Torah Wellsprings

Collected thoughts
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Torah Wellsprings - Chayei Sarah

The Miracles of Shidduchim that Come with Bitachon

Chazal (Bereishis Rabba 60:8) say, יָפָה שִׂיחָתָן שֶׁל עַבְדֵי בָתֵּי אָבוֹת מִתּוֹרָתָן שֶׁל בָּנִים, "The conversations of the slaves of the Avos are more beautiful than the Torah of their children". The story of Eliezer is written on three or four עמודים [pages of the sefer Torah] and is written twice [because when Eliezer spoke with Lavan and Besuel, he repeated everything to them]. The Midrash points out that the Torah elaborates extensively on Eliezer's words, whereas there are large portions of the Torah that are written briefly. Sometimes, important halachos are taught to us from just an extra word or letter. From this we can understand how precious the words of the slaves of the Avos are before Hashem.

Similarly, Rashi (24:42) writes יפה שיחתן של עבדי אבות לפני המקום מתורתן של בנים, שהרי פרשה של אליעזר כפולה בתורה, והרבה גופי תורה לא נתנו אלא ברמיזה, "The conversation of the servants of the Avos is more beloved before Hashem than the Torah of their sons, as we see that the section dealing with Eliezer is repeated in the Torah, while many fundamentals of the Torah were given only through allusions."

Why are these conversations so precious to Hashem?

Also, Eliezer made a siman to know who the right spouse for Yitzchak is. He said that he would ask the maiden for water, and if she says that she will give him water, and to all the camels, then she is a kind person, and worthy to marry Yitzchak (see 24:14). The Gemara (Taanis 4a, and Rashi there) says that this wasn't a clever siman and he shouldn't have made it. What would be if the girl that came forth was lame or blind, and he didn't recognize it? Would he take her for a bride for Yitzchak?! Nevertheless, the Gemara says, השיבו לו כהוגן ונזדמנה לו רבקה, Hashem answered him in a good way, and Rivkah came forth.

The meforshim ask why it worked out well for Eliezer, and he succeeded with his *shlichus*, even though his plan wasn't a good one?

To answer these questions, we quote the Midrash (60:1) which connects the episode (of this week's parashah) of Eliezer seeking a shidduch for Yitzchak to the pasuk (Yeshayah 50:10) מִי בָכֶם יְרֵא ה' שֹׁמֵעַ בְּקוֹל עַבְדּוֹ אֲשֶׁר הָלַךְ חֲשֵׁכִים וְאֵין נֹגַהּ לוֹ יִבְטַח בְּשֵׁם ה' וְיִשָּׁעֵן בֵּאלֹקָיו, "Who among you is G-d-fearing, who hearkens to the voice of His servant, who went in darkness and who has no light, let him trust in the name of Hashem and lean on his G-d." The Midrash explains, מִי בָכֶם יְרֵא ה' זֶה אֱלִיעֶזֶר, when the pasuk says 'Who among you is G-d fearing,' this is referring to Eliezer. שֹׁמֵעַ בְּקוֹל עַבְדּוֹ, בְּקוֹל אַבְרָהָם שֶׁהָיָה עֶבֶד לְהַקָּדוֹשׁ בָּרוּךְ הוּא, when the pasuk says 'who hearkens to the voice of His servant', this means Eliezer listened to the voice of Avraham, who was Hashem's servant. As it states (Bereishis 26:24) בַּעֲבוּר אַבְרָהָם עַבְדִּי, 'for the sake of Avraham, My servant'. אֲשֶׁר הָלַךְ חֲשֵׁכִים, 'who went in darkness'. This means Eliezer went into darkness when he went to bring Rivkah. וְאֵין נֹגַהּ לוֹ, 'who has no light.' Who gave him light? Hakadosh Baruch Hu gave him light בְּזִיקִים וּבְבָרָקִים, with sparks and lightning..."

Meforshim (ר' יחזקאל לוינשטין זצ"ל באור יחזקאל ח"ז עמ' נ"א and others) explain that Avraham sent Eliezer on a *shlichus* that was naturally impossible to accomplish. Eliezer had to go to ארם נהריים (the land where Avraham was born) to find a spouse for Yitzchak. The maiden had to be a *tzadekes*, which was almost impossible in ארם נהריים, a place of *resha'im*.

And even if such an exceptionally righteous young woman could be found in Aram Naharayim, it would only be a suitable shidduch if she came from Avraham's family. And even then, it would only be a shidduch if her family agreed, and if they would permit her to leave and settle in Eretz Yisrael.

It seemed impossible, according to the rules of nature.

But it happened in one day! Eliezer's tefillah was (24:12) וַיֹּאמַר ה' אֱלֹקֵי אֲדֹנִי אַבְרָהָם הַקְרֵה נָא לְפָנַי הַיּוֹם וַעֲשֵׂה חֶסֶד עִם אֲדֹנִי אַבְרָהָם, "[Eliezer] said, 'Hashem, the G-d of my master Avraham, please cause to happen to me today, and perform loving kindness with my master, Avraham." He asked that the shidduch should be made on that same day!

It wasn't only the day he arrived in ארם נהריים, but also the day he left Avraham's house. Eliezer said to Lavan and Besuel (22:42) וָאָבֹא הַיּוֹם אֶל הָעָיִן וָאֹמַר ה' אֱלֹקֵי אֲדֹנִי אַבְרָהָם אִם יֶשְׁךָ נָא מַצְלִיחַ דַּרְכִּי אֲשֶׁר אָנֹכִי הֹלֵךְ עָלֶיהָ, " I came today to the fountain, and I said, 'Hashem, G-d of my master Avraham, "If You desire to grant me success on the path I am going…"

Rashi writes, **ואבא היום.** היום יצאתי והיום באתי מכאן שקפצה לו הארץ, "[Eliezer said] I came today. I left today, and I arrived today. We learn from this that the earth jumped for him, and he arrived in *Aram Naharayim* in one day. Within moments, he met with Rivkah, and the shidduch was completed *that day*.

Naturally, Eliezer's mission would take a very long time. He would have to ask for information about the girl to make sure she was a fitting spouse for Yitzchak. But this shidduch, from its beginning until its finalization, took one day. It is wondrous.

Eliezer had bitachon. In the merit of his bitachon, the shidduch occurred, smoothly, easily, and in one day.

This is what the Midrash (ibid.) is referring to. It quotes the pasuk אֲשֶׁר הָלַךְ חֲשֵׁכִים וְאֵין נֹגַהּ לוֹ, "Who went in darkness and who has no light". This refers to Eliezer, who went into a very "dark" and difficult mission to find a shidduch for Yitzchak in *Aram Naharayim* (as we explained). But he succeeded in is mission because יִבְטַח בְּשֵׁם ה' וְיִשָּׁעֵן בֵּאלֹקָיו, he trusted in Hashem.

We now understand the reason Hashem helped Eliezer find a shidduch, even though he didn't make a good siman (as we wrote above). He had bitachon; therefore, Hashem helped him with *nissim*.

Any prevention to the shidduch was resolved from heaven. As Rashi (24:55) tells us, ובתואל... היה רוצה לעכב ובא מלאך והמיתו, "Besuel… wanted to prevent the shidduch, so a malach came and killed him." This was all so the tefillah of someone who had bitachon should be answered.

We now understand the reason the Torah is so elaborate with the story of Eliezer finding a shidduch for Yitzchak. It is to teach us the greatness of bitachon. Eliezer had קפיצת הדרך, which means that on the day he left Avraham's home, he arrived in ארם נהריים, and on that same day, he found Rivkah. All of this, and similar matters, are wondrous miracles, and it is in the merit of Eliezer's bitachon.

This lesson applies when it comes to parnassah, refuah, and any of our other needs. With bitachon, we will see Hashem's salvation. Even if everyone has lost hope, there will be hope for those who trust in Hashem.[1]

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1. It states (24:62), וְיִצְחָק בָּא מִבּוֹא בְּאֵר לַחַי רֹאִי וְהוּא יוֹשֵׁב בְּאֶרֶץ הַנֶּגֶב. Rebbe Henoch of Alexander zt"l explains that this may be interpreted homiletically as: יצחק בא, happiness comes when a person believes לַחַי רֹאִי, that Hashem, the חי החיים, the Source of all life, רֹאִי sees him and watches over him. וְהוּא יוֹשֵׁב בְּאֶרֶץ הַנֶּגֶב, even if he dwells in a dry land, implying that he is suffering and lacks much goodness, nevertheless, Hakadosh Baruch Hu watches over him constantly from Heaven. With this belief, he can attain true happiness.

In Parashas Vayeira, after Sarah gave birth to a son, she declared (21:6), צְחֹק עָשָׂה לִי אֱלֹקִים כָּל הַשֹּׁמֵעַ יִצְחַק לִי, "Hashem has made joy for me; whoever hears will rejoice with me."

The simple understanding is that people would rejoice with Sarah upon hearing that she had borne a child

Shidduchim are from Hashem

When making hishtadlus for shidduchim, it is important to remember that our efforts serve only to fulfill our obligation of hishtadlus. The shidduch itself comes from Hashem. Nothing a person does can alter the shidduch that Hashem has destined for them; our role is to do what is expected of us while recognizing that the outcome is entirely in His hands.[2]

The Vilna Gaon writes (יהל אור פ׳ פקודי), "There is no reason for the toil people do for shidduchim, because everything is from Hashem."[3]

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in her old age. Rashi, however, citing the Midrash, offers a deeper explanation: "Many barren women were remembered with her, many sick people were healed on that day, many prayers were answered together with hers, and there was abundant joy in the world." Alongside Sarah's personal salvation, countless others experienced salvation as well.

The Ta"z, in his sefer on Chumash, Divrei Dovid, explains that when people heard that Sarah had given birth in her old age, they realized that miracles could happen for them too. Their hearts became filled with bitachon, and through that renewed trust in Hashem, they merited His assistance. As a result, there was great joy throughout the world.

Chazal (Pesachim 8a) teach: "When one gives tzedakah so that his son should live... הרי זה צדיק גמור, he is considered a complete tzaddik." This illustrates a unique quality of tzedakah: even when it is given with personal motives and not entirely l'shem Shamayim, it remains precious and fully accepted in Heaven. Although his immediate intention is that his child should live, rather than to fulfill the mitzvah, the act is nevertheless regarded as a perfect mitzvah, and he is considered a צדיק גמור.

The pasuk states (Bereishis 15:6), וְהֶאֱמִן בַּה׳ וַיַּחְשְׁבֶהָ לּוֹ צְדָקָה. The Abir Yaakov of Sadigura zt"l explains that this can refer to a person whose emunah is awakened by a desperate need for yeshuah. Initially, he may not have placed his trust in Hashem. Instead, he relied primarily on doctors, influential people, or other forms of assistance. Only after seeing that these avenues were not helping did he turn his eyes toward Hashem and place his trust in Him.

His emunah is therefore not entirely lishmah; it emerged because he needed salvation. Nevertheless, וַיַּחְשְׁבֶהָ לּוֹ צְדָקָה. Hashem regards such emunah like tzedakah. Just as tzedakah retains its greatness even when accompanied by personal motives, so too emunah and bitachon are always precious before Hashem. Such a person can be considered a צדיק גמור, a complete tzaddik, because of his emunah and bitachon, even if he arrived at them through his need for help.

2. Also, in Kesuvim it states (Mishlei 19:14), בית והון נחלת אבות ומה׳ אשה משכלת, "A house and wealth are bequeathed by fathers, but an Intelligent woman comes from Hashem.'"

The Gemara (Moed Kattan 18b) brings proof "from Torah, Nevi'im, and Kesuvim" that shidduchim are ordained from Heaven.

From the Torah, it states: וַיַּעַן לָבָן וּבְתוּאֵל וַיֹּאמְרוּ מֵה׳ יָצָא הַדָּבָר לֹא נוּכַל דַּבֵּר אֵלֶיךָ רַע אוֹ טוֹב, "Lavan and Besuel answered and said, 'The matter has emanated from Hashem; we cannot speak to you either bad or good.'"

From Navi, it states regarding Shimshon (Shoftim 14:4), וְאָבִיו וְאִמּוֹ לֹא יָדְעוּ כִּי מֵה׳ הִיא, "His father and mother did not know that it was from Hashem."

And from Kesuvim, it states (Mishlei 19:14), בַּיִת וָהוֹן נַחֲלַת אָבוֹת וּמֵה׳ אִשָּׁה מַשְׂכֶּלֶת, "A house and wealth are an inheritance from one's fathers, but an intelligent wife comes from Hashem."

3. The Gr"a writes, "It states (Tehillim 62:9), בִּטְחוּ בוֹ בְכָל עֵת, 'Trust in Him at all times.' This is the secret of shidduchim. One should trust in Hashem regarding shidduchim. As it states (Tehillim 127:1), אִם ה׳ לֹא יִבְנֶה בַיִת שָׁוְא עָמְלוּ בוֹנָיו, 'If Hashem will not build a house, its builders have toiled at it in vain.' This refers to shidduchim, which are called בנין בית, building a home. The pasuk states, אִם ה׳ לֹא יִבְנֶה בַיִת שָׁוְא עָמְלוּ בוֹנָיו. If Hashem does not build the house, it will not come to fruition. A person's hishtadlus for shidduchim is שָׁוְא, in vain, if it is

The Chazon Ish (Maasei Ish vol.1, 212) teaches that although Hashem leads the world in concealed ways, there is one place where Hashem allowed it to remain clear that everything is from Him, and that is in the realm of shidduchim. Great wonders occur. People move from one place to another, all so that shidduchim can transpire. It is clearly seen that מה' אשה משכלת, that shidduchim are arranged by Hashem, and there is no *hester panim* (concealment of Hashem's hashgachah) at all.[4]

Tzaddikim say (בדרך שיחה להגר"ח עמוד קי"א בשם ספרק חסידים ועוד) that sometimes Hakadosh Baruch Hu brings a war to the world so a shidduch can take place.

Several miracles took place when Eliezer sought a *shidduch* for Yitzchak. Among the miracles were: (1) קפיצת הארץ – the earth jumped for him, and he traveled from Eretz Yisrael to *Aram Naharayim* in one day. (2) While Eliezer was still davening for the *shidduch*, Rivkah appeared. (3) The water miraculously rose to Rivkah. (4) The *malach* exchanged the plates so *Besuel* ate the poisoned food, not Eliezer. And there are other miracles.

The Chidushei HaRim *zt'l* says that every *shidduch* has miracles.

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not Hashem's will."

It states (24:50), וַיַּעַן לָבָן וּבְתוּאֵל וַיֹּאמְרוּ מֵה' יָצָא הַדָּבָר לֹא נוּכַל דַּבֵּר אֵלֶיךָ רַע אוֹ טוֹב, "Lavan and Besuel said, 'The matter [the shidduch] has come from Hashem. We cannot speak to you either bad or good.'"

The Rashbam writes that Lavan and Besuel said, לא הסתירה ולא הבניין תלוי ברצוננו, neither preventing the shidduch nor bringing it about is dependent on our will. על כרחנו, רוצים או לא רוצים, it will happen whether we want it to or not, כי הקב"ה עושה זאת שהיכולת בידו, for Hashem is bringing about this shidduch, and the ability rests in His hands.

4. Reb Chaim Brisker zt"l was invited to deliver the keynote address at a gathering of rabbanim before World War I. He related the following mashal:

A customer entered a fruit store and asked the worker, "How much do the apples cost?"

"Three dollars," the worker replied.

"And the grapes? How much do they cost?"

"Three dollars," the worker answered.

"And the cherries?"

"Three dollars."

The customer approached the owner and said, "Your new worker is going to cost you a great deal of money. He gives the same price for every item in the store."

The owner replied, "This worker is deaf and mute. The only word he can say is 'three.' His father did me many favors, and I wanted to help him. So I packaged all of the merchandise in a way that every item costs three dollars. That way, I was able to hire him."

Reb Chaim Brisker concluded, "I, too, know only one word, and that word is Torah. Torah! Torah! Torah! I know no other word. Therefore, whatever is decided tonight at this asifah must be Torah'dig. It must be in accordance with the words and guidance of the Torah."

We can apply this lesson to emunah in Hashem as well. A person may say, "I cannot speak, and I cannot hear. Yet there is one truth that I can proclaim: אחד יחיד ומיוחד. There is only one Hashem, and everything that occurs comes from Him. That is all I need to know, and that is all I need to say."

This truth is revealed through shidduchim, but it applies to every aspect of life.

The Koziglover Gaon *zt'l* explains that the Satan tries to prevent *shidduchim* from happening because he is aware of the importance and the greatness of *shidduchim*. Therefore, miracles are part of the process of finding a *shidduch*. Miracles are needed to overcome any obstacle the Satan erects.[5]

Chazal (Pesachim 118a) say, קשה זיווגו של אדם כקריעת ים סוף, "A person's shidduch is as

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5. The Gemara (Sotah 2a) states, "Forty days before a child is formed [in the womb], a bas kol emerges and announces, 'The daughter of ploni is destined for ploni.'" Reb Chaim Brisker zt"l added that not only is the shidduch bashert, but even the exact day and hour when the shidduch will come about is also bashert.

Tzaddikim say that it is likewise decreed who will be the shadchan.

People once asked the Ahavas Yisrael of Vizhnitz zt"l, "Why do people say that shidduchim are from Heaven? At times, we see that a person's enemy can ruin a good shidduch!"

The Ahavas Yisrael replied, "When a shidduch is bashert, Hashem arranges that only friends and well-wishers are called upon to provide information about the boy or girl. And when a shidduch is not bashert, Hashem arranges that a person's adversaries are called upon. They present the information in a negative light, thereby preventing a shidduch that was not meant to be."

The Shpole Zeida zt"l said, "Every person has ma'alos and chesronos, positive qualities and faults. When a shidduch is decreed in Heaven, a wide wooden beam descends and covers all the faults, so that only the qualities are seen. When a shidduch is not bashert, a wide wooden beam descends and covers the qualities, leaving only the faults exposed."

The shtar tena'im states, עומד מצד החתן, "[The father] who stands on the chasan's side...." Rebbe Shlomke of Zvhil zt"l explained this to mean that when the shidduch came about, the father merely stood on the side and did nothing. Hashem alone arranged the shidduch.

Hashem grants parents the satisfying feeling that they made the shidduch, but in truth, Hashem alone arranges shidduchim.

A few years ago, a shidduch between an older bachur and an older girl was on the verge of being finalized, but the boy's mother began having doubts. The girl was a couple of years older than her son, and she also had older unmarried siblings. The mother had known these facts all along, but now they began to trouble her.

"I know that the older siblings will give their permission for her to marry before them, but there could be hakpados and hard feelings, and I don't want my son entering a marriage under such circumstances."

The girl knew nothing about this. She was expecting to become engaged on Motzaei Shabbos, while the boy's family was considering breaking off the shidduch.

What did Hakadosh Baruch Hu do?

On Friday night, the boy's father came home from the beis medrash with a "Torah sheet". The sheet addressed precisely the two concerns that were troubling his wife. The author wrote that a girl being older than a boy is not a reason to reject a shidduch, and that older unmarried siblings are likewise not a valid reason to refrain from proceeding with a shidduch.

The vort took place on Motzei Shabbos. The kallah never even knew that the shidduch had nearly fallen through, and that it had been preserved through siyata d'Shmaya over Shabbos.

The author of that Torah sheet had no idea that a family needed those exact words. In fact, when he wrote it, the family was still planning to finalize the shidduch. Yet Hashem caused it to be written and placed into the hands of those who needed to read it, so that the destined shidduch would come to fruition.

We say in the Sheva Brachos, שמח תשמח רעים האהובים כשמחך יצירך בגן עדן מקדם. In this brachah, we ask Hashem to gladden the new couple just as He gladdened Adam and Chavah in Gan Eden. What was unique about

difficult as the splitting of the sea." What is the connection between shidduchim and kriyas Yam Suf? מגדלות מרקחים (the son of the Arugas HaBosem, *Bishalach*) explains that both are salvations that come from unexpected places. When the nation stood in front of the Yam Suf, and the Mitzrim were pursuing from behind, the Yidden came up with four different ways of saving themselves (see Targum Yonoson, Shemos 14:13). Some said to make a war against Mitzrayim, some said to return to Mitzrayim, but none of them imagined that the salvation would be the splitting of the sea. Yet that is how Hashem saved them.

The same is with shidduchim. People have ideas of where they will find their shidduch; however, "Most of the time, the shidduch comes from a place he never imagined." Why does it have to be this way? מגדלות מרקחים explains that it is to teach the couple a lesson in parnassah. They are getting married; the yoke of parnassah is about to be on their shoulders, and they must know that generally parnassah comes from a place least expected. They should realize that just as their shidduch occurred from an unexpected place, their parnassah will also

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Adam and Chavah's joy in Gan Eden? Adam and Chavah knew they were meant for one another because there was no one else in the world for them to marry. We bless the chasan and kallah that they, too, should know that they were meant for one another and that there was no one else they were intended to marry. Hashem makes shidduchim, and He brought them together.

An engagement celebration is called a vort, which is the translation of the word דבר. This alludes to Lavan and Besuel's declaration, מה' יצא הדבר, that the shidduch comes from Hashem.

It states (Bereishis 18:14), הֲיִפָּלֵא מֵה' דָּבָר, which can be understood as, "Is any shidduch too difficult for Hashem?" Shidduchim come from Hashem, and Hashem can do everything.

It states (Mishlei 18:22), מָצָא אִשָּׁה מָצָא טוֹב וַיָּפֶק רָצוֹן מֵה', "One who has found a wife has found goodness and has obtained favor from Hashem."

The Vayeged Yaakov of Pupa zt"l asks that the word מָצָא, "found," generally refers to finding a metziah, something one was not actively seeking. Yet people search for a shidduch (see Kiddushin 2b), so the term מָצָא does not seem entirely appropriate. Why, then, does the pasuk say, מָצָא אִשָּׁה מָצָא טוֹב, "One who has found a wife has found goodness"?

The Vayaged Yaakov notes that the same question can be asked regarding the Gemara (Megillah 6b), יגעת ומצאת תאמין, "If a person says, 'I toiled in Torah and found it,' believe him." He did not simply find Torah; he acquired it through diligent effort. Why do Chazal describe this as ומצאת, "and found"?

The Vayaged Yaakov explains that Torah study is often appropriately described as ומצאת, finding. When a person toils in Torah, Hashem assists him in understanding it. Suddenly, an insight enters his mind, and the Gemara becomes clear. He asks himself, "How did I arrive at this pshat? My intellect is not sufficient to reach such depth and clarity on its own." He realizes that Hashem granted him this understanding. Therefore, Chazal say יגעת ומצאת. One toils, and then he "finds." The understanding does not come solely from his intelligence or effort; Hashem enables him to arrive at the correct explanation.

Shidduchim are similar. The pasuk states, מָצָא אִשָּׁה מָצָא טוֹב, that one "finds" a wife because the shidduch is a metziah, something found, and not merely the product of his own efforts. A person searches and looks for his shidduch, and then Hashem grants it to him. The shidduch comes from Hashem and from Hashem alone. A person does not find his spouse because of his wise decisions or because of his hishtadlus. It is מָצָא אִשָּׁה, something found. He toils, he tries, and then Hashem gives him the shidduch. At times, a person searches throughout the world for his spouse, only to discover that the shidduch is finalized with someone living across the street. It is a metziah, something found, although he searched, pursued, and exerted his hishtadlus.

This is the meaning of וַיָּפֶק רָצוֹן מֵה'. He recognizes that it was רָצוֹן מֵה', Hashem's will and Hashem's choice.

come to them, often from unexpected sources.[6]

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6. At the top of the shtar tena'im it states, ויפק רצון מה', which can be translated as, "Hashem took away their desire..." People search for shidduchim with a plan in mind for whom they want to marry. If their plan does not fit with Hashem's plan, Hashem will ויפק רצון, take away the person's preferences for a moment, causing him to have a change of heart and agree to something different from what he had originally planned.

For the first shidduch in history, Hashem put Adam to sleep in order to create Chavah. Adam's sleep implies that, at times, a person's plans and ideas must be put to sleep for a shidduch to come about. Only then can the shidduch happen.

The Pnei Menachem told a father who regretted a shidduch he had agreed to, "Sometimes, in order for a shidduch to occur, Hashem takes away the parents' reasoning and common sense, because if the parents were thinking rationally, they would not agree to the shidduch. That's what happened to you. This shidduch was destined to be, so Hashem took away your seichel for a while. You should be grateful that Hashem returned your seichel to you. Would you prefer to remain without common sense forever?"

Chazal say, בדרך שאדם רוצה לילך מוליכין אותו (see Makos 10a and other sources). The concept is that Hashem leads a person along the path he wishes to follow.

The Pnei Menachem zt"l explained the phrase as follows: בדרך שאדם רוצה לילך בה, the path a person desires to take, מוליכין אותו, Hashem leads him along it. Hashem placed that desire into his heart because He wants him to go in a certain direction.

This applies to all matters. The Pnei Menachem said it regarding shidduchim. When Hashem wants a certain shidduch to occur, He places into a person's heart a desire for that shidduch. This is the meaning of בדרך שאדם רוצה לילך מוליכין אותו. The desire a person has is itself Heaven leading him in that direction.

The Midrash relates that a noblewoman (מטרוניתא) asked Rav Yosi, "What has Hashem been doing from the six days of Creation until today?"

Rav Yosi replied, "Hashem makes shidduchim."

She responded, "I can make a thousand shidduchim in one day!" She meant that making shidduchim did not seem difficult, and even she could do it. Why, then, should Hashem need to occupy Himself with such a task?

Rav Yosi remained silent and did not respond.

This noblewoman owned many slaves. She gathered a thousand male slaves and a thousand female slaves and declared, "He shall marry her. She shall marry him." That night, every one of those couples quarreled, and they even struck one another. The next morning, they came before their mistress. One had a head wound, another an injured arm. The noblewoman summoned Rav Yosi, told him what had happened, and admitted that shidduchim are from Hashem.

Let us consider this story. This woman was obviously very wealthy; she owned thousands of slaves. Since her goal was to prove that she could make shidduchim, we can assume that she did everything in her power to ensure that her matches would succeed. She likely sought the best advice available. Yet, remarkably, not one of the thousand shidduchim succeeded. It was a complete disaster, ending in arguments and injuries.

The explanation is that no shidduch will succeed if it is not Hashem's will.

For us, this serves as a reminder that even when a shidduch appears perfect on paper, and even when experts are convinced it will succeed, it will do so only if that is Hashem's will. Conversely, there are times when a shidduch does not appear suitable, yet it succeeds beautifully because it was decreed in Heaven.

We heard the following remarkable story from the baal hamaaseh:

A Chassidic family in Eretz Yisrael had two sons learning in yeshivah gedolah. One was seventeen years old and in shiur aleph, the first year of yeshivah gedolah. The older brother was nineteen and learned in shiur gimmel. They attended different yeshivos. The family belonged to a large chassidus with yeshivos in several cities, so the two brothers learned in entirely different environments.

The two brothers were also very different from one another. The older bachur was beloved and highly respected by the staff of his yeshivah because he possessed exceptional yiras Shamayim and middos tovos. The younger bachur was less disciplined, and his maggid shiur was not pleased with him.

This maggid shiur had a daughter in shidduchim. When a shadchan suggested the older bachur, from another yeshivah, as a potential match, he rejected the idea immediately. Although he did not know the older brother personally, he assumed from his experience with the younger brother that there must be something lacking in the family, and he wanted no part of the shidduch. The shadchan attempted to explain that the older brother was very different, but the maggid shiur would not even consider it.

Eventually, the older bachur became engaged and married someone else.

When the younger brother later entered shidduchim, the shadchan again contacted the maggid shiur and said he had an excellent suggestion for his daughter. The shadchan did not reveal the bachur's name, knowing that the suggestion would be rejected immediately. Instead, he said, "Your wife is an expert at analyzing character through graphology. I will send you a sample of handwriting from a bachur. Let her examine it and tell me whether you would consider him for a shidduch."

A short while later, the father called back and said, "We want this bachur as a chasan. My wife says there could not be a more suitable match. What is his name? We want this shidduch!"

When the shadchan revealed the bachur's identity, the maggid shiur was stunned. A year and a half earlier, he had rejected a shidduch with the older brother solely because of what he knew about the younger one. Now he was considering a shidduch with that very younger brother.

Indeed, the shidduch came to fruition.

This was because, when something is bashert, it will occur.

The Midrash Rabbah (65:2) states that if a mamzer and a mamzeres live on opposite sides of the world, Hashem will bring them together so that they can marry one another. A mamzer's options for marriage are limited, and therefore Hashem brings two mamzerim together so they can marry.

Reb Ben Tzion Felman related the following story, illustrating that even the exact time a shidduch is to occur is ordained from Heaven:

Everyone was standing beneath the chuppah, and the chasan held the ring in his hand. Suddenly, the ring slipped and fell. Everyone gasped. The chasan picked it up and began again, but once more the ring fell from his hand. The same thing happened a third time.

A tense silence settled over the crowd. People began wondering whether this might be a sign from Heaven that the couple was not meant for one another.

The Brisker Rav zt"l, who was present at the chuppah, sensed what people were thinking and said, "The ring fell because it was not yet the proper time for the marriage to take place. The moment at which a marriage is to occur is also decreed from Heaven. Everyone was ready a few minutes before the destined time, and therefore a delay was necessary. That is why Heaven arranged for the ring to fall three times. Now the chasunah can proceed at its appointed time."

At that point, the Brisker Rav related another story about a chasunah that was delayed.

It involved a young man and woman who were both baalei teshuvah. Their parents were unfamiliar with the shidduch process in the religious community and did not fully understand their children's needs. As a result, the roshei yeshivah of the institutions where the boy and girl were studying became involved in helping find suitable matches, gathering information, and eventually even helping finance the chasunah.

On the night of the wedding, everyone arrived except for the chasan.

Shidduchim are from Hashem, But Man Must Make Hishtadlus

Above, we elaborated about how shidduchim are from Hashem. Nevertheless, there is an obligation for people to make hishtadlus. The hishtadlus doesn't make the shidduch, but it is the mission that Hashem placed upon us. People make hishtadlus; that is their obligation, but ultimately, Hashem performs alone.

The Midrash (Shemos Rabba 1:32) teaches that three found their shidduchim at a well: Yitzchak, Yaakov, and Moshe.

Yitzchak's connection to his shidduch is associated with a well, as the verse states, "וְיִצְחָק בָּא מִבּוֹא בְּאֵר לַחַי רֹאִי" (Bereishis 24:62), "Yitzchak came from Be'er Lachai Ro'i." Additionally, Eliezer encountered Rivkah at a well and identified her as the fitting spouse for Yitzchak.

Yaakov found his shidduch at a well, as it states, "וַיַּרְא וְהִנֵּה בְאֵר בַּשָּׂדֶה" (Bereishis 29:2), "He looked, and behold, a well in the field," where he subsequently met Rachel.

Moshe likewise found his shidduch at a well, as it states, "וַיֵּשֶׁב בְּאֶרֶץ מִדְיָן וַיֵּשֶׁב עַל הַבְּאֵר" (Shemos 2:15), "He settled in the land of Midyan, and he sat by the well," where he met Tzipporah.

The Midrash highlights the recurring role of the well as the setting through which these divinely ordained shidduchim came about.

What is the meaning of this midrash? What significance is there in a well, and why is it related to shidduchim?

Reb Y. B. Weiss Shlita, the גאב"ד of Montreal, answers that a well represents Hashem's actions and a person's hishtadlus.

Throughout the engagement period, everything had proceeded smoothly, and there had been no indication of any problem. Yet on the day of the wedding, just before the chuppah was to begin, the chasan was nowhere to be found. No one knew what had happened.

The rosh yeshivah sent someone to the chasan's apartment. The messenger found him there, but the chasan said that he had changed his mind and no longer wished to go through with the wedding.

The messenger hurried back to the hall and quietly informed the rosh yeshivah. The rosh yeshivah was shocked and unsure what to do.

First, he sent word to the kallah that the chasan was not feeling well. Then he rushed to the chasan's apartment and tried to persuade him to proceed with the chasunah, but the young man refused.

The rosh yeshivah then hurried to the home of the Steipler and asked for guidance.

The Steipler asked, "Is there another bachur in the yeshivah who would be a suitable match for this girl?"

The rosh yeshivah replied that there was indeed such a bachur.

The Steipler said, "Go immediately to the yeshivah, suggest the shidduch to that bachur, and bring him to the wedding hall. He will be the chasan tonight."

The rosh yeshivah went to the yeshivah and found the bachur asleep in bed. He hesitated. Should he wake him and tell him that he was about to become a chasan? The entire situation was so sudden and overwhelming. Unsure what to do, he returned to the Steipler and asked again.

"Certainly you should wake him," the Steipler replied. "Wake him and tell him."

The rosh yeshivah followed the Steipler's instructions, and the bachur agreed. He put on his Shabbos clothes and went to the chuppah.

Meanwhile, the kallah was informed about what had happened and was told about the qualities of the new chasan. She agreed to marry him. They met briefly before the chasunah (see Kiddushin 41a).

The well's water comes from a natural spring, completely made by Hashem, whereas the walls of the well are dug out and formed by man. This is like shidduchim, which are made only by Hashem, yet He wants us to make our *hishtadlus*.

It states (Vayikra 11:36) אַךְ מַעְיָן וּבוֹר. This pasuk discusses two forms of water sources: a spring and a pit. A spring is from Hashem's hand, and a pit is the work of man. A מַעְיָן is a spring of live water that bubbles directly from the ground and finds a place to gather. No human effort is involved in creating it. This signifies that everything is from Hashem alone. A בּוֹר, a pit, can be called a man-made structure. Man dug up the earth to create the walls and the depth of the pit, and then filled it with water. This represents the work of man. The Gidulei Taharah (שו"ת בסוף ספרו, שאלה ב) says that a באר, a well, belongs in a third category. There are three forms of water: מַעְיָן and בּוֹר and באר (spring, pit, and well). A spring represents Hashem's actions, a pit represents the work of man, and a well is a combination of the two because the water of the well comes from a natural spring, divinely made, and it flows into a man-made area.

Therefore, shidduchim took place specifically at a באר, a well, the combination of Hashem's creation and man's work to signify that this is how shidduchim are made. Ultimately, Hashem makes shidduchim, but people are obligated to do hishtadlus.

Primarily, shidduchim are made by Hashem. When a child is formed in the womb, a bas kol announces, בת פלוני לפלוני, whom the child will marry. It was decided in Heaven from the very beginning. All the steps needed to enable a shidduch to occur are also arranged by Hashem. Nevertheless, human actions are involved because a person must make hishtadlus. In this manner, shidduchim are like a באר, a well. This is the reason the shidduchim of Yitzchak, Yaakov, and Moshe were made at a well.

With these ideas, we can explain the following pasuk (Yirmiyahu 2:13): כִּי שְׁתַּיִם רָעוֹת עָשָׂה עַמִּי אֹתִי עָזְבוּ מְקוֹר מַיִם חַיִּים לַחְצֹב לָהֶם בֹּארוֹת בֹּארֹת נִשְׁבָּרִים אֲשֶׁר לֹא יָכְלוּ הַמָּיִם, "For My people have committed two evils; they have forsaken Me, the spring of living waters, to dig for themselves pits, broken pits that do not hold water."

This pasuk alludes to the three forms of water that we discussed above. It mentions מְקוֹר מַיִם חַיִּים "The spring of living waters," which is a מַעְיָן, we mentioned above, and it states בֹּארֹת, which can be translated as pits (בורות) or as wells[7] (בארות). Thus, three forms of water are discussed: spring, well, and pits.

As we explained above, a spring represents the concept that everything is entirely from Hashem, a well represents a mixture of Hashem's doing with man's actions, and a pit is man's doing entirely.

We can therefore explain that Hashem is rebuking the nation for not recognizing that everything is from Him, like a מַעְיָן, totally from Hashem. Why do they think that it is Hashem *with* people's deeds (באר), and even worse, why do they think that it is *only* people's deeds (בור)? When will they recognize that everything is from Hashem (מעין)? Although Hashem wants us to do hishtadlus, we must always remember that ultimately, everything is in Hashem's hands.

Be a Shadchan

Targum Yonason (Devarim 34:6) writes, "Bless the name of the Master of the World Who taught us correct ways. He taught us to clothe the needy, as Hashem dressed Adam and Chava, and He taught us to make shidduchim… as Hashem made a shidduch for Chavah." As it states (Bereishis 2:22) וַיְבִאֶהָ אֶל הָאָדָם, 'He brought her to Adam.'"

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7. בֹּארֹת represents pits, because the nekudos are the same as בורות, pits. But the letter alef in the word בֹּארֹת appears to be referring to a בְּאֵר, a well. So, בֹּארֹת alludes both to wells and to pits.

The Gemara (Brachos 61a) states, "The Torah teaches us that it is proper behavior to help others get married".[8]

When one is occupied with making shidduchim, he performs several mitzvos:

1) Some write (Shulchan HaEzer 3, Shu"t Radvaz vol.1 61) that the shadchan performs the mitzvah of ולדבקה בו, to connect with Hashem, and also the mitzvah of והלכת בדרכיו, to go in Hashem's ways. This is because Chazal say מה הוא רחום אף אתה רחום, just as Hashem is compassionate, so shall you be compassionate. Similarly, we can say that just as Hashem makes shidduchim, we should also make shidduchim. As is known from the Midrash, Reb Yosi ben Chalafta said that from the time Hashem created the world until today, Hakodosh Baruch Hu is occupied with making shidduchim.[9]

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8. Minhagei Maharil (Hilchos Chanukah 1) states, "The rav (the Maharil) sustained himself primarily from the money he earned through shadchanus. He would write letters to people throughout Germany to arrange shidduchim."

The Chasam Sofer helped arrange a shidduch for two orphans and was occupied with this mitzvah on Erev Yom Kippur. He did not want to postpone it until after Yom Kippur because he wished to enter Yom Kippur with the merit of this exceptional mitzvah.

The brachos of Birkas HaShachar are generally recited in the plural tense, such as פוקח עורים, מתיר אסורים, and so on. However, the brachah of שעשה לי כל צרכי, praising Hashem for "providing all my needs," is recited in the singular. We do not say שעשה לנו כל צרכינו, that Hashem provided all of our needs. Reb Moshe Leib Sassover explains that regarding one's own needs, a person should focus on the emunah that Hashem cares for him and gives him everything he needs. But when thinking about others, one should focus on what they are lacking and seek ways to help them. Therefore, although Hashem makes shidduchim, as Chazal derive from the pasuk מה׳ אשה לאיש, nevertheless, we are obligated to make an effort to help our fellow man.

It states (Mishlei 16:4), כֹּל פָּעַל ה׳ לַמַּעֲנֵהוּ, "Everything Hashem made was made for His sake." Yosher Divrei Emes (at the end of Shemos) asks: If so, why did Hashem create apikorsus, heresy? How can false beliefs increase Hashem's honor?

He answers that when a poor person comes to you pleading for help, this is not the time to say, "This is bashert. Hashem chose that you should be poor. Why are you complaining? You should accept your lot with love." Rather, this is a time to adopt the attitude of apikorsus. One should think that it is not good that this person is poor and that he must help him in his suffering. He should also think that if he does not help him, no one else will. This is not a time for bitachon, trusting that Hashem will help him. Nor is it a time for emunah, believing that his suffering is bashert and ultimately for his benefit. Hashem created the concept of apikorsus specifically for such situations. A person should view the tzarah as something bad and should feel that if he does not help, no one will.

9. The Chazon Ish and Reb Shlomo Hershler were once occupied with arranging a shidduch. The Chazon Ish told him, "Let us busy ourselves with what the Eibershter is busy with" (Maaseh Ish, vol. 2, p. 203).

Similarly, the Chazon Ish once told Reb Elazar Turchin zt"l, "Let us do what Hashem does, for Chazal say that Hakadosh Baruch Hu makes shidduchim."

The Lev Simchah of Gur zt"l would give money to shadchanim and ask them to help older bachurim find their bashert.

The Gemara (Shabbos 31a) states that when a person is brought to judgment in Heaven, he is asked whether עסקת בפריה ורביה. The Maharsha explains that included in this question is whether he helped orphans marry. "Orphans" are merely an example, for every effort made to bring about a shidduch is included in the mitzvah of פריה ורביה.

Many precious segulos and yeshuos come from being involved in making shidduchim. Reb Moshe Shternbuch shlita (in Biurim v'Hanhagos) writes that he heard from the Belzer Rav zt"l that helping others with

2) It states (Yeshayah 45:18) לֹא תֹהוּ בְרָאָהּ לָשֶׁבֶת יְצָרָהּ, "He did not create [the world] for emptiness. He created it to be inhabited." This mitzvah is to attempt to fill the world with people. Working towards making shidduchim is therefore a fulfilment of this mitzvah, as well (see הערות מהגרי"ש אלישב לגיטין מא.).

3) Helping someone find his shidduch can also be included in the mitzvah of tzedakah. It states (Devarim 15:8) כִּי פָתֹחַ תִּפְתַּח אֶת יָדְךָ לוֹ ... דֵּי מַחְסֹרוֹ אֲשֶׁר יֶחְסַר לוֹ, "You shall open your hand to him… whatever he is lacking…" Rashi says that this refers to a wife, to help him get married, which is included in the mitzvah of tzedakah.

4. Above all, he is performing the mitzvah of גמילות חסדים, to do deeds of loving-kindness. Helping someone get married is the greatest kindness one can do for another.[10]

Chasunah Expenses

When it comes to marrying off children, many people are worried, "How will we manage all the expenses?" This problem has been around for generations. It has always been difficult to marry off children. But Hashem helps.

There was once a *shidduch* that was almost finalized, but the girl's father said he wouldn't agree to the *shidduch* before the

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shidduchim is a segulah that one's children will be good and erlich.

Helping others find a shidduch is also a segulah that it will be easier to find shidduchim for your own children. Reb Noson Lubart zt"l (She'eiris Oz) cites the pasuk in this week's parashah (24:62), וְיִצְחָק בָּא מִבּוֹא בְּאֵר לַחַי רֹאִי, "Yitzchak came from Be'er Lachai Ro'i." Rashi explains that he had gone there to bring Hagar back to Avraham so that they could remarry. Immediately afterward, the Torah states, וְהִנֵּה גְמַלִּים בָּאִים, "and behold, camels were coming," bringing Rivkah to marry Yitzchak. Thus, when he helped arrange a shidduch for his father, he merited his own shidduch.

The explanation is based on the teaching of Chazal (Bava Kama 92a): "Whoever davens for his friend, while he himself needs the same matter, is answered first." This principle applies not only to tefillah. Likewise, when a person does a favor for another in an area in which he himself has a need, he is answered first. Therefore, helping someone find a good shidduch is a segulah that one will find good shidduchim for one's own children.

10. Reb Shlomo Zalman Auerbach zt"l would tell shadchanim that they are engaged in the greatest chesed a person can perform. Reb Shlomo Zalman himself devoted many hours to arranging shidduchim because of the greatness of this mitzvah (Shalmei Simcha, p. 4).

Many people dismiss this responsibility by saying that they are not shadchanim and do not know whether a shidduch idea is worth suggesting. Furthermore, even if they come up with a good idea, they do not know how to resolve the issues that will inevitably arise. They are also afraid of offending people by suggesting an unsuitable shidduch. Therefore, they distance themselves from the entire matter and leave the world of shidduchim to professional shadchanim.

However, the truth is that these obstacles can be overcome. If someone has an idea, he can share it with an experienced shadchan. If the shadchan believes it has potential, he can pursue it further.

Furthermore, the claim that making shidduchim is solely for "professionals" is unfounded. Many successful shidduchim were suggested and brought to fruition by friends, relatives, neighbors, and other ordinary people who had an idea. This is especially true when it comes to older singles, or families with several older children still waiting for their appropriate shidduchim. One should think about their tzaar and try to help.

On the other hand, one should not suggest every idea that comes to mind, because if it is unsuitable, it may cause tzaar. Whenever there is uncertainty, one can consult someone experienced in the field of shidduchim for guidance.

boy's father promised four hundred liras to the couple as a dowry. The boy's father wasn't sure he could afford it.

He spoke to Reb Chaim Brim *zt'l* and relayed all his fears. Reb Chaim Brim said, "Let's ask the Chazon Ish together."

The father explained to the Chazon Ish that he was afraid he might not be able to keep this promise. The Chazon Ish zt'l replied, "We see that if one tries, Hashem helps."

The Chazon Ish asked for his name so he could pray for him.

The end of the story was that the father was able to pay up the entire sum without any hardships at all (*Maaseh Ish*, vol.2 p.160).

Once, two *mechutanim* came to the Chazon Ish *zt'l*. Each of them argued that the other one should pay the lion's share of their children's upcoming *chasunah*. When they left, the Chazon Ish told his relative, Reb Shmaryahu Greineman *zt'l*, "Do you know what they were arguing about? They were debating who should receive Hashem's *brachos*. Each one said the other one should receive Hashem's *brachos*…" Because Hashem blesses and helps those who are obligated to pay for a *chasunah*.

A young man was engaged, and his future in-laws promised him a dowry. They kept their promise down to the last penny.

On the first Shabbos as a married man, in his in-laws' home, he noticed something was wrong. The candlesticks were made from clay, and the beds were broken. In general, he saw signs of poverty in his in-laws' home. He asked his wife about it, and she explained that her parents sold all their utensils and went into debt to cover the dowry they promised. He declared, "We can't let matters stay this way."

On Motzei Shabbos, he returned the dowry and gifts. He couldn't have his wife light Shabbos candles with silver candlesticks while his in-laws had clay ones. He couldn't enjoy wealth while his in-laws were suffering poverty on his account.

On Sunday morning, he borrowed twenty thousand rubles from a friend. He used part of the money to buy utensils for his home, and he went to the market to see where he could invest the rest of the money. A wealthy merchant offered him a lucrative business opportunity for ten thousand rubles. He invested and became rich in a short time.

Because of his wealth, when his children came of age, he made prestigious *shidduchim*. One of his *mechutanim* was Reb Shimon Sofer *zt'l* (son of the Chasam Sofer *zt'l*). At that wedding, in Krakow, a Rav asked him how he earned his wealth and how he merited this prestigious *shidduch* with Reb Shimon Sofer. He told him his story. He explained that he was willing to forgo his own pleasure and wealth so his in-laws wouldn't suffer. And just as he did kindness with them, Hashem performed kindness to him, and he earned wealth…and wonderful *shidduchim*.

This story is brought down in *Mishnas Yosef* (*Brachos* 8.), who concludes, "It isn't my way to write stories in this *sefer,* but this story has an important message from which the wise can learn. They should be cautious with the money and utensils of their fathers-in-law, and more importantly, they should be cautious with their father-in-law's heart. If you act kindly, you will receive many *brachos* from Above."