

# Making Shidduchim – Why should I Get Involved?

## ◆ The Great Zechus of Making Shidduchim ◆

### ◆ It's that simple ◆

Simply put, it is a mitzvah to be a *shadchan*, the go-between who helps match a man to a woman. Many areas of the Torah require the involvement of a go-between, with the very giving of the Torah at Har Sinai being presented from Hashem to us through Moshe Rabbeinu.<sup>1</sup>

*Chazal* teach us (Shabbos 150a) that although mundane talk is restricted on Shabbos, discussing a *shidduch* is permitted, for it is speech of a mitzvah.<sup>2</sup>

### ◆ Were you involved? ◆

The gemara (Shabbos 31a) quotes Rava, who states that when a person appears before the Heavenly Tribunal, he will be asked, "*Asakta b'p'rya v'rivy'a* - Did you involve yourself in the procreation of the world?" The *Chasam Sofer* explains that this is referring to one's involvement in *shidduchim*.<sup>3</sup>

It is said that the Gerrer Rebbe, the Lev Simchah, would pay of his own money to those who *redt shidduchim* to older boys. He did this as a means to encourage them in their work, explaining that *redting* these *shidduchim* was in line with the words of the Maharsha on the above-mentioned gemara. The Maharsha writes, "They will not ask 'Did you fulfill the obligation to procreate?' Rather, they will ask, 'Were you *involved* in the obligation to procreate?' This is referring to aiding in the marriage of two orphans."<sup>4</sup>

### ◆ Who was the first Shadchan? ◆

It was none other than Hakadosh Baruch Hu Himself! The gemara (Berachos, 61a) states that Hashem involved Himself in the nuptials of Adam Harishon. The gemara continues that we learn from here that even a great person should not hesitate to involve himself in the wedding preparations of a simple person. The Targum Yonasan (Devarim, 34:6) writes, "Blessed is Hashem who has taught us proper ways. He has taught us to match *zivugim*, just as He did between Adam and Chava."

This is as *Chazal* tell us, "The Torah begins with an act of kindness, for Hashem involved Himself in the wedding preparations of Adam and Chava."<sup>5</sup>

### ◆ Hashem does it every day! ◆

One who *redts shidduchim* is following in the ways of Hashem, and thus fulfills the commandment of "*Uvo sidvok - To Him you shall cling*". As *Chazal* say, from the day of creation until today, Hashem matches *zivugim*.<sup>6</sup> We see Hashem's involvement in *shidduchim* from the verse (Tehilim, 68:7) *Hashem aids those who are single to establish homes*.

### ◆ A Shadchan is no simple person! ◆

Rav S. Hershler was once accompanying the Chazon Ish on a *shidduch* mission. The Chazon Ish turned to him and said, "Let's get involved in that which Hashem involves Himself."<sup>7</sup>

Rav Aharon of Belz stated that it was the custom of his grandfather, the Mahari MiBelz, to drink a *l'chaim* and eat some *mezonos* with each *shadchan* that came to him. He explained that since we see that Hashem matches *zivugim*, a human *shadchan* is involved with the work of Heaven. If so, we must accord him honor.<sup>8</sup>

### ◆ Do it yourself ◆

Rav A. T. Turzin zt"l relates that the Chazon Ish once asked him to take care of a *shidduch* for a family member. Rav Turzin replied that he delivered a shiur to his congregants at that time, and was thus unable to fulfill the request. The Chazon Ish instructed him to send Rav Shaul Barzam in his place to deliver the shiur, but he should go *himself* to deal with the *shidduch*<sup>9</sup> (as *Chazal* teach us, "a mitzvah is better done personally than through a messenger"<sup>10</sup>).

### ◆ Why did he wake him up? ◆

The Chazon Ish would say that when one thinks of a promising *shidduch* idea, he should not delay. He should *redt* it at once. His niece, Rebbetzin Greineman, relates that her uncle once thought of a *shidduch* late at night. The bachur was already sleeping, but the girl was awake and available to meet. The Chazon Ish awoke the bachur to suggest the *shidduch* and have them meet at once. He personally remained nearby so there should be no concern of *yichud*!<sup>11</sup> The Chazon Ish was determined to make things happen rapidly, and did not even wish to wait the few hours until the morning. Perhaps he felt that when a *shidduch* idea pops into one's head, that is a sign that it is an opportune moment. For the same reason, a *shadchan* should not withhold suggesting a name he thinks of, even if he knows that it has already been suggested. It is possible that earlier, it was not yet the right time, and now it is.

Rav S.L. Eizikovitz of Lakewood, a close talmid of the mashgiach Rav Nosson Wachtfogel zt"l, recalls that late one night, the *mashgiach* knocked on his door. "Remind me the name of that older boy... I wish to suggest him to a certain girl." When Rav Shmuel Leib admitted that he could not recall the name, Rav Nosson exclaimed, "But the girl is on her way to Lakewood. We must help her find a *shidduch*!"

♦ *The Gadol Hador himself!* ♦

Never think it is unbecoming for a *talmid chacham* to involve himself in *shidduchim*. Many gedolim *redt shidduchim!* The Maharil, one of the *Rishonim* who was the gadol hador of his era, sent letters across the breadth of the land with *shidduch* ideas. People took his ideas seriously, and *shadchanus* was his source of income.<sup>12</sup>

Rav Yosef Chaim Sonnenfeld zt"l, Rav of Yerushalayim, would also *redt shidduchim*, despite his relatively advanced age of over 70. He explained that this was a tremendous *zechus*.<sup>13</sup>

Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach zt"l was known to spend many hours helping talmidim and others close to him find their *zivugim*.<sup>14</sup>

Furthermore, there is a benefit in keeping *shidduchim* in the hands of *talmidei chachamim*. The sefer *Me'il Tzedakah*<sup>15</sup> writes that the common custom in the past was that only *talmidei chachamim* would suggest *shidduchim*. This is because a *shidduch* sometimes requires a bit of exaggeration, and a genuine Torah scholar stands the best chance to balance that with the prohibitions of falsehood and *ona'as devorim*.<sup>16</sup>

♦ *In preparation of Kol Nidrei* ♦

The Chasam Sofer's descendants state that their esteemed ancestor would involve himself in *shidduchim* during the Yomim Nora'im period.<sup>17</sup> He would say that one who seeks merits at that critical time should do likewise.<sup>18</sup>

Rav Avraham Tzvi Winder was a close talmid of the Chasam Sofer. One year, as *Kol Nidrei* neared, the Chasam Sofer's *shamash* summoned the bachur Avraham Tzvi to his rebbi. Avraham Tzvi was frightened. What could his rebbi, the Chasam Sofer, want from him at such a holy time? He entered his rebbi's room, and the Chasam Sofer said, "I want you to agree to that which I will ask of you. There is a *yesomah* who has no one to look after her *shidduchim*. I want you to agree to marry her." Avraham Tzvi was caught by surprise, but agreed after he received his rebbi's *berachah*. With a joyous countenance, the Chasam Sofer hurried to deliver his *Kol Nidrei* address. "Now I have what to come in to *Kol Nidrei* with!" he announced as he left the room.<sup>19</sup>

♦ *Why did he travel so far?* ♦

Rav Eliyahu Dessler zt"l would leave no stone unturned when it came to *shidduchim*. His dedication to this cause was legendary. When he lived in Eretz Yisrael, he received word that a bachur living up north was *redt* to his friend's daughter. Realizing he could play a pivotal role in making the *shidduch* happen, Rav Dessler and his wife made the long trip from their home to the northern town of Zichron Yaakov to discuss the matter in person with the boy and his family.<sup>20</sup>

♦ *Illness would not stop him* ♦

When Rav Dessler was already very old, the Chazon Ish asked him to *redt* a certain *shidduch* to Rav Moshe Sternbuch shlita, then a bachur in Chevron Yeshiva. Despite his ill health, Rav Dessler traveled to Yerushalayim for this mission, and did what it took to bring the *shidduch* to a happy conclusion.

Five days before his passing, already laid up in the hospital, Rav Dessler mustered the strength to ask a confidante to work on a *shidduch* prospect for a *yesomah* from his Gateshead Seminary. It is mindboggling that on his deathbed, this was his concern – to find a *zivug* for a young orphan.<sup>21</sup>

♦ *Twenty-five years!* ♦

The *Shelah* writes that one who *redts shidduchim* and brings them under the *chuppah* is fulfilling the mitzvah of *hachnasas kallah*, which is very meritorious. The main point of this mitzvah is to aid a young couple to marry. Thus, it is fitting for a person to work to this end with all his resources; physically, spiritually, and financially. He should also try to get others to do so as well.<sup>22</sup>

Rav Chaim Kreisworth zt"l fell ill many years ago, and the doctors declared that he had only weeks to live. R' Chaim went to ask the Steipler Gaon if there was anything to be done to rescind the Heavenly decree. The Steipler told him to get actively involved in *hachnosas kallah*. He explained, "Each morning, we say in *davening*, 'For these mitzvos, we receive the dividends here, and the principal reward in the World-to-Come...visiting the sick, *hachnosas kallah*, and escorting the dead.' Chazal interrupt the typical life cycle of illness, then death, with *hachnasas kallah*. This is to teach us that one can actually ward off death when ill by involving himself with marrying off young couples. R' Chaim accepted this mitzvah upon himself, and merited a miraculous recovery. Amazingly, he lived an additional twenty-five years, and he married off hundreds of orphans during this lengthy reprieve.<sup>23</sup>

♦ *The great merit you can achieve* ♦

We find that the very first act of *kiddushin* – that of Yitzchok and Rivka – was done through a third party, namely Eliezer, servant of Avraham. For this reason, it is customary until this day to arrange *shidduchim* through a *shadchan*; a third-party.<sup>24</sup>

It is said in the name of Sfas Emes that the reason Eliezer transformed from an accursed person to a blessed one was as a reward for his dedication to the aforementioned *shidduch*.<sup>25</sup>

The Spinka Rebbe zt"l commented that one who involves himself in *shidduchim* will receive a Heavenly pardon for even severe sins.<sup>26</sup>

An *avreich* struggling to support his large family asked the Chazon Ish for advice to earn an easy income while remaining in kollel. He replied, "Become a *shadchan!*" The fellow did just that, and saw much success.<sup>27</sup> The Chofetz Chaim writes that one who involves himself in *chesed* earns great merits for salvations. The sefer *Shalmei Simchah* adds that this is certainly so for one who is involved in the *chesed* of *shidduchim*.

♦ *An aid to learning* ♦

An *avreich* spent a significant amount of time *redting* a *shidduch* to a relative. Although he recognized the great mitzvah, he complained to the Chazon Ish about the *bittul* Torah it caused. He replied, “*Chas v’shalom!* Torah is not a science, where the more you study, the more you know. Torah is the essence of our *neshamah*. When one does *chesed* for a fellow Yid, his *neshamah* is elevated, and that helps him acquire Torah knowledge.”<sup>28</sup>

Moshe Rabbeinu merited a Heavenly shine on his countenance because he was the *shadchan*, the intermediary, between Hashem and the Jewish nation.<sup>29</sup> From there we see the significance of connecting Jewish families one to another.<sup>30</sup>

♦ *To merit children Talmidei Chachamim* ♦

An *avreich* who was still childless after a number of years asked Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach zt”l what he should undertake as a *zechus* to bear children. R’ Shlomo Zalman suggested he involve himself in *redting shidduchim* to older singles, as this is a great *chesed*. The man listened, and shortly thereafter merited a son.<sup>31</sup>

Rav Aharon of Belz repeated a *kabbalah*, a tradition, he had from the *Chozeh m’Lublin*, “A *shadchan* who does his work for the sake of Heaven will merit sons who are Torah scholars.”<sup>32</sup>

♦ *It’s up to YOU!* ♦

“There are plenty of *shadchanim*. There’s no need for me to get involved.” If that’s your attitude, think again! Not only is a *shidduch* destined in Heaven, so is its *shadchan*. So if the correct *shadchan* does not come along, the *shidduch* won’t happen. We find this concept by doctors as well, as *Chazal* teach us (*Avodah Zarah*, 55a) that healing can only come through a predestined doctor.<sup>33</sup>

A certain influential individual was asked to help older single girls with *shidduchim*. He demurred, claiming his help was unnecessary; after all, their mates had been determined in *Shamayim* years earlier. What more could he do? However, Rav Chaim Kanievsky shlita told him that he was mistaken. “True, *who* will be their mate is predetermined. But *when* they will find their mate may be in your hands to hasten.”<sup>34</sup>

♦ *But I may slip and say lashon harah!* ♦

Poor excuse. Learn the *halachos* well. And then *redt shidduchim*. Hashem wants us to help one another, and that is what we should do. Learn the *halachos*, think before you speak, work for the sake of Heaven, and *daven* that you do not slip up. When all that is in place, you can and must trust in Hashem that you will not stumble, even accidentally. “*Habah l’taheir, m’sa’ayin oso* - when one tries to do what is correct, he is aided from Hashem.”<sup>35</sup>

♦ *It is never for naught* ♦

We all know that one who partakes of a mitzvah earns tremendous merit, and the harder one works for that mitzvah, the greater the reward. Every bit of effort is accounted for in Heaven, and is always paid for in full. This is all certainly true regarding one who is involved in *shidduchim*. None of his efforts are in vain, and he will be rewarded for every bit of it.

Many times, a person can expend much time and effort *redting a shidduch* which does not come to fruition. Months later, it can be suggested by someone else, and then follow through to a happy ending. Even the first *shadchan* will be rewarded by Hashem for the match, since he, too, played a role in bringing the *shidduch* one step closer to its conclusion.

♦ *Each shidduch brings them one step closer to the right one* ♦

An explanation is given in the name of the Ba’al Shem Tov as to why we often need to try many prospects before finding the right *shidduch*. He explains, “Before a man is born, his life-mate is announced in *Shamayim*: ‘The daughter of so-and-so is to marry so-and-so’. But when they make that announcement, many wrong *zivugim* attempt to join in. Down here, it is impossible to escape easily from all those false *zivugim*. So, when one enters the realm of *shidduchim*, he must first be *redt* all of those *zivugim* without success, and only then can he meet the one who was truly destined for him in *Shamayim* so many years earlier.”<sup>36</sup>

The R”i of Rizhin stated that for this reason he would pay a *shadchanus* fee for every *shidduch redt* to him. After all, those prospects may have very well been those false *zivugim* he needed to do away with before finding the correct match.<sup>37</sup>

The Divrei Chaim would also pay a *shadchanus* fee to anyone who *redt a shidduch* to his children. He explained that he was grateful because each *shidduch* that is suggested brings the correct *shidduch* one step closer.<sup>38</sup>

♦ *Do you want Moshiach?* ♦

*Chazal* tell us that Moshiach cannot come until all the *neshamos* formed at the time of Creation are “used up”, meaning they are placed inside bodies and born into this world.<sup>39</sup> It follows that if someone *redts shidduchim* and thereby helps more people be born, he is bringing Moshiach closer. Yes, one who *redts shidduchim*, helping young couples establish families, is actually bringing the *ge’ulah* closer!<sup>40</sup>

♦ *What does ‘Shadchan’ mean anyway?* ♦

*Shidduch* in Aramaic means to quiet or appease, as the *posuk*, “*And the land calmed*” (*Shoftim*, 3:11) is translated in Aramaic as *u’shdochas ar’a*. *Chazal* teach (*Nidah* 31a), that a man must seek out his wife, and once he finds her and is engaged, he can rest. So a *shadchan* is one who helps the *chosson* rest from his pursuit of finding his *kallah*.<sup>41</sup>

Some say that one who *redts shidduchim* fulfills the precept of *hashavas aveidah*, returning a lost article. After all, *Chazal* compare a man searching for his wife to a person who is searching for an item he lost.<sup>42</sup>

♦ *Even the donkey was rewarded!* ♦

The *pasuk* (Bereishis, 49:14) states, “*Yissachar chamor gorem*”. *Chazal* (Niddah 31a) expound from these words that a donkey brought about Yissachar’s birth. How is that? When Yaakov returned from the field that night, Leah heard his approaching donkey braying. She went out toward Yaakov, and directed him to her tent. That night, she merited Yissachar.<sup>45</sup>

It is astounding! After all, what did the donkey do? Not much at all. It brayed a bit, and that earned it eternal mention in the Torah. The donkey is forever linked to Yissachar in this *pasuk*, and it is the symbol on Yissachar’s flag.

From here we can deduce that one who *redts* a *shidduch* or helps bring it to fruition has an everlasting *zechus* in each child born to that couple. Not only that, but by assisting in even the smallest manner, one can earn a share in this great *zechus*!

♦ *Building worlds* ♦

*Chazal* (Berachos 6b) tell us that one who gladdens a *chosson* is as if he rebuilt the ruins of Yerushalayim, and he merits Torah. This is true although he did not help with the actual match or wedding. If so, we can surmise that one who helped the *chosson* actually reach this point certainly has magnificent merits. He has a part in all the children born of this marriage, and *Chazal* teach us that one who saves a life is as if he saved an entire world. So a *shadchan* has a part in the building and continuity of the world.

Harav Chaim Kanievsky states that one who has merited to make a *shidduch* should *daven* on behalf of the couple that they merit to bear children, and that they establish a long-lasting abode. This is doing a mitzvah in its entirety, as the *shadchan* has now aided with the mitzvah of *be fruitful and multiply*.<sup>44</sup>

♦ *The greatest kindness* ♦

*Redting* a *shidduch* is an advanced level of *chesed*. Take a moment to contemplate just how many people you are bringing *simchah* to! And you are helping the *chosson* and *kallah* reach the totality they are currently lacking.

The *pasuk* (Devarim 15:8) states that we are obligated to help supply a poor man with what he is lacking. *Chazal*<sup>45</sup> deduce from the wording of this *pasuk* that we are obligated to help a man find a wife. As mentioned, Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach would encourage people to *redt shidduchim*. He was especially concerned with *redting shidduchim* to older singles, considering this the greatest kindness one could do for another.<sup>46</sup>

♦ *Get involved!* ♦

It is incumbent on each of us to do our utmost to help with *shidduchim* for close friends and relatives. All the more so is this applicable for those who know an older single. Get involved! It is a great mitzvah to help such a person.<sup>47</sup>

When one is a newlywed, he and his wife often have plenty of single friends. Take some time to sit down and brainstorm with your spouse or married friends. *Redt shidduchim* to those friends who are still waiting. One who does so will surely see much *Siyata Dishmaya*, as we find that Hashem sent an angel to assist Eliezer in finding a *shidduch* for Yitzchak.<sup>48</sup>

♦ *Don't be discouraged!* ♦

It is said that *Shadchan* is an acronym for *Chi shibar dalsos nechoshes* – *for he broke copper doors* (Tehilim 107:16). Yes, there are often great challenges that interfere with a *shidduch*. They can seem as insurmountable as an iron or copper wall. *Chazal* do tell us (*Sotah* 2a) that a *shidduch* can be as difficult as the splitting of the *Yam Suf*.

Yet, certainly, a *shadchan* receives much *Siyata Dishmaya* to overcome all these hurdles and bring a *shidduch* to fruition. If Hashem wills, the *shadchan* will be successful in his quest to match a young couple and help them establish a true Jewish home.

In summation, one who takes the time and effort to suggest a *shidduch* earns great merit. Do not give up when faced with complications. After all, don't *Chazal* tell us (*Shabbos* 130a) that there is no *kesubah*, or marriage arrangements, without a complication? Persevere, and if it is the *zivug hagun* – the ‘right one’, it will come to be with Hashem’s help.

♦ *So where should I start?* ♦

Now that we know the great significance and value of making *shidduchim*, how should we proceed? Even for those with minimal experience in *redting shidduchim*, there is one practical idea that can get you started. Keep an updated list of all single boys and girls you know of, and use it to brainstorm! You never know what great things will transpire!

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<sup>1</sup>Pachad Yitzchak, R' Yitzchak Lampronti zt"l. <sup>2</sup>See Rambam's Peirush Hamishnayos ibid. <sup>3</sup>Imrei Shamai, ibid. <sup>4</sup>Ne'imas HaChaim, Shidduchim. <sup>5</sup>Pirka D'Rebbi Elazar, Chap 16. <sup>6</sup>Bereishis Rabbah, 68:4, Bamidbar Rabbah, 3:6. <sup>7</sup>Mevakshei Torah, Vol XXIV, pg 158. <sup>8</sup>Simchas HaChaim, Vol II. <sup>9</sup>Ma'aseh Ish, Vol VII, pg 125. <sup>10</sup>Kiddushin 41a. See also Ran. <sup>11</sup>Mevakshei Torah, Vol XXII, pg 72. <sup>12</sup>Minhagei Maharil, Laws of Chanukah. <sup>13</sup>Yerushalayim shel Ma'alal, Vol III, pg 123. <sup>14</sup>Shalmei Simcha, Chap I. <sup>15</sup>R' Yonah Lansdorfer zt"l. <sup>16</sup>Otzar Hayedios, *Shidduchim*. <sup>17</sup>Rav Moshe Sofer, in *sefer Hachasam Sofer*. <sup>18</sup>Mevakshei Torah, Vol XXIV, pg 158. <sup>19</sup>As related by Harav Y.T. Dushinski, *sefer Zikaron L'Moshe*, pg 10. <sup>20</sup>Mechanech L'Doros, pg 300. <sup>21</sup>Mechanech L'Doros, pg 301. <sup>22</sup>Shelah, Maseches Pesachim, Ner Mitzvah, 48. <sup>23</sup>Ne'imas HaChaim, Shidduchim. <sup>24</sup>Sefer Matamim, Erech Choson V'Kallah. <sup>25</sup>Mili D'Avos, pg 90. <sup>26</sup>Sefer Sadeh Tzofim, Kiddushin. <sup>27</sup>Ma'aseh Ish, Vol V, pg 162. <sup>28</sup>Ma'aseh Ish, Vol IV. <sup>29</sup>Yalkut Shimoni, Yisro, Chap 279. <sup>30</sup>Shulchan Ha'ezer, 3:1. <sup>31</sup>Shalmei Simchah. <sup>32</sup>Avnei Zikaron, 5702. <sup>33</sup>Toldos Aharon Rebbe in *Mevakshei Eruvah*, 5758. <sup>34</sup>Derech Sichah, pg 109. <sup>35</sup>Halichos Olam, Chap 18. <sup>36</sup>Nitei Gavriel, opening remarks to *Shidduchim*. <sup>37</sup>Ner Yisrael, Vol IV, Chap 13. See also Orchos Rabeinu, Vol I, pg 264. <sup>38</sup>Simchas Chaim, Vol II. <sup>39</sup>Maseches Niddah (13b), with Rashi ibid. <sup>40</sup>Sefer Tiw Hashidduchim, from Rav Gamliel Rabinovitz shlita. <sup>41</sup>Sefer Hakushyos, see also Ran Shabbos (12a). <sup>42</sup>See Kiddushin (2b), and Divrei Shalom, Chap 94. <sup>43</sup>Bereishis Rabbah, (99:10). <sup>44</sup>Derech Sichah, pg 109. <sup>45</sup>Sifri 15: 136. <sup>46</sup>Shalmei Simchah, Chap I. <sup>47</sup>Nitei Gavriel, *Shidduchim*. <sup>48</sup>Pirkei D'Rabbi Eliezer, Chap XVI.