SEGULOT FOR SHIDDUKHIM Don’t fall in love with a picture

Our Sages understood beauty in exactly the opposite way from how the modern world understands it.

For Greek culture – and for contemporary culture, which in this respect is Greece’s heir – beauty is an objective fact, already there before anyone falls in love. You fall in love because you found beauty.

But for the Jewish mind it is precisely the reverse: the perception of beauty is the result of love, not its cause.

“I don’t love you because I find you beautiful. I find you beautiful because I love you.”

The best example is our own children. The neighbor’s four-year-old girl may be adorable. But for me, there is no creature in the universe more beautiful than my daughter. Or my granddaughter. Why? Because I love her. And loving her, she seems to me the most beautiful girl in the world. I cannot see her any other way.

If beauty comes afterward, then the right question on a first date is not “Am I attracted to her?” but “Is this someone I could come to love?”

Most of the couples I know felt neither immediate attraction nor automatic rejection on their first dates. They were emotionally parve. And since the head said yes, they invested time in the relationship. The emotions were nourished by time spent together, by knowing one another, by sharing some things and debating others. And that is when the attraction arrived.

That is what’s normal. The other thing is what you see in the movies.

From here comes a very practical segula: if you are going out with someone of good middot and a good family, give the attraction time. Time, and getting to know the other person, do their work.