



THE REAL SHIDDUCH CRISIS - WHO'S IN CHARGE?

Hakadosh Baruch Hu is the *mezaveg zivugim*. There's no ifs, ands, or buts about it. This is a Gemora in Moed Katan (18b).¹ Now, the problem that many people have, is that they think that Hashem didn't figure out the *mehalech* yet. He doesn't know how to be *mezaveg zivugim*. And the proof is, there's a "crisis." If Hashem is the *mezaveg zivugim*, why is there a "crisis?" So therefore some "*chachamim*" think they have to come up with ideas of how to help Hashem be *mezaveg* the *zivug*.

You have to know that not only is Hashem completely capable of taking care of His world, but we have no say and no ability to do anything on our own. All of our actions are absolutely worthless. But we often forget that. And you know what happens? Many times people make *hishtadlus*, whether in *parnassah* or in *zivugim*, and do things that are completely frowned upon by Hashem. But we think, "I'm doing it because of Hashem. That's why I'm doing it." It's like we tell Hashem, "We don't think You could make it happen." Now, of course that's ridiculous. Just because you're nervous about something does not mean that you get new powers and new abilities to go forward and do anything that's not the *ratzon* of Hashem. Any *hishtadlus* that you do, you better make sure beforehand that this is the *hishtadlus* that Hashem wants you to make. And if Hashem doesn't want you to make it, it's not very wise to do it because you're not going to see *brachah* from that *hishtadlus*.

A MATCH NOT MADE IN HEAVEN

Somebody was telling me that nowadays there are many *zivugim* that break up. There are more divorces than ever before. There are engagements that break up. They give numbers and statistics. What does all of that mean? That means people think they're in charge. A person has to understand that if you think you're smarter than Hashem, you're just like that lady who came to Chazal and said, "Hashem is *mezaveg zivugim* all day? I can do that, too." And she took a thousand men and a thousand ladies. I'm sure she made some kind of system to match them up.

She wasn't stupid. She didn't just say, "You're marrying him, and you're marrying him." She had a questionnaire, I'm sure. "What do you like to do? What do you appreciate? What are you looking for?" And she matched up these thousand people and they ended up killing each other. Because it wasn't from Hashem (Vayikra Rabbah 8:1).²

Now, there's a Vilna Gaon (*Yahel Ohr*, pg. 33) who speaks about the topic of *zivugim*. Incidentally, somebody asked me recently, "Who says this Vilna Gaon is the only *shitah*?" I thought that was the craziest question I've ever heard. I *pashut* had to control myself. Because if the Gaon says that *shidduchim* come from Hashem and only from Hashem and there is no place for *hishtadlus*, do you think there is anybody who knows better than the Vilna Gaon?! I don't care what sefer this person wrote. I don't care how big his beard is. He thinks that he knows better than the Vilna Gaon who says that *shidduchim* come only from Hashem and that forty days before *yetziras havelad* there's a *bas kol* that goes out and says *bas ploni leploni*?! (Sotah 2a) How could he even think otherwise? He says clearly that *hishtadlus* in *shidduchim* is *lashav* (for naught). *Lashav* means לא יבנה בית שאו עמלו בוניה (Tehillim 127:1), the only one who "builds houses" is Hashem, meaning to say, the only one who is *mezaveg zivugim* is Hashem. All you have to figure out is, not how to help Hashem, but how to align yourself with Hashem. And the Gr"a says, this is the the *pshat* in the Gemara (Moed Katan 18b) that says that *zivugim* are הכתובים ומן הנביאים. So we see that *zivugim* are completely from Hashem and our *hishtadlus* in that regard is in vain, as the Vilna Gaon writes.³

You have to see it, you have to bake it into yourself, and you have to know that there's no one else and nothing else who brings a *shidduch*. Let's say a person says, "I like that girl." Here's a mother, a nice mother, who wants the best for her son. She meets a nice girl, and she says, "I want this girl for my son." And she starts coming up with *shtick* to make

¹ הכי אמר רב משום רבי ראובן בן אצטרובלי מן התורה ומן הנביאים ומן הכתובים מה' אשה לאיש מן התורה דכתיב ויען לבן ובתואל ויאמרו מה' יצא הדבר מן הנביאים דכתיב ואביו ואמו לא ידעו כי מה' היא מן הכתובים דכתיב בית והון נחלת אבות ומה' אשה משכלת

² זה קרבן אהרן ובניו (ויקרא ו, יג), רבי לוי פתח (תהלים עה, ח): כי אלהים שפט, מטרוניתא שאלה את רבי יוסי בר חלפתא, אמרה לו, בכמה ימים ברא הקדוש ברוך הוא את עולמו, אמר לה, לששת ימים, דכתיב (שמות לא, יז): כי ששת ימים עשה ה' את השמים וגו'. אמרה לו, ומאותה שעה עד עכשו מהו יושב ועושה, אמר לה מזוג זוגים, אשתו של פלוני לפלוני, בתו של פלוני לפלוני, ממנו של פלוני לפלוני, אמרה לו, הדא הוא, אף אני יכולה לעשות כן, כמה עבדים יש לי וכמה שפחות יש לי ואני יכולה לזוגם בשעה אחת. אמר לה, אם קלה היא בעיניך קשה היא לפני הקדוש ברוך הוא כקריעת ים סוף, הניחה והלך לו. מה עשתה, שלחה והביאה אלף עבדים ואלף שפחות, והעמידה אותן שורות שורות, אמרה להם פלוני ישא לפלונית פלוני לפלונית, זוג בלילה אחת, לצפרא אתין לגבה דין מחו פציעה ודין עינו שמוטה ודין אציליה פריך ודין ארכוביה תבירה, דין אמר לינא בעיא לדין, ודין אמר לינא בעיא לדין. מיד שלחה והביאה את רבי יוסי בר חלפתא, אמרה לו, רבי אמת היא תורתכם נאה משבחת היא, יפה אמרת כל מה שאמרת. אמר לה לא כך אמרתי לך אם קלה היא בעיניך קשה היא לפני הקדוש ברוך הוא כקריעת ים סוף, שנאמר (תהלים סח, ז): אלהים מושיב יחידים ביתה מוציא אסירים בכושרות, מהו בכושרות, בכי ושירות, דבעא אמר שירה דלא בעא בכח, ומה הקדוש ברוך הוא עושה מזוג על כרחן שלא בטובתן

³ וז"ל וז"ש (ע"ב) ואע"ג דלזמנין מסתייע מלתא ושקיל דא תיר מן דא סלקין ומתחברין כחדא כו'. וענין הפסוק כך הוא שקודם לכן אומר בטוח בו בכל עת שהוא סוד הזיווג שנקרא כל ועת בחיבורא כידוע ואומר שיש לבטוח בזה על הי כמו כמ"ש (מ"ק י"ב ב') מן התורה ומן הנביאים ומן הכתובים שמה' אשה לאיש, מן התורה מה' יצא הדבר, מן הנביאים ולא ידעו כי מה' הוא, מן הכתובים ומה' אישה משכלת וכמ"ש אם ה' לא יבנה בית שאו עמלו בוניה בו שהוא הזיווג שנקרא בנין בית כידוע ואמר עם ה' וכי ששואו הוא עסק בני אדם בענין הזיווג שהכל הוא מאת ה' וז"ש אך הבל בני אדם כד בני איש רק במאזנים לעלות אבל המה מהבל יחד כו'. (ס' יהל אור באורים על הזה"ק)

the *shidduch* happen. Do you think this *shidduch* is going to be blessed by Hashem? No.⁴ The gemara in Moed Katan (ibid) speaks about a fellow who wanted a certain girl and he davened for her. And Hashem said, "Okay, you want her? I'm going to give her to you." And then after he got married, he davened to Hashem to either kill him or take his wife's life because it wasn't working out too well for them (ibid).⁵ A person has to get it into his *kishkes*.

THE BIGGEST OBSTACLE

Now I'm going to tell you what I think is the biggest block in shidduchim. Now, big *gedolim* have said it already, but I will explain it in my fashion. The Steipler said this, Rav Chaim Kanievsky said this, Rav Aharon Leib Shteinman said this - it all stems from *ga'avah*. *Ga'avah* is the biggest *me'akev* in shidduchim. Everybody is a *ba'al ga'avah*.

How does the *ga'avah* manifest itself? I often talk to girls in shidduchim. I talk to boys in shidduchim. I talk to parents as well. And I say to them, "What are you waiting for? For Hashem to send you the shidduch, I assume. Is that correct?" "Yes," they answer. "Now, what if Hashem sends you the shidduch, but you don't like Hashem's shidduch? It happens. But do you know why you don't like it? Because you're a *ba'al ga'avah*. You think that you deserve better than that."

I know of a young man whose parents told me, "We need somebody with money." The young man told me, "My parents won't ever accept anybody without money. They're always looking for money." So I said, "Okay." I called the parents, and I spoke to them. They said, "Yes, we don't have the money, so we need somebody who has money." I said, "What if his *bashert* is somebody who doesn't have money? It's going to be a problem, correct?" The guy went out with a whole bunch of girls. I told the parents, "Are you ready to give up? Why don't you try this one?" They tried this one and bingo! There was no money in that shidduch. Hashem is going to have to help you. You may have to contribute some money, and I'm sorry to disappoint you, but that's the plan of Hashem.

TOO TALL, TOO SHORT

Here's a guy who tells me I can't marry a particular girl. I asked him, "Why not?" "I've heard she's too short." I said, "But what if Hashem picked that shidduch for you?" I know a guy who couldn't marry a girl because she was too tall. I said, "So what is wrong with a girl who's too tall?" He said, "I was walking by a store window and we looked in the window together, and I saw the picture, and it didn't look right. She was taller than me! That's not a shidduch." I asked him, "Do you like this girl? Do you like everything about her? She's for you." No!

When Hashem sends you a shidduch and you don't accept the will of Hashem - that means that you're not willing to accept what Hashem wants for you. Boys don't accept what Hashem wants. Girls also don't accept what Hashem wants. That's the whole problem in a nutshell.

PICKING YOUR OWN SHIDDUCHIM

Here's a young lady who is successful, and comes from a good family. She wanted a boy that was going to sit and learn and she was ready to support him for the rest of his life, comfortably. The guy would never have to think of a penny of *parnasah*. And she was happy to do that, *lechatchila*! She could support the family and all the kids! I met her, and she couldn't find a shidduch. You'd think she had everything going for herself. She had *yichus*. She had everything going for her. Why couldn't she find a shidduch? You know why? She was picking her own shidduch. She was trying to create her shidduch. So I met her, and she asked me, "Can you give me a *brachah*?" I said, "No. But I'm going to give you advice. Break your will." She said, "I'll take anything that Hashem sends me." I said, "That is such a lie and such a falsehood. You wouldn't take anything that Hashem sends you unless it's exactly what you want! Your own will is paramount for you! You have to learn how to break your will, to accept the *ratzon* of Hashem." She said she was going to. I said, "You're not going to. You really want to break your will? Come to my house for Shabbos." She came for Shabbos. When I began to work on her, I saw that she didn't want to accept Hashem's will. I said, "You've got to accept Hashem's will!"

WHO ARE YOU REALLY LOOKING FOR?

I told her, "Let me tell you a little story. I had a talmid, who today is a very *chashuve* Rav, a *Rosh Kollel*. He's a rebbi, and very *matzliach*, but back in the day he wasn't so *matzliach*. He was a Sefardi, and he was a *ba'al teshuvah*, and he had a lot of *chesronos*, no big *yichus* and no big this or that, but he was a good *bachur*. I knew this guy was "good stuff." And I *redd* a shidduch. My daughter had told me, "You know, there's a teacher in my school who's 28 years old. Do you think it would be a good shidduch?" I said, "Give me her number. I'll find out."

I called her and asked, "What are you looking for?" She said, "What do you mean?" I clarified, "In the 'looks department' - what are you looking for?" She said, "Oh, nothing specific." "Ok, what about in the *yichus* department

⁴ Rav Brog, Shlita, pointed out that if the mother in this case would say, "Maybe Hashem made us meet because this is His shidduch," then this is fine. The real problem here is that the mother wanted a particular girl for her own personal interests (i.e. "I want her for my son"). [Additionally, part of the problem may be because the "I want" attitude is combined with going through the whole "shtick" approach, to make it happen, meaning that a person doesn't see Hashem in the picture, and everything is contingent on: "This is what I want, and this is what I am going to go for it and I'll make it happen."]

⁵ כי הא דרבא שמעיה להווא גברא דבעי רחמי ואמר תזדמן לי פלגיתא אמר ליה לא תיבעי רחמי הכי אי חזיא לך לא אזלא מינך ואי לא כפרת בה בטר הכי שמעיה דקאמר או איהו לימות מקמה או איהו תמות מקמיה אמר ליה לאו אמינא לך לא תיבעי עליה דמילתא (ע' חדושי הר"ן ד"ה שלא וד"ה או)

- what are you looking for? Do you care if he's a Polisher? A Galicianer? A Litvak? Or a Sefardi?" She said, "As long as he's *erlich*, I don't care." I said, "Okay, do you care about the money department?" "I don't care about that either," she replied. I said, "Let me tell you one thing about this guy. He would like to have a TV in his house, a small one - to watch it *bein hazmanim*. Would that be acceptable to you?" You'd be shocked how many girls told me that they could be understanding. But this girl said, "Oh, no. That's one thing I can't accept. No, my house has to be clean from that." I said, "Do you mind an up hat or a down hat?" She didn't care for that. Now, this girl was about 5'11. That's very tall for girls. I told her that the guy was 5'7. "Will that be acceptable to you?" She said "As long as he's *erlich* and he wants to grow in *ruchniyus*, I don't care." I said, "You're getting married. You're getting out of jail." I said, "Let me tell you something; the guy is 6'4, he's not planning to have a TV in his house, and he is extremely good looking. Yes, he happens to be a Sefardi. Say 'Baruch Hashem' he's not a Galicianer and he's not a Litvak." And this girl had *yichus*. They met and bingo! They got married.

I told the girl afterwards, "I knew you were going to get married, because you were looking for whatever Hashem sent you and you were humble, and that *shidduch* came from Hashem. I didn't think of that *shidduch*. I didn't know you. My daughter said to me, 'maybe you know a guy who is this tall, who is this age for a very nice girl.'" Now, Baruch Hashem, they are a *mishpachah* who lives in Eretz Yisrael, a *mishpachah chashuvah*. A wise girl. She got married.

The problem is that people don't accept the *ratzon* of Hashem. So you found that there's some kind of *chisaron*. So what? Is it a *chisaron* that undermines the *shidduch*?

ARE YOU SERIOUS ABOUT GROWTH?

Here's a girl who called me. This girl is an *erliche* girl. She said, "I was going out with a boy and all of sudden he said, 'Oh shoot, I didn't daven *mincha*.' So she said to him, 'Just pull over to the side of the road and go daven *mincha*.' He said, 'Nah, forget about it. I'll daven two *ma'ariv*.' So she asked me, 'Is that a *p'sul*.' I said, 'Yes. But do you know why? Because a person who was accustomed to davening three times a day in the usual time would never say such a thing. But if this guy shows such a *kalus*, that means he doesn't daven three times a day.'

Just two nights ago a girl went out with a boy. The girl is desperate for a *shidduch*, and the car that the boy was driving (I assume it was one of his parents' car) started to rattle a little bit. You know that today there's this new *shtus* when it comes to cars for dates, that the boy must carefully choose what type of car he's going to pick her up in. Does it make any difference how you get there? Does it make a difference? No difference. All you need is two pairs of wheels. An older car, a newer car - what's the difference? So this guy borrowed his parents' car and it started to rattle, so instead of saying, "Excuse me, the car is rattling," this guy cried out and said, "What kind of bleeping sick car is this? I said to the girl, "There's something wrong with the guy. I'm not saying you shouldn't marry him for that, but there's something wrong with the guy. It says a lot about him."

She said, "But there was one more thing." I said, "What's that?" She said, "I'm very anti smartphones. Extremely strict. And I asked his *rav* beforehand if he had one, and he told me 'No, this bachur doesn't have a smartphone. He might have once had a smartphone.'"

Bekitzur they go out on a date. On the date this *chacham* pulls out a smartphone for Waze. The girl was shocked! So she called the *rav*. The *rav* said, "Oh, he doesn't have a smartphone. So the father of the girl (who was on the call as well) said, "The guy pulled out a smartphone on the date!" So the *rav* said, "Really? I'm surprised. I thought he got rid of it." So the *rav* calls the guy. What do you think the *chacham* said? And by the way, he learns in a decent *yeshivah* where they're very *makpid* about smartphones. He said to this *rav*, "You know, today the *minhag* is that a lot of bachurim have two phones. They have a flip phone for the *velt*, and they have a smartphone for 'behind the scenes.' Some say it's only for Waze or a little Whatsapp." I said to this girl, "Tell the guy he is *pasul*. Call the *shadchan* and say that you don't want to see him again because he has a smartphone. Don't say, 'I don't think it's for me.' Let him know why you *zaged* him up. He has to know that."

So she tells this to the *shadchan*, and the *shadchan* calls the boy and tells him. The guy says, "Oh, I'm sorry. I'm sorry. Okay, I'll get rid of it! I'll get rid of it! If it means that much to her, I'll get rid of it." So she called me back and asked, "What do I do now?" I said, "It's your call. The *shadchan* advised you to go out with him. Bring it up with him. Explain to him why you were surprised. Your own *rav* was fooled! And he didn't even have *seichel* not to pull it out in front of you on the date!"

A GUY WITHOUT A FRESH SHIRT

But if you find a guy who doesn't dress that well, that's a different story. There was an older girl who was looking for a *shidduch* and this bachur came here to learn for a few months. He was a *fine* bachur, a *geshmake* bachur, but he wasn't a clotheshorse. He was a *shtickel farshlumpfte* guy. He always wore clean clothes, though. He went out with the girl, and the guy had *mazal* like nobody's business. What happened? The guy realized that the date was set up for Motzei Shabbos and he didn't have any clean shirts. So he pulls out a shirt from his laundry that looks like it had *roshei karnayim* of grasshoppers all over it. The guy pulls it out and he figures he'll put it on and he won't take his jacket off. He'll put a tie over the shirt and he'll get away with it. So he puts on the shirt. That Shabbos it rained, so on Shabbos,

his hat flew off his head and fell into a puddle of mud. So after Shabbos he was trying to clean it, but it looked a little bit like it had been through the war. He said, "I was thinking of wearing my weekday hat, but I thought that hat was even worse." So he figured, "What's the big deal?" Now, because he was working on his hat, he never got a chance to shine his shoes. So he came looking a little rumpled.

The girl liked him. The girl really liked him. He was a *mentsch*. She calls me up afterwards. "I can't go further." I said, "Why not?" She tells me how disheveled he looked. So I said to her, "I know the guy. He's not stupid. He may not be Mr. Clotheshorse, but he's not a guy who doesn't understand." I called him up, and he told me the whole story. He had an explanation for every single thing. I called her back. I said, "I want you to know. Hashem orchestrated this. It was not his fault. Once he gets married, he told me clearly he'll wear whatever his wife wants him to wear. He'll be happy to stick his shirt in his pants and wear a clean hat. If his wife wants to clean it for him, *nach besser*. You understand?" She wasn't buying it. I told her, "You're not accepting the *ratzon* of Hashem." She said, "Why did Hashem make this happen?" I said, "To test you. You see, you didn't meet this guy in the pizza shop. You didn't meet him online. Hashem sent this shidduch to you. You're an older girl looking for a shidduch, and you like this guy. It's straight off the bat. And his clothing is your main objection? That means you don't accept the *ratzon* of Hashem." B"H, they ended up getting married.

THE "BAGGY PANTS" SYNDROME

There was another girl who came to us for Shabbos. I spoke to her throughout that Shabbos telling her, "I'm trying to brainwash you to get you out of your thickness. Are you ready?" She said, "Yes." I said, "Okay, the next shidduch that comes your way, check him out beforehand. If there's no clear reason why it shouldn't work out, you're marrying him." She didn't answer. I said, "Say 'yes,' otherwise, Hashem is not bringing you the shidduch." So she said "yes" and left. At that point, my daughter - out of nowhere - thought of somebody. I *redd* the shidduch and they got back within two days, which was not normal for both families, and before you knew it, they were going out on a date.

I called her up after the first date and I said, "So how did it go?" She said, "A very nice person. I had a very enjoyable time. Good conversation. He's a *mentsch*." I said, "Oh, very nice, so you're getting married?" She says to me, "I'm not sure. I'll think about it." I said, "What do you have to think about?"

Bekitzur, she goes on another date. I said, "Are you ready to get engaged?" "No, no, I can't marry him." I said, "Why not?" She said, "His pants that he wore were very wide. He didn't wear tight pants." As you know, the new minhag is that yeshivah *bachurim* have to wear black tights. The girl's mother called me and told me the following (I'm paraphrasing it): "You know, he has so much room in his pants that I could climb in there and there'll be room for both of us! I can't have a bachur like that marrying my daughter." I said to her, "Are you cuckoo? What's wrong with you?" I told them that it's a *mum over* (i.e. not a real problem - correctable).

NOTHING LESS THAN FASHTUNKENE GA'AVAH!

I looked into it. I said to myself, "*Taka*, what's *pshat*?" A bachur goes on a date, even if he doesn't wear tights but you don't wear pants for the whole family, including your mother in law! *Bekitzur*, I called the guy and he said that he wasn't expecting to go out. He hasn't gone out in a while, and he lost 75 pounds, so now he had room for other people in his pants, but it's not that it was an invitation. He told me, "I wear regular pants." "Are you sure?" I asked him. "Yes," he said. He called a Rav up and he was told, "Go get yourself a new pair of pants." The problem was that Hashem orchestrates everything. It was during the three weeks. Lakewood doesn't have one open store during the three weeks. Not even a *chatzi* suit store is open. So he couldn't get pants. And the girl couldn't get over this issue. I got on the phone and I started trying. I said to her, "You're a *meshugene*. If you don't take this shidduch, don't call me when you're forty-four. I won't talk to you. I'm telling you, this shidduch is the *ratzon Hashem*. He's a nice person. You can't find one *chisaron*." Then she tells me, "I'm not sure if he's exactly like my brothers." I said, "I hope you're not marrying your brothers. That's not the Torah way. No, he is similar to your brothers - he has eyes, he has a nose, he has ears. What's the problem?" My daughter *shreyed* on her, I can't tell you. Until finally, her hand was twisted, and she said, "Yes." I met them after they got married. I met the guy. I called her over to the side. I said, "How stupid were you? Do you know you cost me my health? I was screaming at you on the phone. Your husband looks just like your brothers! If you have three guys in a room, wouldn't you say, 'Oh, this is family. He's such a nice person. What was your *safek* even?' She said, "It's a good thing you were screaming at me because otherwise I wasn't getting it."

Unbelievable! People don't want to accept *ratzon Hashem*. You know what that's called? *Ga'avah*! That's all. And the funny thing was, this fellow didn't even care about her money. But that's how people are.

ALL YOU NEED IS ONE SHADCHAN

The *hishtadlus* you have to make is to accept the will of Hashem. But any *hishtadlus* you make, you have to make sure there's *da'as Torah*.

A forty-year-old bachur came to Rav Chaim Kanievsky. A forty-year-old bachur! The bachur said that people were telling him that he wasn't doing enough *hishtadlus*. So Rav Chaim asked him, "What are you doing?" He said, "People tell me that I should go to three different shadchanim and introduce myself." Rav Chaim said, "One, at the most."

I didn't say that you shouldn't do what is clearly the will of Hashem. If Hashem *redds* you a shidduch, you go out with the shidduch and you "behave," because the shidduch is from Hashem, and to make the shidduch happen - that's proper hishtadlus. But you don't focus on what kind of car you have or what kind of truck you're driving. It doesn't make any difference *ki hu zeh klal*.

I had a father tell me, "I want to rent my son something nice." I said, "He's going to drive a beat-up *yeshivishe* jalopy for the rest of his life - what are you going on a date for if you're going to fool her? You're going to rent a new car? That's silly. That's not *hishtadlus*. And if you have a girl that's so shallow that she gets fooled by the nice car on the first date, *och un vey* to you if you end up marrying her because you're going to have a very shallow existence!"

ASK YOURSELF THIS QUESTION

The main thing you have to do is ask yourself this question: "Am I willing to accept the will of Hashem?" Do I understand that Hashem knows what and who is best for me? Everybody has a picture in their mind of who they want to marry. I'll never forget what my zeida (HaRav Avigdor Miller, zt"l) once told me - I tell this to a lot of people, "I have a surprise for you. If you take a hundred men and give them an artboard so they could draw a picture of the lady they wanted to marry, ninety nine would not draw a picture of their wife! You know what that tells you? That it's not what they thought about. It's not what they planned. But somehow they were smart enough to overlook it and they got married and they're happily married."

"I DON'T FEEL THE CONNECTION"

But the biggest *machalah* in this *inyan* today is when they say, "I went out with a boy and I don't feel a connection. I just don't feel an attraction." The Steipler would say over hundreds of times, "There's no such thing as attraction!" - i.e. meaning it's not a condition not to move forward. Someone recently told me that their rav said that attraction is important. I told him, "Your rav should quit the rabbinate and he should go become a therapist or psychologist. He's not a rav because he is not telling you Torah ideas - as long as she doesn't repulse you, it's good enough."

Now, I didn't say you're not allowed to be attracted to a woman and the woman should not be attracted to a man. I didn't say that. What I am saying is that attraction has nothing to do with whether this is your *zivug*. "Why can't Hashem make it that I should be attracted?" a fellow asked me. I said, "You know why? Because Hashem wants you to have some *emunah*. He wants you to trust Him. Have you ever thought that maybe Hashem wants you to trust Him?"

Rav Chaim says this over and over. My grandfather told me, "There is no such a thing as attraction." I once asked him, "Does the Torah say anything about attraction?" He said, "Yes. If the person is not repulsive. If they are not repulsive in your eyes, then you grab it and you be *sameach bechelkecha*." Do most guys marry Esther Hamalkah and Sarah Imeinu? No. Do most guys marry Rachav and Avigayil?⁶ No. Only four people in the world married these beautiful women. The rest of them - I'm sorry to disappoint - do not get their dreams. Does that mean I shouldn't be happy with what Hashem granted me? No! I'm very happy with it. I don't drive a Cadillac. Can I bring my own car to a date? Why not? I'm *sameach bechelki*. You should be happy with your house. You should be happy with your children. You should be happy with what Hashem gives you. This is called your *chelek*.

So I say the following to such a fellow, "Who do you think you are?" One guy told me, "Well, I'm a talmid chacham and a talmid chacham needs to have a beautiful wife." I told him, "If Hashem agreed with you, He would have provided it!"

But people get this *meshugas* that they need to feel attracted to her, they need to feel drawn toward her. The Steipler used to say a line about the concept of attraction. He said in the gemara (Kiddushin 25a) we find a concept of *meshichah* - of being "drawn" to somebody. It says בהמה גסה נקנית במשיכה - if you want to acquire a large domesticated animal, you acquire it with *meshichah*, you "draw" it toward you.⁷ You call an animal and it comes. Or you take the animal and you give it a pull. An animal is acquired through attraction; not a wife.

WHAT IS AN ATTRACTION?

You have to realize that when the Steipler was looking at this whole concept of attraction - about the "pulling" - it meant nothing to him. But most people would naturally say, "What?? I'm sure Hashem wants attraction! Hashem created attraction!" I asked my zeida this question - "Hashem made attraction, no?" He told me, "Yes, He did, but do you know when attraction starts? After you get married. After you start a relationship. That's when attraction comes. You become connected and drawn to somebody when you see their *ma'asim tovim*. That's what draws you. It doesn't say that Yitzchak took a look at Rivka and said, 'Wow! That's my picture!' No. First he brought her to his house. He said, 'I want you to stay here in my mother's house for a while and I want to watch how you behave.' And there he saw her beautiful *ma'asim tovim*. Unbelievable! That's what attracted him to his wife! That's what drew him to her."

This is what you have to understand. Again, it's great if you're attracted. I'm not saying that it shouldn't be present, but it's not a prerequisite for a shidduch.

⁶ תנו רבנן ארבע נשים יפופיות היו בעולם שרה רחב ואביגיל ואסתר, ולמאן דאמר אסתר ירקרקות היתה מפיק אסתר ומעילי ושתי (מגילה ט"ו א)
⁷ דרש רב בקימחוניא בהמה גסה נקנית במשיכה אשכחניהו שמואל לתלמידי דרב אמר להו מי אמר רב בהמה גסה נקנית במשיכה והאן במסירה תנן ורב נמי במסירה אמר הדר ביה מההיא הוא דאמר כי האי תנא דתניא וחכ"א זו וזו נקנית במשיכה רבי שמעון אומר זו וזו בהגבהה (קידושין כ"ה ב)

NOT THE RIGHT KIND OF SHOES!

I'll never forget one girl who called me and said that the guy's shoes looked clumpy. I said, "Did you like the guy?" "Yes," she said. I said, "You know you don't deserve a husband! You really don't deserve a husband. If you could *pasul* a guy by his shoes! And you aren't even embarrassed to bring it up to me! His shoes weren't the right kind of shoes?!" I told her, "Do you know what kind of level of arrogance you have? You know what kind of demanding woman you have to be? You know what kind of conceited woman you have to be?" But you know what people tell me? "I happen to be a demanding person. I feel I'm entitled to something. Why can't I want that? Why can't I get everything I ask for?" I tell them, "Because who are *you* to demand all of that?!"

CAN YOU MEVATEL YOUR DA'AS?

You have to accept the *ratzon* of Hashem and you have to be *mevatel* your *da'as* to the *ratzon* of Hashem. You can't do it any better than Hashem. There's nothing you can do. But the second you are *mevatel* your *da'as* to the *ratzon* of Hashem, that's when you're going to find out where your *zivug* is and who your *zivug* is.

A girl called me yesterday. She said, "I was going out with a young man and I said 'no' to him. Then somebody told me to call you." I said, "Could you fix the situation now?" She said, "No, it's too late. The guy told me - if you say 'no' - goodbye, it's off." I said, "So what would you like to know from me?" She said, "Did I make a mistake?" I told her, "It's irrelevant. Whether you did or you didn't - it's irrelevant now. Do you know why? Because you can't go backwards. Now, you have to look toward the future. Hashem should send you another *zivug*. Even if we assume that this young man was your first *zivug*. So, maybe the next one will be your second *zivug*. You can get a second *zivug*. Hashem will take care of you. You never look back. If you could correct it, then you have to see, you have to analyze it." That's what a person has to realize.

I told the girl, "You are 32 years old. Was there ever a 35-year old or a 37-year old bachur that you went out with, who was a decent human being and would have been a good mate for you and a good father for your kids? Have you never found him yet? Have you never met such a person? Or maybe you never even judged him by these criteria? You judged him by your feelings, by your emotions, or by his level of being put together."

We have to daven to Hashem that we should be able to be *mevatel* our *da'as* to the *da'as* of Hashem and understand that the only way a *zivug* will come is from Hashem.

A "MISMATCHED" MATCH

I'm going to end with a little story that happened to me many years ago. There was once a relative of mine who owned a seminary for girls. There were many talmidos in the seminary at that time. She had a son that was about twenty-two or twenty-three who wanted to get married. For whatever reason, no shidduchim were coming. One day I told the mother, "Why don't you *redd* him a shidduch? At least let him not to feel bad. Make him feel good. Show him you're trying to find him a shidduch. *Redd* him a girl!" She said, "I don't know who to *redd* him." I told her, "Wait a second, you have a whole bunch of girls in your seminary! You can't *redd* him one girl from your whole school? You can't pick him just one for a date?!" "No, I can't," she said. I said, "I'm very disappointed." She said, "Why don't you find him one." I said, "I don't have a seminary." But then I thought for a second and told her, "But you know what? I am going to find him one. I'm going to call my sister who was then in that age bracket, and I'm going to ask her, 'Do you have any friends that may be a match?'"

I went home to New York for Yom Tov, to visit my parents. After Yom Tov, we were leaving the house and my mother walked us out. We got into our station wagon and started to drive off. All of a sudden I said "Oy vey, I forgot about the name! We backed up. My mother just walked into the house. I beeped the horn. I said, "Ma, give me one name of my sister's friends." She said, "Who is it for? "I said it's for such and such a family. She said, "Oh, that family..." I said, "Ma, just give me a name. I'm trying to get him a date. That's all I need." She thought for a minute and then she said, "Okay, I'll give you a name. I'll give you a name." I said, "What do her parents do?" She said, "Her parents are both public school teachers." I said, "Oh, no. This guy's parents are both rosh yeshivos and heads of seminaries, and they're both world famous. It's not going to work." But then I said, "You know what? I'm doing it!"

HASHEM DOES THE REST

We came home to Cleveland, and the mother of the boy said to me, "Nu? Did you find something for my son?" I said, "I have a name. I have a name!" So I gave her the name of the girl. I said, "Look into it and get back to me." She asked me on the spot, "What do her parents do?" I said, "I'm not familiar with the parents. I never met them. You have to look into it on your own and tell me if you're *maskim*." Anyway, they came back to me a week or two later. The rosh yeshivah comes to me and says, "We're interested in the shidduch." I said, "You are??!!" He says, "Yes!" I said, "Okay, what do her parents do?" He says, "Oh, her parents? They own a jewelry store in Boro Park! They're mamash heimishe mentschen, very heimishe mentschen." I said, "Oh... Okay. Very good."

Obviously, that wasn't the girl that I *redd* to them. The girl that I *redd* to them wasn't the girl they checked out, but since they assumed I *redd* this girl that they checked out, they asked me to set them up for a date. They went out

three times. After three dates, they're ready to get engaged. And they got engaged. And they're living happily ever after. It turned out that there were two girls in Bais Yaakov of Boro Park with the same name! One girl's parents were public school teachers and the other girl's parents owned a jewelry store in Boro Park. The boy's parents did check out this girl from Boro Park, but Hashem said, "I'm *mezaveg zivugim*. This is not the shidduch. My shidduch is the other one." Now, we laugh about it after all these years. Hashem is *mezaveg zivugim*. Your *hishtadlus* is not worth much.

HASHEM KNOWS BEST

Earlier in the shiur, we mentioned a famous Gr"a about *hishtadlus* in shidduchim. Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach, zt"l, was asked about this Vilna Gaon who says that *hishtadlus* is *lashav*. Rav Shlomo Zalman said that the Gr"a means the following: you should do less *hishtadlus* in *shidduchim* than you do for anything else in your life. For anything else?! I want to see people doing less *hishtadlus* in shidduchim! I want to see you follow Rav Shlomo Zalman. People think, "This is maybe true for Eretz Yisrael, but in the diaspora, I could do what I want." No, you can't. Trust in Hashem. Hashem knows if you're a *ba'al teshuvah*, or a *ba'alas teshuvah*. Hashem knows if you have emotional illness. Hashem knows if you have physical illness. Hashem knows if you have this. Hashem knows if you have that. If you trust Hashem and you don't lie and you're upfront, Hashem will send you the *zivug hahagun beshvilcha*.

✧ IN CONCLUSION ✧

As our *gedolim* have repeatedly said over the years, the real *shidduch* crisis of today's world is rooted solely in the problem of *ga'avah*, which manifests itself in our inability to align ourselves with the will of Hashem. Aligning ourselves with Hashem's will means that we shouldn't pick out our, or our children's *shidduchim* based on our personal wishes, interests, desires, and various frivolous and often meaningless externalities. Rather we should realize that, number one - all *shidduchim* come directly from Hashem, and number two - even a minimal required *hishtadlus* (according to the Vilna Gaon) doesn't help at all. Once we internalize that, we should work on accepting what Hashem sends us with humility and *menuchas hanefesh* provided, of course, that all the basic *halachic* and *hashkafic* requirements have been met. And in the *zechus* of being willing to be *mevatel* our *da'as* to Hashem's *ratzon* in this area, HKB"H will send us proper *zivugim b'karov*.