
TEACHER'S GUIDE FOR THE SERIES

AM I READY TO FIND MY SOUL MATE?

This series offers you, the educator, a novel and thought-provoking format for presenting why it is vital to marry Jewish, and how your students will be more fulfilled by doing so. In these classes, students are first encouraged to explore the idea of “Self,” or the soul, which is the essence of who they really are. Students are shown how fundamental the soul is to their identity, even though it may have previously been unacknowledged or underutilized. Ultimately they will discover how the soul profoundly affects their interpersonal relationships and consequently, their marriage.

Since intermarriage is a very emotive topic that often breeds defensiveness, we present here a gentle, non-confrontational approach to the question of why it is important to marry Jewish. Therefore, the topics of love and marriage are not directly dealt with until the third class. If you have limited time with your students, you might want to compile relevant excerpts from the various classes and create your own class in a way that will have the greatest impact on your students. The rule of thumb is “Less is more.” If you’re doubtful about including certain material, leave it out.

A. THE PURPOSE OF THE SERIES

This series affords an intuitive, rational and compelling understanding of “Why Marry Jewish” through a fresh approach – by discovering one’s soul mate. The shiurim enable students to think about their spiritual identity – their “Self,” or soul, and how awareness of their deeper essence affects how they choose a marriage partner. At the end of the series they should have a better idea of themselves, the parameters of love, what a soul mate is, and why their soul mate is Jewish.

Because the content of these shiurim is very different from other NLE Morasha classes, the way they are presented is also very different:

1. **LANGUAGE** – It’s much more personal, emotional, and intuitive, rather than authoritative, conservative, and official. This is so that the teacher can connect with the students in a real way.
2. **APPROACH** – The classes are not designed to influence the students to become more Jewish. The target audiences are people who might not ever go to a class about being more Jewish. We try not to “push” Judaism, in order to avoid creating a barrier that would prevent the students from connecting with the teacher and trusting them with the very personal subject of their emotional lives. Quotes were chosen that should “emotionally resonate.” Judaism is the oldest “database” of sources to talk about the Self, so that is where we draw our inspiration from.
3. **EXERCISES** – There is a lot of class participation through the use of exercises that deal with emotional blocks the students may have concerning the emotive subjects involved in this discussion, including racism, licentiousness, and lust. There might also

be other issues to contend with, such as the innate distrust of a rabbi/Jewish teacher, and the short attention span of the students, etc.

The exercises help break up the material into more manageable pieces for the students to chew on. The give-and-take between student and teacher empowers the student, allowing him to feel actively involved in the thought process that is being developed in the classes, and thus able to make a rational decision about whom they might marry, rather than being preached at. In this way, students connect more genuinely with the information and are able to work out their feelings and clarify their outlook on the ideas presented to them in a non-confrontational and less threatening way.

B. OUTLINE OF THE GOALS OF EACH CLASS

The following is an outline of what each class attempts to accomplish:

Class I. *Discovering Your Infinite Self*

This class defines the “Self,” allowing the student to explore the concept of having a soul. The student might have an emotional or intellectual block against this premise. This class is not meant to prove the existence of the soul, rather to open students up to an idea that they may not have been aware of – that they have a spiritual dimension, and that this dimension has implications on their lives and marriage. We chart the development of Avraham Avinu’s spiritual identity as an example to the students. We discuss how this gift of self-knowledge is the first step in choosing the right marriage partner.

Class II. *Gratifying Your Deepest Desires*

In this class, we explore some of the implications of what we learned in the first class. While we cannot prove the existence of the soul, we give examples of how the soul manifests itself through actions and character. Having clarity about the soul and its expressions and desires helps a person searching for a marriage partner to focus on looking for someone with whom they can build a soul connection. Since marriage is the most profound level of relationship, marrying someone for motivations that do not emanate from the soul means that they will be off the mark in terms of what is truly best for them. That might easily result in a very disillusioning awakening as they mature and become more aware of their soul’s attributes and desires, and realize that they’ve married the wrong person!

In the course of this class we explain that our most basic desires for happiness and fulfillment stem from our soul’s deep awareness of reality. When we go about life without this understanding, we inevitably end up seeking merely superficial means of satisfying these basic desires. Finding a path towards spiritual fulfillment will prove to be much more deeply satisfying.

Class III. The Search for Eternal Love

This shiur teaches that there are two types of love: One unites two individuals, intrinsically expanding their consciousness and identity, and the other is a counterfeit love, “ice cream love,” which may at first feel as if it is achieving these goals, but ultimately leaves us no bigger and does not lead to a true bond. We also discuss why we all want love, the soul-root of this drive, and how it can be satisfied within the parameters of a Jewish marriage.

With the aim of assuring the students that they can safely commit to a relationship, we explore the idea that everyone seeks a unified bond, which they will attain if they marry the right partner. The class is meant to give the students hope that there is a way for them to believe and invest in love, based on the idea of the Self, of having a soul, discussed in the previous classes. Through love they can be more, since love, including giving to their marriage partner, enables them to fulfill their potential. Therefore, it is worth investing in a relationship.

Since some people come from broken or dysfunctional homes, any relationship, let alone marriage, may be extremely scary for them. We want the students to know that there is such a thing as a healthy relationship. True love should make them feel expanded. This is the opposite of the feeling of reaching a dead end that the wrong type of relationship engenders.

Class IV. What’s the Jewish Connection?

As a natural progression of the previous classes, this class opens the student up to the idea that they will find true love and satisfaction only in marriage with a soul mate, who must necessarily be Jewish. We explore the concept of soul mate, the different missions of the Jew and non-Jew, and the impact these ideas have on marriage. The conclusion of this series aims to show the students that through marrying another Jew they will attain a true feeling of oneness, a deep connection through marital intimacy, an empowering sense of self-expansion, and an ability to truly impact the world and leave a lasting legacy. Students will come away with the sense that a Jew accesses the greatest sense of self when he or she is married to another Jew.

Issues in Inter marriage — A Discussion Primer (SEPARATE FROM THE SERIES)

CAVEAT: The Discussion Primer is a separate, independent component of the *Am I Ready to Find My Soul Mate?* series. It is a more direct framework to broach the question of “Why Marry Jewish” with one’s students, and is not intended for educators to teach as a class. Rather, it is offered as background material for educators who would like to engage their students in informal, one-to-one discussions on intermarriage. Educators can decide which parts are appropriate, if at all, for their particular students.

In summary, in order to get the students to acknowledge the pitfalls of intermarriage, we try to help them:

1. Entertain the idea that they have a soul, and that it is the main aspect of their persona.
2. Trust that Judaism's "soul path" makes life more worthwhile in all areas, including relationships and marriage.
3. Open up to the idea that Judaism has a better way to reach emotional satisfaction than what they are used to.
4. Get in touch with the idea that what they really want is love, security, and unity on a soul level, rather than the superficial level of self-gratification.
5. Realize that all the benefits they crave from a relationship come only through marriage with a soul mate who automatically shares their mission, i.e. another Jew.

C. NOTES TO THE EDUCATOR FOR CONDUCTING THE EXERCISES

The exercises are intended to be used for class discussion. The educator should ask the questions to the class and either discuss the possible answers with them, or allow them to break up into groups to discuss and then review with the educator afterwards.

The teacher should please note the following points when preparing to teach the series:

Class I.

1. Prologue

The educator should decide whether or not to include the prologue in the class, depending on the nature of the audience. It is intended to shake them up a little and make them think, but if it will be taken in the wrong way, do not use it.

2. Exercise #5, Section II, Part B

The point is for the students themselves to realize that everything is created with design. The implication is then – there must be a Higher Force behind this design.

3. Exercise #7, Section III, Part B

The educator should help the students verbalize which value this was: truth, justice, kindness, integrity, fairness, shalom, self-sacrifice, decency, purity, human dignity, love, etc.

Class II.

1. Exercise #2, Section I, Part C

After asking the students to write a list of their ten deepest desires, give the students a few moments to compile it, and then ask: Did anyone include “a sense of meaning, significance, or purpose” in their list? Then continue with the exercise.

2. Exercise #3, Section II, Part C

The students are asked who they think are the smartest, strongest, richest, and most honored people in the world. This analysis is meant to lead to a discussion of what these concepts actually mean and whether they are the path to real happiness.

Class III.

1. Section II, Part B, introduction

We ask: Why is the desire to feel love such a powerful motivator for us? This, and the following questions, can be used as a forum for discussion.

2. Section II, Part C, introduction

We ask: What is our deeper soul drive to love trying to express? This question can be used as a springboard for discussion.

Class IV.

1. Exercise #1, end of introduction

There is an inherent flaw in the exercise: A person may always push off marriage, claiming they cannot be sure who their soul mate is. This point is addressed at length in Section III of the class *Dating Jewish Style: The Search for a Soul Mate* and in Section III of the class *The Jewish View of Marriage*. However, at this juncture the conclusion that the student reaches at the end of the exercise is critical, because it will allow them permission to exclude non-Jews from their list of soul mate options.

It is then the job of the educator to guide the student to understand that through getting to know who we are, Jewish-guided dating, and learning about *hashgachah pratit*, a person will be led to their soul mate.

2. Class Summary

The student might ask whether it is possible to miss marrying their soul mate. For further information on this topic, see the *Morasha* class *The Jewish View of Marriage – Marrying Your Ezer Knegdo – Soul Mate*.