Tu B'Av, Lag B'Omer, Purim, Chanukah. Why do we need so many days a year in

which we celebrate this light of the future, and why isn't one day enough? Is it because we are in exile and therefore we need to draw forth much light from the future in order to survive in the now?

ANSWER 3:

Just as Avraham Avinu had four entrance ways, so are there are many different entrance ways which are conceptually different from each other, and each person should examine which of the entrance ways are particularly relevant to the root of his [personal] soul.

GUIDANCE IN SHIDDUCHIM

shidduchim, where many people of marriageable age aren't finding their mate. What is the general source of this issue? Is it happening due to a general reason, or are there several reasons for the phenomenon? And what do we need to work on, so that we can remove these obstacles that are preventing marriage?

ANSWER:

There must be similar compatibility between them, in terms of their spiritual goals. Or, there

should be at least be a certain level of dedication [on the woman's part] to the husband's spiritual development. That is the case for most people. Ideally, one needs to look for a spouse who is compatible in terms of fine character. However, the more inner that a person becomes, the more heshe is able to recognize that there are certain aspects of personality and character traits [in the other spouse] which will require one to

work hard at accepting, and that one will need to connect to the other spouse and deal with the inevitable faults that are found. For on This World, the important thing

is to work hard [*at refining our character*], and we can't only look for comfort, which is superficial. [*Because when we are only searching to be comfortable*], such a

desire comes from the lowly "world of disparity", where there is spiritual defilement that separates a person from purity and emunah.

GOOD GIRL WITH INTERNET

QUESTION:

If a boy and girl are dating and they are compatible in their ruchniyus, but the girl owns a laptop with filtered (*Net-Free*) internet which she uses for her learning and for work, is this a reason for the boy to say no the shidduch?

ANSWER:

You need to find out well

why she owns a laptop, which sites she is able to connect with, and the level [*amount of time*] of how much she uses it. Find out also if she uses it only for work or beyond work purposes. And, find out if she is aware at all of the dangers [*of owning an internet-capable laptop even though it's filtered*].

QUESTION:

If a certain bochur is reputed to have a good heart and has yiras shomayim but he smokes, is that a reason to reject him in a shidduch?

ANSWER

If there is nothing else you are concerned about him, then this [*smoking*] is not something to be concerned about.

MARRYING FOR BEAUTY

QUESTION:

None of the girls I go out with are attractive in my eyes. They're not ugly, they're just not pretty enough for me. I really feel like I need to marry a beautiful girl, and because of this, I don't feel like I connect with any of the girls I go out with. Are there certain souls who need to marry girls that are more beautiful than others? Is this just a lustful desire or is it a

real need that I have? I just can't see myself in a loving relationship with a girl who isn't beautiful enough. No one understands me when I speak to them about this, not even my Rabbonim, and they are shocked at me when I say that this is what I need, because I do not come across as the type to be so into this. Maybe it's just a taavah (*desire*) that I have, but I'm still confused

about what to do, because maybe it's a real need that my neshamah has...

ANSWER:

No matter what the case, never look for a particularly beautiful girl! If this is a real emotional need that you have, then it is possible to find a girl "a bit more" beautiful than the average, but if you are looking for a particularly beautiful girl, you are holding back your

zivug (*marriage partner*) and this will cause you to marry someone who is not according to your personal

cheilek (*share*), and it will be “In the way a person wants to go in, he is led” [*Heaven will guide him*

towards what he wants, but to his detriment].

APPRECIATING MARITAL CHALLENGES

QUESTION:

What is the meaning of “ezer k'negdo”, that a wife is a “helpmate” who “opposes” the husband?

ANSWER:

We are taught by Chazal that there are two approaches to this. One approach is that it is only if a person merits this, he merits a wife who helps him. Another approach is that a person realizes that even though his wife opposes him, that itself helps him; just like a person realizes that “I place Hashem is opposite me always” – that when Hashem is opposite

him, Hashem helps him by “opposing” what a person wants – so can we understand that although one’s wife appears to be opposing him, this itself is a “help” for him. So the husband should nullify himself to the opposition, and realize that he needs it, in order to become improved.

All challenges are meant to complete us. A man’s soul is rooted in the element of water, and a woman’s soul is mainly from fire, and we know that water and fire oppose each other.

Marriage brings these two opposites together; the word shomayim (*heaven*) is a combination of the words aish (*fire*) and mayim (*water*), because in Heaven, opposites can unite in harmony. So too, although a man and woman are of opposite natures, they can still have a harmonious union together, when they live correctly. But without having this essential understanding towards marriage, they fall from the “shomayim” and into the erez\earth....

APPLYING THE FOUR ELEMENTS TO MARRIAGE

QUESTION:

The Rav has said that in order for a couple to improve their marital peace, a couple needs to find the element that they are both strong in [*in the positive sense*], and from there onward, they can

go about building their marriage. My wife and I have opposite elements. I am mainly dominated by the element of earth, and my wife by wind. Many fights erupt between us, as a result. Through the kindness of Hashem

upon us, we both have been graced with a strong element of water, and we are trying to fulfill the advice of the Rav. However, it is not clear to us how we can build our marriage through working with our common

element – in our case, the element of water, which is mainly about getting pleasure. (*I am asking this question assuming that I have understood the Rav's approach*). Does that mean that we need to go out to eat together in restaurants and eat very appetizing food there, together? Does it mean that we need to experience a lot of pleasure together? It seems that this would only cause our spirituality to sink, on many levels. I would be happy for guidance on this matter. Thank you.

ANSWER:

Before we consider how to build a marriage through finding the common element between you, a husband and wife are able to build their marital peace in several other ways as well. Here are some examples:

Each of the spouses should connect to their true self, their "I", and from reaching that place they can build a relationship with each other. Meaning, when the husband is living his own internal world, and the wife is also living her own internal world, they will

be able to connect to the other, in a way that suits each of their personal soul structure and their true inner abilities, without having to do trespass each of their personal boundaries [*the natural limitations of their personal soul*], and without having to trespass the boundaries [*the natural limitations of the soul*] of the other spouse.

Each spouse can offer his or her best to other spouse, which in turn will create a strong connection to each other. Practically speaking: (1) The husband should recognize his nature well and what his most positive aspect is, and then connect to that point and receive vitality and joy from it. (2) The wife should recognize her nature well and what her most positive aspect is, and connect to that point and receive vitality and joy from it. (3) Each of the spouses should make good use of hisher strong positive point, in order to be hisher best to other spouse and create a connection to each other through each of their positive points.

The above is especially true

in your case, where your dominant element is earth and your wife's is wind (*as you said*), the benefits which you can each give to each other are tremendous, because earth and wind are opposite elements, and they each complete the other. For example, the earth-dominant husband can prove a wind-dominant wife with more stability and consistency, while the wind-dominant wife can provide the earth-dominant husband with more movement and expansion.

A fundamental rule is, that all opposites bear the same root. Therefore, what is found in you is also found in her, and whatever is found in her is also found in you. So each spouse needs to find how there are traces of hisher main positive points in the other one. Alternatively, each of the spouses should see how some positive aspects of the other spouse also exist within himself or herself. Through either of these ways, they can each find common strong points that they share and build their relationship from this.

Now let's speak about what it means to build the relationship together from finding their common strong point. Firstly, each of the spouses needs to do the inner work of balancing out hisher dominant element, and to learn how to direct it towards holiness [*how it can be used in a constructive way*]. After that, they can each use the balanced element as a common point between them.

Alternatively, they can each find qualities in either of their personalities which are already repaired, and then they can use these aspects as a common point that can connect them together. Along with this, they should also aspire to

further increase upon those qualities.

If the above cannot be done, then, as a last-resort option, one of the spouses should find hisher strongest good point and guide the other spouse on how to improve in that area – but only if the other spouse agrees to this. They can then use this as their common connecting point. Understandably, this kind of approach will only work if they both choose to do so together, and if they are both very willing to make changes.

In certain instances, the common element between the spouses should be used in order to provide a connecting point between

them, even if the connecting point in question is on the level of the 'animal' level of the soul, as in the example you are presenting in your question [*going to eat in restaurants, which provides outlet for the element of waterpleasure that is dominant in you and in your wife*]. But even when that is the case, you should still try to infuse some holiness into it. For example, you can eat good-tasting food together on Shabbos, when there is a mitzvah to have oneg (*pleasure*) on Shabbos, or by any meal that is a seudas mitzvah.



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