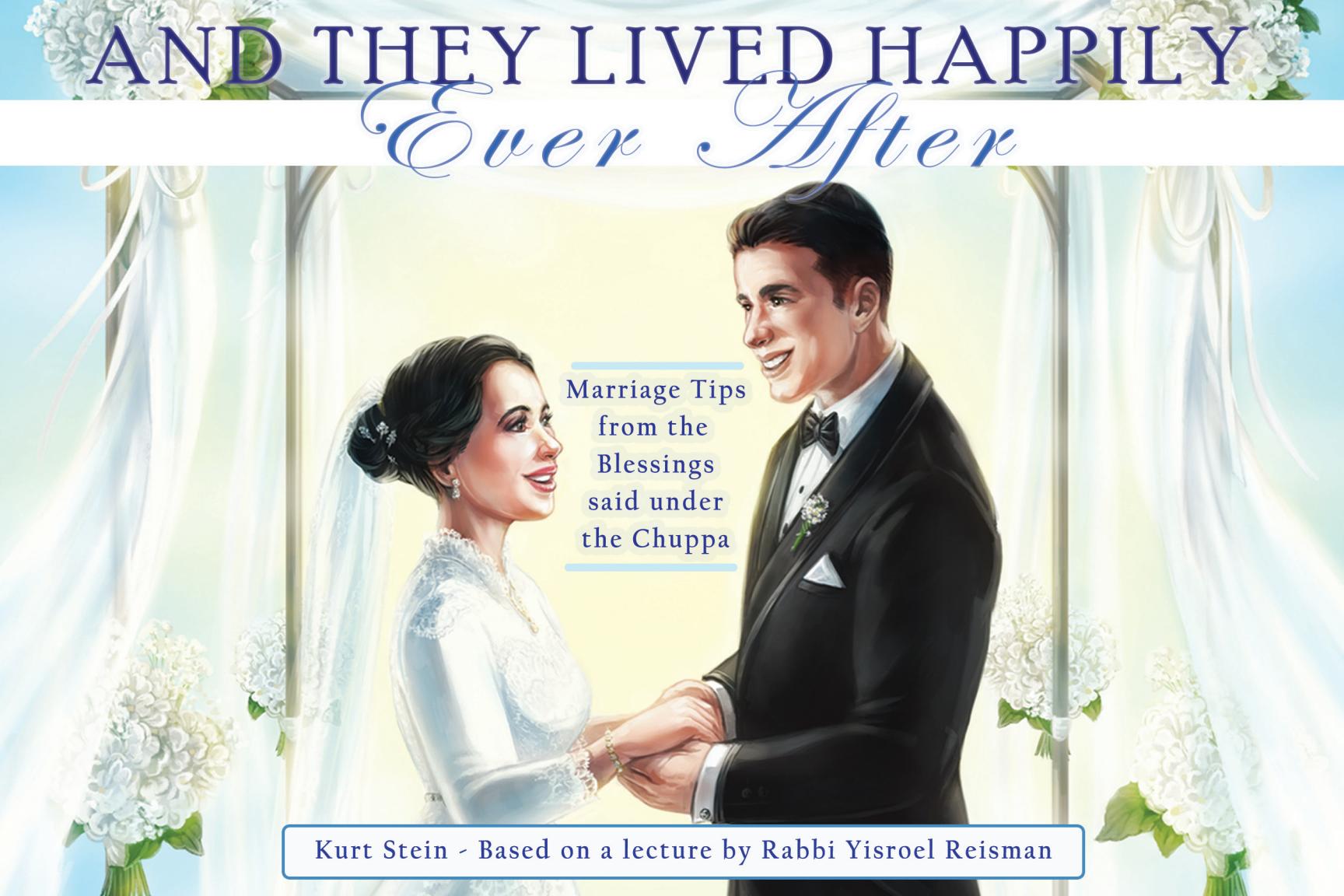


AND THEY LIVED HAPPILY

Ever After



Marriage Tips
from the
Blessings
said under
the Chuppa

Kurt Stein - Based on a lecture by Rabbi Yisroel Reisman



In honor of the wedding of:



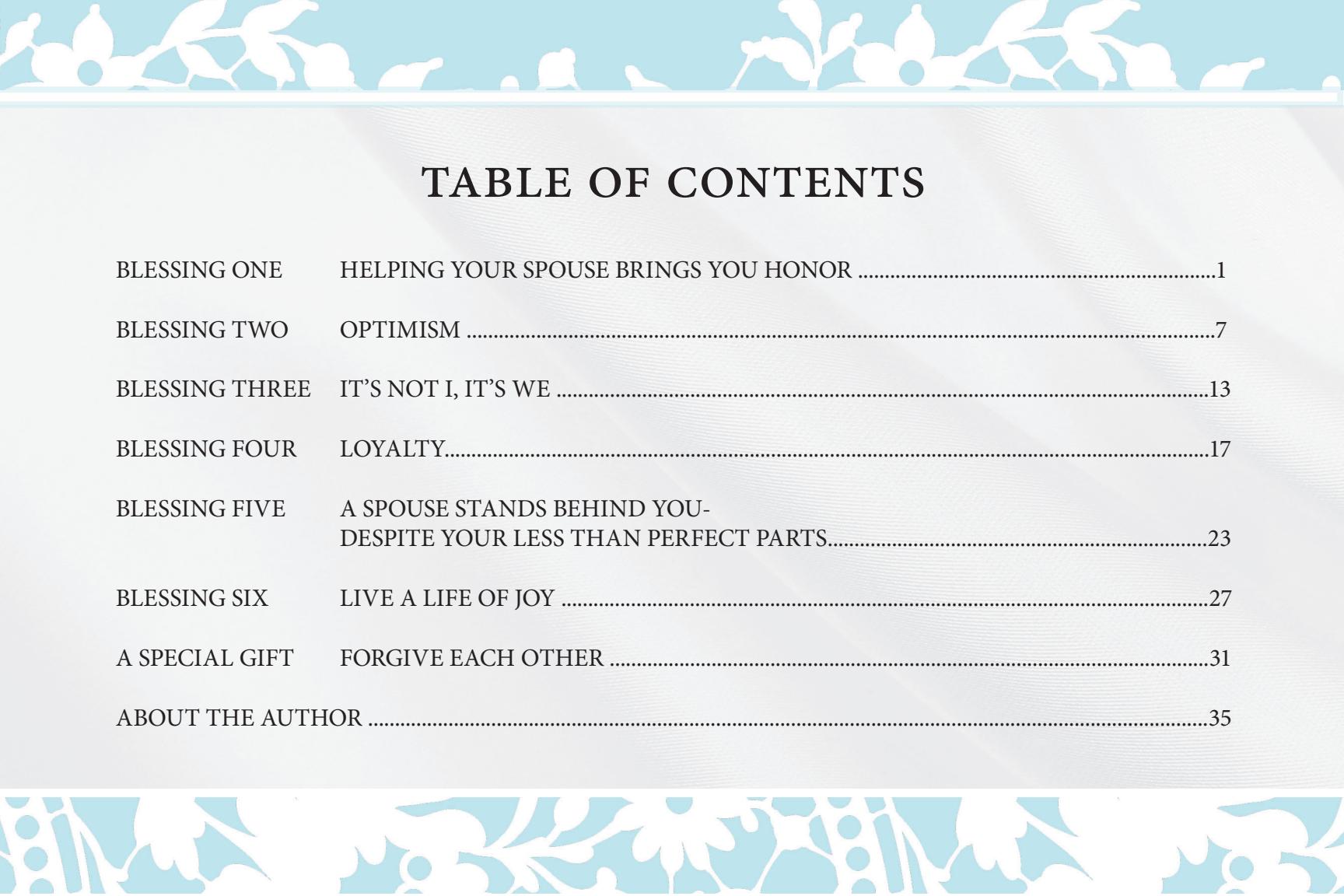


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Introduction

Our Sages instituted that “Six Blessings” are said at a Jewish wedding. (We actually say Seven, but the seventh is the blessing on the wine.) Because they last for seven days we call them Sheva Brachos, although the Talmud actually refers to them as Bircas Chassanim, “Blessings of the Groom”.

6 BLESSINGS





In addition to being the six blessings at a wedding, our tradition teaches that they are in fact six marriage tips that we want to communicate to the bride and groom.

6 MARRIAGE TIPS

Blessing 1

HELPING YOUR SPOUSE BRINGS YOU HONOR

ברוך אתה הָאֱלֹהִינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, שְׁהַכֵּל בְּרָא לְכָבוֹד:

BLESSED ARE YOU, HASHEM, OUR G-D, KING OF THE UNIVERSE,
WHO HAS CREATED EVERYTHING FOR HIS HONOR.



*T*he Torah teaches that this blessing is actually in honor of the guests at the wedding. Their purpose is to bring joy and honor to the bride and groom.

Why do the guests need a blessing?

It is not always so easy to drop whatever you are doing and go to a wedding, but the guests are learning from G-d's example.



The Torah tells us that the first wedding in history was between Adam and Eve and that the guest of honor was G-d himself. The fact that G-d took a personal interest in Adam and Eve and decided to honor them by attending the first wedding teaches us an important lesson.

Let's say a great Rabbi is the guest of honor at a wedding. When he arrives, he realizes that the caterer isn't there. Is the great Rabbi permitted to act as the caterer and help serve the food? Or is it not appropriate for a great Rabbi to do something beneath his dignity? At most events, it would not be dignified for a Rabbi to lower his own honor and act as a caterer.

However, a wedding is not like other events. If G-d honored Adam and Eve by participating in their wedding, then there is nothing more honorable than doing whatever is needed to make a bride and groom happy, even if it means a great Rabbi has to act as a caterer.

THE MARRIAGE LESSON BEHIND THIS IS SIMPLE.



ONCE YOU ARE MARRIED, YOU CAN BE CERTAIN THAT YOU WILL HAVE TO DO THINGS FOR YOUR SPOUSE THAT YOU DON'T WANT TO DO. YOU MAY HAVE TO MAKE DINNER OR CLEAN UP THE HOUSE.



YOU MAY EVEN HAVE TO BE QUIET WHEN YOUR IN-LAWS COME TO VISIT.



It may seem that those tasks are a burden on you. However, just like a wedding is unlike other events: when you honor the bride and groom you are acting like G-d and it brings you honor.

So too a marriage is unlike other relationships. When you do something for your spouse, it is never a burden, it is never beneath your dignity.

On the contrary , it brings you honor. It brings honor to you, your marriage, and most importantly to G-d who created everything for His own honor.



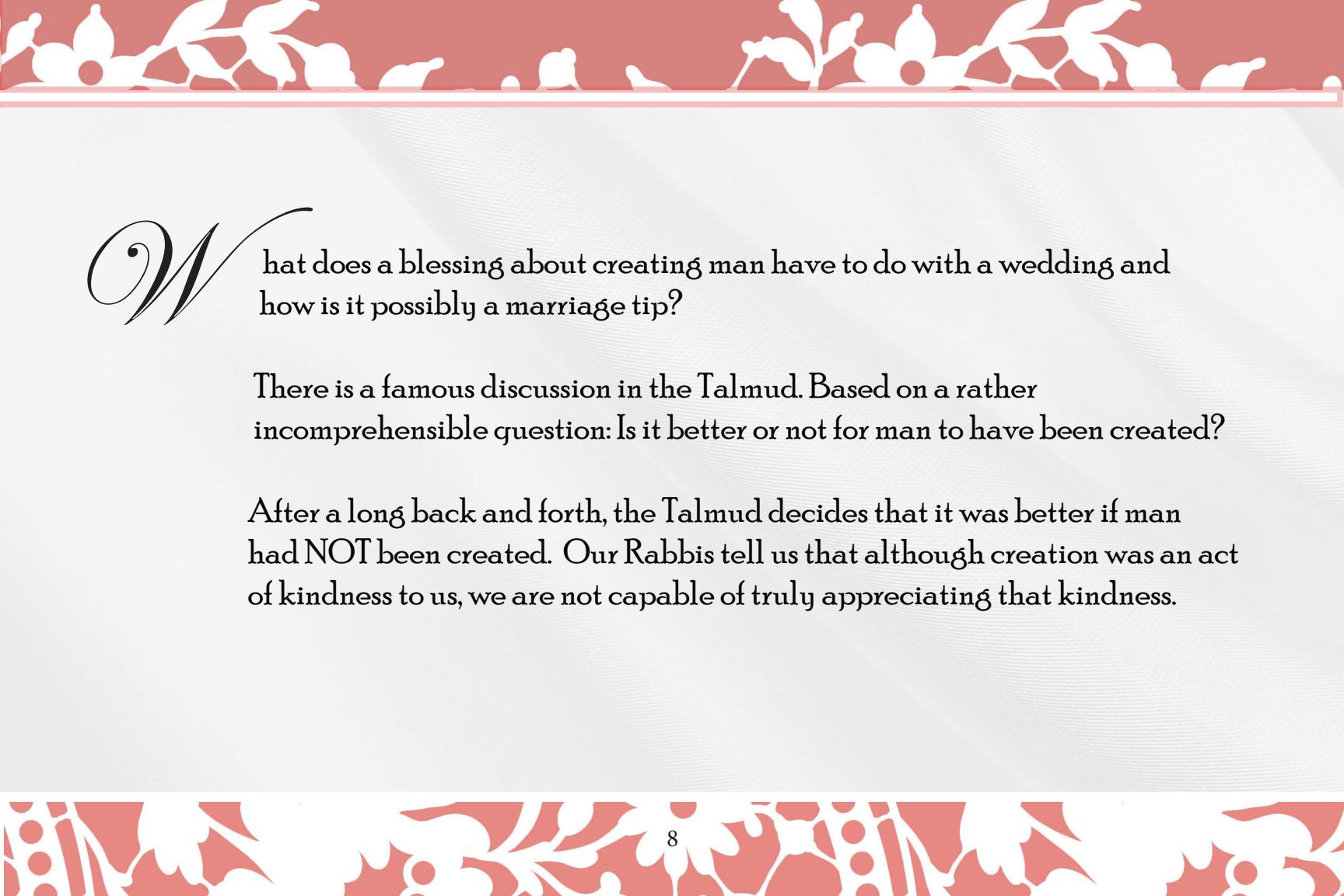


Blessing 2

OPTIMISM

ברוך אתה הָאֱלֹהִינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, יוֹצֵר הָאָדָם:

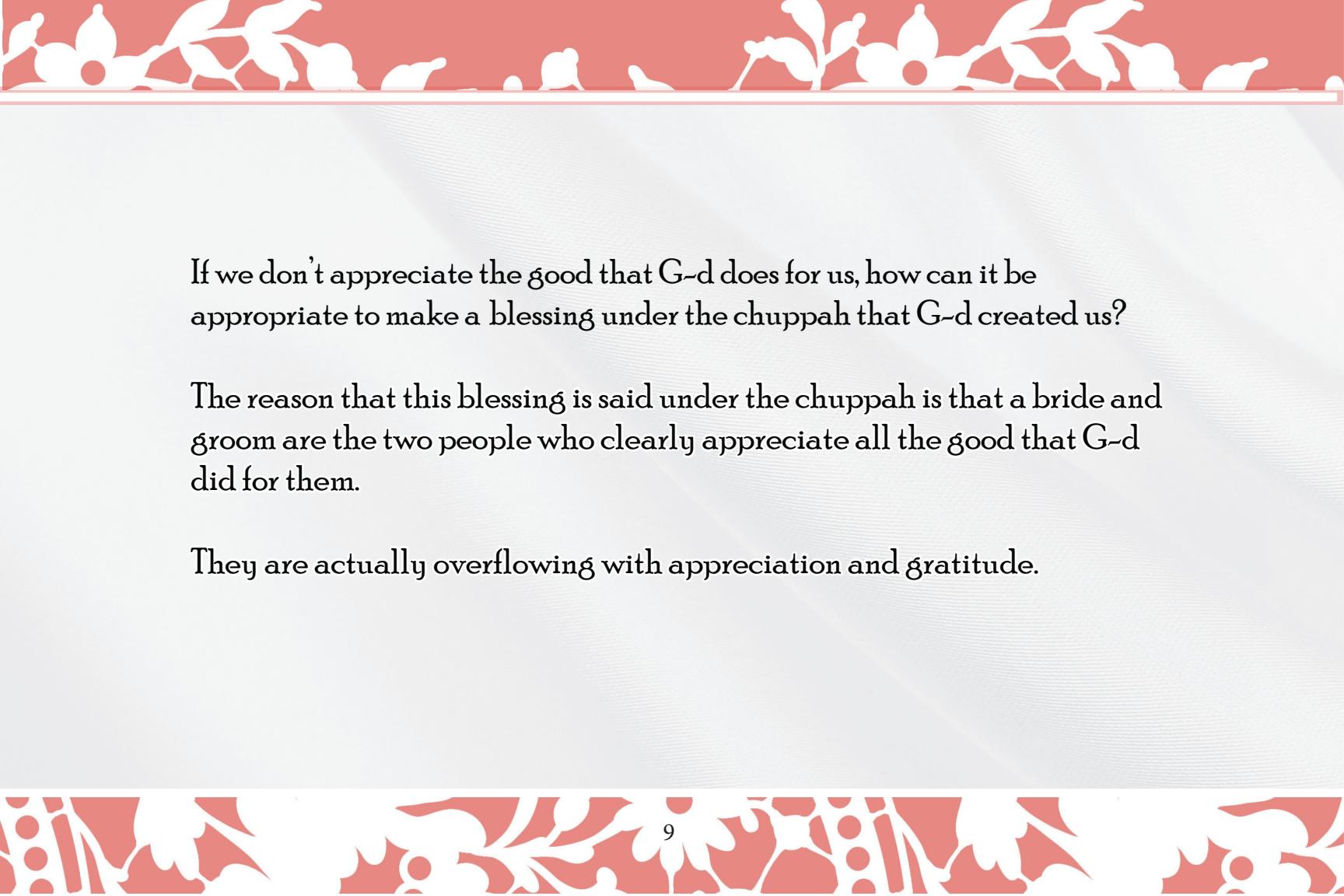
BLESSED ARE YOU, HASHEM, OUR G-D,
KING OF THE UNIVERSE, WHO CREATED THE MAN.



*W*hat does a blessing about creating man have to do with a wedding and how is it possibly a marriage tip?

There is a famous discussion in the Talmud. Based on a rather incomprehensible question: Is it better or not for man to have been created?

After a long back and forth, the Talmud decides that it was better if man had NOT been created. Our Rabbis tell us that although creation was an act of kindness to us, we are not capable of truly appreciating that kindness.



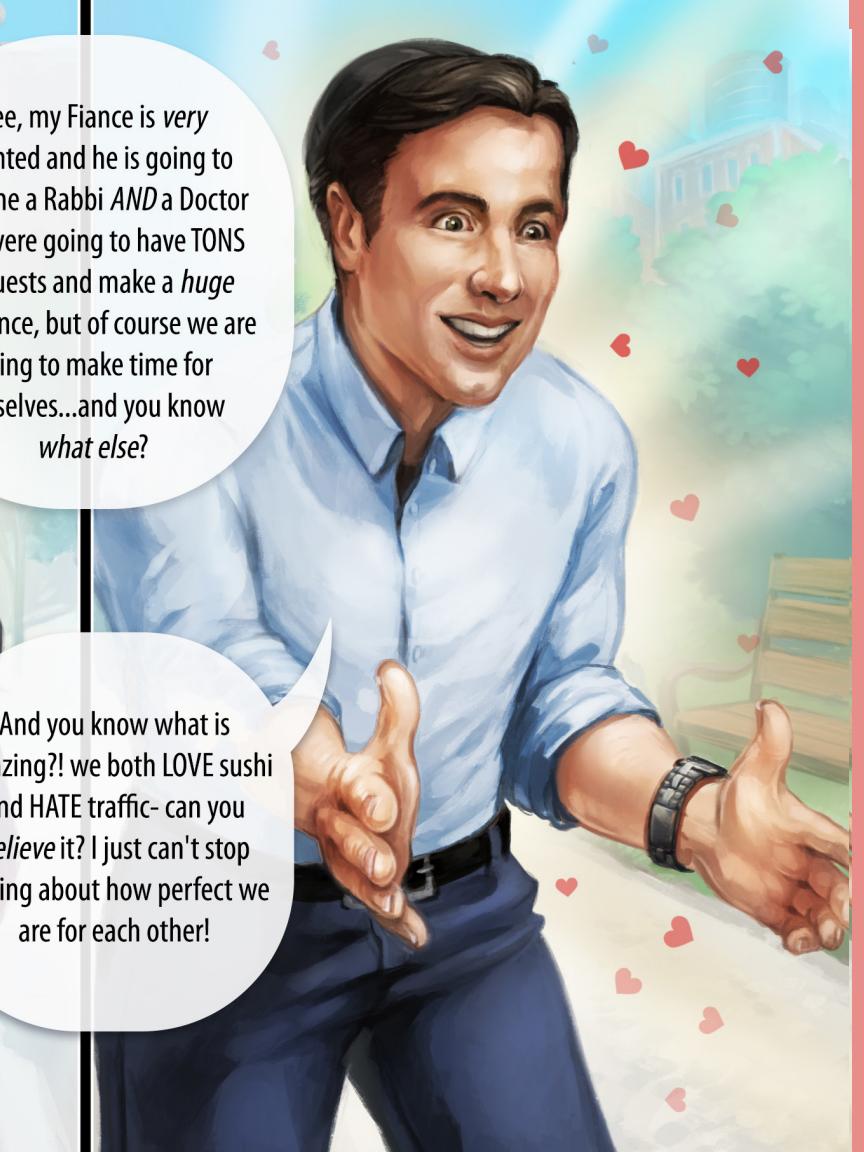
If we don't appreciate the good that G-d does for us, how can it be appropriate to make a blessing under the chuppah that G-d created us?

The reason that this blessing is said under the chuppah is that a bride and groom are the two people who clearly appreciate all the good that G-d did for them.

They are actually overflowing with appreciation and gratitude.



See, my Fiance is *very* talented and he is going to become a Rabbi *AND* a Doctor and were going to have TONS of guests and make a *huge* difference, but of course we are going to make time for ourselves...and you know *what else*?

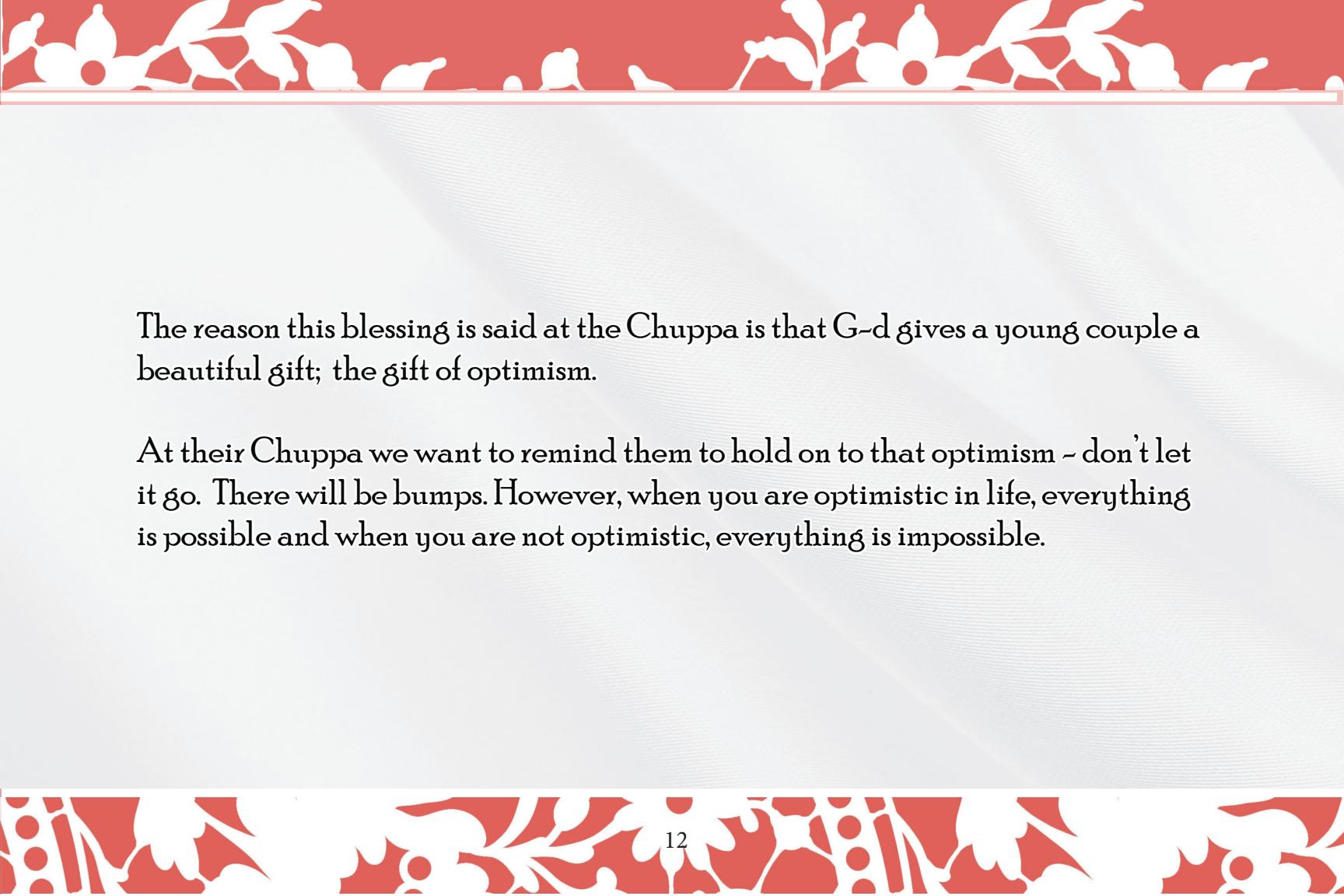


And you know what is amazing?! we both LOVE sushi and HATE traffic- can you believe it? I just can't stop talking about how perfect we are for each other!



It's just a puddle.

THEY ARE GIGGLING AND SKIPPING AND HAVING SUCH DEEP, INTENSE CONVERSATIONS. THE REST OF US KNOW: LIFE WON'T ALWAYS BE THAT SMOOTH, PLANS DON'T ALWAYS WORK OUT.



The reason this blessing is said at the Chuppa is that G-d gives a young couple a beautiful gift; the gift of optimism.

At their Chuppa we want to remind them to hold on to that optimism - don't let it go. There will be bumps. However, when you are optimistic in life, everything is possible and when you are not optimistic, everything is impossible.



Blessing 3

IT'S NOT I ~ IT'S WE

ברוך אתה הָאֱלֹהִינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם אֲשֶׁר יָצַר אֶת הָאָדָם בְּצִלְמוֹ בְּצִלְמוֹ
דְּמוֹת תְּבִנִיתוֹ וְהַתְּקִין לוֹ מִמְנוּ בְּנִין עָד, ברוך אתה ה יוצר האדם:

BLESSED ARE YOU, HASHEM, OUR G-D, KING OF THE UNIVERSE,
WHO CREATED THE MAN IN HIS IMAGE,
IN THE PATTERN OF HIS LIKENESS AND PREPARED FOR HIM -
FROM HIMSELF - A BUILDING FOR ETERNITY.
BLESSED ARE YOU HASHEM, WHO FASHIONED THE MAN.



W

hy does it say that “G-d created the man” two times and how does that build something that lasts for eternity?

We all know that marriage is not logical.

After all, G-d takes two people from different families and backgrounds and he expects them to live together FOREVER.

A man and a woman are seated at a table in a restaurant, engaged in a conversation. The woman, on the left, is wearing a yellow dress with white floral patterns and has a small pearl earring. The man, on the right, is wearing a green button-down shirt. They are looking at each other with smiles. In the center, a white speech bubble contains the following text:

Our checkbook
our diet
our therapist
our vacation
our leg hurts
our mother in law

The restaurant has large windows in the background, showing other diners and a waiter. There are green plants on either side of the table, and a vase of red roses sits on the table between them.

Our checkbook
our diet
our therapist
our vacation
our leg hurts
our mother in law



G-d therefore reminds us of how he created the first couple. He used a two-step process to create Adam and Eve. First He created Adam. He then put Adam to sleep and formed Eve from Adam. This reminds us that when a couple gets married they need to remember that they are simply putting back together two pieces that a long time ago were one piece.

This blessing is telling us: once upon a time you were one, G-d separated you and now He is putting you back together again.

Your spouse is certainly going to have an aspect of his/her personality that you don't like. It is easy to get upset at your spouse for his/her failings. However, if you see your spouse as an extension of yourself, you will accept his/her failings just like you accept all of your own. After all, YOUR failings are nothing to get upset about, they are simply a part of how you were created.

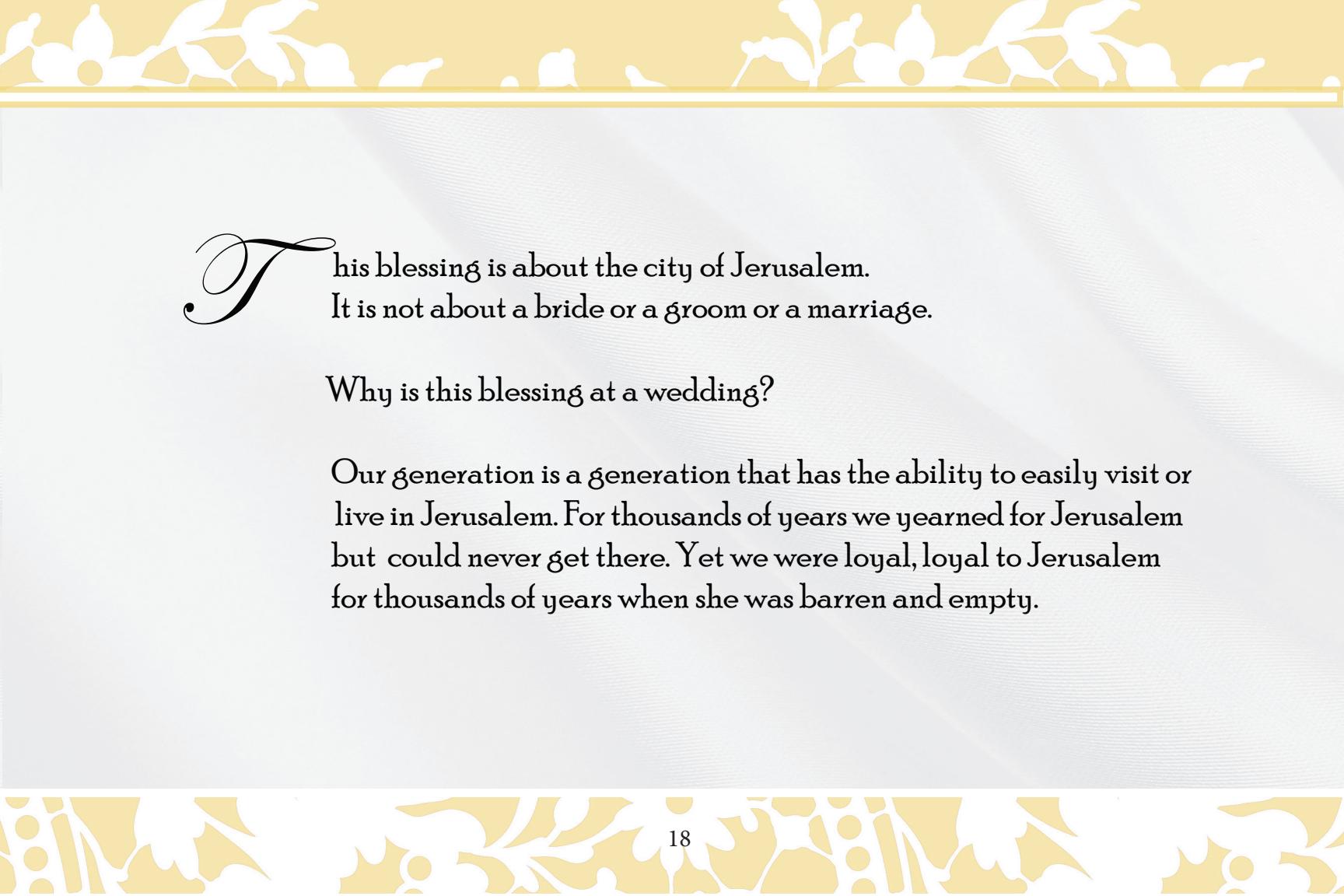
Blessing 4

LOYALTY

שׁוֹשׁ תְשִׁיבֶשׁ וַתְגַלֶּלֶת הַעֲקָרָה בְּקַבּוֹץ בְּנֵיהֶם לְתוֹכָה בְשִׁמְחָה
בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה הָמָשֵׁמֶת צִיּוֹן בְּבָנָיהֶם:

BRING INTENSE JOY AND EXULTATION TO THE BARREN ONE THROUGH
THE INGATHERING OF HER CHILDREN TO HER IN JOY.

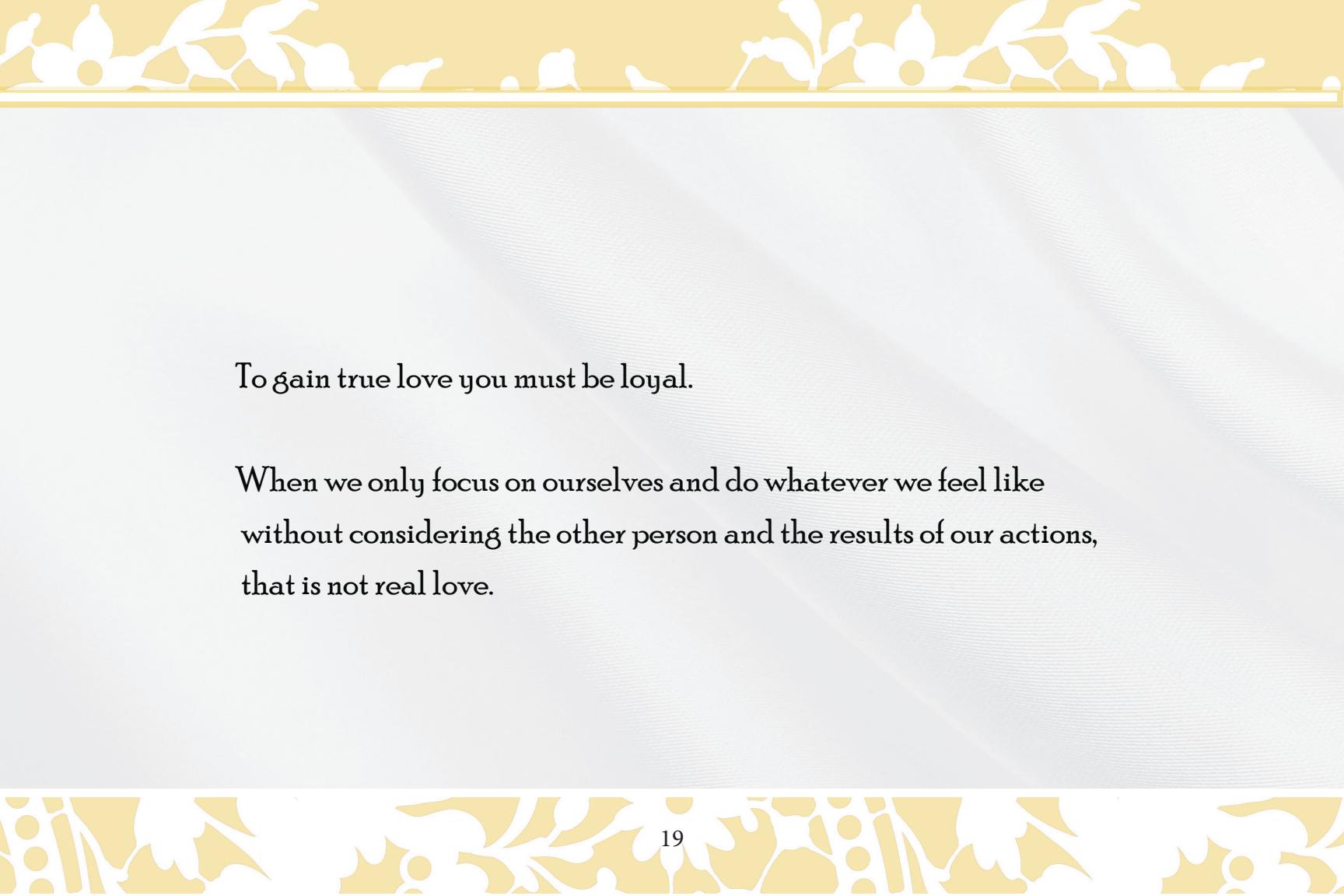
BLESSED ARE YOU, HASHEM,
WHO GLADDENS ZION THROUGH HER CHILDREN.



This blessing is about the city of Jerusalem.
It is not about a bride or a groom or a marriage.

Why is this blessing at a wedding?

Our generation is a generation that has the ability to easily visit or live in Jerusalem. For thousands of years we yearned for Jerusalem but could never get there. Yet we were loyal, loyal to Jerusalem for thousands of years when she was barren and empty.

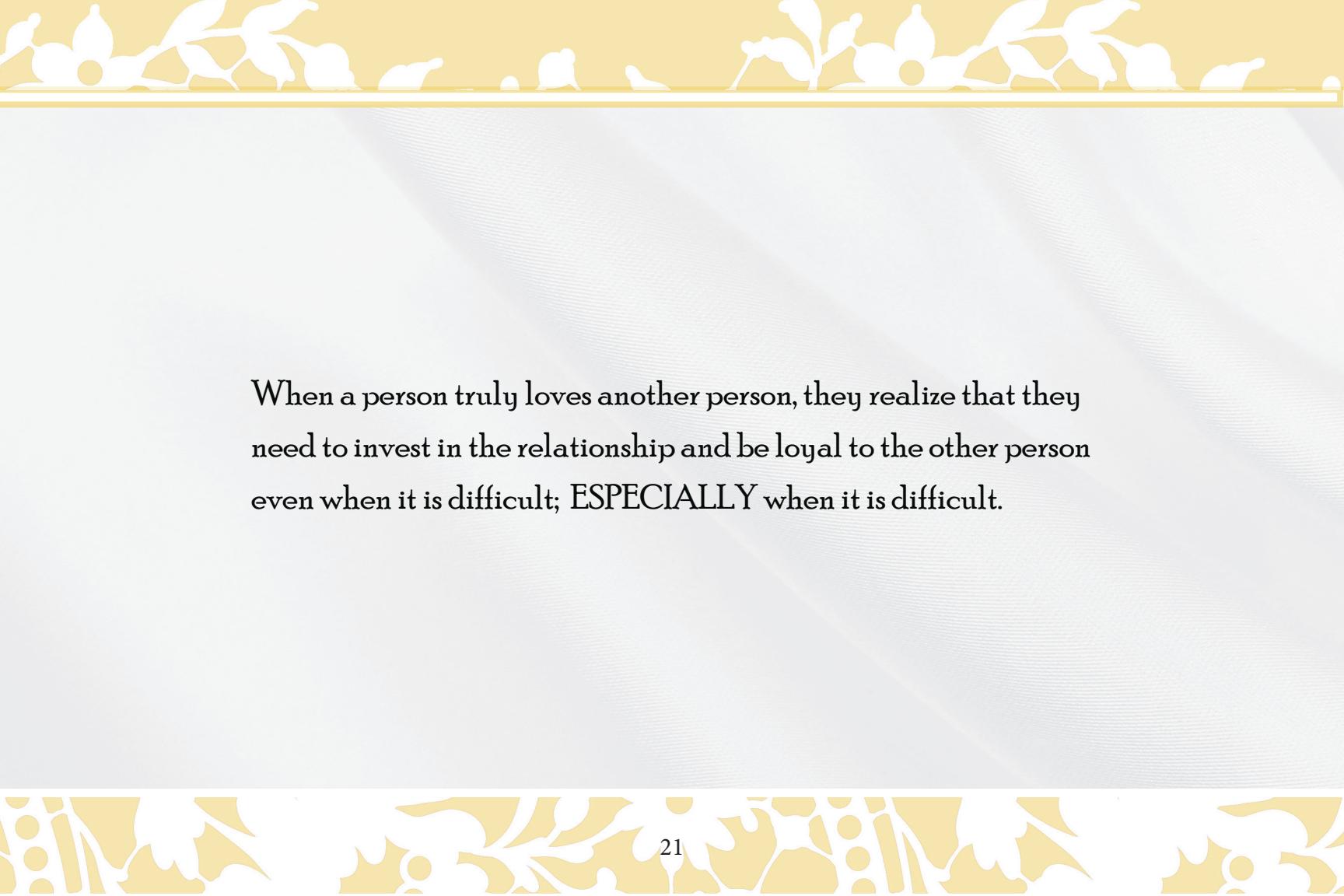


To gain true love you must be loyal.

When we only focus on ourselves and do whatever we feel like without considering the other person and the results of our actions, that is not real love.

It's going to be difficult, I'm wounded and I'm not sure I can slay the dragons.

Don't worry, I've got your back!



When a person truly loves another person, they realize that they need to invest in the relationship and be loyal to the other person even when it is difficult; ESPECIALLY when it is difficult.



REAL, CONSISTENT LOVE CAN ONLY FLOURISH OVER TIME
WHEN IT IS BUILT ON A FOUNDATION OF COMMITMENT AND LOYALTY.

Blessing 5

A SPOUSE STANDS BEHIND YOU

שְׁמַח תִּשְׁמַח רְעִים הָאֶחָדִים בְּשְׁמַחְךְ יִצְּרֶךְ בָּגָן עַדְן מִקְדָּם
בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה הַמֶּשְׁמַח חַתָּן וּבָלָה:

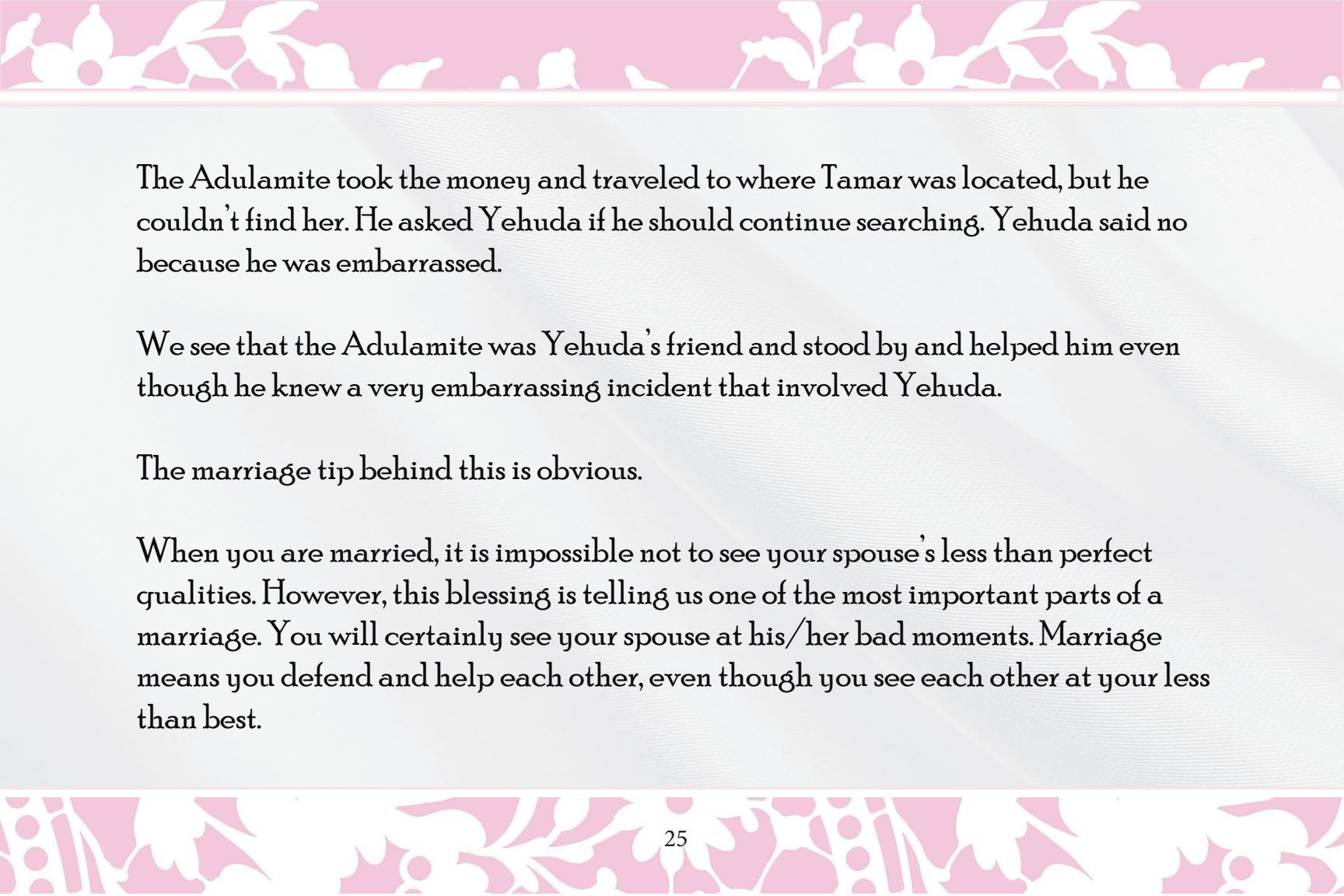
GLADDEN THE BELOVED FRIENDS AS YOU GLADDENED
YOUR CREATURE IN THE GARDEN OF EDEN FROM AFORETIME.
BLESSED ARE YOU, HASHEM, WHO GLADDENS GROOM AND BRIDE.

T

he Hebrew in this blessing is what is important. The Hebrew language has many words for friend. For example, chaver means connected and yedid means precious. This blessing uses the word RAYIM for friend.

In addition to the word friend, RAYIM also has the word RA inside it. The word RA means evil or bad. Why does this blessing use a word with a negative implication? The Torah (Genesis 38:1-36) tells us the story of Yehuda and Tamar. Tamar disguised herself and Yehuda consorted with her.

He didn't have payment with him so he left her his cloak, his staff and his signet ring as a deposit, and promised to send her what she was owed. Yehuda was very embarrassed about his behavior and asked his friend (RAYIM) the Adulamite to take the payment to Tamar.



The Adulamite took the money and traveled to where Tamar was located, but he couldn't find her. He asked Yehuda if he should continue searching. Yehuda said no because he was embarrassed.

We see that the Adulamite was Yehuda's friend and stood by and helped him even though he knew a very embarrassing incident that involved Yehuda.

The marriage tip behind this is obvious.

When you are married, it is impossible not to see your spouse's less than perfect qualities. However, this blessing is telling us one of the most important parts of a marriage. You will certainly see your spouse at his/her bad moments. Marriage means you defend and help each other, even though you see each other at your less than best.



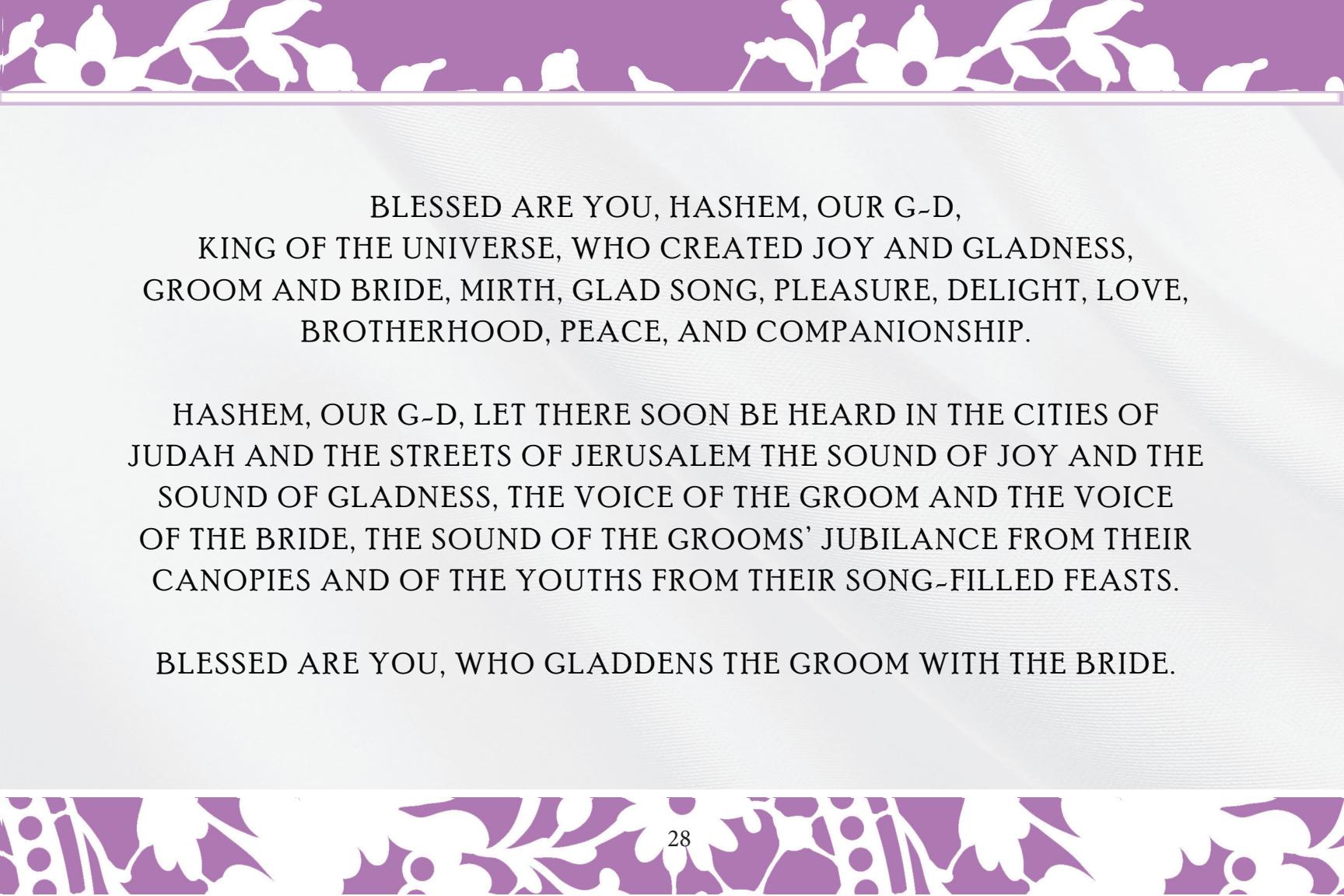
I was afraid to tell you this,
but I'm afraid of the dark and I can't fall asleep
unless I feel safe, do you still love me?

I just love him

Blessing 6

LIVE A LIFE OF JOY

ברוך אתה ה אֱלֹקֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, אֲשֶׁר בָּרָא שְׁ羞ָׁן וְשְׁמָחָה, חַתּוֹן וּכְלָה, גִּילָּה רְגָנָה, דִּינָּה
וְחַדּוֹה, אַהֲבָה וְאַחֲרָה, וְשָׁלוֹם וְרָעוֹת. מְהֻרָה ה אֱלֹקֵינוּ יִשְׁמַע בְּעָרִי יְהוָה וּבְחוּצֹות יְרוּשָׁלַיִם,
קוֹל שְׁשָׁן וְקוֹל שְׁמָחָה, קוֹל חַתּוֹן וְקוֹל בְּלָה, קוֹל מִצְחָלוֹת חַתּוֹנִים מִחְפְּתָם,
גָּעָרִים מִמְשִׁטָּה נְגִינָתָם. בָּרָוך אתה ה, מִשְׁמָחָה חַתּוֹן עִם הַבָּלָה



BLESSED ARE YOU, HASHEM, OUR G-D,
KING OF THE UNIVERSE, WHO CREATED JOY AND GLADNESS,
GROOM AND BRIDE, MIRTH, GLAD SONG, PLEASURE, DELIGHT, LOVE,
BROTHERHOOD, PEACE, AND COMPANIONSHIP.

HASHEM, OUR G-D, LET THERE SOON BE HEARD IN THE CITIES OF
JUDAH AND THE STREETS OF JERUSALEM THE SOUND OF JOY AND THE
SOUND OF GLADNESS, THE VOICE OF THE GROOM AND THE VOICE
OF THE BRIDE, THE SOUND OF THE GROOMS' JUBILANCE FROM THEIR
CANOPIES AND OF THE YOUTHS FROM THEIR SONG-FILLED FEASTS.

BLESSED ARE YOU, WHO GLADDENS THE GROOM WITH THE BRIDE.



The meaning behind this blessing is obvious.

In this blessing there are 12 expressions of Joy. The words Chasson and Kallah also mean joy. They are part of the 12.

We all know that life can be monotonous. It can be boring.

We tell the bride and groom. Be happy with each other. Twelve times over.



LAUGH, SMILE, GIGGLE, MAKE FUNNY FACES. HAVE INSIDE JOKES. SKIP, PLAY, BE EACH OTHERS' PARTNER IN CRIME! HAVE A HOME AND A LIFE AND A RELATIONSHIP FILLED WITH JOY.



G-d's Gift to the new Bride and Groom

FORGIVE EACH OTHER

Our tradition teaches that on a wedding day,
G-d gives the bride and groom a beautiful present.

He gives them their own Yom Kippur and forgives all of their mistakes.
The mistakes they made when they didn't know any better, to the intentional things
they did wrong when they should have known better, and everything in between.



The Satmar Rov, Rov Yoel Teitlebaum (13 January 1887 – 19 August 1979) would impart an important message to the bride and groom at many weddings.

We all know that a couple receives many gifts on their wedding day.

They get linens, dishes, a crockpot, etc. However, we all know that the gifts given at a wedding aren't actually used on the wedding day itself, instead they are used during the marriage.

It must be that the gift that G-d gives the couple is also to be used for the marriage.





How does a couple use G-d's gift of forgiveness during their marriage?

It's simple. Act like G-d and FORGIVE EACH OTHER.

Forgive each other for every mistake; For the mistakes you made when you were first married and you didn't know any better. For the mistakes you made when you should have known better. For everything in between.





ABOUT RABBI REISMAN

Rabbi Yisroel Reisman is one of the Roshei Yeshiva at Yeshiva Torah Vadaas and the Rabbi of the Synagogue, Agudas Yisroel of Madison. He is also one the most popular teachers in the Jewish world today and has been delivering a Saturday night lecture series for over thirty years. (He delivers about thirty lectures annually, beginning just after the Holiday of Simchas Torah in October, and ending just before the Holiday of Shavuos in June.)

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Kurt Stein moonlights as a Managing Director at a respected Financial institution to support his career as a Jewish professional. He lives in New Jersey with his wife Melissa and their children.

He has a summer camp personality and (as of the date of this publication) can do 15 one armed push ups with either arm. He is a popular Bar/Bat Mitzvah teacher in New York City/on Skype and officiates regularly at lifecycle events. He can be reached at steinkurt@gmail.com or 917-533-6912.

If you want to make his day, tell him you LOVED the book. (You don't even have to be sincere!)

Please see his website www.jewishmoments.org for more information.

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