Foreplay Knocks Me Out

Contributed by Tzvi Fishman
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Question:

I am a newly married man. What holy thoughts should I have in mind during relations with my wife? What images or pictures or visions should I be thinking about? Can these holy thoughts, images, pictures, or visions bring me pleasure? Also, what can married men do to stay happy and satisfied during the niddah period (about 12 days) when the wife is prohibited? Thirdly, I find the mitzvah of bringing pleasure to my wife before relations to be very, very hard work. My hands and fingers often become tired and I need to stop. Is there a way for me to find more pleasure and satisfaction during this particular phase of marital relations?

Answer:

You can think about your love for your wife and picture her face. You can think about a holy rabbi and picture his face. You can think about a Psalm you know by heart, about pleasing the Shechinah, about making a Yichud between Hashem and His Shechinah, as we request before performing mitzvot. Regarding pleasure, we are called upon to perform all mitzvot with pleasure - pleasure knowing that we are doing the will of Hashem. Regarding the physical pleasure involved in the marital union, when the intention at the outset is to fulfill the mitzvah of Onatah, having relations at the proper times, and to make your wife happy, then the physical pleasure that accompanies the act is holy too.

During your wife's niddah time, do things that make you happy - read a good book, study more Torah, take her out to dinner, spend more time with your kids.... Try not to place undue emphasis on sex in your marriage and this period won't be such a difficulty for you.

Regarding your third question, ask your wife what permitted things brings her the most stimulation, and how you can help her reach enjoyment. Sometimes a good conversation and spending quality time together before relations is more important than foreplay. Perhaps some soft music and a caring foot massage. Maybe more simple hugging and kissing. When you know that you are doing a big mitzvah by giving her pleasure, this will give you added strength, even when she takes time to warm up. And if it turns out that what you describe is the only method of arousal that she enjoys, then get a small rubber ball and squeeze it for exercise to build up your strength. Remember, her enjoyment comes first and it's your mitzvah to do your upmost to please her.