

# Torah Wellsprings

*Collected thoughts  
from  
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Shlita*

*Chayei Sarah*



# Torah WELLSPRINGS

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# Torah Wellsprings - Chayei Sarah

## Avraham Avinu's Reaction to Nisyonos

At the Akeidah, Hashem said to Avraham (22:16-17), *כִּי יַעַן אֲשֶׁר עָשִׂיתָ אֶת הַדְּבָר הַזֶּה וְלֹא חָשַׁקְתָּ אֶת בְּנֶךְךָ*, "Because you have done this thing, and have not withheld your son, your only one, I shall surely bless you..."

Avraham returned from the Akeidah and received the sad news that his wife, Sarah, was niftarah. The Zer Zahav (from Rebbe Wolf of Stropkov zt'l) says that Avraham could have complained bitterly, "Is this the blessings You promised me?" But Avraham didn't question Hashem, nor did he break or become bent over due to his tzaros. On the contrary (23:3) *וַיָּקָם אַבְרָהָם*, he stood tall and erect. *וַיָּקָם אַבְרָהָם*, he rose to high levels because he passed this difficult test.<sup>1</sup>

This is because when one believes in Hashem, he passes all tests, knowing that it is all from Hashem, and for the good.<sup>2</sup>

It states (23:3) *וַיָּקָם אַבְרָהָם מֵעַל פְּנֵי מֵתוֹ וַיְדַבֵּר אֶל בָּנָיו*, "Avraham rose up from the presence of his dead and spoke to the children of Ches saying..."

Mishmeres Isamar zt'l says that this pasuk teaches us that Avraham rose after each fall, and then he taught all the people who fell and who went through hard times that they, too, should recognize that everything is for the good. Mishmeres Issamar explains that *מֵתוֹ* "His dead" (written in this pasuk) refers to those who fall from their level and go through hard times. As the Zohar states, "Whoever falls from his level,

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1. The Mishnah states (Avos 5:3) *עֲשָׂרָה נִסְיוֹנוֹת נִתְּנָסָה אַבְרָהָם אָבִינוּ עָלָיו הַשְּׁלוֹם וְעַמֵּד בְּקֶלֶם*, "Avraham was tested ten times, and he stood up to all of them." *וְעַמֵּד בְּקֶלֶם* means that he kept his ground, standing erect. He didn't fall or falter.

2. At the Bris Ben HaBesarim (the covenant Hashem made with Avraham Avinu) Hashem promised Avraham (Bereishis 15:15) *תִּקְבְּרָ בְּשֵׂיבָה טוֹבָה*, "You shall be buried in a good old age." Rashi explains this to mean Avraham will be niftar peacefully, without experiencing any tzaros or distress. As Rashi writes, Hashem revealed to Avraham that Yishmael would do teshuvah during Avraham's lifetime. Eisav, too, didn't go out to תרבות רעה, sinfulness, as long as Avraham was alive. This is why Avraham was niftar early - five years before his time. And on that day, Eisav rebelled."

The question arises, wouldn't Avraham see everything from Heaven? He will be aware of Eisav's sinful ways. So, what did Avraham gain from being taken from the world before his time? He will anyway see all the bad Eisav does, from his place in Heaven!

Some answer that from heaven, one sees the greatest troubles in an entirely different light. From Heaven, Avraham will see that it is all for the good. Even Eisav's sins had a good side. As the holy sefarim explain, it was necessary that Eisav and Yaakov be twins, because Eisav took all the bad, enabling Yaakov and his offspring to remain entirely pure.

During the Holocaust, the Nazis gathered Rebbe Yisrael Grodzisk zy"a with a group of Yidden to send them to the gas chambers. At that fateful moment, the people asked Reb Yisrael to give them chizuk. He told them, "Very soon, our souls will go up to Heaven, and from there, everything will appear entirely different than how it appears here. Therefore, don't be sad, and don't feel broken..."

We can say the same to people today: Life flies by quickly, as it states (Tehillim 90:10) *יְמֵי שָׁנוֹתֵינוּ כֶּהֱם שְׁבָעִים שָׁנָה*, "The days of our years... are seventy years, and for the mighty, eighty years... for it is cut off swiftly and fly away." Life flies by swiftly, and then people will be in heaven. From that vantage point, everyone sees and understands how everything that occurred was for the good. Therefore, one shouldn't feel sad or broken. He should wait for his sojourn to pass, and then he will see that everything that happened in this world was kindness and goodness.

it is called *מת*, death." וַיָּקָם אַבְרָהָם מֵעַל פְּנֵי מוֹתוֹ means that Avraham rose up from those falls. *בְּגֵי חַת* alludes to people who are going through hard times. *וַיְדַבֵּר אֵל בְּגֵי חַת*, Avraham spoke with these people, and he told them, *לֵאמֹר*, that everything is for the good. *לֵאמֹר* is soft, comforting words. Avraham showed them from his own life that every situation, even those that we think look bad, is ultimately for the good.

Mishmeres Issamar concludes, וממילא יומתק, "Automatically [with the awareness that everything is for the good] everything will become sweet, and all the issues that he is going through will end with his promotion and gain."

### Shidduchim (and All Matters) Need Tefillah

The Midrash (Bereishis Rabba 60:2) states, "Everyone needs chesed. Even Avraham, who brought chesed to this world, also needed chesed. As [Eliezer prayed] (24:12) *וַעֲשֵׂה חֶסֶד עִמָּי אֲבִירָהֶם*, 'Do kindness with my master, Avraham.'"

Eliezer davened that Hashem perform chesed with Avraham. But why was that necessary? The great Tzaddik Avraham deserved to receive Hashem's kindness also according to *דין*, law, and rightfulness. Why should he receive goodness solely as a chesed?

Chidushei HaRim (Sifsei Tzaddik, *ואתחנן*) answers, "Avraham Avinu was a good teacher. He instilled into the hearts of his students that Hashem doesn't owe anyone anything, that everything is solely chesed!" Whatever we receive is Hashem's chesed, and therefore, we should pray for all our needs.

There is an essential rule regarding tefillah:

Even after Hashem has decreed that someone should receive something, it won't happen and he won't receive it without tefillah. We can prove it from this week's parashah (24:66): *וַיִּסְפֹּר הָעֶבֶד לְיִצְחָק אֵת כָּל הַדְּבָרִים אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה*, "The servant told Yitzchak all the things

that he had done." Rashi writes, *גלה לו נסים שנעשו לו, שקפצה לו הארץ, ושנודמנה לו רבקה בתפלתו*, "He told him all the miracles that happened to him, that the earth jumped for him, and that he found Rivkah with his tefillos." The earth jumped for Eliezer (קפיצת הדרך) when he traveled to find a shidduch, but not on the way back.

The Chasam Sofer explains that the earth didn't jump on the return trip because they had to wait until Yitzchak davened. Immediately after Yitzchak davened they arrived, as it states (24:63) *וַיֵּצֵא יִצְחָק לְשׂוּחַ בְּעָרְבָה* "Yitzchak went out to daven in the field towards evening, and he raised his eyes and saw, and behold camels were coming." His shidduch arrived immediately after he said this tefillah. Had the earth jumped for him, they would have returned too early, before Yitzchak prayed for it.

Once again, Rashi writes: *גלה לו נסים שנעשו לו, שקפצה לו הארץ, ושנודמנה לו רבקה בתפלתו* "[Eliezer] told [Yitzchak] all the miracles that happened to him, that the earth jumped for him, and that he found Rivkah with his tefillos." Eliezer was telling Avraham that he had *קפיצת הארץ*, that the earth jumped for him to help him make this shidduch. So, if you ask why the earth didn't jump for him upon his return? The answer is *כי נודמנה רבקה בתפלתו*, Rivkah had to come through tefillah. Their return trip took longer. It was delayed until Yitzchak davened, and then the shidduch could occur.

Now we get to our point. Rivkah was the shidduch that was bashert and destined for Yitzchak. Nevertheless, the shidduch wouldn't occur without tefillah.

Another indication is from last week's parashah. Hashem promised Avraham that he will bear a child, as it states (Bereishis 17:19), *אֲבָל שָׂרָה אֲשׁוּתְךָ יִלְדֶת לְךָ בֵן וְקָרָאתָ אֶת שְׁמוֹ יִצְחָק*, "Your wife Sarah will bear you a son and you will call his name Yitzchak..." The malach set a time for the child to be born, as it states (Bereishis 18:10) *וַיֹּאמֶר שׁוּב אֲשׁוּב אֵלֶיךָ בְּעֵת הַזֶּה וְהָיָה בִּי*, "I shall return to you at this time

next year and behold Sarah your wife will have a son." The birth of the child was decreed, and the time was set. Nevertheless, Avraham needed tefillos for this to occur. Avraham davened for Avimelech, and Chazal (Bava Kama 92a) say, "Whoever davens for his fellow man, and he needs this matter, he is answered first." The miracle occurred, and Avraham bore a son, because of tefillah. It was destined to be, a time was set, but this is how Hashem made the world, that all salvations occur solely through tefillah.

Also, it states (Bereishis 30:22), וַיִּזְכֹּר אֱלֹהִים אֶת רָחֵל, וַיִּשְׁמַע אֱלֹהִים אֶת רָחֵל, "Hashem remembered Rachel, and Hashem listened to her, and he opened her womb." The Or HaChaim writes, "The pasuk is saying that although Hashem remembered Rachel, tefillah was still needed, as it states וַיִּשְׁמַע אֱלֹהִים, 'He listened to her.'" It was decreed for her to bear a child, but tefillah was needed for it to occur.

Rebbe Tzadok HaKohen of Lublin zt'l (Tzikdas HaTzaddik 66) proves this concept from Eliyahu HaNavi. Hakadosh Baruch Hu told Eliyahu to tell Achav that it will begin to rain once again, after a three-year drought, as it states (Malachim 1, 18:1) וַדְּבַר ה' הָיָה אֶל אֱלִיָּהוּ בְּשָׁנָה וַדְּבַר ה' הָיָה אֶל אֱלִיָּהוּ בְּשָׁנָה וַדְּבַר ה' הָיָה אֶל אֱלִיָּהוּ בְּשָׁנָה וַדְּבַר ה' הָיָה אֶל אֱלִיָּהוּ בְּשָׁנָה, "The word of Hashem came to Eliyahu in the third year saying, 'Go to Achav, and I shall send rain upon the face of the earth.'"

But regardless of this promise, the rain only came with tefillah, as it states (Malachim 1, 18:42) וַאֲלֵהוּ עֲלֶיהָ אֵל רֹאשׁ הַכַּרְמֶל וַיְגַהֵר אַרְצָהּ וַיִּשָּׁם פָּנָיו בֵּין הַרְבֵּי, "Eliyahu went up to the summit of the

Carmel, bend down to the ground and put his face between his knees." Rashi writes that this means he davened for rain. Reb Tzaddok proves from this that even after Hashem gives His word, the salvation will only come when there is tefillah.

Also, Rebbe Tzaddok proves this from the fact that we daven all year long for all our needs, such as for parnassah, for health, etc. Although we believe that the decree was established on Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, we continue to daven. This is because good comes after we daven. The decree is in place, but the bounty comes down with tefillah.<sup>3</sup>

Yitzchak Avinu was perfect in all ways. He is even called עולה תמימה, a perfect korban for Hashem. He had no faults. In addition, it states (24:10) וַיִּקַּח הָעֶבֶד עֶשְׂרֵה גְמִלִים מִגְּמְלֵי אֲדֹנָיו וַיֵּלֶךְ, "The servant took ten camels of his master's camels and set out with all the bounty of his master in his hand." Rashi explains that וַיִּקַּח הָעֶבֶד עֶשְׂרֵה גְמִלִים מִגְּמְלֵי אֲדֹנָיו, "all the bounty of his master in his hand," means that Avraham gave Eliezer a document stating that all his wealth goes to his son, Yitzchak. He did this to encourage parents of potential shidduchim to send their daughters to marry Yitzchak.

Nevertheless, Yitzchak davened. Eliezer also davened, as he said in his tefillah (24:12) וַעֲשֵׂה חֶסֶד עִם אֲדֹנָי אֲבִרְהָם, "Do kindness with my master, Avraham." They davened with the feeling that without tefillah, there is no shidduch. Rav Shach zt'l repeated in the name of the Chofetz Chaim zt'l that when

3. Two years ago, Purim Kattan, year (5784), some yungerleit from Ashdod traveled to daven at kever Rachel. One of their friends, Reb Chananyah Gross z"l, was sick with the renowned disease, and they went to daven for his recovery. Unfortunately, the gezeira in shomayim was sealed, and he was r'l niftar that year, erev Tisha b'Av. However, their tefillos were effective in other ways. Nine months afterwards, on the yahrtzeit of Rachel Imeinu (5785), two of the people who had gone to daven at kever Rachel had a salvation. One of them was married for four years and didn't yet have children. The other one had children, but seven years had passed since his last child. Their wives both gave birth on the yahrtzeit of Rachel Imeinu. This is because tefillos are never in vain. They davened for Reb Chananyah Gross, and unfortunately, those tefillos weren't answered, but their tefillos were used for their own salvations. They understood that the births occurred specifically on Rachel Imeinu's yahrtzeit to show them that it was their tefillos at kever Rachel which led to their salvations.

one has a perfect son, a masmid, with good middos, parents don't feel that they must daven so much for him. They feel that many people will run after them to offer shidduchim, so why should they daven so well? Especially if they have money, they feel that they don't have to daven. But we see that for Yitzchak Avinu, who was perfect with all qualities, and who had wealth, as well, it was understood that salvations come solely with tefillah.

Chazal say (see Rashi 24:42) **יפה שיחתן של עבדי** (The speech of the servants of the *avos* are more beautiful to Hashem than the Torah of their children.) We can explain that **שיחתן** refers to the tefillos. The tefillos of the **עבדי אבות** are very precious to Hashem, because they understand how essential tefillah is. This awareness is a very high level of emunah.

**שיחתן** means conversation. The tefillos of the **עבדי אבות** are called **שיחתן**, conversation, because when one davens, he should know that he is having a conversation with Hakadosh Baruch Hu. It states (Tehillim 102:1) **תפלה לעני כי יעטף ולפני ה' ישפך שיחו**, "A prayer of the afflicted man when he wraps himself and pours forth his conversation before Hashem." The pasuk is teaching a person who is wrapped in his tzaros that he should pour out his heart before Hashem. He should

tell Hashem everything that is in his heart. The Alshich Hakadosh (Tehillim) writes, "Like someone who is pouring out a vessel with water, so should he pour out all the tzaros of his heart, as it states (Iyov 32:20) **אֲדַבְרָה וַיִּרְוַח לִי**, "Let me speak, and I will feel relieved."<sup>4</sup>

### Become a Shadchan

This week, we read about Eliezer, the first shadchan, who went to find a shidduch for Yitzchak. Therefore, this week is an opportune time to discuss the precious mitzvah of being a shadchan. Even if it isn't one's profession, and he is occupied with other matters, he can find time and opportunities to be involved in this great mitzvah, in his own way, as we will explain.

Targum Yonoson (Devarim 34:6) writes, "Bless the name of the Master of the World Who taught us the correct ways, and he taught us to dress those who need clothes, 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) **וַיִּבְרָא אֱלֹהִים אֶת הָאָדָם**, "He brought her to Adam." This means that Hashem made Chavah's shidduch.

The Gemara (Brachos 61a) states, "The Torah teaches us *derech erez* that one should try to help people get married"<sup>5</sup>.

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4. The Chazon Ish writes (קובץ אגרות ח"א סי' ב') "Tefillah is the staff of strength for man, and to the extent a person places his trust in Hashem, so will he succeed."

In (קובץ אגרות ח"ב סי' ב'), the Chazon Ish writes, "How wonderful is this matter, a person can speak about his worries before the Master of the World as one speaks to a friend. Hakadosh Baruch Hu calls him **ילד שעשעוים**, his beloved child."

In (אגרות ח"א סי' כ"ג) the Chazon Ish writes, **עבודה נאצלה בתפילה לצייר כמו חי איך שהקב"ה שומע את שיחה שפתותינו ומאזין הגיון הלב**, that a person should visualize how Hakaodsh Baruch Hu listens to the words of our mouths and pays attention to the thoughts of our heart.

The Chofetz Chaim (Likutei Amarim 10) writes, "When one says a tefillah, in the form of speaking to Hakadosh Baruch when he is in need, that is the primary form of tefillah. This is because we are accustomed to the tefillos [of the siddur], and we say them by rote, without proper kavanah. But when one speaks with his Creator [in his own words], his words come from the depths of his heart."

5. Many gedolim were occupied in this great mitzvah. The Minhagei Maharil (Hilchos Chanukah 1) states, "The rav (the Maharil) ate mostly from the money he got from shadchanus, because he would write letters to people throughout his country [Germany] to arrange shidduchim."

When one is occupied in making shidduchim, he performs several mitzvot:

1) Some write (Shulchan HaEzer 3, Shu"t Radvaz vol.1 61) that the shadchan performs the mitzvah of *וּלְדַבֵּק בּוֹ*, to connect with Hashem, and also the mitzvah of *וְהִלַּכְתָּ בְּדַרְכֵי*, to go in Hashem's ways. This is because Chazal say *מִמָּה הוּא רַחוּם אִף אַתָּה רַחוּם*, 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, Hakadosh Baruch Hu is occupied with making shidduchim.<sup>6</sup>

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The Chasam Sofer helped two orphans get engaged, and he was occupied with this mitzvah on erev yom Kippur. He didn't want to push it off until after Yom Kippur because he wanted to come to Yom Kippur with this exceptional merit.

Hakadosh Baruch Hu is indeed the shadchan, as Chazal learn from the pasuk *מִמָּה אִשָּׁה לְאִישׁ*, and shidduchim occur at the time that Hashem planned it, and this must remain in the minds of singles and their parents. Nevertheless, we are obligated to take action to help our fellow man.

The brachos of birkas hashachar are recited in plural tense, such as *פּוֹקֵד עוֹרִים... מִתִּיר אֲסוּרִים*, and so on. But the brachah of *שְׁעֵשָׂה לִי כָּל צְרִכֵי*, praising Hashem for "giving me all my needs," is said in the singular tense. We don't say *שְׁעֵשָׂה לָנוּ כָּל צְרִכֵינוּ* that Hashem gave *us* all *our* deeds. Reb Moshe Leib Sassover explains that when it comes to one's own needs, one should focus on the emunah that Hashem takes care of him, and he has everything he needs. But when we think about our fellow men, we should think about what they are lacking and try to help them.

It states (Mishlei 16:4) *כֹּל פְּעֹל ה' לְמַעַנְהוּ*, "Everything Hashem made, [Hashem made it] for His sake." Yosher Divrei Emes (end of Shemos) asks, if so, why did Hashem create *apikorsus*, heresy? How can such attitudes and beliefs increase Hashem's honor? He replies that when a poor person comes to you, pleading for help, at this time, don't say, "This is *bashert*. Hashem chose that you should be poor. Accept your portion with love." Instead, now you should use the attitude of *apikorsus*. You should think that it isn't good that he is poor, and you must help him from his tzaros. Also, you should think that if you don't help him, no one can help him. This isn't a time for bitachon, to trust that Hashem will help him. Hashem created the attitude of *apikorsus* specifically for such times.

6. The Chazon Ish and Reb Shlomo Hershter were once occupied in arranging a shidduch. The Chazon Ish told him, "Let's 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's do what Hashem does, because 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. He said that this is included in the statement of Chazal *עֲסַקְתָּ בְּפִרְיָה וּרְבִיָּה*, "Did you occupy yourself with the mitzvah of bearing children?"

Similarly, the Gemara (Shabbos 31a) states that when one is brought to the judgment in heaven, he is asked whether *עֲסַקְתָּ בְּפִרְיָה וּרְבִיָּה*, and the Maharshah explains that included in this question is whether he helped orphans marry. "Orphans" is merely an example, because every attempt to make a shidduch is included in the mitzvah of *פִּרְיָה וּרְבִיָּה*, to bear children.

Many precious segulos and yeshuos come from being occupied in making shidduchim. Reb Moshe Shternbuch Shlita (in his sefer Biurim v'Hanhagos) writes that he heard from the Belzer Rav zt'l that helping others with shidduchim is mesugal that your children will be good and erlich.

Helping others find a shidduch is also mesugal that it will be easier for you to find shidduchim for your children. Reb Noson Lubart zt'l (שארית עוה) quotes the pasuk of this week's parashah (24:62) *וַיָּצֵק בָּהּ מְבוּאָה בְּאֵר לַחַי*, "Yitzchak came from Be'er Lachai Ro'i," and Rashi writes that he had gone there to bring back Hagar to Avraham to remarry. Immediately afterwards, it states, *וְהָגָה גְּמִלִים בָּאִים*, "camels were coming," with Rivkah,



2) It states (Yeshayah 45:18) **לֹא תָהוּ בְרִיאָה לְשֵׁבֶת** וְיִצְרָה, "He did not create [the world] for emptiness. He created it to be inhabited." This mitzvah is for one to attempt that there should be a lot of people in the world. 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 פָתַח תִּפְתַּח אֶת יָדְךָ לּוֹ ... דֵּי מַחְסְרוֹ אֲשֶׁר יֵחָסֵר 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 **גְּמִילוּת חֶסֶד**, to do deeds of loving-kindness. Helping someone get married is the greatest kindness one can do for another.<sup>7</sup>

### Bashert

When making hishtadlus for shidduchim, it is important to remember that it is just to perform the obligation of hishtadlus, but the shidduch is from Hashem. Nothing the person does can change the shidduch that was destined to be.<sup>8</sup>

The Brisker Rav zt'l said that even hishtadlus isn't needed. There is an obligation to make hishtadlus for parnassah, as it states (Bereishis 3:19) **בְּזַעַת אִפְיֶךָ תֹאכַל לֶחֶם**, "By the sweat of

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to marry Yitzchak. So, when he helped others (his father) with a shidduch, he merited his own shidduch.

The explanation is that Chazal (Bava Kama 92a) say, "Whoever davens for his friend, and he needs that matter, he is answered first." This isn't only in regards to tefillah. Also, whoever does a favor to his fellow man, and he needs that matter, he will be answered first. So, helping someone find a good shidduch is a segulah that you will find good shidduchim for your children.

7. Reb Shlomo Zalman Aurbach zt'l would tell shadchanim that they are occupied with the greatest chesed one can do. Reb Shlomo Zalman, himself, spent many hours making and finalizing shidduchim because of the greatness of this deed. (Shalmei Simcha p.4).

Many people shrug off this responsibility by saying that they aren't shadchanim, and they don't know what a shidduch idea is worth suggesting. Furthermore, even if they do come up with a good idea, they don't know how to iron out the issues that will inevitably come up. They are also afraid of insulting people by suggesting an unsuitable shidduch. So, they stay away from the entire matter and leave the world of shidduchim for the shadchanim. But the truth is, there are ways to overcome these obstacles. When they have an idea, they can share it with an experienced shadchan. If the shadchan thinks it might work, he can suggest it.

Furthermore, the claim that making shidduchim is solely for "professionals" isn't valid. Many shidduchim were suggested and carried through by amateurs, such as friends, family, or neighbors, who came up with an idea. Especially if it is for an older single, or for a family that has a line-up of older children waiting for their suitable shidduchim, one should think about their tzaar and do everything to try to help them.

On the other hand, they shouldn't offer any idea that comes to their mind, because if it isn't suitable, it might cause tzaar. Whenever in doubt, one can go to someone with experience in the field of shidduchim for advice, or to have them take the shidduch off your hands and take care of it themselves.

8. The Gemara (Moed Kattan 18:) proves "from Torah, *Nevi'im*, and *Kesuvim*" that *shidduchim* are destined from heaven. From the Torah, **לָאֵלֹהִים דְּבַר אֵלֶיךָ רַע אוֹ טוֹב**, "Lavan and Besual said, 'The matter has emanated from Hashem. We cannot speak to you either bad or good.'"

In *Navi* it states (*Shoftim* 14:4) regarding Shimshon, **וְאָבִיו וְאִמּוֹ לֹא יָדְעוּ כִּי מִה' הוּא**, "His father and mother didn't know that it was from Hashem."

Also, in *Kesuvim* it states (*Mishlei* 19:14), **בֵּית וְהוֹן נַחֲלַת אֲבוֹת וּמֵה' אִשָּׁה מְשַׁכֶּלֶת**, "A house and wealth are bequeathed by fathers, but an Intelligent woman comes from Hashem."

your brow shall you eat bread." For health and for other matters, there is an obligation to make hishtadlus. However, when it comes to shidduchim, it states (*Mishlei* 19:14), בית והון נחלת אבות ומה' אשה משכלת, "A house and wealth are the parents' inheritance, but an intelligent woman is from Hashem." The Brisker Rav concludes, "Perhaps you will ask why I go to shadchanim and why I make hishtadlus for shidduchim for my children? Really, there is no reason, but I do it to calm my nerves."

The Vilna Gaon (יהל אור פי' פקודי) "There is no reason for the toil people do for shidduchim, because everything is from Hashem."<sup>9</sup>

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.<sup>10</sup>

Tzaddikim say (ברוך שיחה להגר"ח עמוד ק"א בשם ספרק חסידים) 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

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9. It states (24:50) ויען לבן ובתואל ויאמרו מה' יצא הדבר לא נוכל דבר אליך רע או טוב "Lavan and Besuel said, 'The matter [shidduch] is 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 to break the *shidduch* nor to make is up to us. על כרחנו רוצים או לא רוצים כי, it will happen, whether we like it or not, שהיכולת, כי הקב"ה עושה זאת שהיכולת, בידו, for Hashem is doing this *shidduch*, and He has the ability."

10. Reb Chaim Brisker zt'l was asked to be the keynote speaker at a gathering of rabbanim before World War I. Reb Chaim gave a mashal of a person working at a fruit store.

"How much do the apples cost?" a customer asked.

"Three," the worker replied.

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

"Three," the worker answered again.

"And how about the cherries?"

"Three."

The customer went over to the owner of the store and said, "You will lose a lot of money due to your new worker. For every item in your store, he gives the same price."

The owner replied, "This worker is deaf and dumb. The only word he can say is 'three.' I wanted to help him because his father did me many favors, so I packaged each item in a way that the cost is three dollars. This way, I was able to hire him."

Reb Chaim Brisker concluded, "I also know only one word, and that word is Torah. Torah! Torah! Torah! I don't know any other word. So, whatever will be decided tonight at this asifah, it must be Torah'dig. It has to be according to the words and direction of the Torah."

We can use this story in regards to emunah in Hashem. A person can say, "I can't speak. I can't hear. But I can say one phrase: אחד יהוה ומיוחד, that there is only one Hashem, and everything that occurs comes from Him. That is all I need to know, and that is all I can say.

This is revealed by shidduchim, but it applies to all aspects of life.

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* contains miracles.

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.<sup>11</sup>

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

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**11.** The Gemara (Sotah 2.) says, "Forty days before a child is formed [in the womb], a *bas kol* comes forth and announces, "The daughter of *ploni* will marry *ploni*." Reb Chaim Brisker *zt'l* added that not only is a *shidduch bashert*, but even the hour and day that the *shidduch* will occur is also *bashert*.

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

People asked the Ahavas Yisrael of Vizhnitz *zt'l*, "Why do people say that *shidduchim* are from heaven? We sometimes 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 good people are called upon to provide information about the boy or girl. And when a *shidduch* isn't *bashert*, Hashem arranges that a person's adversaries are called upon, and they will present the information in a negative light, thereby ruining a *shidduch* that isn't supposed to happen."

The Shpole Zeida *zt'l* said, "Every person has *maalos* and *chesronos* (positive qualities and faults). When a *shidduch* is decreed in heaven, a wide wooden beam comes down from heaven to cover all the faults, and only the qualities are seen. When a *shidduch* isn't *bashert*, a wide wooden beam comes down from heaven and covers the qualities, exposing only the faults."

The *shtar tana'im* states, עומד מצד הרתן, "[The father] who stands in for the *chasan's* side..." Rebbe Shlomke of Zvhil *zt'l* explained this to mean that when the *shidduch* happened, the father stood on the side and didn't do anything; Hashem alone arranged the *shidduch*.

Hashem endows parents with the satisfying feeling as if they made the *shidduch*. But really, Hashem makes *shidduchim* alone.

A few years ago, a *shidduch* of an older *bachur* and an older girl was about to be finalized, but the mother began having doubts. The girl was a couple of years older than her son, and she had older single siblings. She knew this before, but now she was worrying about it. "I know that the older siblings will give her permission to marry before them, but there might be *hakpados* and hard feelings, and I don't want our son marrying under such circumstances."

The girl didn't know about it. She was expecting to get engaged *motzei Shabbos*, but the boy's family was considering breaking off the *shidduch*.

What did Hakadosh Baruch Hu do?

Friday night, the boy's father came home from the *beis medresh* with a "Torah sheet." The sheet addressed precisely the two issues the mother was concerned about. The writer wrote that a girl being older than a boy isn't a reason not to do a *shidduch*, and older single siblings are also not a valid reason to avoid doing a *shidduch*.

*Motzei Shabbos* was the *vort*. The *kallah* didn't even know that the *shidduch* almost fell through, and that it was saved through *siyata dishmaya* over *Shabbos*.

Now, the author of this Torah sheet didn't know there was a family that needed to read these ideas. In fact, when he wrote the paper, the families were planning to finalize the *shidduch*. But Hashem caused it



and alludes to *parnassah*. This means Hashem will give you *parnassah*, and you are silent, because the *parnassah* will come from a place you didn't think of at all."

### Chasunah Expenses

When it comes to marrying off children, many people are worried, "How will we manage to give so much money? The *chasunah* expenses and the dowry are so expensive!"

This problem has been around for generations. It has always been difficult to marry off children. But Hashem helps.

Once, a *shidduch* was almost finalized, but the girl's father said he wouldn't agree to the *shidduch* before the 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 is 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 that 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*.<sup>13</sup>

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

His 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

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**13.** Someone came to Reb Shlomo Zalman Auerbach *zt'l* and said, "My daughter was recently engaged to get married. But I discovered that when the boy was a child, he was ill with a serious disease."

"So, what's your question?" Reb Shlomo Zalman asked. "Do you want to break off the *shidduch* because of that?"

"No. The doctors say that most probably, the illness won't return."

"So, what's your question?"

"It's regarding money. I promised a lot of money to the couple. Had I known the boy had an illness that may return, I wouldn't have promised so much."

Uncharacteristically, Reb Shlomo Zalman grabbed a broom and told the man, "Get out of my house! Get out of my house!" Reb Shlomo Zalman, with his correct perception of right and wrong, couldn't bear this person's crookedness.

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 that the wise can learn from. 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."<sup>14</sup>

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**14.** A *chasan* told the Chazon Ish *zt'l*, "My future father-in-law promised me a large dowry, but now he's going through a financial crisis, and he is having trouble keeping his promise. However, I can do something that will force my father-in-law to keep his word and give me what he promised. Should I take advantage of this opportunity?"

The Chazon Ish told him to refer to *Shulchan Aruch* (*Even HaEzer* 2:1), which states, "If a lot of money was promised for your wedding, and then your future in-laws back down, don't cause your fiancé to wait like an *agunah* because of that. Don't fight over the money. If you will, you won't succeed, and the marriage won't work out well... Rather, whatever your future in-laws give you, accept with a good eye, ואז יצליח, and then you will succeed."

The Chazon Ish told him, "If you force your father-in-law to pay what he promised, you won't succeed. Somewhere, somehow, you will lose the money. But if you won't make an issue about the money, *Shulchan Aruch* promises, ואז יצליח, you will succeed. And the *Shulchan Aruch's* *brachah* will certainly materialize."

The Chofetz Chaim would tell people that he married a poor girl without a dowry, and in this merit, he was able to learn his entire life. His friend, who did a wealthy *shidduch*, went into business shortly after the wedding and lost all his money. "Had I married wealthy, it is likely that I too would be drawn to business..."

There was a *bachur* who was looking for a *shidduch* that promised him full support for five years. The Chofetz Chaim *zt'l* asked him, "How will you support yourself after the five years pass?"

The *bachur* replied, "Hashem will help."

The Chofetz Chaim asked him, "If you believe Hashem will help you, why don't you believe that Hashem can help you the first five years, too?"

It states (*Mishlei* 15:27), שונא מתנות יחיה, those who despise gifts will live.

The Tur (*Choshen Mishpat* 249) explains that it is a *middas chassidus*, a righteous approach, not to accept gifts from anyone. Instead, one should trust that Hashem will give him all his needs. For doing so, יחיה, he will live long.

The Prishah explains, "Usually, people desire presents because they think the gifts will grant life for them and their families. We tell them, שונא מתנות יחיה, hate gifts. Instead, have *bitachon* that Hashem will help you, and then Hashem will grant you life."<sup>15</sup>

## Middos

The Siduro shel Shabbos (vol.1 1:4) tells about the many miracles that Eliezer saw Rivkah perform. One miracle was that when she came to draw water from the well, the water came up to her, as it states (24:17) וירץ העבד לקראתה, "The servant ran towards her," and Rashi writes, "He ran because he saw that the water came up towards her."

The Siduro Shel Shabbos explains that it wasn't only the water that came up to Rivkah, but the entire well came to Rivkah. The well picked itself up from its place and moved towards Rivkah. The proof is that Eliezer was standing by the well, as it states (24:13) הנה אנכי נצב על עין המים, "Behold I am standing by the fountain of water." Why did he have to run towards Rivkah? It must be that the entire well came towards Rivkah.

Another miracle that transpired was that the camels drank just a little bit, and they were satisfied. The Siduro Shel Shabbos discusses these and other miracles that Eliezer witnessed, but that wasn't the primary reason Eliezer understood that Rivkah was fitting for Yitzchak. The main sign was that Rivkah was a *baalas gemilas chasadim*, and that she helped Eliezer with even more than he requested. That was the

most significant sign that Rivkah was a fitting shidduch for Yitzchak.

Yitzchak married Rivkah because of her middos and not because of the miracles that happened around her. When Rivkah was brought to Sarah's tent, Yitzchak saw that the three miracles that his mother experienced had returned in Rivkah's merits. There was a cloud over the tent, there was a blessing in the dough, and the Shabbos *lecht* remained lit until the following week. Rashi (24:67) writes, "When Sarah was *niftarah*, these miracles stopped, and Rivkah came, and they returned." But it wasn't because of these miracles that Yitzchak married Rivkah. He married her because he knew that she was a *baalas gemilus chasadim*. Rebbe Yissachar Dov of Belz zt'l proves this from *Targum Yonason* (24:67) ורחמה בגין דחמא עובדהא דתקן כעובדי אמה, "He loved her because he saw that her deeds were good like the deeds of his mother."

The Siduro Shel Shabbos explains that this tells us that good middos is an even greater praise than someone who can perform miracles.<sup>16</sup>

Let us discuss some examples of Rivkah's *gemilus chasadim*, as expressed in the Torah and explained by the commentaries:

Eliezer performed a test to determine who was a fitting wife for Yitzchak. He

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**15.** The Meor Einayim was a young *yasom* and was raised in his aunt and uncle's home, but his aunt and uncle didn't treat him as an equal to their children. One morning, the aunt served toast and butter to her children, but to young Nochum, she gave toast without butter. When Nochum complained that he wanted butter, his aunt locked him in a room. In the room, he saw a bucket and thought it was filled with butter. He smeared it on his bread, but then he discovered that it was cement. He said he learned from this episode that when one takes what isn't his, he loses even what is his!

**16.** A group of chasidim was once discussing the miracles that their respective rebbe performed. They were saying things like, "Whenever my rebbe davens, Hashem listens to his tefillah and answers him."

There was a chasid standing off to the side without participating in the conversation. They asked him, "Tell us a miracle that your Rebbe performed!"

He replied, "I don't know if Hashem does everything my rebbe asks, but I can tell you this: My rebbe does everything that Hashem requests." This is the greatest level, to do Hashem's will. That is greater than performing miracles. As Rebbe Moshe Kobriner zt'l said, Hashem performs the miracles. Our job is to do His will.

asked for a sip of water. If the maiden would reply (24:14), שתה וגם גמליך אשקה, "Drink and I will also give water to your camels, אתה הוכיח, לעבדך יצחק, You have designated her for your servant, Yitzchak."

Things didn't go exactly as planned. He asked Rivkah for water, and she gave it to him. At this point, she hadn't yet mentioned the camels.

Then it states (24:19), ותכל להשקותו ותאמר גם, לגמליך אשאב עד אם כלו לשתות. "She finished giving him to drink, and she said, "I will also draw for your camels, until they have finished drinking." She didn't mention the camels until Eliezer finished drinking. Why?

The Or HaChaim (24:18) explains that Rivkah acted with greater piety than Eliezer had tested her for. "Rivkah didn't tell Eliezer immediately that she would give water to his camels, demonstrating her generosity. The *tzaddekes* figured that if she told Eliezer right away that she would draw water for his camels, too, he might quickly gulp down his water [and drink less than he needed to quench his thirst] because he knew that Rivkah still had a lot of work, to draw water for all the camels. Rivkah didn't tell Eliezer her plans, so Eliezer would drink at his own pace, as much as he needed. After he finished drinking, she said, 'I will draw for your camels.'"

The Shlah found in the *parashah* another remarkable facet of Rivkah's courtesy and kindness. After Eliezer finished drinking, it

states (24:20), ותמהר ותער כדה אל השקת ותריץ עוד אל, הבאר, "She quickly poured out the jug... And she ran to the well..."

The Shlah HaKadosh *zt'l* (end of *Chaya Sara*) writes, "After Rivkah gave water to Eliezer, some water was left in the jug, but Rivkah didn't know what to do with it. If she poured this water for the camels, it would appear that she compared them to Eliezer, for she gave them both to drink from the same utensil. On the other hand, pouring water on the ground is disrespectful. It might imply that since Eliezer drank from the water, it isn't good anymore. Rivkah acted with wisdom. She ran and rushed, making it appear that due to her haste, she dropped the jug, and the water spilled out. This way, Eliezer's honor was maintained."

At the beginning of this episode, Eliezer is called עבד, a slave. It states (24:10, 17), ויקח, העבד... ויריץ העבד. Afterwards, Eliezer is called איש (see *pasuk* 21 and 26, והאיש משתאה... ויקד האיש). What caused the change?

I heard from a *talmid chacham* that the change happened when Rivkah called Eliezer שתה אדוני, "my master." As she said (24:18), "Drink my master." Eliezer was a slave and wasn't accustomed to people addressing him with honor. She spoke to him with respect, and this lifted his self-esteem. And since he felt like an איש, the Torah also calls him that way. It was because of these and her other wondrous deeds of chesed that Rivkah was chosen to be Yitzchak's wife.<sup>17</sup>

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17. The Chebiner Rav *zt'l* gave the following counsel for those seeking a *kallah* for their sons: "Look for three things: *middos*, *middos*, and *middos*."

Chazal (*Taanis* 24.) teach, כל כלה שענייה יפות כל גופה אין צריך בדיקה, when a bride has beautiful eyes, that is a sign she is beautiful all over. The Kli Yakar asks (1) that it isn't always so. Some women have beautiful eyes but are otherwise not beautiful. (2) Why does the Gemara teach us this?

"Certainly, the Gemara is teaching us how to check a girl's deeds. The counsel is to check whether she has good eyes, which means whether she does *gemilus chasadim*. If she has a good eye towards others (she cares and helps others), she is without doubt perfect in all her *middos*. Chazal learned this from Eliezer, who only checked Rivkah in this attribute. If she has this attribute, she certainly has all other good *middos*, too."

The commentaries ask, why didn't Avraham, himself, seek a *shidduch* for Yitzchak? The Abarbanel and



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others explain that it is because Avraham was old. As the parsha begins with the words (24:1), ואברהם זקן בא, בימים, that Avraham was old.

Haamek Davar adds another explanation. "Avraham was kept very busy by the people who came to him. One person came to ask a question about *emunah*. Another asked that Avraham should pray for him. As the Gemara (*Bava Basra* 16:) states, 'A diamond hung on Avraham's neck; whoever saw it was healed.' This refers to Avraham's blessings and tefillos [which came forth from Avraham's neck]. Similarly, many things were dependent on Avraham, so he wasn't able to leave." This is the meaning of the words ה' ברך את אברהם בכל: Hashem blessed Avraham with the ability to help everyone, so he had to remain home.

This demonstrates Avraham's outstanding trait of *chesed*, the attribute to which he devoted his life.

This is why Eliezer sought a woman who performed *gemilus chasadim*, as Rashi writes (24:14), ראוייה היא לו, שתהא גומלת חסדים וכדאי ליכנס בביתו של אברהם, "She is fitting for Yitzchak because she performs *gemilus chasadim*. She is fitting to join the home of Avraham."