

The Shadchan's Chair – Finding Your Soulmate

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What is a good match? Who makes a good mate? How, when and where does one find a marriage partner? And why should this be so difficult?

The Midrash asks similar questions:

A Princess once asked Rabbi Yosi ben Chalafta, "In how many days did G-d create the world?" "In six days," he answered. "Well, what has He been doing since then?" "Making matches!" Rabbi Yosi answered.

The Princess laughed and said, "That is His profession? I can do the same! I have many servants and maids. I can match them up in a few moments."

Rabbi Yosi said, "In your eyes, it seems to be a simple task. However, G-d views matchmaking as formidable a task as splitting the Red Sea." Rabbi Yosi then left.

The Princess took 1,000 servants and 1,000 maids, paired them up and married them. The "lucky couples" went home for the night. The next day they appeared before her: one with a head wound, another minus an eye, yet another with a broken leg... To her obvious question, "What happened?" each answered, "I refuse the mate I was given." The Princess sent for Rabbi Yosi and said to him: "There is no G-d like your G-d!"

Rabbi Yosi said, "Didn't I tell you? Even though in your eyes matchmaking seems a simple task, G-d views it as formidable a task as splitting the Red Sea. What does He do? He brings them together, some through tears and some through song. G-d makes social ladders, elevating one person's status while lowering another's, He makes one wealthy, another poor... Sometimes He brings him to her, other times He brings her to him..." (Bereshit Rabbah 68:4)

The difficulties of finding a mate have been around ever since the First Man. Adam's wife had yet to be created! But even though the world's population has consistently increased since then, the task seems just as formidable, just as frustrating, and just as forbidding as in the time of Creation. We present here selected passages adapted from the teachings of Rebbe Nachman of Breslov on the subject of finding a marriage partner, hoping that these ideas will bring support and encouragement to those seeking their "perfect" mate.

TO EACH HIS OWN

The great kabbalist, Rabbi Yitzchak Luria (the ARI, 1534-1572), writes that sometimes a person's misdeeds cause his partner to become distant. When a person's soul first descends into this world, his soulmate descends with him. But, should the person sin, meeting his intended can become very

difficult. Some people must overcome awesome obstacles to meet their rightful intended partner (Sha'ar HaGilgulim #20).

Rebbe Nachman once spoke about shiduchim (marriage matches). He said that each person has many zivugim (intended marriage partners). However, there are all kinds of levels and variations, involving many deep concepts. The very discussions people have about possible introductions and matches, even if the proposed match is never finalized, are themselves accounted as a certain level of shiduch. Sometimes people sitting in their homes suggest that a certain man might be suitable for a certain woman – and with this, the match this man had to make with this particular woman is over. Sometimes, dates and engagements are discussed but the match never materializes. This is a greater level of shiduch and zivug, more so than the previous instance.

There are times when the couple themselves, or their families, meet. Then, just as the arrangements are being finalized, they split up for some reason. Other times the engagement is actually finalized, only to be broken off. Sometimes the wedding takes place, only to be followed soon afterwards by a divorce. Many marriages last, but there are cases where a divorce comes after many years.

There are many other levels of shiduch and zivug which never materialize, yet all are considered a person's zivug. For each person has several zivugim. With some, the shiduch involves nothing more than the possibility of such a match being mentioned. In other cases, the shiduch involves more discussions, a link of some kind, a journey or some other positive action, even though nothing further comes of it.

Rabbi Nathan (1780-1844), Rebbe Nachman's closest disciple, writes: This idea that even a mere discussion about a possible match is itself a level of shiduch is completely original and very profound. We find the same idea in The Aleph- Bet Book (Marriage B7): "Just speaking about a match makes an

impression upon him and her.”

Clearly, Rebbe Nachman knew awesome secrets about the concept of shiduchim and zivugim which had never been revealed in the world. (Tzaddik #595)

So there we have it. Some people will meet, get engaged and marry right away. Others, though, must pass through several levels of shiduchim and for any number of reasons. Thus, even if a person is unaware of what might be in store – how many “meetings” will have to take place and how many “obstacles” will have to be overcome until the bond of matrimony is sealed – still, each encounter, each suggested date or match, serves to bring the intended partner closer. However, even when everything seems perfect, don’t be disappointed if things don’t turn out exactly as planned. Rabbi Nathan’s son, Reb Yitzchok, was about to finalize a shiduch for his daughter. Though things appeared positive for both sides, Rabbi Nathan wrote to his son, “But don’t force it. There is nothing more hidden from man’s eye than matchmaking! If G-d wants it, it will eventually come through...” (Alim LiTerufah #437).

It is significant to point out that any kind of a connection between two people can be considered a shiduch. Business partnerships, teacher-pupil relationships and the like are also shiduchim. Another type of shiduch is that between man and his environment, i.e., his interaction with the place he was born, raised, traveled to, etc., or his connection to inanimate objects such as home, automobile, etc.

The Talmud teaches (Makot 10b), “A person is led in the direction he desires to go.” Thus, everybody one meets and everything one experiences is a direct outcome of one’s own innermost feelings (see Likutey Moharan 1:31). “Chance meetings” are not chance. They are the end result of the person’s inner desire. By bringing about these “chance meetings,” G-d enables the person to seek and know Him from each and every situation.

SOME HELPFUL HINTS

1. [Selected teachings](#) from Rebbe Nachman's works to help a person find a mate.
2. [The Matchmaker](#) – Likutey Moharan (11:89), Rebbe Nachman offers a very novel approach to finding one's mate.
3. [Prayer For A Soul Mate](#)
4. [The Shadchan's Chair – The mystery of uncovering the true shadchan](#)

We hope you enjoy these teachings. We pray that Rebbe Nachman's teachings help you find a perfect match – together with a life of happiness, success and contentment.