



*Tzippy  
Remembers  
When ...*

# The Matchless MATCHMAKER

Tzippy Clapman

*I am not an official shadchan, nor will I ever hang a shingle on my door. However, I admit that I have made over a dozen successful matches. When Hashem wants two soulmates to get together, He will find a way to do it. I feel honored to have been the conduit for such a mission, several times.*

## **THE OSTROV SHIDDUCH**

**M**y brother, Yeshaya Ostrov, then 23, was staying in our home in Crown Heights for Simchas Torah. My mother called Erev Yom Tov and asked me to find him a *shidduch* over Yom Tov. My mother was a major believer in marrying off kids as soon as possible. I was married at 18 and my mother was very happy to see me going off to build a strong Jewish home. Now my brother, who was already a college graduate and attending Hadar Hatorah in the evenings, was in search of his *basherte*. I tried to tell my mother that Simchas Torah in 770 was not

the ideal time or location to find my brother's match, but my protests fell on deaf ears.

I went into Yom Tov knowing that this mission was pretty much impossible. I was already rehearsing my phone call to my mother after Yom Tov, explaining how pointless it was even to try. With thousands of people in 770 during *hakafos*, and then the *farbrengen* late Simchas Torah afternoon which lasted into the early hours of the next morning, I would never be able to accomplish such a miraculous feat.

But my mother knew better. Lo and behold, around midnight Motzoei

I asked her if she would like to be introduced to my brother right here and now.

Yom Tov at the *farbrengen* in 770, I met a lovely young woman from Montreal, Marsha Garelik. We got to talking and the more I spoke with her, the more I thought she would be a great match for my brother. I gently gauged her interest in meeting a potential husband. She answered in the affirmative, and then I asked her how long she would be in Crown Heights prior to returning to her home and job in Montreal.

She answered that she was staying one more day.

The next night she planned to go into *yechidus* with the Rebbe and from there straight back to Montreal. She told me her parents were awaiting her quick return as they had a bar mitzvah out of state and needed her to babysit for her two younger brothers.

Seeing my mother's anxious face in my mind, I went into emergency mode. I looked down into the men's section at the *farbrengen* downstairs; all I could see was a sea of thousands of men and boys and black hats and black suits and *kapotes*. They were all blended into one ocean of waves swaying back and forth to the singing of lively *niggunim* with the Rebbe clapping. I realized I would never be able to locate my brother there.

Suddenly, I caught a glance of a familiar nose coming out of one of the hats right below me. It was none other than my brother. Now I was even more frustrated. This was in the days before cell phones. How would I draw his

attention from up above in the balcony right on top of him? The noise was deafening and even though he was right in my sight, how could I get his attention? With all my strength I loudly shouted his name, and he immediately looked up in my direction! I motioned to him to come outside to the front of 770. I immediately ran toward the exit and found my brother outside. He looked like he had just been crushed in a washing machine. His suit was wrinkled, his hat was flat like a *latke*. He anxiously

waited for me to tell him what I needed, so he could return to the *farbrengen*. I told him simply that I had found a suitable young lady for him. My brother thanked me and smiled, and told me that he would take her phone number and call her some time after Yom Tov to arrange a date. I stopped him from turning around to re-enter the *farbrengen* and said, "The young lady is leaving tomorrow. If you want to meet her, you must meet her NOW!"

My brother looked at me in bewilderment. I told him that she was leaving the next day to Montreal and would not be back for at least two weeks. My brother stared at me as if I was telling a joke, but I reassured him that the young lady was upstairs in the women's section and that I was going to ask her if she would like to be introduced now. My brother thought for a moment, realized I was dead serious, and did what any human being would do. He worked on his appearance. He took off his crushed hat and started to mold it into a more hat-like shape. He straightened his jacket and shirt and told me to proceed in bringing her. (He looked skeptical.) I rushed back into the women's section and found the girl I hoped would be my future sister-in-law. I asked her if she would like to be introduced to my brother right here and now. After a moment of hesitation, she agreed.

I formally introduced them and off they went on their first date, which consisted of walking

Yeshaya and Marsha Ostrov on their wedding day, 26 Adar (March 12), 1972.



At the Ostrov wedding, L-R: Yisroel Ostrov; Rabbi Moshe Elye Gerlitzky (speaking); Yehuda Clapman; Yeshaya Leib Ostrov; Marsha Ostrov; Francis Garelik (kallah's mother); Chasha Rifka Ostrov; Minnie Garelik (kallah's aunt); and Tzippy Clapman.



▲ Rabbi Aryeh Leib and Rebbetzin Chaya Zelda Kramer

around Crown Heights for a few hours. It went well and the next day she went into *yechidus* and got a *brachah* to find her *shidduch* soon.

Within a month they were engaged. Needless to say, my mother was thrilled and felt that she had accomplished her motherly duty!

#### YET ANOTHER SHIDDUCH

**W**e were celebrating the wedding of my brother and sister-in-law in Montreal, and we were warmly welcomed into the home

of the *Rosh Yeshivah*, Rabbi Aryeh Leib Kramer, and his Rebbetzin, Mrs. Chaya Zelda (Clara) Kramer, who were close friends of my sister-in-law's parents for many years. The first *sheva brachos* was hosted by Rabbi and Rebbetzin Kramer. I remember sitting in their dining

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room enjoying the *seudah* and their most wonderful hospitality. One of the guests at the *sheva brachos* was a Rebbetzin married to one of the *rebbeim* in the Lubavitcher Yeshiva in Montreal. We were talking and she asked us who put this lovely *shidduch* together. I humbly took the credit. The Rebbetzin broke out into a giant smile and told me confidentially that her eldest son had just received a *brachah* from the Rebbe for a *shidduch*, and she wanted to know if I had any suggestions.

I was new to Crown Heights and only knew one Lubavitcher girl. When I got engaged to a Lubavitcher *bachur*, my friends told me that they had a girl in their class in Prospect Park Yeshiva who always told her friends about her love for Chabad. She went to Camp Emunah every summer and wanted to marry a *bachur* who was very *chassidish* and wanted to go on *shlichus*. I also knew that she was very short.

I asked the Rebbetzin to tell me a little bit about her son, and she told me he was a very *chassidische bachur* learning in 770 and wanted to be a *shliach* of the Rebbe. I asked the mother about his physical characteristics and she told me he was very short. The idea for the *shidduch* struck me like a bolt of lightning. Of course they had a lot more in common than their height,

but it struck me as a good sign that in this, too, they were similar.

I told the Rebbetzin that I would get back to her once I was back in Brooklyn and got in touch with the young lady. Within two months the young couple wrote in to the Rebbe and became engaged.

I feel great *nachas* to have been a *shliach* in putting together the match. I am honored to have seen them raise their beautiful family that now includes grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

#### MY DINING ROOM IS AVAILABLE

From then on I would dabble in *shidduchim* whenever an idea would come to me. My husband and I decided to offer young men and young ladies the option of having their dates in our private dining room. Our children were then very young and had an early bedtime. I would set up my dining room table with a tea set, hot water, cold beverages, and assorted cookies. I would answer the door and then leave the couple alone in the dining room, usually with me sitting in the kitchen nearby. Many couples took us up on our offer to meet at our home, and until this day I have unfamiliar faces in the neighborhood come up to me to tell me that they met their husbands in our dining room.

I wish this system would make a comeback. I feel the expense of dating is very high. Renting a car, parking, buying beverages at the lounge, all easily add up to over a hundred dollars a date. I think this may be one reason why many boys are reluctant to date! The expense of dating puts an unwelcome burden on the boys or his parents, many of whom just don't have that money. I feel if they knew that the first few dates would be in a person's home with little or no expense, they would be willing to consider

more possibilities for dating. And once they see that this person is a good candidate, they can move on to more elaborate and costly dates. Additionally, for young couples who have never dated before, meeting in a private home may be less stressful and embarrassing than going out in public.

In addition, it is simply out of character and inappropriate for *chassidische bachurim* to go to lounges. Never before and never after do they do it, but somehow when preparing for marriage it is okay?

I am proud to say that my dining room is still being used on many evenings for this purpose, and I am open to hosting anyone interested in dating this way. Please call me for your free reservations.

#### WEDDING MAGIC

There was once an older single girl who was finding it hard to find her *bashert*. A few close friends of the family suggested that she invest in a gorgeous dress and shoes, and head out every night to a different wedding in order to be noticed by the many *shadchanim* who go in search of available candidates. Now no one knows if you are from the *chassan's* side or the *kallah's* side so no one would even question what she was doing there. All she had to do was apply her makeup and do her hair and off she would go. It got to a point that transportation was a problem, and she made an arrangement with an inexpensive *heimishe* car service to pick her up and take her home. The idea worked. Within a few months this girl was engaged to an older *bachur*—her car service driver.

#### IT'S NO ROSE GARDEN

Marrying off our children is no easy feat. It demands a total commitment of thought and action by parents, relatives, or whoever is willing and able to help. The parents must be very proactive and constantly keep up with all the *shadchanim* they can find. We must understand that our dedicated hard-working *shadchanim* work very hard on the daunting task of finding two *neshamos* who belong together as one. *Shadchanim* are not

perfect and there are times they may suggest a name that is unsuitable for your child. It is your job to look into the name and research to see if it is suitable or not. Do not get upset if the name they suggested is not right for your child! The *shadchanim* cannot do all the research for you. If they do meet the candidate at all they usually meet them very briefly and form an opinion based on that, which is not always accurate.

If you've never done it, you cannot imagine what a *shadchan* goes through emotionally while doing this very hard work. I remember making a few matches and one partner was thrilled with the date and the other was insulted—with the same date. It is heartbreaking to have to tell the hopeful partner that the other one does not want to go on another date.

I have seen couples go out many, many times and one is ready to go shopping for *l'chaim* clothing and is imagining going to the Ohel. Then the other partner says, "I changed my mind, I cannot go through with it!" The pain and rejection that the girl or boy feels when one side backs out after dating has gone so smoothly can be devastating.

Many of our children have never experienced this type of rejection in their lives and it can be very hard to swallow. All of a sudden their self-esteem drops. "Maybe I will never find the right one. ...Maybe I am lacking personality, or my physical appearance is not good enough." Unfortunately, depression can set in and it is imperative to catch it early and get help if it does not pass within a few weeks. I have seen the most beautiful girls with the most charismatic personalities going out with great boys and then being rejected after one or many dates. If their *neshamos* are not drawn to each other, the match cannot happen.

#### WHAT YOU THINK YOU WANT

I will never forget the brother of a close friend of ours who was looking for a *shidduch*. He was a very tall and handsome young man who had just received *semichah* and was finishing his Master's degree from Yeshiva University. His family was very well off. He

told the *shadchanim* that he wanted a gorgeous girl, slim and attractive, with very good *middos*, and well-educated like himself. His sister was very overweight and he did not want his *basherte* to have any weight problems. One day my friend happily called me with great news. "My brother is a *chassan* and he is bringing her home for dinner tonight, so please come over to meet her." I had this *kallah* very clear in my imagination. I knew she was probably the most adorable pretty little *kallah* in the world. My friend was so happy about this event because she was the *shadchan* who initially introduced them.

My friend told me that she went to pick her up one day to drive her to her parents' home after school. It was raining and pouring and the *kallah* did not have an umbrella, and she gave her own umbrella to her. Then the *kallah's* dress got soaked and my friend told me she had lent her one of her dresses to change into. My friend thought it was a big joke and said, "I am giving her my brother, my umbrella and now my dress!?" This last comment hit me like a ton of bricks. How could a tiny, thin, gorgeous little *kallah* fit into my friend's size XX-large dress? I went over to the house to meet the happy glowing couple, and lo and behold she was the sweetest size XX-large *kallah* I had ever seen. They could not keep their eyes off each other and looked

so genuinely happy. They are happily married *b"H* to this day with children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

When the right match presents itself, it does not matter what he or she said beforehand that they want or don't want. If it's *bashert* they will click immediately and the two *neshamos* will finally be brought together by a strong magnetic connection.

It is important to have our children be open to more possibilities, and not rule out potential *shidduchim* right off the bat based on height, weight, what you heard about their relatives or other superficial characteristics. When a *shidduch* is *bashert* you will know it in your heart, no matter what physical form the person has. I wish you much *mazel* and may your children's *shidduchim* come easily! ❧

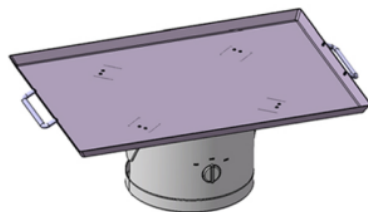
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Tzippy Clapman, RN, MS, FNP, lives in Crown Heights with her husband, Rabbi Yehuda Clapman, a certified sofer. Formerly a NICU nurse and now a provider in school-based clinics, Tzippy has written extensively for the N'shei Chabad Newsletter, always with the goal of convincing parents of the supreme importance of creating warm, happy, Yiddishe memories for their children. This is the 19th installment of "Tzippy Remembers When..." and we think Tzippy is just warming up!

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