

Is There a Purpose for Wedding Pictures?

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HaRav Pam, Z'TL (The Pleasant Way, pp. 55-57) asks a splendid question: "Is there a purpose for Chasuna pictures?"

HaRav Pam's answer is that they can play a vital role. There are times in married life when things are not the way they should be. There may be bitterness, complaints and feelings of unhappiness and anger. That is the time to take out the chasunah pictures and study them. Then the pictures call out: "Look how happy you were--filled with joy and gratitude to Hashem for bringing you together on this great day! Try to recall your dreams and hopes of how you would establish your new home in peace and harmony and do everything possible to make each other happy.

Look at the joy in the eyes of your parents and grandparents who lived to see your wedding day! Look at the distinguished Rabbonim and Roshei Yeshivos who took time from their hectic schedules to take part in your chasunah! Look at the friends and relatives who came from far and near to help you rejoice! Relive the joy of your chasunah and then ask yourself the question: Does it pay to throw all that happiness away because of petty arguments, unkind words or bad middos?"

With this, HaRav Pam explains a question that troubles many in this week's Parsha. When Leah's fourth son was born, she named him Yehuda--for "this time let me thank Hashem" (Bereishis 29:35). Did not Leah thank Hashem with exuberance for her first three sons? For being married to Yaakov? For being one of the holy Imahos? For having a sister like Rachel? HaRav Pam answers that the "Yehuda"--the thanks she was expressing here was different. "Her intent was to permanently ingrain her initial feelings of happiness so that it not be diminished with the passage of time and the inevitable difficulties that arise in a person's life. Thus, whenever she would mention her son's name, she would remind herself as to her intent in that name. This would reawaken in her the emotional joy that she had felt at the time of his birth and it would carry her through the difficult circumstances of life."

We can all take the lesson in trying to guide ourselves through hard times, thorny situations, and even the rigors and ins-and-outs of every day life. If it is not the Wedding or the Bar Mitzvah album, if your name is not Yehuda, and you cannot remember the last moment of unbridled joy in your life...you can always use that very same bridge--the bridge between Olam Hazei and Olam Haba, so beautifully expressed by Dovid HaMelech--"Teach me Your ways Hashem, so that I walk in Your truth."