

Sermon delivered by Rabbi Shalom M. Paltiel
Chabad of Port Washington
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Judaism is a Marriage to G-d

Yom Kippur is our anniversary of our marriage with G-d (Midrash)

So LET'S TALK ABOUT MARRIAGE....

Daughter comes home from date feeling sad.

Daughter: "Two hours ago Jeff proposed to me, I really like him".

Mom: "So?"

Daughter: "But he told me he's an atheist, he doesn't even believe in hell..."

Mom: "Marry him anyway. Between the two of us we'll show him how wrong he is!"

A man and his wife are sitting in the living room. He says to her: "Just so you know... I never want to live in a vegetative state dependent on some machine. If that ever happens, just pull the plug."

His wife gets up and unplugs the TV...

The secret to a happy marriage remains a secret- Henny Youngman

Always get married in the morning. This way, if it doesn't work out you haven't wasted a whole day... - Mickey Rooney

All marriages are happy... it's the living together afterwards that causes all the trouble... - Raymond Hull

I was married by a judge. I should've asked for a jury... - Groucho Marx

Yet marriage is still in!

People think it's obsolete...

Time Magazine asked people in a study: Do you think marriage is becoming obsolete?

In 1978: 28% said yes

In 2010: 40% said yes

So we think it's out the door. But in fact it's not:

In another study Time asked people in their 20s if they planned on getting married –

95% said YES!

So, marriage isn't going away anytime soon. It's as popular as ever...

To paraphrase Mark Twain's famous quote: The reports of marriage's demise are highly exaggerated!

So why do 95% of people want to marry?

Benefits? You can have everything without it:

Friendship, business partnership, love, companionship, admiration, adoration, emotional support, even a family...

Could it be it's the tax benefits that are keeping marriage popular? Nah...

Judaism answers that question:

You know why people marry?

It's not for any utilitarian purpose – all of those can be satisfied outside of marriage (with far less headache and expense...)

G-d said after creating Adam – the first man: *Lo tov heyos ho'odom levado* "It's not good for man to be alone".

We don't want to be alone.

We are born "alone" ... In spite of the fact that we have parents and siblings and friends, we're still "alone" – our life is ours alone.

We humans crave to fill that void

It's one of the deepest human needs – not to be alone

We can be fulfilled and successful and happy in many ways without filling the void of loneliness. However, it's not optimum for us. We crave walking the path of life holding hands with another as a true partner.

That's what Torah is saying when G-d said those words: It's not GOOD for man to be alone. It's ok... but it's not GOOD. Why not have GOOD!

Marriage is the only way to fulfill that need

It is not solved by friendships, business associates, our pets, our goldfish, even joining the synagogue board

A married man is NEVER alone!

Joke: If a man is in the forest, alone, without his wife – is he still wrong?

Yes we have parents who care about us, and children and siblings, friends

But them – they worry about YOUR troubles

The celebrate YOUR successes
At the end of the day – it's YOUR successes, not theirs

In marriage – it's OURS

Marriage makes "ME" – "WE"

How so?

G-d took one of Adam's ribs and created Eve

Why did he have to do that? Did He finally run out of material? He just created an entire world; couldn't HE create one more woman? Why the surgery?

Kaballah teaches, it wasn't a rib... She was created with him, back to back, as Siamese Twins, which were then separated

Indicating that all couples are truly in fact one – the same soul, born into two bodies, two families, then finding each other, your beshert, and uniting as one!

(True in first marriage or 2nd marriage as well)

You're never alone – someone else is sharing life with you

And not just any someone else – it's YOUR someone else

It's the other half of your soul...

It's meant for you... it's the only one; it's another part of you!

R' Aryeh Levin, well known rabbi who was extraordinary – took his wife to the doctor. Doctor asks: What's wrong? To which he replies: "Her foot hurts us..."

There's a discussion in the Talmud, when is it OK morally, from a Torah perspective, to divorce one's wife. Some opinions say it's only OK in extreme circumstances of infidelity or abuse. Others opine that less severe dysfunction in the relationship is enough to warrant divorce. Then there's the opinion of Rabbi Akiva, the greatest of Talmudic sages: "Even if he finds someone who is prettier in his eyes, it's OK to divorce."

How do we understand this?

Commentary explains - it is the most romantic statement:

If someone else seems prettier to you – you're not really married...

This doesn't mean you are convinced your wife is the prettiest face on the planet...

Then you're simply delusional....

It means you understand she is yours, perfectly gorgeous for you

Just like – I love myself... and don't want to be anyone else (when I sometimes wish I was someone else, I know I'm experiencing temporary insanity...)

That doesn't mean I think I'm the best person alive... (unless I'm delusional...)

I'm sure there are wonderful and beautiful women out there –

But she is mine – thank you very much!

No one else is a contender...

Story – single guy complains to the rabbi that now that he finally got married, he's lost his freedom. Now he's gotta answer all kinds of questions

If he ever shows up 5 minutes late – “Where've you been?”

If he's traveling, he's got to answer phone on take-off and landing... “Did you land yet? Are you OK?”

He's lost his freedom

Rabbi explains: realize how fortunate you are – you're not alone

You might be 30,000 ft up in the air, someone is thinking about you
“How you're doing, are you safe, keep your eyes open”

“Did you eat yet?”

Don't worry – I'm not gonna starve...

“What did you eat?”

When you were single – no one cared –

Sure if something would G-d forbid happen people would be heart-broken and would show up at the funeral... But barring that – Who cared? Who knew? Who wanted to know?

Now you're never alone

Like anything good – there's a price to pay...

A few nagging phone calls... it's well worth it.

Dear friends, the marriage relationship is a metaphor would our relationship with Hashem – Torah refers to the Jewish people as G-d's beloved bride:

Yom Kippur – it's our wedding day "yom chasunoso" – the day of our marriage (when the second set of Tablets were brought to the Jews following their full pardon and re-embrace by G-d after the sin of the Golden Calf).

(Yes, people customarily fast on their wedding day...)

"THIS IS MY G-D" – is the essence of Judaism: a personal G-d... Not just "the G-d of Israel", but YOUR G-d. G-d knows your name and worries about you as an individual.

He's in love with us... He said so in the Torah

Ohavti eschem omar Hashem...

I love them – says G-d

ani ledodi vedodi li...

I am to my beloved and my beloved is to me

Read through the Biblical book: Song of Songs –

It's a love song from Him to us, His beloved people, the LOVE HIS LIFE

I challenge you to get through it without a box of tissues... Impossible...

He's in love with us

More importantly... more relevantly: He's in love with YOU (the individual Jew)!

He can't live without you in His life – that's JUDAISM 101 – it's the most important tenet of Jewish belief.

That's why we bother doing all this stuff for Him

He loves us so much – we want to try to make Him happy...

Like a marriage – a relationship with G-d isn't just utilitarian: I want stuff, He's the boss, so let's make sure we keep Him happy and we're on His good side...

A relationship with G-d is a marriage –

You're never alone!

You awake in the morning – He's there waiting for His good morning kiss (Modeh Ani and Shma)

You go to sleep at night – how was your day (Shma, kiss the mezuzah)

He's got some nagging questions. You walk into shul after not having been here for a while:

“Where've you been?”

“What did you eat? (Is it kosher?)”

It's a pain sometimes... but it is well worth it...

People often ask me what the secret is to a happy marriage

I think it's simple:

Remember you're not perfect – and yet you still expect to be loved

Why expect perfection from your spouse?

Same here: G-d does things we don't like – but don't we do some things He doesn't like?

We're still married...

Dear friends, if you have a bad day, or a bad year, in business or otherwise, it doesn't mean G-d doesn't like you anymore! He's just ignoring you for a little bit... But He still loves you...

Sound familiar?

Give Him a chance to come around...

One of the most important aspects in a marriage relationship: GIFTS!

Guy says to wife: Honey, what do you want for your birthday – a new diamond chocker or a trip around the world?

She: Actually I'd like a divorce

He: I wasn't planning on spending that much

One of the most common questions I get is – what value is there to the ritual mitzvhas

When I help a poor person, or volunteer at a soup kitchen - I understand what I've accomplished

When I visit the sick or help a friend with a chore - I understand the value in that

But why tefilin, mezuzah, Shabbat candles, kosher, prayer?

Who benefits? What difference am I making?

Great question!!!

Truth is – mitzvos benefit the world

Same way world was created through Divine energy – it is sustained by Mitzvos, G-d's Will being carried out, which contain Divine energy

Every word of prayer for health – empowers our doctors. Every moment of prayer for our fellow – empowers that person. A Shabbat candle illuminates our lives because it brings Divine light into our homes. The mystics were able to see that energy... (e.g. Friday afternoon, when the Divine Energy prepares for the Day of Rest – the great mystics would fall asleep involuntarily...)

But today I want you to consider a much simpler, more practical approach to that question - why bother with the ritual mitzvahs:

Think of them as gifts – to your BELOVED...

You don't buy a gift because it's needed...

You don't get her flowers because she needs to decorate the room...

She doesn't NEED the flowers... she needs flowers from HIM

Wife complains to therapist that he never says I love you...

Therapist: well, what do you say to that?

Him: 28 years ago when we got married I told her I loved her. If anything changes I'll let you know...

She doesn't need the "I love you" – she needs it from HIM

Every word of prayer, every SHMA, it's precious to Him – it's as sweet as I LOVE YOU coming from someone that you love dearly... someone you can't live without...

Every moment of Torah study – is quality time spent together in meaningful conversation...

Every Shabbat observed – is a weekend honeymoon getaway with that special someone who loves you more than you can imagine...

It's our wedding day – our anniversary

It's time for a gift – mitzvah resolution!

I think of myself as the salesman here... you just came into our department store here looking for a Special Gift for that Special Someone...

Let me help you out...

Doesn't matter small or big, but get Him something that He likes...

He gave us a full registry of items – 613 of them...

Give Him the gift of Shabbat Candles, of tefillin, of koshering the kitchen, of being at Shul once a month on Shabbat, join a torah class or JLI course,

If you're already doing these mitzvahs, if you can "spend more" –

How about attending shul every Shabbat or every morning, consider observing a Shabbat from time to time... you'll love it... sending the kids to Yeshiva or a Jewish summer camp...

The options are endless...

One of Chabad's main mottos – it's not all or nothing

There's something for every taste and "budget"

And you can even try something and then change your mind (the way you shop for a perfume... testing a few before making your choice...)

Husband goes into a Monte Blanc store and buys a beautiful pen set for a Chanukah gift for the wife

Store keeper: I bet she's gonna be surprised!

He: Surprised? Shocked! She's expecting a mink coat!

Let's surprise G-d; actually let's shock Him with a resolution that's a little bit out of our comfort zone... Let's "spend a little more" this year

Let's go all out this year for Him...

After all, He's the MAN OF YOUR DREAMS!

And I'm sure He'll reciprocate the gift – and He's got deep pockets and can spend lots –

He'll shower you with gifts: a year filled with only blessings – health, happiness and prosperity!

SHANA TOVA!