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# AM I READY TO FIND MY SOUL MATE?

## PART IV

### WHAT'S THE JEWISH CONNECTION?

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In the previous classes in this series, we developed the idea that each person is created with a Divine soul, which is the essence of the persona. The better we understand the soul's expressions and desires, the more in tune we will be to the idea of building a soul connection with one's marriage partner, with the awareness that the most profound level of relationship is at the level of the soul. We then explored different types of love, contrasting between counterfeit love and everlasting love based on soul connection. In this class we discuss whether a soul mate must be a fellow Jew or not. We examine how one may best fulfill his life's purpose and grow as a person, how a couple's love can be forever increasing, how intense the pleasure of intimate relations can be when based on spiritual principles, and whether all this can be achieved with a non-Jew.

This class aims to answer the following questions:

- ❧ How do we define a soul mate?
- ❧ Is there any significant difference between a Jew and a non-Jew?
- ❧ Is my soul mate Jewish?
- ❧ What are the benefits of knowing my soul mate is Jewish?
- ❧ What does marrying Jewish have to do with our sense of self?

#### CLASS OUTLINE:

##### Introduction: Am I Ready To Find My Soul Mate?

##### Section I: Endless Love Requires Endless Connection

**Part A.** What is a Soul Mate?

**Part B.** Two Become One Only If They Were Originally One

##### Section II: Jew and Non-Jew

**Part A.** Different Missions

##### Section III: The Benefits of a Jewish Soul Mate

**Part A.** Becoming One

**Part B.** The True Lasting Pleasure of Love

**Part C.** Expanding our Sense of Self

**Part D.** Impact and Legacy

## INTRODUCTION.

# AM I READY TO FIND MY SOUL MATE?

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In our last class we explained two types of love. The first, what we called “ice-cream love,” provides instant gratification but is superficial and “dependent on a thing.” We said this type of love dies out and is self-limiting. In contrast, the second type of love, where we focus on the essence and inner qualities of another person, leads to unconditional, endless love. This love expands us, because it makes us one with the other person.

The big question that haunts our generation on the dating scene is: “Where Do I Find Love?” In other words, with whom am I meant to become one? If love builds oneness, who do I let myself invest in?

To open ourselves up to discovering the answer to this, we should first ask ourselves: “Am I indeed ready to bond in true oneness with anybody?” “Am I ready to find my soul mate?”

### Exercise #1: Am I Ready To Find My Soul Mate?

1. Is a choice never to invest with full commitment in another person prudent or shortsighted?
  - a. Prudent.
  - b. Shortsighted.
  
2. Buying an apartment or home is an example of a committed investment. In contrast, with a rental, even after years of paying rent, the property does not belong to you. A committed investment is like paying off a mortgage. Little by little, you get a home which is fully yours. If you live in each for twenty years, in which do you invest of yourself more?
  - a. The apartment.
  - b. The house.
  - c. The investment is equal.
  
3. What condition(s) do you need filled to feel safe to fully invest in another person for life? Circle the three most important points that apply to you:
  - a very strong physical attraction
  - a feeling of trust that the person will remain loyal to me
  - a few more years of therapy

- to find myself first
- my own financial stability
- total acceptance of who I am
- a partner who is giving and forgiving
- someone who will give me space to be
- someone who will be there for me, encouraging and loving in all my awkward moments
- someone to grow with
- someone who entertains me

4. If you found somebody who has the qualities you are looking for, would you stay with them if you knew for sure they are not your soul mate?

- a. Yes.
- b. No.
- c. I'd like to think so but am not sure.

5. If you said you would likely pass up such a person, can you articulate to yourself why you would?

- a. Yes.
- b. No.
- c. I intuit why, but can't express it.
- d. I don't know why, I just know I would pass it up.

6. Often we are unable to articulate why someone who seems great just isn't for us. In such situations, do you trust yourself to give up the relationship even if it seems you're passing up a great person with whom to spend your life?

- a. Yes.
- b. No.

7. Which of the following reasons for marrying your soul mate over someone who has the qualities you are looking for, as mentioned above, rings most true for you?
- a. Even if someone can satisfy me emotionally and physically, I am meant to also have a deeper soul connection with my soul mate.
  - b. If every bonding experience makes me more one with my soul mate, then such a relationship is likely to hold greater potential for emotional and physical satisfaction than what I would be giving up.
  - c. Marrying my soul mate is meant to help me fulfill the purpose for which I was born. Getting involved with anybody else would be a detour from my purpose.
  - d. If love has the power to unite two people, I do not want to unite with someone who I know deep down is not for me.
  - e. None of the above.
  - f. All of the above.
8. If I knew that my emotional investment, shared pleasure, and even shared challenge growing as a person and growing in love is being safely invested in one person, whom I know is my soul mate, I'd be willing to:
- a. Get out of my current relationship.
  - b. Stop dating for six months in order to find out who really is my soul mate.
  - c. In a few years from now, I'd be willing to do whatever needs to be done.
  - d. Allow myself to consider getting married.
  - e. Set aside at least a summer to work through any personal issues I may have, so I can give the best of myself in marriage and ensure that it will succeed.
  - f. None of the above.
  - g. Most of the above.
9. I think my soul mate is:
- a. From any religion.
  - b. From any nationality.
  - c. Probably Jewish, since the concept of soul mate originates from Jewish sources.
  - d. No opinion.

Dating someone we know we will never marry is like renting an apartment with a time-bomb in it. If the couple is not on the same page, they may enjoy their time together for a while and it might be convenient, but at some point, the good times will turn sour and destroy the relationship. One or both of the parties will inevitably be emotionally burned. Marrying a soul mate is similar to investing in a home designed “just for you.” Even if at times the relationship is difficult, the home is yours, and the investment is well spent.

## SECTION I. ENDLESS LOVE REQUIRES ENDLESS CONNECTION

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Once a person is ready to truly bond with his soul mate in a committed and lasting way, there is a chance he will find love. Finding endless love means connecting with that part of another person from which I will never be separated. Unfortunately, modern culture is ill-equipped to help us build this lasting bond.

1. **David Brooks, Columnist for The New York Times, Advice for High School Graduates, June 2009 – There is no course of higher education on how to choose a spouse.**

I used to believe life got better as you got older, but now I realize this is untrue...At the moment, I'm thinking of talking about the chief way our society is messed up. That is to say, it is structured to distract people from the decisions that have a huge impact on happiness in order to focus attention on the decisions that have a marginal impact on happiness.

The most important decision any of us make is who we marry. Yet there are no courses on how to choose a spouse. There's no graduate department in spouse selection studies. Institutions of higher learning devote more resources to semiotics than love...

[S]ociety is busy preparing us for all the decisions that have a marginal effect on human happiness. There are guidance offices to help people in the monumental task of selecting a college. There are business schools offering lavish career placement services. There is a vast media apparatus offering minute advice on how to furnish your home or expand your deck.

To get information on private affairs, you have to go down-market to Oprah or Dr. Phil. Why are they the ones who have access to information on meeting life's vital needs?

We seem to be missing vital information about how to build the most important relationship in our lives. Fortunately, Judaism offers comprehensive literature, traditions, seminars, and classes addressing how to prepare for and enhance one's marriage. Traditional Jewish couples participate in courses and read books before and throughout marriage to maximize “Shalom Bayit,” marital harmony, strengthening and rejuvenating their emotional, physical, and spiritual connection. All of this is predicated on the Jewish soul mate principle as we will now explore.

## PART A. WHAT IS A SOUL MATE?

Having a soul mate assumes that we have a soul, and that a couple is connected on a soul level. The general Jewish term for soul mate is *bashert* or “destined one.” In terms of marriage, we use the Biblical term *ezer kenegdo*.

1. **Bereishit (Genesis) 2:18, with Rashi – A person needs a soul mate in order to fulfill his mission in this world.**

God said, “It is not good for man to be alone; I will make him a helper against him (*ezer kenegdo*).”

Rashi: A helper against him: If he is worthy, [she is] a helper; if he is not worthy, [she is] against him to oppose him.

וַיֹּאמֶר יְקוֹק אֱלֹהִים לֹא טוֹב הִיּוֹת הָאָדָם לְבָדוֹ  
אֶעֱשֶׂה לוֹ עֶזֶר כְּנֶגְדּוֹ:

עֶזֶר כְּנֶגְדּוֹ

זָכָה עֶזֶר, לֹא זָכָה כְּנֶגְדּוֹ לְהִלָּחֵם.

The Jewish definition of soul mate is a person who helps the other complete the mission he was sent to accomplish in the world. Therefore, if a person is doing a good job, the soul mate encourages; if not, the soul mate opposes. It is a reciprocal relationship. One of the main jobs of each is to learn to relate to and give to one another.

2. **Rabbi Matisyahu Solomon, Shidduchim: Where Heaven and Earth Meet, in Shidduchim, Shalom Bayis, and Beyond, pg. 200 – A soul mate helps the other fulfill his mission in this world.**

Marriage is the means for bringing a person to completion, so that he can achieve his ultimate goal: Each spouse is intended to complete the other, to enable the two together to overcome their inherent inadequacies...God intended that each person help his or her mate achieve their assigned goals through understanding each other's needs, and overcoming obstacles so as to realize these goals. This is what the verse indicated with the comment: “It is not good for Man to be alone”...In fact, the Talmudic source for this concept is, “Forty days before conception, a Heavenly Voice proclaims, ‘the daughter of so and so is destined for so and so.’” But that Talmudic statement continues, saying the same regarding “the house of so and so is destined for so and so...[and] the field of so and so is destined for so and so...” The same Heavenly Voice that declares whom one will marry also proclaims which house one will live in, and which field one will acquire. These too are “bashert”...We recognize, of course, that at the moment of a child's birth, a soul is sent into its body to fulfill a specific mission. The soul has a complement of tools necessary to achieve that purpose...All of the above factors mentioned in the Gemara, including the daughter of so and so – the person who will be one's life partner – are integral components in enabling an individual to achieve the specific purpose for which he was created.

The Heavenly Voice that declares, “the daughter of so and so is destined for so and so” is saying that each partner has potential to enable the other to achieve the ultimate

purpose for which he and she were created. Herein lays the deeper meaning of the verse, “It is not good for Man to be alone.” While alone, a person cannot achieve this ultimate purpose; it is only the proper helpmate who can bring him to this goal.

For more on the concept of soul mate, see the Morasha class *The Jewish View of Marriage, Marrying Your Ezer Kenegdo - Soul Mate*.

## **PART B. TWO BECOME ONE ONLY IF THEY WERE ORIGINALLY ONE**

In the last class, we discussed the unifying power of love. However, there is an important condition: In order for two people to become “one,” there must be a preexisting connection between them. They must be soul mates. We see this principle at play in the union of Adam and Eve.

1. **Rabbi Aryeh Kaplan, *Made In Heaven*, pg. 11 – Love makes us one because we were originally one.**

The Torah teaches that man and woman were originally created as a single, androgynous unit. God then separated the two, making man and woman into independent persons. Thus man and woman began as a single entity, and togetherness is a natural tendency to be one. Adam recognized this as soon as Eve was separated from him. He said, “Now this is a bone from my bones and flesh from my flesh.”

The Talmud therefore teaches, “One’s wife is like one’s own body.” It also teaches us that in a perfect marriage a man loves his wife like his own body. When love is perfect, man and wife are like a single person. All barriers no matter how insurmountable can be overcome by this love. The Talmud thus relates that one man said of his wife, “When the love between us was intense, we could have lain together on the edge of a sword.”

Rabbi Kaplan is referring to a man and woman who are soul mates and who have worked on themselves to be givers as we discussed in the previous class. They are ready to rediscover their inherent soul connection. If they are not soul mates, they can love each other but true unity will always be lacking.

What is true unity in marriage?

2. **Rabbi Aharon Feldman, *The River, the Kettle and the Bird* (Feldheim 1987), pp. 1-2 – Three levels of unity in marriage.**

[O]ne who dreams of a river, a kettle, or a bird can look forward to peace (Berachot 56b).

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The simplest level of marriage is the peace of the river...A river is the classic vehicle of commerce between two cities. As such, it represents a state of communication which exists between two separate entities connected only by their mutual benefit... Each marriage partner is prepared to fulfill his duties and obligations to his spouse faithfully, but each lives his own separate and individual life. They have learned to avoid disagreements and to live together peacefully, but although they do not quarrel, there is little emotional attachment present.

The second level, the peace of the kettle, exists in a marriage in which goals are set which each partner would be unable to achieve separately...[When cooking] the kettle harnesses the talent of water to retain heat and the talent of fire to produce it to create an edible product. The kettle has thus made possible a productive peace between fire and water...As they work together towards their goals, and each senses how he could not function without the contributions of the other, an emotional bond based on mutual dependency begins to form between them. Unlike the peace of the first level, this peace becomes internalized...

### 3. **Ibid., pg. 3 – The bird represents the highest level of marital unity.**

The third and final level of peace is the peace of the bird. A bird has two disparate talents: the ability to survive on earth as well as to fly in the heavens. These talents are not separate skills which exist side by side. Rather, they are details of a single organism which operates in these two realms. The way the bird walks on earth is affected by the way it is designed to fly. Conversely, the way it flies in the heavens is affected by the way it is intended to walk the earth. It is simultaneously both an earthbound and airborne being. A bird, therefore, represents an embodiment of a peace where two natures and two entities have merged into one unit...

The third and highest level of peace in marriage is peace which has become completely internalized (and is symbolized by the bird). This is the peace which stems from a deep sense of identity which each marriage partner feels for the other. The relationship has become so vital and meaningful that neither of them conceives of himself as a separate entity. An emotional bond has been created between them which has gone beyond the feeling of mutual dependency or awareness of benefits received. Each is as keenly sensitive to the other's needs as if they were his own. Each is as happy to give to the other as he is to receive from him. There is no separate sensation of "I"; there is only "we."

Each of these three levels can exist in a marriage, but the third level reflects the ultimate unity that only soul mates can achieve.



## KEY THEMES OF SECTION I

- ∞ Finding everlasting love means connecting with that part of another person from which I will never be separated. Unfortunately, modern culture is ill-equipped to help us build this lasting bond since it disregards the spiritual aspect of marriage.
- ∞ The Jewish definition of a soul mate is a person who helps the other complete the mission he was sent to accomplish in the world. It is a reciprocal relationship.
- ∞ Love is a unifying power, but in order for two to become one there must be a preexisting connection between them. To re-unite they must have once been one. They must be soul mates.
- ∞ There are three levels of connection in marriage, which are compared to a river, kettle, and bird. Each level is important in building a marriage, but the highest level, absolute unity, can only be achieved by soul mates.

## SECTION II. JEW AND NON-JEW

### PART A. DIFFERENT MISSIONS

We spent a lot of time in the previous classes discussing the fact that we have a soul, and the impact that makes on how we live our lives.

The major difference between Jew and non-Jew has to do with the reason for which each particular soul was sent into the world. Every person has a job in this world, a spiritual mission. But how can we know what our mission is in this world? We can tell what our job is by looking at the tools we were given to accomplish it.

What are the tools for the spiritual mission of a Jew?

1. **Rabbi Shlomo Wolbe, Alei Shur, Vol. I, pg. 168 – The profound importance of each individual and his purpose in life.**

Every person needs to know that he has importance. Not an imaginary importance, that he “holds himself high”...rather a deeply profound importance that is even shocking.

The Talmud states, “Each and every person must declare, ‘The world was created for

כל אדם חייב לדעת, שיש לו חשיבות. לא חשיבות מדומה שהוא “מחשיב עצמו בעצמו”... אלא חשיבות בעלת משמעות עמוקה ואף מזועזעת.

”כל אחד ואחד חייב לומר: בשבילי נברא העולם” - רש”י: “כלומר: חשוב אני כעולם מלא,

me” (Sanhedrin 37a). Rashi explains that this means I am considered as important as the entire world...

“Like the entire world” – This is the one-off life experience of a particular person – there was never a person like him, nor will there ever be a person like him until the end of time. I, with my special character strengths, the child of my parents, born at a specific time period, and in a certain environment – certainly there is a unique duty that is placed upon me. I have a special share in the Torah, and the entire world is waiting for me to actualize my duty. For my role cannot be exchanged with anyone else in the world!

לא אטרד את עצמי מן העולם בעבירה אחת.”  
(סנהדרין לז, א)

“כעולם מלא” – זוהי חווית חד-פעמיותו של האדם, שלא היה עוד כמותו ולא יהיה כמותו עד סוף כל הדורות. אני עם המיזוג המיוחד של כוחותי, בן לאותם אבות, נולד בתוך אותה תקופה ובאותה סביבה – בודאי עבודה מיוחדת מוטלת עלי, חלק מיוחד לי בתורה, וכל הבריאה מחכה לי שאתקן את המוטל עלי, כי את עבודתי לא אוכל להחליף עם שום אדם אחר בעולם!

## 2. **Rambam (Maimonides), end of Hilchot Temurah (The Laws of Temurah) – The mitzvot are God’s instructions for living and for character improvement.**

And all these things [the mitzvot] are to [help us to] overcome our negative inclination and to correct our character traits; and most laws of the Torah are instruction from afar from the Great Adviser [to help us] to correct our character traits and straighten our ways.

וכל אלו הדברים כדי לכופ את יצרו ולתקן דעותיו ורוב דיני התורה אינן אלא עצות מרחוק מגדול העצה לתקן הדעות וליישר כל המעשים.

## 3. **Midrash Rabbah, Bereishit 44:1 – The mitzvot were given to refine humanity.**

What does it matter to God if an animal is slaughtered by cutting its neck through the spine or the throat?

[The answer is:] The commandments were given only in order to refine humanity.

וכי מה איכפת ליה להקב”ה למי ששוחט מן הצואר או מי ששוחט מן העורף,

הוי לא נתנו המצוות אלא לצרף בהם את הבריות.

The mitzvot are the framework for the Jewish people to strive for perfection in all areas, marriage included.

4. **Gordon Cohn, *The Ethics of Tax Evasion: A Jewish Perspective*, *Journal of Accounting Ethics and Public Policy* – A truly refined person.**

Rabbi Yaakov Kamenetsky was given a silver kiddush cup by an appreciative congregant. He took the cup to a silversmith for appraisal. It was strange that a person who received a gift was preoccupied with determining its value. Rabbi Kamenetsky's true intention was this. [He] decided that its value was taxable income. Fear of the Inland Revenue Service citations could not motivate such extraordinary dedication.

5. **Tehilla Abramov, *The Secret of Jewish Femininity*, Targum Press, 2005 – When “I” becomes “We.”**

Once, Rabbi Aryeh Levin accompanied his wife on a visit to the doctor. The doctor was surprised when the couple entered his office together. Surely this woman was capable of consulting a physician on her own. But he was soon provided with an explanation. Rabbi Aryeh sat his wife comfortably in a chair and, turning to the doctor, said: “Good morning, sir. We’ve come to seek your professional advice. You see, my wife’s leg hurts us.”

6. **Rabbi Jeremy Kagan, *The Choice to Be*, Feldheim Publishers, pp. 2-4 – Judaism is a holistic way of life to build a relationship with God.**

The way people connect is through relationships; that is as true of our connection to our Source, the Creator, as to any other connection we make. A full relationship has as many facets as we have parts to our personality. We experience our self in our conscious awareness – obviously that must be involved in any significant relationship we have. If awareness constituted the whole person, perhaps we would be satisfied with our relationships restricted to sharing thoughts and emotions. But our awareness arises from a complex melding together of spiritual and physical roots and is profoundly impacted by the subconscious of both of them. Involving these deeper aspects is at least as important as our conscious self, since whether we are aware of it or not, they largely govern our personality.

Pen pals are nice, but they don't last because the connection never goes beyond ideas. A husband can tell his wife he loves her, but if he doesn't do something that conveys that love, the relationship will inevitably flounder. This is not only because there is something missing in what he receives. It is also because without actual deeds, the self we commit to the relationship is critically deficient. Full relationships need actions to incorporate our physical energies. And those actions must also give expression to our spiritual root so that it too is joined to the other. But how can we know what actions will accomplish this when our spiritual self lies beyond our conscious reach?

We turn to the Torah for guidance. In fact the word “Torah” comes from the root *horaah* which means to teach in a practical way – to guide. Although the Torah conveys an

understanding of reality that is deep beyond measure, it is essentially a book of commands to action – mitzvot. Obviously those mitzvot assume and manifest all the spiritual depth that is in the Torah. When we are required for example to give charity, it is not as a utilitarian band-aid to inequity – God can take care of His poor. Rather, it is because giving charity profoundly impacts the nature of our humanity.

In general, when fulfilling a command out of obedience, we are nullified to its commander; our action becomes a vehicle of his will, endowing it with his intention. In the case of the Torah's mitzvot, obedience invests our action with the Creator's purpose, a spiritual content which transcends humans' understanding. The mitzvot of the Torah thus bind our spiritual root to our awareness and physical being, fostering a relationship of our whole self with our Source, the Creator.

But just as an assembly of disjointed acts cannot form the basis for a relationship between two people, so, too, a bunch of random commandments cannot form the basis for a relationship between man and God. Torah is not a mere jumble of mitzvot. Rather, the mitzvot are a system through which a relationship with the Creator develops and takes on physical expression. Understanding the relationship we are striving to form with the Creator and our overall responsibilities in achieving it requires that we grasp all the mitzvot together as a structured whole – i.e., what they are about as a system.

The Torah is an instruction book for Jews on how to forge a relationship with God, but it tells us about the spiritual mission of other nations as well. This spiritual mission does not require all non-Jewish nations to have the same culture; it allows for any culture to flourish within an ethical framework. The tools of the non-Jewish spiritual mission are known as the Seven Noahide commandments. Noah was the first to follow this spiritual path of seven commandments, inherited in part from Adam. Since all the nations emerged from Noah, they are considered the children of Noah. Hence this spiritual mission is entitled “the Seven Commandments of the Children of Noah.”

## 7. **Talmud Bavli, Sanhedrin 56a – The Children of Noah have seven commandments.**

The rabbis taught in a Braita: “Seven mitzvot were given to the Noahides: [to establish courts of] civil law, ‘blessing’ (i.e. not cursing) the [Divine] Name, not to engage in idolatry, [not to transgress the laws of] immorality, not to murder, and not to steal. Rabbi Chananiah ben Gamliel said: Also not to eat blood from [the detached limb of] a live animal.

תנו רבנן: שבע מצוות נצטוו בני נח: דינין, וברכת השם, עבודה זרה, גילוי עריות ושפיכות דמים, וגזל, ואבר מן החי. רבי חנניה בן גמליאל אומר: אף על הדם מן החי.

**8. Rambam, Mishnah Torah, Melachim 9:1 – The Children of Noah have seven commandments, whereas the Jews have the commandments of the Torah.**

Adam, the first man, was commanded concerning six things: idolatry, murder, “blessing” the [Divine] name, sexual immorality, theft, and on [setting up courts of] civil law...Added to Noah was [the commandment of [not eating from] the limb of a live animal...

And so it was in the whole world until Abraham. He was commanded an additional command: circumcision...until Moses our Teacher came and the Torah was completed through [God commanding] him.

על ששה דברים נצטווה אדם הראשון: על ע"ז, ועל ברכת השם, ועל שפיכות דמים, ועל גילוי עריות, ועל הגזל, ועל הדינים... הוסיף לנח אבר מן החי...

וכן היה הדבר בכל העולם עד אברהם, בא אברהם ונצטווה יתר על אלו במילה... עד שבא משה רבינו ונשלמה תורה על ידו.

Any non-Jew who lives according to the path set out for him is considered to have fulfilled his spiritual mission in this world, and is granted eternal life in the world to come. If a non-Jew wishes to adopt the spiritual mission of a Jew, he can do so by converting. Similarly, just as a Jew fulfills his potential by marrying another Jew (as will be further discussed in Section III), a non-Jew fulfills his by marrying his soul mate – another non-Jew.

**9. Rambam, Mishnah Torah, Hilchot Issurei Biah, 14:7, Hilchot Teshuvah 3:5 – The Children of Noah are considered truly righteous and earn eternal reward.**

A non-Jew who has accepted upon himself not to worship idols as well as to keep the rest of the commandments in which an offspring of Noah is commanded...Behold he is amongst the Righteous of the Nations of the world.

The Righteous of the Nations have a place in the world to come.

אי זה הוא גר תושב זה עכו"ם שקיבל עליו שלא יעבוד עכו"ם עם שאר המצוות שנצטוו בני נח... מקבלין אותו והוא מחסידי אומות העולם...

חסידי אומות העולם יש להם חלק לעולם הבא.

For today's average Jew, intermarriage does not seem a burning issue, because we are not raised with an awareness of our spiritual mission. Life has become more focused on career and worldly achievement. Therefore, on the superficial level, we identify easily with non-Jews as peers. However, the differences still exist. The mission that a Jew was sent into this world to accomplish is entirely different than that of a non-Jew.

Even if a Jew decides not to accept this mission, the difference still exists and affects many areas of life in ways that are much more impacting than we may ever have expected. Although on a conscious level we may not be aware of this mission, on a soul level, we are. As we saw

in earlier classes in this series, such spiritual sensibilities affect the way we relate to the world and ourselves. One of the most important ramifications is whom we choose to marry, for as we saw above, the purpose of a soul mate is to help us fulfill our potential and carry out our mission in life.

## KEY THEMES OF SECTION II

- ∞ The major difference between Jew and non-Jew has to do with the reason for which each particular soul was sent into the world. Every person has a job in this world, a spiritual mission.
- ∞ The tools of a Jew to fulfill his spiritual mission are the 613 mitzvot. The tools of the non-Jew are the Seven Noahide commandments.
- ∞ Just as a Jew can fulfill his potential by marrying another Jew, a non-Jew can fulfill his by marrying his soul mate – another non-Jew.
- ∞ Even if we do not personally connect to the soul mission of being a Jew, deep down our souls are aware of the difference between our mission and the mission of a non-Jew. This has many practical ramifications, as we will now examine.

## SECTION III. THE BENEFITS OF A JEWISH SOUL MATE

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One may wonder: “So what if a Jew and a non-Jew have different soul missions? Let’s deal with what we see in front of us: two people in love. Doesn’t love conquer all?” Based on the approximate 40% divorce rate, that’s not the feedback from the field. Clearly, love does not conquer all.

In the rest of this section we will discuss four major benefits of marrying our soul mate and what we miss out on when we do not:

1. Unity or feeling truly “one” with another person
2. Growing pleasure in love, accompanied by physical satisfaction
3. Feeling a sense of true expansion of purpose and identity
4. Truly impacting the world and leaving a lasting legacy

### PART A. BECOMING ONE

How does Torah help bring two people together in a perfect way, enabling them to unite as soul mates and develop their true potential?



1. **Rabbi Itamar Schwartz, Getting to Know Your Home, pg. 88 – Only the tool of creation can make two into one.**

There is only one “entity” that can bring two different things to become one. It has never happened that two different species of animals have merged together and become like one, nor have two stars ever combined. So how is it that two people so different from each other can join together and become like one in marriage?

God combines two opposite people in marriage to become one. They are united through the Torah. “God looked at the Torah [and through it] created the world” (Zohar, Terumah 161b)...The heaven, the earth, and all mankind were created from the Torah. Two aspects of creation will only unite when we utilize the “tool” that created them. There, at their source, they can merge and become one. If we do not use the “tool” that created them in order to unite them, then they will not only be *shnayim* (two), but they will also be *shonim* (different). They will be two entirely different beings unable to unite.

All mitzvot in Judaism create spiritual realities. So too, the mitzvah of marriage creates a reality where two souls are able to bond together. The Jewish commandment to marry has two parts, called *Kiddushin* and *Nesuin* (or *Chuppah*), which build the spiritual connection between husband and wife.

Kiddushin establishes the relationship between husband and wife as exclusive, even prior to consummation of the marriage. In contrast, according to Noahide law, non-Jews are not married until they live together. They have no requirement to perform Kiddushin.

2. **Talmud Bavli, Kiddushin 2b, Tosafot s.v. *d'assur lah* – Kedushah (holiness) means separated and dedicated for a particular purpose.**

What is the [meaning of the] expression (“You are betrothed, *mekudeshet*, to me”) employed by the Rabbis (for the purpose of marriage)?

[It means] that he forbids her to the entire world, like *hekdesh* (an item that has been set aside and dedicated exclusively for the use of the Temple).

**Tosafot:**

“You are betrothed (*mekudeshet*) to me” ...  
The simple explanation of this statement is:  
You are reserved exclusively to me.

ומאי לישנא דרבנן?

דאסר לה אכ"ע כהקדש.

תוס'

והרי את מקודשת לי ... ופשטא דמילתא  
מקודשת לי מיוחדת לי.

The common denominator between *kiddushin* (betrothal) and *hekdesh* (sanctified property) is exclusivity. Something dedicated to the exclusive use of the Temple as *hekdesh* makes it forbidden for private use. In marriage, each spouse devotes themselves exclusively to the other and may not share a similar relationship with any other person. These two concepts go hand in hand. When something is *dedicated* for a particular purpose, it is automatically *separated* from anything which is foreign to this purpose.

Kiddushin creates a spiritual attachment even before any physical bond has been created. Why should this be so? The reason is that we understand that the marriage, while establishing a legal relationship, is the means of revealing the spiritual bond that was always there.

## PART B. THE TRUE LASTING PLEASURE OF LOVE

The New York Times calls the best proponents of Western love “restorers.” These are couples who do whatever they can to keep their love alive.

1. **Daniel Jones, “Good Enough? That’s Great” from [www.nytimes.com](http://www.nytimes.com) (Jan. 31, 2014) – Western lovers will accept marital boredom.**

THE RESTORER. When a restorer couple’s marriage starts to feel subpar, they sit down and have a sensible discussion about where their marriage is and where they would like it to be. Then they set goals and seek the means to achieve those goals. Typically affluent, educated and highly motivated, restorer couples almost single-handedly support the vast and profitable marriage-improvement industry...

Ultimately every member of a dedicated restorer couple will become a marital-boredom scholar, reading everything that explains why living and having sex with the same person for 30 or 40 years can get boring and what to do about it when it happens to you. In their pursuit of such knowledge, these couples convert their night stands from leisure-reading podiums scattered with travel magazines and suspense novels into social-science libraries stacked with ominous-sounding book titles such as: “I Don’t,” “Marriage Shock,” “Against Love” and “Mating in Captivity.”

From their research they will learn how their boredom may ebb and flow before finally leveling off into the pleasant hum of old age. They’ll become experts in the ways men and women have driven each other crazy for all of eternity.

How does the Torah help us keep love alive? Inasmuch as the Torah’s goal is to help a couple unite on the soul level, the Torah alone holds the key for how we are supposed to keep passion alive on a physical level. Therefore, our modern love syndromes have always been well known to one who has a Torah outlook. Marital boredom is avoided by studying and practicing the Torah’s perspective on marital intimacy.



2. **Rabbi Yitzhak Ginsburg, *The Mystery of Marriage*, pp. 402-3 – Built on proper foundations, the Jewish marriage helps bring people to greater love rather than letting love fizzle out.**

The secular notion of romance is the tension preceding and leading to the consumption of love. Once this tension is resolved boredom sets in and even hostility may follow; artificial means must therefore be found to reinstate the tension and renew the challenge.

[A] Jewish marriage is spared this need by the Laws of Family Purity. The romantic dynamic of tension and fulfillment is built into these observances, which constantly refresh the couple's romantic love on the physical plane. On the metaphysical plane, however, the intensity of romance is preserved by the couple's modesty...

Although there is a rational side to marriage, it is its super rational aspect that affords its infinite depth.

The Torah's goal is to create intimacy and closeness. The best arena to teach us these skills is in a totally committed inter-dependent relationship. Through such a commitment, our selfish love can develop over time into a "love not dependent on anything." Physical passion becomes translated into a love of the soul, which bonds us to the other forever.

3. **Rabbi M. Shlanger, *Ohel Rachel*, Ch. 1, pg. 17 – The mitzvah of sexual relations allows a couple to feel complete and helps to perfect their marriage.**

This mitzvah {of *Onah*} is called "joy" because it makes people complete – and this feeling of completion is what initially caused him joy at the wedding. As the Maharal states...*Because their joining together* {in sexual relations as described by the Torah} *is what makes a person complete.* (Beer HaGolah Be'er Sheni) The joy that the couple experiences from all aspects of their relationship, and particularly from mitzvat onah, develops their love and brings them to a perfected marriage...

In contrast to the "restorer couple," the following is a description of the depth of oneness that a Jewish couple can achieve.

4. **Rabbi Yitzhak Ginsburg, *The Mystery of Marriage*, pg. 72 – Marriage is the most intense of all relationships, because its goal is to reveal our true self through focusing on the good of another.**

At the final stage husband and wife come to experience themselves as a single entity. Their common soul-root is now fully manifest in both of them; as they were in heaven, so they are on earth. This is the fulfillment of God's intention that they "cling...and become one."

5. **Rabbi Avraham Edelstein, Parshah Insights, Acharei Mot, pg. 8 – Since Adam and Chava were created from the same being, they were able to achieve a high state of unity.**

The culminating act of a spiritual, intellectual, and emotional unity between husband and wife is sexual intimacy. This act recreates Adam prior to the split of the first man and woman – they again become one being. They have finally resolved the tension generated by their original separation. Hence the intensity of passion with which it is endowed and the sense of wholeness and peace it brings in its wake. Because of its significance, marital relations are considered an act of the greatest holiness, and it brings down God's *Shechinah* (Presence) into the home and through it into the world. (Based on Mishkan Yisroel p. 9, Ramban Iggeret HaKodesh, Ketubot 62b)

The marital boredom that many couples feel contrasts with the potential for continual renewal within a marriage based on Torah principles, which allows for the relationship to constantly refresh itself and grow in intensity and depth over the years.

Aside from the Laws of Family Purity that intuit a couple's need for space to heighten their physical relationship, is there a deeper reason why couples who follow marriage principles defined by the Torah should experience a higher level of marital satisfaction?

6. **Rabbi Itamar Schwartz, Getting to Know Your Home, pp. 136-8 – Pleasure is a physical and spiritual connector.**

When a person does not enjoy something, he is not really connected to it. The importance of pleasure in creating connection is relevant to the physical and the spiritual aspects of life... Marriage is a connection of a soul with another soul and a body with another body. If the couple lacks a spiritual connection, then they are lacking in their connection in marriage... The pleasure of the [body] is a step towards creating and strengthening their union, and the vehicle for bringing forth the depth of their relationship. When the pleasures are only physical, the relationship lacks holiness... Instead of acting as a vehicle for the soul, the physical pleasure has become an end in itself... leaving neither spouse with a sense of closeness or any great emotional bond. Instead, there is a lingering sense of emptiness and self-indulgence.

A Jewish marriage is built on bonding on the soul level. Just like the soul animates and fills the body with life, so, too, the soul relationship constantly built by the couple animates and makes their physical connection passionate.

As we explained in the last class, love is directly impacted and energized by the spiritual concept of unity. When a married couple becomes more unified on a spiritual level, then their love will continually strengthen. Necessarily, soul-mate love is meant to get better over time. Again, here the Jewish Laws of Family Purity nurture the love, by giving the couple the ability to progressively develop and enjoy their intellectual, emotional, spiritual and physical connections.

7. **Rabbi Dr. Joseph Breuer, Rav Breuer's Essays, pp. 245-6 – Desire builds love and oneness when channeled properly.**

As long as a Jewish husband [and wife] observes the Divine marriage code, he will love his wife. For his love will not then be one of fleeting passion or passing attraction, but it will be that of true love which is a joyous mutual devotion, a joint realization of common ideals of life. And in the course of their married life – “surrounded by a hedge of roses” (Sanhedrin 37a) of ever-reoccurring shy and sacred restraint – this love will find perpetual bridal rejuvenation. Each year will add strength and intensity to this love, for such love receives in equal measure as it gives...So long as you retain it, your marriage will remain forever young, for God will continue to dwell in your marriage...

Here again we see how sexual desire expressed in the framework of Jewish ideals helps a couple grow in love their whole life. When two people live in this way, neither feels a need to look elsewhere or to consider leaving the other.

### **PART C. EXPANDING OUR SENSE OF SELF**

It is possible to have a relationship with any person or anything for that matter. Many people relate to their pets, and some even to their plants. Some relationships have unlimited room for growth, while others are very limited; and yet others totally block us from finding endless love.

1. **Sara Y. Rigler, Friend or Foe, from [www.aish.com](http://www.aish.com) – Not all relationships offer us the same potential for spiritual growth; some can even stunt it.**

Sometimes, “relationships” are really anti-relationships, for, in the process of forming a bond, they destroy a potentially closer bond. For example, an adulterous liaison may look like a relationship, but it destroys the quintessential relationship, which is marriage. A parent, who spends hours a week helping the local homeless, but has insufficient time for his or her own children is also partaking of an “anti-relationship.” (The average American teenager speaks seven minutes a day with his mother and five minutes a day with his father.)...

To understand how different relationships have different inherent potentials for bonding, we can assign a numerical “bonding value” to various relationships. For example, you could form a relationship of love (=giving) with a drug addict in your city. I did that. With all my involvement with Mayan, the differences between us were too huge to form a bond deeper than, let's say, 5 out of 100. Let's say your relationship with...your friends could reach 60... with your parents and your children you have a potential of 100. And your relationship with your spouse would have a potential of 10,000, because it's the sole relationship with a potential for total bonding – spiritually, emotionally, intellectually, and physically.

Whenever you opt to devote yourself to a relationship with a lower potential value *at the expense* of a higher value relationship, you're really choosing *against* relationship...

Judaism sees the merging of male and female in marriage as the stepping stone to greatness. Husband and wife help each other achieve their potential on multiple levels:

1) personal – on spiritual, emotional, and intellectual levels, 2) familial – as a spouse, parent, child, sibling, etc., 3) professional, and 4) communal – as part of one's local and even greater world community, by participating in *chesed* (acts of benevolence), *tzedakah* (charity), and communal service towards *tikun olam* (improving society).

A growth-oriented person merits his mate precisely for that purpose – to grow and become an ever-greater person via merging with his opposite. This merging produces a new reality that only the two can achieve together.

The potential of every Jew is perfectly matched in his soul partner. Marrying someone Jewish allows us to reach our potential, expanding our consciousness and identity rather than ultimately bringing us to a dead end. (For more on these and other benefits of marrying your soul mate, see the Morasha Class *Marrying Your Soul Mate*.)

But there is no such thing as utopia. Sometimes the dynamics of marriage change, either due to challenging circumstances, or because one or both of the partners do not invest the hard work necessary to maintain their marriage. Traditional Judaism recognizes that under certain conditions, such as when marriage becomes a source of great contention, break-up is necessary. Thus Judaism has perhaps the oldest and richest tradition of laws and literature relating to divorce.

Having said that, until recently, Jewish divorce was extremely rare, and even as western culture influences traditional Jewish life, divorce rates are still much lower than average. Why should this be? What makes Jewish marriage different?

The answer is: Jewish marriage is different. It is a bonding of soul mates, and therefore filled with meaning unmatched by other love relationships. The strength of the bond is related to the couple's Jewish connection. The more dedicated a couple is to studying and observing Jewish tradition, the more their marriage is a conscious bonding of soul mates. The notion that husband and wife – and only husband and wife – can be soul mates, bound together from before their birth, is fundamental to Jewish thinking and the foundation of Jewish living. With the distancing from Jewish tradition and values comes the accompanying weakening of Jewish marriages. People start looking for ice cream.

## **PART D. IMPACT AND LEGACY**

Let us now consider how marriage itself is the foundation to create our legacy and impact the world. As we learned in the past two classes, Jewish marriage is the vehicle that brings a person to completion. As such, he has a greater ability to positively impact those around him, as well as the next generation, through who he is and what he does. Being a positive role model for others will in turn affect what they do and who they become.

We can also impact the future through our children. Let us return to the idea we began this series of classes with:

1. **Rabbi Aryeh Kaplan, *Made in Heaven*, pp. 4-5 – Having two children can change the face of humanity.**

A single marriage one thousand years ago could have changed every single person alive today. Assume that they have a “small” family of only two children. After only 24 generations – a mere 600 years there will be 16,777,216 descendants. This is very close to the current world Jewish population.

Thus when a couple decides to marry it is much more than a personal decision. It is a decision that will ultimately affect the entire Jewish people. This explains why boy-meeting-girl is such a great miracle, and is so carefully planned by God. In the course of time every Jew in the world will have in his heredity the unique characteristics that result from his union.

In a way the Talmud alludes to this, it says: “Why was Adam created alone? To teach that whoever destroys a single Jewish life is counted as if he has destroyed an entire world, and whoever saves a single life is counted as if he has saved an entire world.”

It is obvious that if God is concerned with the destiny of even the most insignificant individual, then He is all the more concerned with the population of the entire world. Creating a marriage is therefore just like creating an entire world.

Indeed, it is the extraordinary bond of Jewish marriage that enables individuals, families, and communities to actualize our deepest aspirations.

2. **Rabbi Pinchas Stolper, *Made in Heaven*, intro pp. XIII-XIV – The Jewish Home is the greatest production house of individuals who impact the world.**

In the family structure we find the one human, social institution...for creating and forming the individual...In the historic Jewish view the family and not the synagogue is considered the basic institution of Jewish life and society...a model of harmony, love, and stability...the essential force in the development of a God-conscious individual... After birth, too, the father and mother must live together within the family unit...in such a way that [their children] will develop into men and women who are capable of fulfilling their human and spiritual destinies. Each person is to a large extent what his parents and family make him; if they are successful parents the children may even be better than they are. Jewish parents have always hoped to rear children even more successful than themselves, each more capable of fulfilling his own individual human and spiritual destiny...Marriage...is the point of origin of all mankind...which can bring to fruition man's greatest hopes and dreams.

### KEY THEMES OF SECTION III

- ∞ There are many benefits to connecting with our Jewish soul mate. Among them are attaining a true feeling of oneness, forming a deep connection through marital intimacy, developing an empowering sense of self-expansion, and impacting the future.
- ∞ True unity occurs on the spiritual plane. This connection is created in the Jewish act of Kiddushin, marriage, which brings God into the relationship between husband and wife.
- ∞ Our modern love syndromes were well known to our Sages, and throughout history have been resolved simply by following the Torah's path in intimacy. Doing so helps translate physical passion into a soul-level love, an eternal bond.
- ∞ Marrying our soul mate gives us unlimited access to our potential and room for exponential growth. The potential of every Jew is perfectly matched in their soul partner. Marrying someone with a different spiritual mission cuts a Jew off from the potential that his soul can attain.
- ∞ Judaism sees the merging of male and female in marriage as the stepping stone to greatness. Husband and wife help each other achieve their potential on personal, family, professional, and communal levels.
- ∞ Counter to the theory that a spouse and children slow a person down, one of the ways that we impact the world and leave a lasting legacy is through raising our children with purpose. For this reason the Jewish people's greatest resource has always been its people. The greatest producer of this asset has always been the Jewish home.

## CLASS SUMMARY:

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### HOW DO WE DEFINE A SOUL MATE?

- The Jewish definition of soul mate is a person who helps the other complete the mission he was sent to accomplish in the world. Therefore, if a person is doing a good job, the soul mate encourages, and if not the soul mate opposes. It is a reciprocal relationship. One of the main jobs of both is to learn to relate to and give to one another.

### IS THERE ANY SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A JEW AND A NON-JEW?

- Physically, mentally, and emotionally there may be only minor differences between a Jew and a non-Jew. For this reason resistance to intermarriage may even seem preposterous to many young people. But Judaism sees every person as having a unique purpose in this world, a spiritual mission. The major difference between Jew and non-Jew has to do with the purpose for which each soul was sent into the world.



- By marrying another Jew, who is our soul mate, we are able to achieve our true purpose.

### IS MY SOUL MATE JEWISH?

- A Jew is sent into this world to complete an entirely different mission than that of a non-Jew. Inter-marriage does not seem like an issue because we are not raised with an awareness of our spiritual mission.
- Even if a Jew decides not to accept his personal mission, the differences between the mission of a Jew and a non-Jew still exist and affect many areas of our life. Although we may not consciously have an awareness of this mission, our soul does.

### WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF KNOWING MY SOUL MATE IS JEWISH?

- There are many benefits to connecting with our Jewish soul mate. Among them are the potential of attaining 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.

### WHAT DOES MARRYING JEWISH HAVE TO DO WITH OUR SENSE OF SELF?

- Marrying our soul mate gives us unlimited access to our potential and allows room for exponential growth. The potential of every Jew is perfectly matched in the soul partner, and the merging of soul mates in marriage is the stepping stone to greatness – personally, professionally, and communally.

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

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Rabbi Aharon Feldman, *The River, the Kettle and the Bird*, Feldheim Publishers.

Chana Levitan, *I Only Want to Get Married Once: The 10 Essential Questions for Getting It Right the First Time*, Gefen Publishing House.

Nachum Braverman and Shimon Apisdorf, *The Death of Cupid: Reclaiming the Wisdom of Love, Dating, Romance and Marriage*, Leviathan Press.

Gila Manolson, *Choosing to Love*, Feldheim Publishers.

For deeper insight into the unique dynamics of a Jewish marriage, see Tomer Devorah, sections on *Gevurah* and *Chesed*.

Even after you have married your soul mate, any marriage takes work. For practical advice on how to achieve marital harmony and peace, see Rabbi Yirmiyohu & Tehilla Abramov, *Two Halves of a Whole*, Jewish Marriage Education Publishers.