

The matter stemmed from Hashem! (24:50)

Anyone who has ever been involved in the area of *shidduchim*, matchmaking, is acutely aware of the value and verity of this *pasuk*. Hashem is the Divine matchmaker – end of subject. While at times we have difficulty finding rhyme or reason to explain some marriages, Hashem does, and that is all that really counts. Indeed, the Divine Providence manifest in *shidduchim* is so acute and lucid that one must be myopic to ignore it. There is a classic story, which occurred concerning the **Rashash** (*Horav Shmuel Shtarshon*, *zl*, noted commentator to *Talmud Bavli*), which underscores this idea.

The *Rashash* conducted a *gmach*, free-loan fund. He once lent a man one hundred ruble to be paid back in three months. At the designated time, the borrower entered the *bais hamedrash* where *Rav Shmuel* had his “office” (he learned all day in the *bais hamedrash*) and announced that he was repaying the loan. He placed the 100 ruble note on the *Gemorah* from which *Rav Shmuel* was learning, and he left. *Rav Shmuel* was so engrossed in his studies that he did not even notice the man’s coming or going. When he concluded his learning, he closed the *Gemorah* and returned it to the bookcase.

Every couple of months, *Rav Shmuel* would go over his books to see if people had been timely in their payments. He noticed that the borrower had not paid his loan. (He had paid it, but it had not been entered in the book.) *Rav Shmuel* asserted that he remembered nothing of the transaction, and, since this was *gemach*, communal funds, they would have to go to a *din Torah*, litigate their claims before a rabbinical court.

As is common fare among people, once a rumor starts, it develops a life of its own and explodes into full-scale slander. No one would believe the borrower against the word of *Rav Shmuel*, who was a world-renowned scholar. People distanced themselves from him; his son, who studied in the *yeshivah* in Vilna, was forced to leave the city out of shame.

A few months later, *Rav Shmuel* had occasion to open that same *Gemorah* that he had earlier used and in which he had placed the one hundred ruble note. He immediately summoned the borrower, who was by now a broken person. He had lost everything: friends, livelihood, stature, but, worst of all, his son, who was forced to leave town out of shame. *Rav Shmuel* asked, “How can I make it up to you?” “The *Rav* cannot,” the borrower replied. “I have lost it all. Once my son left town, it was all over. I have nothing left.”

The *Rashash* told the man, “Call your son. I would like to speak with him, because I want him to become my son-in-law.” (*Rashash* had raised an orphaned girl as his own child.) One can only begin to imagine the overwhelming joy that permeated that wedding. Here was clear evidence of *Mei’Hashem yatza ha’davar*. Clearly, it was Heavenly destined that this boy should marry this girl. It was up to Hashem to manipulate events in such a manner that these young people should come together in marriage. Clearly, had Hashem not intervened, this young man would never have

married the *Rashash's* daughter.

At times, it takes “patience” for Hashem’s plan to manifest itself. A *chasid* of the **Lev Simchah, zl**, asked the *Rebbe* (through one of his *gabbaim*, aides), about a certain *shidduch*, match, for his daughter (this is the prevalent custom among *chassidim*, especially *Gur*. (The family will not go further unless the *Rebbe* responds affirmatively.) The *Lev Simchah* did not respond affirmatively (nor did he say, “No”), which left the petitioner to use his common sense. The average *chasid* will not go further unless the answer is positive. Undeterred, the petitioner asked a *mekubal*, a holy scholar who was steeped in studying *kabbalah*, for his opinion concerning the *shidduch*. The *mekubal's* answer was “Yes.” The petitioner was now in a serious quandary. What should he do?

The *chasid* went to the **Pnei Menachem, zl** (the *Lev Simchah's* brother and next *Rebbe*), “I went to the *Rebbe*,” he began. “He did not give me a clear answer. I left him in a quandary concerning what I should do. I spoke to a *mekubal* who told me to go forward with the *shidduch*. What should I do?”

The *Pnei Menachem* replied, “You should know that a *mekubal* has powerful insight, but he only sees what is good now. He is unable to see if this *shidduch* will be good in twenty years or through the next generation (what type of children and grandchildren will descend from them). The *Rebbe* (and all *Rebbes*) have the ability to see generations later, even what is best for each *neshamah*, based upon its previous *gilgul* (transmigratory soul, earlier “version” of himself).

The *Pnei Menachem* continued, “A *chasid* once came to my father, the **Imrei Emes, zl**, and petitioned him for a blessing which would provide him with monetary wealth. The *Rebbe* demurred. The man returned a number of times, until the *Imrei Emes* asserted and blessed him with wealth. The blessing came true, and the man became very wealthy.

This *chasid* had one son, a brilliant, talented, pleasant looking boy, who was a budding Torah scholar. He would be a “top catch” when the time for him to marry came around. Shortly before he reached marriageable age, he was in a tragic accident, which cost him his leg. He was, sadly, no longer at the top of the *shadchanim's* list. The father’s demands for a suitable wife for his son were no longer “demanding.” In the end, he married a lovely girl, who happened to be the tailor’s daughter.

Shortly before the wedding, the man went in to speak with the *Imrei Emes* and ask for a *brachah* for the young couple. The *Rebbe* said to the father, “It was Heavenly ordained that your son should wed this girl. Years ago, it would have been quite a suitable *shidduch* for you, since you were not affluent, and neither was the tailor. When you besieged me time and again to grant you a blessing for wealth, however, this *shidduch*, which Heaven had decided was best for your son, became below your dignity, in light of your newly acquired financial status. As a result, your son had to undergo a painful experience which left him an amputee. Now you are open to accepting the *shidduch* that was meant for your son from the very beginning. Now you understand that one does

not “push” Hashem. If the Almighty is not forthcoming with His blessing, He has a good reason for it.