

DEAR TORAH TIDBITS FAMILY



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If one year ago someone would have asked me to describe the *kochot* (strengths) that I have been given by the Almighty, I might have told them that I can connect with teens from diverse backgrounds, I can identify areas of need in *Am Yisrael* and do what I can to be a good son, husband, father and grandfather. What I would *not* include is having the ability to make *shidduchim*.

I was fortunate enough to find my wife at a young age, date and propose to her in a relatively short amount of time. And it was only as the years went by that I realized many of my friends were not so fortunate and were struggling to find their *zivug* (soulmate). In an effort to do my part I tried setting people up but typically got one of two responses. “What on earth were you thinking?!” or “She’s a nice person, but it’s a no.”

At some point I finally decided that *HaShem* gave me many *kochot* and *shidduchim* was not one of them. After all, in the *Talmud, Sotah 2b* it says:

“אָמַר רַבִּי יוֹחָנָן וְקָשׁוּן לְזוּגוֹן בְּקָרִיעַת יַם סוּף...”

“Rav Yochanan said, it is as difficult to match couples in marriage as was the splitting of the Reed Sea...”

For many years I held onto the belief that making *shidduchim* was simply out of my wheelhouse. But that changed one year ago. On *Tu B’Av* last year I saw a post by a dear friend, Rav Yoni Lavi, asking people to take one hour to write the names of the male

and female singles they know and dedicate time setting them up. While it seemed like a harmless request I felt *shidduchim* was best left to the experts and hoped others would be inspired by this challenge.

But weeks passed and I found myself preparing for *Rosh HaShana* when a horrible feeling came over me as I thought about Rav Lavi’s request. In the time I spent working for the OU - whether it be in Vancouver building its NCSY chapter or in my current position at OU Israel, I have a broad network of wonderful people. What would I say to the *Borei Olam* when He asks me what I did with the *kochot* He gave me to help make *shidduchim*?

On the first night of *Rosh HaShana* I turned to my wife and committed to helping those looking for *shidduchim* this year. Understanding that such an important *mitzvah* would require a tremendous amount of *siyata Dishmaya* (help from Heaven), my wife and I turned to *HaShem* and reaffirmed our commitment to helping His children, asking for some Divine guidance along the way. After the *chag* we created two WhatsApp groups for ourselves - one for men looking for *shidduchim* and the other for women. Whenever we were approached by someone looking to get married, we would send their name in the respective WhatsApp group, and every so often we would sit down to review the list to see what connections we could make.

Six months ago it just so “happened”

that I received a call from Dovie Rosengarten, a dear friend and adopted son of my family, whom I first met in Vancouver at an NCSY *shabbaton*. He called to tell me he had moved to Israel – a milestone we’d been waiting to celebrate together - and I eagerly invited him to spend the following *Shabbat* with my family. I can’t explain it any other way, but when I saw him, something clicked. I thought of someone else whom I had only recently come in contact with but had never met - Nechama Feuerstein, another Vancouver-born *olah* whose parents served as *Rav* and *Rebbetzin* in Vancouver for 15 years.

To be perfectly honest, the idea made no sense because I hadn’t formally met Nechama - her family left Vancouver before my family arrived and I only connected with her a few months prior over phone calls and voice notes. But it just so “happened” that a close friend of Nechama, Dovie and my family, Lauren Wolbromsky, was also spending that very *Shabbat* with us. And both Lauren and my wife had the same idea as me.

By motzei *Shabbat*, after making some phone calls to mutual friends, Dovie and Nechama were set to go out the following week. Last week, on *Tu B’Av*, Dovie proposed to Nechama at the *Me’arat Hamachpelah* (Cave of the Patriarchs) in *Chevron*.

When I received this photo from them on Friday morning I couldn’t stop the tears streaming down my face. With the help and guidance of the *Borei Olam* and mutual



friends, I made my first *shidduch*. And it just so “happens” that the very institutions *Rav* and *Rebbetzin* Feuerstein led and founded were the ones that allowed Dovie to mold his life into what it is today.

The night before *Tu B’Av*, I had another special *zechut* (merit) of reciting two *brachot* (blessings) and speaking under the *chuppah* of another NCSYer from Vancouver, Leiba Spivak, and a friend of my brother’s who grew up with us in *Har Nof*, Akiva Meizel. Needless to say it was a miracle to see two vastly different worlds become one and I was once again struck by the tremendous *siyata Dishmaya* that must have been provided for Leiba and Akiva to find one another.

I can no longer say that the field of *shidduchim* is best left to the experts because *shidduchim* are in the hands of *HaShem*. However, each and every one of us has the opportunity to serve as the *kli* (vessel) through which a *shidduch* comes about. I

invite you to join me in taking Rav Lavi’s challenge to heart. Spend one hour writing down the names of those you know who are looking to find a *shidduch* and see what you can do. *B’ezrat HaShem*, we

should be successful in our efforts!

Wishing you all an uplifting and inspiring *Shabbat*,

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