

Delight (Oneg and Chafets) In Your Life Partner

"May your fountain be blessed and may you delight in the wife of your youth" (Prov. 5:18)

In this week's *Torah* reading, it is evident what our father Abraham thought of his wife Sarah – he deeply loved and cared for her. Even in death, he honors her. He insists on purchasing an expensive burial place for her remains. This is prophetic in that in doing so, he purchases the burial place that will one day be his own and all of our patriarchs (except Rachel). Scripture and the *Torah* have a lot to say about husbands and wives, and if you notice carefully, starting in Genesis, we can observe Abraham and Sarah modeling marriage for us. This *Parashat* gives me the opportunity to speak about the type of marriage *Adonai* created and the special relationship between husbands and wives that Scripture calls for.

We'll start out by focusing on the word delight. The first Hebrew word associated with marriage is *oneg* (עֵנֶג), We are firstly to delight in the Lord: *"Delight (וְהִתְעַנַּגְתָּ) yourself in Adonai, and He will give you the requests (desires, KJV) of your heart (Psalm 37:4) and delight in His Shabbat: ¹³If you turn back your foot from Shabbat, from doing your pleasure on My holy day, and call Shabbat a delight (עֵנֶג), the holy day of Adonai honorable, If you honor it, not going your own ways, not seeking your own pleasure, nor speaking your usual speech, ¹⁴then You will delight (תִּתְעַנַּגְתָּ) yourself in Adonai, and I will let you ride over the heights of the earth, I will feed you with the heritage of your father Jacob." For the mouth of Adonai has spoken (Isa. 58:13-14)*

A second Hebrew word associated with delight is the word *chafets* (חַפֵּץ). We are to delight in the Torah of *Adonai*: *"But his delight (חַפֵּצוֹ) is in the Torah of Adonai, and on His Torah he meditates day and night" (Psalm 1:2).* When we delight in the Lord and in His ways, he will then delight in us: *"Does Adonai delight (הִתְחַפֵּץ) in burnt offerings and sacrifices as in obeying the voice of Adonai? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, to pay heed than the fat of rams" (1 Sam 15:22).* *Adonai* will also order our steps: *"From Adonai a man's steps are made firm, when He delights (יִתְחַפֵּץ) in his way" (Psalm 37:23).* We, then, experience His loving hand upon us: *"For Adonai loves those He reproves, even as a father, the son in whom he delights" (Prov. 3:12).* Then we will become *Hephzibah* and *Beulah*: *"No longer will you be termed "Forsaken", no longer your land termed "Desolate". Instead you will be called, "My Delight is in Her" and your land, "Married". For Adonai delights (כִּי־יִתְחַפֵּץ) in you, and your land will be married" (Isa. 62:4).* He will also send us the angel (messenger) of His covenant: *"Behold, I am sending My messenger (מַלְאָכִי) and he will clear the way before Me" (Mal. 3:1).*

So today, if you are able to hear His Voice, then *"...you (will) delight in the wife of your youth" (Prov. 5:18b).* Do not wait for time to pass and celebrate your spouse *after* they pass away. Like our father Abraham did in *Chayei Sarah*, we are going to **DELIGHT** in our spouse. We are going to *Oneg* and *chafets* our spouses and celebrate that: *"Whoever finds a wife finds good, and receives favor from Adonai" (Prov. 18:22) and: "House and wealth are an inheritance from fathers, but a prudent wife is from Adonai" (Prov. 19:14).*

God's design of marriage is a complete unity (an *echad*) of man and wife, which is an embodiment consisting of spirit, soul, and body. There must therefore be oneness (*echad*) of spirit, oneness of soul, and oneness of in the physical relationship. In order to achieve this *echad* on the physical level, each partner must recognize that the predominant factor of unity in the marriage comes *first* by *echad* of spirit and then by *echad* of soul.

If one were to describe the internal drive structure of a married couple, the spirit must be pictured **dominant**, the soul in **harmony with the spirit**, and the **physical under control**. With these inner drive structures functioning in both the husband and wife, the **Spirit of the Marriage** will remain strong even if the soul and the body become incompatible. If a couple achieves the best possible physical relationship, they will still experience only a small and distorted part of what God intended for marriage oneness (*echad*). If they enjoy the best physical and psychological oneness, they still will have a relationship that falls short of what God intended.

On the other hand, if a couple comes together in oneness (*echad*) of spirit, each partner is free to demonstrate love by giving to the other's needs. Sacrificial love (*agape* love) becomes the norm. Even if for some medical reason they are not able to enjoy the physical aspects of marriage, they can still give to each other's needs while having an awesome marriage.

Is it possible to enhance the **Spirit of a Marriage**? Absolutely! As a couple gets closer to the Lord, they indeed come closer to each other's spirit. For this (if for no other) reason, it is essential that each partner maintain their own intimate fellowship and closeness with the Lord. The principle in effect is the **synergism** developing into a strong spiritual power: *"¹⁶I pray that from His glorious riches He would grant you to be strengthened in your inner being with power through His Ruach" (Eph. 3:16). "⁷In the same way, husbands, live with your wives in an understanding way. Though they are weaker partners, honor them as equal heirs of the grace of life. In this way, your prayers will not be hindered" (1 Peter 3:7).*

We must deepen the spirit of a marriage through *Adonai's* Word and Prayer: *"²⁶to make her holy, having cleansed her by immersion (mikveh) in the word" (Ephesians 5:26).* In this way the couple is able to: *"³³But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you" (Matthew 6:33).* For *Adonai* has stated: *"...No good thing will He withhold from those who walk uprightly" (Psalm 84:12b)*

On the other hand, the **Spirit of a Marriage** is damaged when either party feels used (or abused). The husband is to view his wife as an extension of himself and to protect her as he would protect himself: *"²⁹For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it—just as Messiah also does His community" (Ephesians 5:29).* Therefore, (1) oneness (*echad*) is promoted by a servant's spirit – working to make your partner successful; (2) oneness (*echad*) is deepened by helping one another identify and develop their spiritual gifts; (3) completeness is rewarded when major decisions are not made until both partners are One (*echad*) in Spirit; and (4) the ultimate expression of oneness (*echad*) is when a couple can say that their partner is their *"best friend."*

The apostle Paul stated: *"¹⁴Do not be unequally yoked with unbelievers" (2 Cor. 6:14)* The same principle applies after marriage. Do you really think that if either partner chooses to shy away from *Adonai* that the marriage will not suffer? Can your marriage really improve if either one of you chooses to become immoral, or sensual, or to become irresponsible, or to focus on material goods, or to become selfish, or to become bitter, angry, or prideful? You know the answer: **God Forbid – NO WAY!** The only way those of us that have been married for lengthy periods of time have grown together is by growing closer **first in spirit** and then other dimensions will follow. Do you want to build up the spirit of your marriage? Then get close to *Adonai! Shabbat Shalom!*