



A Hassidic wedding (source:  
<http://www.vosizneias.com>)

## Jewish matchmaking

### The shidduch

*In the Jewish tradition, a Shidduch is a system of matchmaking in which Jewish singles are introduced to one another in orthodox communities for the purpose of marriage.*

### Date to marry

In strictly Orthodox Jewish circles, dating is limited to the search for a marriage partner. Both sides (usually the parents, close relatives or friends of the persons involved) make inquiries about the prospective partner, on his/her character, intelligence, level of learning, financial status, family and health status, appearance and level of religious observance. A *shidduch* often begins with a recommendation from family members, friends or others who see matchmaking as a mitzvah, a commandment. Some engage in it as a profession and charge a fee for their services. Usually a professional matchmaker is called a *shadchan* but anyone who makes a *shidduch* is considered the *shadchan* for it.

### A very codified process

After the match has been proposed, the prospective partners meet a number of times to gain a sense of whether they are right for one another. The number of dates prior to announcing an engagement may vary by community. In some, the dating continues several months. In stricter communities, the couple may decide a few days after originally meeting with each other. Also the age when *shidduchim* start may vary. In very orthodox circles, especially among Hassidim, it is usually 18. Those who support marriage by *shidduch* believe that it complies with traditional Judaism's outlook on *Tsniut*, modest behaviour in relations between men and women, and prevents promiscuity. It may also be helpful in small Jewish communities where meeting prospective marriage partners is limited. Also, the decision as to whether or not the mate is good can be made with the emotional boundary of the *shadchan* who, if so desired by the couple, can call and talk to either side in the beginning stages of the dating. As the couple see more of each other the *shadchan* backs away. It is expected that the couple keep the *shadchan* up-to-date on how the *shidduch* is going at regular intervals. If the *shidduch* does not work out, then usually the *shadchan* is contacted and it is him/her that tells the other side that it will not be going ahead. If the *shidduch* works out then the couple inform the *shadchan* of its success.

### Shidduch in the Talmud

The *Talmud* (tractate Kiddushin 41a) states that a man should not marry a woman until having seen her first. This edict is based on the *Torah* statement: "Love your neighbour (*re'acha*) like yourself" (Leviticus 19:18). In other words, a marriage that is arranged so completely that the prospective couple has not even seen each other is strongly discouraged, since they could not love each other. The etymology of the words *shidduch* and *shadchan* is uncertain. The Medieval *Rabbi Nissim of Gerona* (commonly called *Ran*) traces it back to the *Aramaic* word for "calm" (cf. *Targum* to *Judges* 5:31), and elaborates that the main purpose of the *shidduch* process is for young people to "settle down" into marriage (Commentary of the *Ran* to *Talmud*, Shabbat 10a).

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Source : « The Shidduch » <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shidduch>