

INTERNATIONAL JEWISH RETREAT

'Where Jews Connect'



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Unedited

Rabbi Simon Jacobson - Part 1

MO Moderator
RSJ Rabbi Simon Jacobson
US Unidentified Speakers

MO Good morning everyone. Don't worry, the food's not running anywhere. There'll be another opportunity to make the most of all that delicious, certainly, looking food and I'm sure tasting food too. Welcome to the final session of our first weekend retreat. I say that because we are on a learning curve and the feedback so far – and we encourage all your feedback – the good, the bad, the ugly, whatever you feel, that's real and we want to hear it and any good ideas in the future, certainly, and that's how we build and grow, and I'm sure all of you, Friday night, Shabbat lunch, last night and today certainly in terms of the quality insight really. I know Rabbi Jacobson is standing here and that obviously I'm only going to say good things about him, but really one of the great minds and more than just a mind, this is experiential in terms of interacting with people, primarily based in New York, but his travels bring him to all parts of the world and part of what we're trying to achieve here in bringing all the young people together locally, European and beyond that too, is to build up a good relationship with people like Rabbi Jacobson and some other too and over the year we will have many more opportunities to have such wonderful moments, together with very inspirational people like Rabbi Jacobson.

I'm not... I'm sorry, I've got a little bit carried away there, but this is Rabbi Jacobson, he's going to share with us some insights into, you know, one of the most basic questions of all and that is, what are we looking for in people, guy and a girl, girl and a guy, Ella D, for you it's too late already. But it's not too late, because each and everyone of us has those good qualities. Part of life is about bringing out the good qualities in other people. Some people bring out the worst in us and I'm sure some of you know people like that. I'm kidding. I'm sure all of you that are here are surrounded by people who bring out the best in you and that's really what partnership is about, that's what marriage is about. Rabbi Jacobson's going to address us now, he'll take questions and answers afterwards and the topic is: what are we really

looking for in an individual with whom we want to spend the rest of our lives with.
Rabbi Jacobson.

RSJ Good morning.

MO Rabbi, I just have to warn you that you're being recorded.

RSJ We get that message every time we call our service online, we're being monitored or recorded for, what do they call it, for quality purposes. We have to be monitored and recorded, so that's just like... what? Anyway. So yes.

Good morning. All of you were here throughout the weekend? Or this is... anyone here the first time? Like yesterday lunch or Friday night? Not because I'm asking whether I can repeat any of my jokes, more like, you know, I just want to know the continuity thing.

So here's what's interesting, talking about the experiential and experimental, so last night it was like 300 people, right? And Friday night another 300 hundred or similar overlap and here you have, one second, 111 people, so not that I'm into numbers, but statistically you want to wonder like how come everyone wasn't inspired last night to come today here.

MO They were so inspired last night, that they're...

US They're still high on inspiration.

RSJ Right, there you go and the question is, how long is this recovery period? A lifetime sometimes. Like who was the gentleman who said, life is what happens to you when you're busy making other plans. So they're busy making other plans. Now I don't mean to be critical, it's just interesting; I just wanted to hear what you think. But I think it's a good spring board to this discussion.

Obviously I come from New York and New York, as I mentioned, is a pretty good Mecca, some call it epidemic of single life, where it's glorified and basically it's not a number one priority – marriage or a committed relationship, let's put it this way. There's a guy that I know, a few weeks ago, let's me know that he's finally reached the pinnacle of his career; he's in a relationship that's not committed. He's getting everything thing he needs and there's no commitment. He says it took him a long time to master that art and he sees it as a source of pride.

So I'm gathering that, since you are here, a party scene like last night or Friday night, as beautiful as it is, you know, the real question is: can that be carried over into a committed relationship and what does commitment mean and what does a relationship mean? And the truth is, to really be somewhat bold about it, it really is challenging the wrong assumptions, because a lot of assumptions – I talk from my own experience – talking to many, many young people, people not so young, who are struggling in relationships or struggling to find a relationship and they may think they are doing everything right and they're not. It's not so easy always to tell somebody, you're not doing that right, that's not what they want to hear. They want to hear, you know, they want to like modify this or that or maybe just redefine the person.

Just recently I had a conversation with a woman who was looking for a committed relationship, nothing's working. She's been dating, she seems to have all the qualities, she's intelligent, she has a good job, she's attractive and so on, and so I asked here, do you have any blind spots? She says, yes, but I know what they are. You hear? You have blind spots and you know what they are. That's not called a blind spot. That's like the doctor that says, I'll tell you when you need a second opinion. You know, the whole point of a second opinion is you don't want to hear it from the guy who has the first opinion.

So how do you go on to explain to this woman that, you know, your blind spots may be ones you don't know and maybe there are things that you think you've got right that are completely off? And I'm not suggesting everyone here has that, but the truth is, everyone does have those blind spots and that's often the culprit, because the areas that you don't know what you're doing, what you project. How many of you know what you really project? When someone meets you for the first time, what are they really picking up; the first vibe? Very few people will tell you that they feel that you're cold or aloof or angry. You know, everyone gives off a vibe and that's, just for the record, it doesn't mean the vibe you give off is the real one, people give off a very negative vibe and they're very fine people, they just don't have that outer veneer social skills. Then there are people who are the other way around, they give off a great vibe and you cut a little beneath the surface and they're not people you want to be with. So I'm not suggesting... but nevertheless, it's good to know. Because sometimes actually even body language, somebody... how they walk or how they stand and/or how they sit. You can see a person who's been hurt. You can see sometimes a person who is introverted, trying not to be. A lot of things that can be seen and people... not everybody sees, but people... some people see more than they think they see. Just like you see other things that they don't know you see.

So I want to address some of the key assumptions and so on. But maybe I want to begin with a more practical question. I don't know if it's practical. I once gave a workshop on relationships called The Learning Annex in New York, there a thing called Learning Annex, just a secular network, they have these classes. So I gave this course with around 50 people and the question I asked and I want to ask you as well, but I asked: how many people here believe in a love for ever after? And only one woman raised her hand, out of 50. Which surprised me, because I knew that they didn't believe it, but I didn't think they'd acknowledge it, you know, I thought about half would raise and then we'd have to debate the issue if they actually believe it or not. But here they helped the cause because they just... and then when I asked: why do you think only one person raised their hand? And they said, she probably was never hurt in a relationship, so she's young and naïve, so she thinks... she still believes the movies and the romance novels about love forever after, you know, that type of thing. This was a cynical New York crowd, obviously, but it made for great material to speak.

So I want to ask you the question and then, you know, hopefully you'll be honest. How many of you believe in love forever after? And I don't mean that as a fantasy. Okay? And the rest of you, it means that you don't? Huh? So let me amplify the question. For those of you... not to be ashamed, I'm not challenging those that do believe it. Okay? Right?

Here's the challenge: nothing on earth that we know of lasts forever. Everything erodes and everything dies; everything. Physical objects, even minerals over the years, that's what called radioactive decay and stuff like that, everything decays. We age. So why suddenly when one commodity called love would last forever? Obvious question. So yes, in our minds and our hearts we'd like to believe it. We may even have been exposed to parents or others who have such relationships, which obviously, that's a key factor, because if you've seen it, it's not a fantasy, you've seen it happen. The question is what the ingredients are and how do you replicate it, but it's there.

So, I'm talking about the logical, scientific level, how's it possible when everything dies and we are human beings, mortals. Yes?

US Maybe because [inaudible].

RSJ Yes, exactly right, okay, good.

US I think everything's static, included, that if you are in a relationship that evolves [inaudible].

RSJ Okay. So I'm going to break it down in real specific detail, because what you're both saying is correct, absolutely, but to really analyze it, obviously the question is: what is love? So we're talking about a topic here now, is how to... what to look for, is really a secondary question to first, what is it? If you've got it all wrong, if it's a distorted view, then obviously you're going to look for the wrong things, you know, and if you have a different view... that's why people have different opinions on what to look for. What really is a companion for life? What's a soul mate? Is there such a thing as a soul mate?

I'm going to address all this and obviously with a goal to really be able to maybe challenge your assumptions or maybe broaden them to a point beyond and then, really come down to what the criteria... how do I find... now I know what it is, what I think it is, how do I find that in my life? What am I doing wrong? What am I doing right? Sometimes people you see, they're always choosing the wrong person and pattern of that, so all that is, I'm sure, part of our history and if we open it to the floor here you can hear all kinds of great stories and all kind of nightmares that people have in relationships, as they say. You know what I'm talking about? Yes. That's good. And as they say: you can't live with her, you can't live without her or you can't live with him, you can't live without him. Love is one of those things you can't get around. You either have, you know, you either have love or you have bad love and it's very hard – you can't be neutral for long because a person is wired to find somebody they can be intimate with and have a loving relationship and build something, even though, sadly, there are people giving up and just, you know... sorry, it's not working properly?

MO Go ahead, try again.

RSJ Do you want me to start again? Did you hear what I said? Or are you just like being nice and smiling? They were laughing in the right places, I thought they could hear.

Okay. There was a lecture like that, without names, who spoke like for three hours and the whole crowd... everybody came out... I wasn't there, but my brother told this to me, and he says, he was there, he didn't understand a thing that the guy said, everyone was kind of, it was the deepest lecture every, nobody understood it. That was the reaction. So it's not important what happens, it's important what people think happened. So, with that being said...

So let's dissect this and talk about what love is. Now what I'll do is what we call a comparative study. We'll take the prevalent secular model of love, somewhat scientific, and compare it to what we'll call the Torah model. It's good for contrast, a study in contrast. So even though there are many models out there and obviously this is not a seminar that can go through every theory that exists, but there are... there's a prevalent one that most of us are exposed to in the western world and we either hear it directly in our education system or definitely subliminally, messages in the media, so the whole standard of what love is today. What is love?

So evolutionary theory, let's call it the Darwinian/Freudian model, basically explains it consistent with just general evolutionary theory; that it's all about one key driving rule, cardinal rule, called: survival of the species. Species must perpetuate, that's the rule, nothing is more important, because if a species doesn't perpetuate it won't exist. Interestingly, no one really knows and no one can explain why that is a cardinal rule. You know, there are things in life, you can make the argument that some things do disappear, do obliterate, there are species that did become extinct. But regardless, that is the given assumption; that species must perpetuate.

Now, the way nature perpetuates, except in the amoebas and one-celled animals, is through breeding. So basically you have to get a male and female together. This is true, humans, animals and amphibians and so on. There's different ways how an offspring is produced, but bottom line is you've got to get them together. So nature has to get them together. So therefore, nature created and evolved into an attraction, what we call sexual attraction, male would be attracted to a female, female to a male and they will court each other in some way in order to breed. But if you break it down into pure scientific raw fact, there's nothing romantic about it, there's nothing sublime, it's simply the need to breed and if they weren't attracted to each other, why would they come together. So there has to be some type of... some force, some power.

Now, here's where it gets... I'm not exaggerating this, but it does come across as humorous in a way. Humans however evolved beyond animals. So animals don't... some of them have elaborate courtship and it has been documented today, you can see it on film, but in general, many, most animals just know what they have to do and then they disappear. You don't find, for example, animal bars where you have to go to a bar and you have to court a woman, there are pick up lines and all kinds of stuff and manipulation and manoeuvring, because they're wired in a pure way. Evolution knows how to bring them together and then they, some of them, you don't see any love, they disappear afterwards, you know, it's very clinical and very practical. But humans evolved with minds and we developed a whole thing, you know, some people say that basically all modern culture is really just nature's way of getting people to breed. So we call it romance, because most people don't like to think that we're just

two breeders being manipulated by evolutionary forces just to bear offspring so the species should perpetuate. So we have these elaborate dating mechanisms, you go to therapy for it and, you know, the whole works.

I read actually one of the evolutionists to say that the whole thing is really a quirk and a mistake. You know, evolution has its mistakes because it's not efficient. It would have been much more efficient if it was men and women, meaning human men and women, Homo sapiens, who just simply do what they have to do and stop making a whole thing about it, you know? We have to have like he's going to bring my flowers and you want him sensitive and warm. But this is the truth, bacteria have to mate, they have to breed, some people made that argument. I know it sounds repulsive, but if you break it down to: if perpetuation of the species is the key drive, then everything else is secondary.

Now, most of us will reject that because we just can't accept that that's what it's all about. But you read it up and you tell me if you come to a different conclusion. This is, in a nutshell, what I call the Darwinian/Freudian. Why do I call it that? Because that's essentially what Darwin writes about the perpetuation of the species and Freud adds to it in psychological terms, I mean, I'm not asserting that they knew each other, but it's very similar, that was the driving force inside of the psyche, it's called the id. The id, the German word, and it sounds like the yid, but without the y, as we shall discuss a little later. But the id is, as he puts it, I don't have the exact quote, but I remember reading, in his own words, in Freud's words, that the id is a mad sexually raving spirit that did not have a clerk and a doorman, as I say, it would be complete, you know, self-destructive and destructive. So that's the id and Freud explains it as ego and superego that we superimpose upon ourselves, restraints and so-called humane reactions because we need to coexist with others, so it's not just all of us driven by narcissism. But essentially... but the core strive of a person is self, me, me, me and nothing else and that includes also in the sexual context and take away all the trimmings and all the accoutrements, that's what we are at the heart. So if you think of it that way, as I said, the whole... the props, the entire romantic scene that some of... all of us aspire to is really just nature's way of manipulating us to breed to perpetuate the species. How many of you like that, to know that? It's very positive right?

Now, here's the Torah view. The Torah model, I'm just going to call Genesis, right in the beginning, it says like this: God created the creature in his own image. That's what it says. God wanted [speaks Hebrew] to create an entity in my image, God said. And then he continues: He created this entity called a human being, [speaks Hebrew], male and female, and in very literal reading, it means that the human being was a male and female, an androgynous creature, both male and female, and then the later Torah goes on and speaks about how He split these two into parts and they became the male and became the female. Which by the way, dispels one of the big myths, people think that God created a man and then at some point took a rib and created a woman, it's not accurate. There's no question that, when you read the Bible, the reading is that God created this creature [speaks Hebrew], literally two halves, from where we get the idea of soul mates. Then he split it into two. There, the question is how the split took place and there are different opinions, but there's no question that it was a male and female and especially the mystics explain that the male and female are two, so to speak, God dimensions called for example, when we say [speaks

Hebrew] in the Kabbalistic language, that's the feminine dimension of the divine. When you say [speaks Hebrew], that's the masculine dimension. So even though God is one, the one God manifests and expresses himself, it's in two forms, it's like two forms of energy, masculine and feminine energy and as it evolves into the human level, on the physical level, it's male and female as we know it.

So we really are embodiments from this perspective of two energies: masculine energy and feminine energy. Of course there's overlap, you know, a masculine person has feminine elements and a woman, feminine, has masculine parts. And then the Torah – this is the key sentence – then the Torah continues: [speak Hebrew] and for this reason, a man will leave his home to find the other half, basically. Because we essentially began as one, male and female, that's the root of sexual attraction. No mention of breeding, no mention of children, it's not about perpetuating the species per se, I'll address that in a moment, you know, children and so on, but it's about two entities who were once one and now they are looking to reunite. And it's not just reuniting with the other part of themselves, they're also reuniting with God, because to have God completely in your life, you need to have the male and female, because the image of God is basically half male/half female, so to speak.

So what is the root of attraction? The root of attraction is a transcendent root, very transcendent. It's about seeking a so-called spiritual other half. Now also important to the disclaimer is, it doesn't mean that you're half a human being without your spouse, you know, we obviously are complete individuals, but you're not complete if you talk about the big picture, on a cosmic level, we are not complete without the other person. We'll talk about that as well, individuality versus marriage and so on or adversely, how individuality reconciles with marriage.

So the Torah view is a stark contrast between the Torah view and the so-called secular view. The Torah view has nothing to do with perpetuation of species, it's not selfish, it's about discovering the transcendent element in you, which is the other part that you were once one with.

Now what about children? Yes, then afterwards the Torah says: and God commanded Adam and Eve [speaks Hebrew], multiply and have children, because that definitely concretizes and in a way expresses the unity of the male and female. But contrary again to the stereotype is that Judaism you marry only to have children, it's not correct. It's absolutely not correct. Based on the biblical explanation, marriage, the idea of a union, is about... is male and female coming together and becoming one. The Torah says: one flesh. And as a matter of fact [speaks Hebrew] the mystical text even says that when husband and wife from a sacred union come together, even if they don't have children, even if they're beyond child bearing age, even for example, Abraham and Sarah did not have children until very late in their lives, one child, that every time they come together a soul is born out of it. If God blesses, the soul will come down into our body. So the union always creates offspring, that's a given, but it shows you that it's now about, you know, there's a separate mitzvah so to speak, a separate commandment that says: you shall have children, which is, as I said, is an extension or an outgrowth of the union. But the union itself, sexual attraction, is not to have children. Sexual attraction is a... is actually a sacred thing. It's a result of two souls looking for each other.

Now it manifests in the physical world in attraction, we're attracted to each other in many ways, which we shall discuss, physically or personality-wise or other compatibility that we look for. But this is... these are the two models and I'm not here making a case one for the other. Obviously I'm representing or embracing the Torah one, but it's not because I have blind faith. Compare them and I would say to people, you know, listen, compare them and see which one resonates more. You all know it, I don't have to tell you which one resonates more. Not just what we'd like to believe, what resonates more? Do we really want to think of love and when you love somebody and that you've finally found the person that you want to be with the rest of your life, that it's just nature's way, all the love and the warmth and the courtship is just a manipulation? Or is it really reflecting a deep connection between two people that has a transcendent component and goes all the way up to the cosmos itself and even God himself celebrates? This is the reason, by the way, why a Jewish wedding is such a celebration. Not a party, not just a party, it's actually two pieces of the big puzzle have found each other that have been for years looking for each other. That's why you have statements like, before a person gets married, the two souls are designated who's going to be for whom, and I'm not getting now into predestination, whether we can change that or not, but the idea is that it's a major simcha, a major celebration, because what's happening here is the picture is being completed.

So God in a sense, in creating existence, split us, created schisms, and when we find that soul mate we are essentially creating a unity that ripples through all of the cosmos and that's why it's such a big simcha, that's why you look at the [speaks Hebrew], which are the blessing we make traditionally under the hupa, under a wedding ceremony or at a wedding ceremony or at the end of the wedding. You know, the seven days celebration, they don't even talk about the names of the people. You'd think the blessing should say: blessing Janko married Sarah, you know, no names are mentioned. All you have is blessings that God created Adam and Eve and may we all at once rejoice in Jerusalem because a true marriage is much deeper than just two individuals coming together. It's not... it doesn't take away from the two individuals, the joy of two people finding each other, but the truth is, all of existence celebrates because this male/female that were separated, that God separated, have found each other and they now create union and that unity is meant to, as I said, ripple and effect all of existence. So that's what we're waiting for with all of you, to create that ripple, not just about you, we're all incomplete until you find your soul mate. Think of it that way.

So with that being said, you have here the two models and I think it's critical because you have to know what is it that you really love in another person and that's what I want to get to now. If, we're going now with the Torah model, if it's not the Torah model frankly, you know, I was watching one of these nature shows, alligators, okay? And they of course, a part of it is how they breed. I was thinking to myself, so what do they look for in each other, you know? So of course, the classic evolutionary theory they look for... in the male they look for, you know, strong genes, great potential for fertilization, the whole thing; the woman is always the nurturer, whatever, the one who can keep the egg warm for a longer period of time and the animals instinctively pick this up. But they don't like necessarily... and the features of the alligators are like meant to reflect that, fins of the alligator reflect virility, you know, stuff like that.

So if you think about it in the context of human courtship, so I guess just like the peacock or something, you see a certain look on a person, I guess that's the evolutionary theory, you say that this person looks like a very... has a lot of very good solid eggs or this one has, you know, solid... has a strong nurturing qualities, this would be the criteria from an evolutionary theory. Now I don't know how many of you think like that, like you meet somebody on Jdate of something like that, I want you to tell me how you're... I'm not going to say it, but what are your fertilization potentials, stuff like that. Obviously it wouldn't sound very appealing if someone asked you that. So do you dress it up? But, we don't even think like that. So the evolutionary is saying, it doesn't matter what you think, that's really what your subconscious wants, you're looking for the maximum result of the breeding.

Now how... I wouldn't be giving a workshop on this or a talk because I don't even know what the criteria are from evolutionary theory and I don't even know how you figure it out, but basically, you know, it's just something that I guess our genes have to guess.

But in the Torah perspective, you have a lot of input; it's not nature manipulating you. There, it has a lot to do with your attitude and here you'll see real contrast in how people look at this thing. So let's break this down into several levels of what we're looking for and usually you talk about... I think I mentioned on Friday night, three types of compatibility that people usually look for. One is physical. One is emotional. One is cognitive, intellectual.

So physical is... we all know what that is. Some people you're attracted to, some you're not, it's as simple as that. Look at someone, most people can say, that's not my type. They never met the person, they haven't spoken to the person, there's a look. They really mean that the physical appearance is not appealing. At the same time, you know, beauty is in the eyes of the beholder. You find many, many people getting married and many people love each other and some people see beauty where others don't and what is beauty exactly anyway? Is it again a scientific thing, a symmetry of all of the combinations on the face? Is beauty a glow that is an aura that is not exactly tangible? So this too has been debated and I'm not going to go through all of that, but regardless, there's nothing wrong with the fact that a human being, you look at someone, some people have an attraction... you're attracted to, some you are not. Now you can also be attracted to someone you have no relationship with, you'll never have one, you know, why do you think they spend millions of dollars on advertising, they have attractive men and women in ads, it has nothing to do with you having a relationship with them, it's a fantasy and if you know how much, what do you call it, airbrushing is going on, you meet that person, sometimes they don't look quite the way they do in a magazine or in a picture. Like you know that story where the mother's rolling her carriage and someone comes over and looks and says, what a beautiful baby, and she says, ah, that's nothing, you should see the picture. You know, the picture.

So with that being said, beauty is... there's a thing that physically our eyes are attracted to certain looks on some people. There are classical looks that almost everybody considers beautiful, and then there's a beauty that is objective, but bottom line is that there's a thing called physical attraction and interestingly, the Torah does not dismiss it. Not only does it not dismiss it, but it says that you're supposed to

marry someone that you're attracted to, you shouldn't marry someone that you don't... that just has a good soul. In other words, you should be able to be compatible in that level and even though that alone is not enough, that's why we say in [speaks Hebrew], which means that, you know, how do we translate that, false is beauty and grace... forget about it. Just bottom line is that beauty on its own is hollow, but physical beauty in Judaism is a critical component. We would say, beautify your mitzvahs, a synagogue should look beautiful physically. If you have physical beauty and there's no inner beauty, obviously that is a big problem. But the inner and the outer should reflect each other basically.

So to go back to this physical compatibility, it's definitely a critical component. Yes, you could say that some people put too much focus on it, but let's just go through all of them and then we'll read the balance.

The second is emotional compatibility. So emotional of course is not just that you're attracted, because I say you can be attracted to a model or to an actress or to an actor or to a picture and then if you meet them, even though you may want to speak to them, but after a while you see there's no emotional connection. You don't feel for the person, they don't feel for you and I'm not just talking because they're a celebrity thing, personality-wise. So in that sense, the emotional compatibility then is a connection, it's an emotional connection, you feel drawn to somebody, you feel warmth, they feel warmth to you. Usually obviously this develops, it doesn't happen in one second, it's once you have a connection, once you communicate, it's not just, you see somebody. You may be attracted to somebody physically, sit down with them and you talk and then you have more of a feeling, that feeling develops, then there's a type of emotional connection there and that is not easy to really quantify, because what does that mean exactly? But you know it when it's there, let's put it that way.

Then comes the third, which is an intellectual compatibility, which really creates, really rounds it out, because the first two are great, but the bottom line is, intellectual compatibility gets into the area of respecting another person's perspective, intelligence, having an interesting conversation, sharing similar ideas, stimulating each other, challenging each other. You see relationships that have the first two, they don't have the third one, usually the partners are going to look for stimulation elsewhere and it does not bode well for this relationship. In other words, there are people who are attracted to each other, they have an emotional connection, they may have a very good sexual relationship, but there's no respect intelligently, so that means a whole dimension is not there.

Now these three levels of compatibility, most people have tested this and say, if I had one of those three I'd be happy, two out of the three is almost like a dream and three out of three is a complete fantasy. I mean, I've heard this from many people. People who've dated and met different people and they would compromise on each one of them if they had some of them. And here again, to really quantify and say what is the most important, the physical or not, it's a combination and we don't have to go through it. But here's the fourth dimension that is never spoken about and even though you may sense it, but it's just not discussed, and for obvious reasons, because the prevalent model of love and romance is the Darwinian/Freudian model and this fourth dimension doesn't work in that model; doesn't exist in that model. In that

model, the truth is the first three also don't really exist, they're only there to get the two together, so nature created an attraction, so some of us like a certain look and stuff like that. The emotional and intellectual hard-core evolutionists will tell you are not necessary, because they don't do anything for the breeding process. The only you could say is that if there's an emotional connection and if there's an intellectual connection, it'll help the offspring, because the two partners will join together to protect the offspring. So it's another evolutionary way to keep the children growing, the species perpetuating.

The Torah dimension adds a critical fourth level of compatibility – we'll call it spiritual compatibility. You know, what does this mean? It's a nice word, what does it mean? It doesn't mean to say you have a spiritual nature, some people have a spiritual nature, some are less spiritual. It means a transcendental dimension in the relationship. It's something beyond the two people. In simple English, the sharing of vision together. I wanted to get that word in one way or another: vision. Sharing a vision together, that means two people who are thinking what else they would like to contribute to this world together, what kind of home they want to have, what kind of children, what would you like your children to look like. Nothing you could predict, but what would you like? What's your dream? As they grow up, what would you like them to do? Again, I don't mean professional-wise, I mean what mark they will make in this world and what mark you'll make with your partner. These are just some questions. I could phrase them in different ways just to give you a sense of it. What... the common denominator of all of these questions, it's a whole different question. It's not about: am I physically attracted to my person I love or am I emotionally connected, am I intellectually... which are vital components by the way, obviously, but here the question is not about me and you, it's a third dimension. What is the third invisible ingredient that transcends both of us? I mentioned the hupa, a bride and groom stand under a canopy. Why a canopy? So this week's chapter, partially yesterday we read, that God... that Mount Sinai was like a canopy, this is why we have a canopy. What is the significance of it? The significance of it is that there's nothing in life that works without... we'll introduce the word [speaks Hebrew], that's the word that two people are somewhat... suspend themselves for something greater than themselves. This is true by the way in all of life, not just relationships.

But in relationships it's acutely necessary because that, as you'll see, is the critical ingredient to eternal marriage and to a healthy life. So it's the idea that there's something above both of us. It's not me, it's not you, it's not even the sum of the parts, it's a synergy of a third dimension, you know, the word synergy is used. Synergy comes from this concept that goes back thousands of years. Synergy simply means that there's a third invisible power when two people come together. For example, the Talmud gives an example when the Moroccan scouts came back from checking on... spying on Israel, they came back with fruits to show how gargantuan and giant is this country and the Talmud gives a calculation that when two people... let's say you can lift 100 pounds and I can lift 100 of weight, together it seems like we should be able to lift 200. That's not correct. You can lift more than 200. If three people, it will exponentially grow. So the question is: where is the extra strength coming from? If lift 100, you lift 100, it should be 200, why is it 225 or whatever? And if it's three people or if it's 1,000 people, it's beyond.

So that's called synergy. It's something that happens that no one... that we can't quite place. It's something that's some collective power. What we call it is the third partner in marriage called God and I specifically didn't want to use the word God because I didn't want to taint it with a religious stamp, but the idea is a transcendental element that's beyond the two people and something that is absolute, because that is the secret. You said it correctly before, it is the secret to an eternal relationship. You see, because every human does die, absolutely, and the only thing that doesn't die is something that is... you know, that wasn't born. The soul cannot die because the soul was never born. Bodies die because bodies are born. Everything physical, everything that has an end has a beginning, or the other way around, everything that has a beginning has an end, and you don't have to wait for the end to know it has a beginning. As soon as it has a beginning, it's already dying. It says in one of the great scholars [Hebrew name], a child, as soon as he's born or she's born is already beginning to age and die and not to be morbid, but what does that mean? That you don't develop wrinkles when you're 50, 60, 70, you develop them right away, they're just not apparent, it takes time until you see age. No one is going to say a newborn is old, but when do you think? If you didn't have the first 20 years of your life, you're not going to become 40, so it's cumulative.

However, what doesn't die is spirituality and is the soul. So introducing that fourth dimension is the key to the eternity of it and it's also the key to the soul mate part. Because what I said earlier about finding your soul mate based on the Torah's view of attraction, sexual attraction, love, is based on a soul looking for another soul, means that the first three levels of compatibility is the way it manifests and they're very vital, but ultimately it's a spiritual compatibility that is the key thing in the relationship and I can tell you this hands down, that... and I've seen many, many marriages and stuff that you could say, many marriages last without the fourth dimension, I would like you to just give me one example. You'll always find a fourth dimension. They may not... it may not have a religious context. I've seen people have a transcendental relationship and they're not religious people per se, but they have a definite spiritual context. So they don't necessarily know or do not embrace the particular rituals, but they both have a type of, what is the word for it, a type of subjugation to a third dimension that's beyond the two, always the secret to an enduring relationship.

Now look, the divorce rate is 50% they say, something like that. You know, with statistics it's a little hard to say, because of age group and divorce of younger, you know, usually divorces happen the first two years of a marriage, but it's a pretty high number, it's not a number that can be dismissed. And then the question of course is: how many people are divorced in all ways except technically? You know, they're together for convenience, children and stuff like that. The old joke, I hate telling it because I hate the joke, but it just captures the idea so much, there's a 102 year-old man and a 100 year-old woman, they come to the Rabbi, they want a divorce. He says, 102, we have a bright future ahead of us, but you were married for like 70 years, 80 years, what did you wait for? We waited for the children to die. That's the joke, which, you know, captures a story that many people stay together for the children. Now that's not usually going to happen, to that age, but the idea is that many marriages of convenience, which some people say, you know, the known evil is better than the unknown evil. What am I going to do? Get divorced and then how am I going to find something better? You know, all men are this way or whatever it is.

So to bring us back to our discussion here, what is the secret then to an eternal relationship and how does one find this transcendent element and, as I said, how does it also infuse the first three dimensions? Because some people will think: well, if I have that transcendence, does it mean that I don't have to be attracted to that person or I shouldn't have emotional compatibility and such? Absolutely not. There's no contradiction at all. But here, as you'll see in a moment, is the key. The key is this word I've introduced, it's called bittle [?].

What's our time like? Where are we time-wise?

MO It's five to one.

RSJ Which means?

MO Another five minutes and they'll be a request for questions.

RSJ Okay, fine. We began at 12? I'm talking for an hour already? To myself? Huh? I'm having a good time. I hope you are.

So since we're about to take questions, I'll say this, the key thing is bittle. This word bittle is a Hebrew word and it's critical, that's why I want to introduce it, it means suspending yourself. It's not self-annihilation. It's hard to translate into English to be honest. It's a combination.

MO I've heard the word bittle being translated as transparent.

RSJ Yes, I was going to use that word, yes. But you have to explain it. Okay? Bittle, in the Hebrew it means, literally it means to abnegate or to... but in Hebrew, written technically in Hebrew it can be a negative word, it means like annihilation also, or something disappears.

MO Nullification.

RSJ Nullification, right. It's not the word nullification; because it's... bittle really means the key to all growth. For example, a seed has to rot in the ground before it grows into a beautiful tree. You have to demolish a building before you build a new one. You have to shed one layer of skin to assume another one. All of those, like the frustration always precedes creativity; the greater the creativity, the more the frustration before it. So it's always... because as long as you're still on the earlier stage of your experience, you're not going to have a new experience without shedding it. So bittle is almost like also opening your mind to a new perspective. If you don't do that, you'll always remain an extension of the past. No matter how smart you are, the smarter the person the more they understand the need for this type of... it's like finding a ladder, you have to leave the earlier step. It's much easier said than done. Intellectually we understand; emotionally is the trap. The emotional trap is because you're established core, your past and your childhood perceptions hold you hostage. That's the hardest part and you don't know how deep they are. Because what you saw in your home in relationships, for good or for bad, is what becomes impressed in that child's mind and it's not so easy to just dislodge and change. So if you're

blessed and you grow up in a loving home, you know what that means, it's a great blessing. But if you weren't, that's something you have to contend with because that perception of what you grew up with keeps... is your standard and that standard may be wrong.

Now of course we don't have the time to go through it all in graphic detail, but something to think about. So what I would leave you with is this. You have to think about these ideas of your own, what you're looking for. Not so much the type of person, but first what you think is valuable and I guarantee that it's not perfect. You probably have distortions in that area. You need to have a trusting person you can speak to and let it's own objective appear how you look at things, you know, what are you looking for? Because if you think about what I've said, really what it comes down to is a simple formula, you're looking for someone that's a trusting partner, that's above all. Someone with a kind heart, [speaks Hebrew] they said good heart. Obviously it has to be an intelligence that you respect, but a good heart is above all. What does it mean, has a good heart? Because you know that person will be able to be giving, will be able to be transcendent, it's not even someone that you immediately share a vision with, but you can tell that they're not locked in their own narcissistic view of things. Because that's what will not allow them to really have a relationship and the same question is to yourself, how locked are you in your own ways? So we all hear about this, you know, you can be obstinate, you can be just have it your way, but it's not just about that. It's a fundamental sense that there's something greater than yourself. I do not see how a person can truly get married in a healthy way without that, some element of that, and that not everybody has that naturally. Because we grow up in a world where they tell you, you have to be aggressive, go out and get it, no one's going to do it for you. It cultivates a sense of survival, a sense of fighting and we apply the same principle to marriage and to relationships. We're going to go out and get it, we're going to be tough and stuff like that. It does not... we don't grow up... we don't live in a world that cultivates and respects the nurturing, the warmth. Many people say, I can't be vulnerable like that. But love is all about vulnerability; it's a celebration of vulnerability and in this world, to be vulnerable? Do you know how many predators are out there? I have to protect myself. And that's all true by the way.

You do have to have your defences up, have your wits about you, because there are plenty of predators, but that... but you don't want to do it in a way that closes off that inner vulnerability. So you have to use your intelligence to gage and see what a person is, check him out, or her out, until it comes to a point where you allow. But if you never allow your heart out, you're not going to have that type of relationship, it doesn't work. People want relationships where they're in control and relationships have nothing to do with control. Everything in this world is about control. Business is about control. Relationships is the exact opposite, it's losing control. But losing control with someone you trust, obviously. Being vulnerable with someone you trust.

So the question is: if one doesn't have a relationship with that transcendental side to themselves, can they really expect to find a soul mate? It's a very good question and I'm asking it myself. The answer is: you could, you could because we grow and we can grow in a relationship. It doesn't mean you have to have it all worked out before, but you have to at least know these principles. You have to know and sometimes for some of you it may require complete reframing of your standards. For some what

I've said maybe resonates and you knew it all along, maybe I added a few pieces, but the bottom line is, if you're looking for a soul mate and you haven't found one, that means there's something missing and it's usually you, it's not because that person hasn't just appeared. Because often God doesn't send you the right person until you're ready. Now that doesn't... I'm not trying to put the blame on you that there's something wrong with you; it just means that maybe you've got to review it again. Just think of it like going to a consultant where if your business isn't working, you'd better go and find another advice, you know, and again, I don't know your situation and I'm speaking somewhat in a generic way, without knowing all of the details, but the concept that you have to introduce into your life is bittle, it's critical. It's critical. Ask anyone in a healthy relationship, no one knows the exact degree, but one thing you know it's not, it's not all about me.

So I'll finalize with one thing and then we'll take some questions. I met a couple who came to me a few years ago that had a lot of what we call domestic problems and they said, they claimed they loved each other and they... but they don't just get along. Every day's a fight about this, about that, and all the details are getting in the way and stuff and they're both career people and I asked them if they had gone to any therapy yet. They'd gone to plenty of therapy and so I asked: does anything work? They said, most didn't work, but there was one therapist actually that worked for a while, she suggested to both of them to make a list of their needs; from one to ten, the most important need and ten the least important. And then it gets complicated, so follow along. The second column in that needs was: how much of this need are you getting filled by your partner? So let's say if it's number one, most important need and number ten least fulfilled, you can imagine right? And then each person was supposed to make a list for the other person, how much of... what do you think the other person's needs are and how much are you giving them? And then they all compared lists. So you can imagine, there's a lot of a surprise, because some things I didn't even know that was important to her, you know? And I thought I was giving that to her or to him and he claims I don't get any of that. So you start seeing the other person's perspective. So how did it help? They said, well, it gave them first of all new insights into the other person's needs and interests and how much you're doing for them and not doing for them and I said, so what happened, why didn't it work? They said, well what happened was that we both... each one says... she says, I pasted it on the refrigerator, my list, and his list, he had to remind me, oh, that was such an important need I forgot all about it, you know, and he had it in his office and they were running to the lists and they said it became such a life that it was no longer about the relationship, they were busy with their lists and it was like... and they're trying... and they were so confused and they said it was like navigating a mine field. That was it basically; a mine field. You know, make sure this... don't step on this mine because it's so important to her and this was so important to him. So it didn't work.

So not to sound funny, so I said, well, let me... I hear what you're saying, let me tell you to make one more list. They said, stop with the lists, the list is destroying our lives. So I said, no, this list is a different type of list. The list is not your needs, what do you bring? What do you give? See, she's right about... the therapist was right technically, but missing the key component, her approach was very much driven by needs, very much like bringing the evolutionary theory into a relationship, which is: I need something and therefore I will give you, because I get something, it's a

reciprocal business negotiation and in the concept of transcendence, it's what you give. It's how much you give and it's not necessarily dependent, tit for tat, on reciprocity. And thank God their relationship works, because they did love each other, I saw that they cared, but they didn't have the tools. No one ever told them this. They didn't grow up... they grew up in a society where everything is about what you need and why not? Because none of these people have physical needs, sexual needs, this need, that need, you know? Conversation need, time, and the idea that you have to give creates confidence also. People who are takers ultimately are miserable people, because subconsciously at least, maybe even consciously, they know that they always are dependent and they always need to take from something to be... when you give, it's like knowing, the confidence I have what to give and the more you give, the more strong... the stronger you become as a human being. It's a secret in this society that is unfortunately very deeply underestimated or even almost unknown, power to give in every possible way. Obviously, growing up in a home that's giving is a great plus because it becomes second nature. But when you don't have it and you have to live in a society where everybody is busy taking and you only give when you get, it's hard to stop that when it comes to a relationship. But relationships work by different rules. They don't work by the conventional rules of the street. In a relationship it is ultimately going to be the giving person and a lot more can be said about this. I hope this was somewhat enlightening. If it wasn't... too bad, what can we do

I know we have a second session, so I would love to take your questions, questions, comments, etcetera, and then we'll take a break.

US I can understand three of the four dimensions, what is the main [unclear]?

RSJ What?

US You talk about physical...

RSJ ... and emotional compatibility.

US ... what intangible... how do you make it click?

RSJ You usually feel it, I mean it's... I'll give you a few examples. It could be you meet someone, a woman, and after a conversation or a few dates or so on, you have compassion to that person, you just feel a sensitivity. Some people you won't feel it, you will not feel that you want to protect or nurture or be kind to. It's hard to quantify, but you'll know. I mean, not everyone you meet do you feel the same emotional draw and the same thing the other way around. Some people say something to you and you feel they are sensitive to your needs and you feel nurtured by it, you feel calm and some people say you just feel cold. I mean, am I clarifying? That's an emotional type of gage. Is it clear?

US Yes.

RSJ Have you had these experiences? Look into your own experiences, or you've never met anybody? No, but have you ever had these true experiences? Someone that you really feel you can trust, you want to trust, you feel warm to and some people you don't feel warm to, that's emotions, that's not physical, that's not intellectual,

that's just an emotional connection or you don't have an emotional connection. Usually if you want to pursue a relationship with somebody, I mean, I'm not talking about purely raw sexuality or something like that, it's because there's some emotional draw. You miss the person, you want to speak to them, you want to hear their thoughts or you feel warm when you're with them, stuff like that, that's the emotional thing. It's hard to quantify because one person maybe you have an emotional connection to that another person will not have, you care about them. How many people do you know that when you travel that you forget about? Some people you care, you remember them, you call to ask them, how are you, and you really mean it. That's an emotional connection. Obviously you can do this with a friend as well, it doesn't necessarily have a romantic nature, I'm adding obviously the romantic part to it, which is also you care in a much more personal way than more than just a friend. Okay? Any others.

US What does it mean the souls [unclear words]?

RSJ Oh, and therefore, don't die. Well, a soul really... let's put it this way, we live in a physical world where things have... let's say, there's a moment when you're born, but your soul precedes your birth. The mystics would put it: the soul is on a spiritual plane before it comes into a body when you're born and upon death, the soul doesn't die, the separation of the soul and body happens, but the soul continues its journey. That's what I was referring to. Now, in the beginning of time did God create souls? It's a complicated question. A soul is much more of a divine energy than anything, so the divine is in a sense eternal, the soul is eternal. The soul is not God, but it's a piece of God, do you follow what I'm saying? So the soul is a spiritual energy, like it does not disappear upon death and that's why we can love people, you know, my father passed away five and a half years ago, so I miss him physically, but my love for him is like it always was, because his soul lives on somewhere, you know, and I believe that. Just because we don't see that... see, we live in a box, the box doesn't see what's outside of the box. A refrigerator doesn't see electricity, it thinks it's only.... so people ask, where does a soul go to after death? It's like a refrigerator or an appliance asking electricity, where do you go to when they pull the plug? It goes back to it's natural place, that's what I meant, and so when you connect with a soul in this lifetime, you're connecting to something that's much more than just here and now, that did not die. People's looks change... you know, you ask a person, you're attracted to this woman, she was attracted to this man, 40 years ago, you both were beautiful then, now you're older and it's not so beautiful, but they still see beauty in each other and what is it that they're seeing? You look at, you know, men all the time, they've always leave women, their wives, to find a more beautiful woman and some don't. What is it? The ones that don't are what? They don't... because they don't see physical beauty as the only thing, there's a spiritual connection there. And then, they don't see their spouse as ugly, it doesn't matter as much and I love the person, it's more than just a face, there's a whole personality within it, that comes with it and then you do see beauty, you know? Two people can be 80 years old and they see beauty in each other, it doesn't have to be like the model beauty we see in magazines, who said beauty is only on the outside? Do you follow what I'm saying?

MO Now we're taking a break for some drinks and then we will continue around the table [unclear].

RSJ Okay, thank you. Want me to sign this thing?

[1:01:00 - 1:22:41 Break]