

Shayla: What will our relationships with each other be like in heaven?

Meforshim:

I've generalized the question because it comes in so many forms. Let me give you some examples of what I mean.

- My spouse had children by other women but had them aborted. Since then we got saved and are now married. Do those children become ours in heaven? If the other persons get saved, what then?
- Will my relationship with my spouse be special in heaven?
- Will my son who died in child-birth know me in heaven?
- Will my still-born daughter be mine in heaven? What age will she be?

Let's lay out some basic principles, establish some constants first, shall we?

Jesus' glorified body was a real, tangible object, and His disciples recognized Him after His resurrection.¹ He ate, drank, and handled objects in our plane of existence.² Granted, He had some supernatural powers that included the ability to suddenly appear and disappear,³ change His appearance at will,⁴ and levitate,⁵ but He was still encapsulated and immanent.

Since the Apostle John assures us that we will be like Him,⁶ it is safe to assume that our resurrection bodies, likewise, will be real and recognizable, though somehow supernatural.

- [1 Corinthians 15:42-44 HCSB](#) So it is with the resurrection of the dead: Sown in corruption, raised in incorruption; (43) sown in dishonor, raised in glory; sown in weakness, raised in power; (44) sown a natural body, raised a spiritual body. If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body.
- [1 Corinthians 15:48-49 HCSB](#) Like the man made of dust, so are those who are made of dust; like the heavenly man, so are those who are heavenly. (49) And just as we have borne the image of the man made of dust, we will also bear the image of the heavenly man.

Carefully consider Paul's words. He says that our earthly bodies are all like the first Adam's. Do we all look precisely the same? Are we all precisely the same age all the time? Are we all masculine? No. Similarly, our heavenly bodies will resemble the Masters *IN GENERAL*, not necessarily in specifics.

Jesus gave us some insight into *olam haba*, the afterlife, with the following story.

- [Luke 16:22-23 HCSB](#) One day the poor man died and was carried away by the angels to Abraham's side. The rich man also died and was buried. (23) And being in torment in Hades, he looked up and saw Abraham a long way off, with Lazarus at his side.

Not only did the rich man recognize Lazarus (whom he knew during his life) but he also recognized Abraham who had died centuries before he had been born! To see another example of this phenomenon consider the story of Jesus' transfiguration.⁷ The apostles were able to accurately identify both Moses and Elijah even though they had never seen them before. Why is this? What drives this phenomenon? The apostle John (who apparently was destined to reveal a LOT about eschatology!) explains:

¹ Luke 24:36-43; John 20:26-29

² John 21:13; Luke 24:41-43

³ Luke 24:31, 36

⁴ John 20:14-16; Luke 24:16, 31

⁵ Luke 24:51; Acts 1:9

⁶ 1 John 3:2

⁷ Matthew 17:1-9

- **1 Corinthians 13:12 HCSB** For now we see indistinctly, as in a mirror, but then face to face. Now I know in part, but then I will know fully, as I am fully known.

We will know each other then, as we are presently known by God and the departed saints. Why? This is in direct response to the Messiah's prayer for us.

- **John 17:11 HCSB** I am no longer in the world, but they are in the world, and I am coming to You. Holy Father, protect them by Your name that You have given Me, so that they may be one as We are one.
- **John 17:21-23 HCSB** May they all be one, as You, Father, are in Me and I am in You. May they also be one in Us, so the world may believe You sent Me. (22) I have given them the glory You have given Me. May they be one as We are one. (23) I am in them and You are in Me. May they be made completely one, so the world may know You have sent Me and have loved them as You have loved Me.

This d'vekut in its final, best, and brightest form. This has ALWAYS been Hashem's purpose for us – a deep, personal, and intimate relationship with God and amongst humans. This is what Job anticipated when he said,

- **Job 19:25-27 HCSB** But I know my living Redeemer, and He will stand on the dust at last. (26) Even after my skin has been destroyed, yet I will see God in my flesh. (27) I will see Him myself; my eyes will look at *Him*, and not as a stranger. My heart longs within me.

The apostle Paul tried to bring us comfort and encouragement in regards to our dead loved ones. He said,

- **1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 HCSB** We do not want you to be uninformed, brothers, concerning those who are asleep, so that you will not grieve like the rest, who have no hope. (14) Since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, in the same way God will bring with Him those who have fallen asleep through Jesus. (15) For we say this to you by a revelation from the Lord: We who are still alive at the Lord's coming will certainly have no advantage over those who have fallen asleep. (16) For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the archangel's voice, and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. (17) Then we who are still alive will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air; and so we will always be with the Lord. (18) Therefore encourage one another with these words.

Let me ask you, in what way would this truth about the resurrection be comforting and encouraging if it did not imply that we would know each other and love each other in heaven?

King David, when he heard that his infant son had died said, "I'll go to him, but he will never return to me."⁸ Apparently, he agreed with Job in that upon *t'hiyat hametim* – the resurrection of the dead – he would be in a physical body and capable of recognizing his loved ones.

On the other hand, there are some caveats we must make. One day some Sadducees (who did not believe in resurrection) posed the following question:

- **Matthew 22:24-28 HCSB** "Teacher, Moses said, **if a man dies, having no children, his brother is to marry his wife and raise up offspring for his brother.** (25) Now there were seven brothers among us. The first got married and died. Having no offspring, he left his wife to his brother. (26) The same happened to the second also, and the third, and so to all seven. (27) Then last of all the woman died. (28) Therefore, in the resurrection, whose wife will she be of the seven? For they all had married her."

⁸ 2 Samuel 12:23

Jesus' question was blunt and to the point,

- **Matthew 22:29-33 HCSB** Jesus answered them, "You are deceived, because you don't know the Scriptures or the power of God. (30) For in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage but are like angels in heaven. (31) Now concerning the resurrection of the dead, haven't you read what was spoken to you by God: (32) **I am the God of Abraham and the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob? He is not the God of the dead, but of the living.**" (33) And when the crowds heard this, they were astonished at His teaching.

He refuted not one but TWO of their errors in one fell swoop. By saying that Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob were not dead but yet living He overturned their idea that there was no such thing as resurrection. Not only did He teach that they WOULD be alive, He implied that they were CURRENTLY alive!

Second, He demonstrated that in that in olam haba the cultural taboos and rituals that divide us here on Earth would no longer be applicable. Note that He did not say that there would be no sex; He said that we would not marry nor be given in marriage. That is a very different thing and that particular issue is treated in detail elsewhere.⁹

So what do I conclude from these points?

1. After the resurrection we will be in possession of glorified but tangible bodies.
2. These bodies will generally imitate the Lord's in their fundamental nature and abilities, though not in the specifics of gender and age.
3. We will not only recognize each other but we will recognize people that we have never met.
4. We will enjoy such a level of intimacy that is beyond imagination and that will preclude much, if not all, of the current cultural rituals and intimacies.
5. Babies who die in childbirth or shortly thereafter will be in heaven and will be recognizable.

Now for a little conjecture.

1. Though I cannot conclusively prove it at this point I do not think that it is likely that babies will still be babies in heaven. To ask "whose baby will it be" is just as silly as asking "whose wife will she be". We will not possess each other. We will not be responsible for raising, rearing, or caring for each other at that point for we will be living in the presence of our king and we will be judging angels.¹⁰
2. Love essentially being a decision, an act of the will, and we retaining our free will in heaven, I believe that it will be possible to maintain a special relationship with certain people. After all, Jesus was without sin when He maintained a closer relationship with Peter, James, and John than He did with the rest of the disciples and was especially intimate with the Apostle John (him again!).
3. Further, even if we will know each other as we are now known, we will still have history with certain people and that might influence the type of relationship we have with them.

⁹ Will there be babies in the Millennium?; Millennial Babies; Is my guardian angel a boy or a girl?

¹⁰ 1 Corinthians 6:3