

# NEARLY THREE HUNDRED SHIDDUCHIM AND COUNTING

## OHEL SARALA'S "אוּלַי אִבְנֵה מִמֶּנָּה"

### A Clarion Call of Hope for Singles and Couples

BY FRIMET BLUM

When Rabbi Aryeh Ginzberg, *shlita*, wrote an article, "The Hidden World of *Shidduchim*," he couldn't have imagined just how strong a chord it would strike. The article described a new project, Ohel Sarala, founded in memory of his young daughter Sarala, *a"h*. Within hours after the magazine hit the stands, he was flooded with calls. Singles. Mothers. Married couples waiting for children. It seemed as if everyone wanted to be join. And almost immediately, there were results.

An older single got engaged. A couple struggling with infertility learned that they were expecting a baby. It was as if the heavens had opened and an outpouring of *chesed* was showering down upon the people who had joined.

Today, two years later, the miracles continue. This winter, Ohel Sarala celebrated a major milestone: it's 250<sup>th</sup> *shidduch*. The number has since grown to close to 300. That is astounding, especially in note of the fact that the organization is barely two years old! During the same time, almost one hundred couples had babies or are expecting.

The *simchas* are no coincidence. As per the directive of Hagaon Harav Aron Leib Shteinman, *zatzal*, Ohel Sarala harnesses the Torah's source for a *zechus*. People in need of *shidduchim* and children are taking note.

### What is Ohel Sarala?

It began when Rabbi Shlomo Bochner, founder of Bonei Olam, visited Hagaon Reb Aron Leib Shteinman, *zatzal*. Rav Shteinman told Rabbi Bochner that there are two challenges facing *Klal Yisroel* that allow him no peace of mind – singles seeking *shidduchim* and couples struggling to have a child. Both have no children.

The Torah itself shows that the two are related, said the Rosh Yeshiva. Only after Sarah Imeinu gave Hagar to Avraham Avinu, saying "Ulai ibaneh mimenah, perhaps I will be built from her" (Beraishis 16:2)," did Hashem send the *malach* to tell her that she would give birth. The Torah is teaching us *middah k'neged middah*. When a person assists someone else with having a child, there is a *havtacha* that he will also merit a child. And since a person can only have a child through marriage, said the Rosh Yeshiva, helping someone have a child is a *zechus* for a single to find a *zivug*.

Rav Shteinman advised Rabbi Bochner to give singles an opportunity to help waiting couples financially. Such an arrangement, he said, would harness the power of *middah k'neged midah*, and would open a channel of great *brachah*.

A short while afterward, Rabbi Bochner related this conversation to Rabbi Ginzberg. Rabbi Ginzberg and his wife

had been seeking a project to undertake in memory of their daughter, Sarala, *a"h*. Taking Harav Shteinman's words to heart, they founded Ohel Sarala as a *zechus* for the *neshamah* of their daughter, *a"h*, who didn't merit to get married or have children.

Ohel Sarala matches singles with couples waiting for children. The singles sign up through Ohel Sarala; the couples are reached through Bonei Olam. The singles make a donation to Bonei Olam. Then, following Chazal's dictum of *hamispallel b'ad chaveiro ne'eneh techilah*, the singles and couples *daven* for each other.

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"Two challenges give me no peace of mind. Singles who need *shidduchim* and couples waiting for children." Rabbi Bochner consulting with Harav Shteinman, *zatzal*

"There is no minimum donation," says Mrs. Avigail Ginzberg. "People donate anything from small amounts to \$10,000. Our mission is to help singles and couples waiting for children." Ohel Sarala has raised significant funds for Bonei Olam, so that collectively, the singles are fulfilling Sarah Imeinu's words, "*ulei ibaneh memenah*."

Ohel Sarala recently launched a beautiful website where people can sign up to join, view powerful speeches and articles, and have their names sent to Reb Chaim Kanievsky and the Rachmastrivke Rebbe of Eretz Yisroel, *shlita*. While a large percentage of the site's visitors are singles, there are others.



Rabbi Bochner consulting with Harav Chaim Kanievsky







“Many mothers sign up without their children knowing,” Mrs. Ginzberg says. Parents of singles often feel that there’s not much they can do for their children. When a mother signs up for Ohel Sarala and commits to helping a couple through her donation and *tefillos*, she is doing something real to help her child.

The entire project is completely anonymous. The singles and couples get only a Hebrew name to *daven* for. They don’t know anything more. It’s also not a very big commitment of time.

“We don’t tell people how much to *daven*,” she says. “Most people say

*Tehillim* and have their partners in mind whenever they are *mispallel*. Many include their partners in their *tefillos* at *hadlakas haneiros*.”

Although the partners don’t know who they’re *davening* for, the singles and couples grow to care deeply about each other. When there’s good news to share, Ohel Sarala contacts the partners. The partners share the joy. Some singles have sent baby gifts to the couples they were *davening* for. And sometimes, they share the *simcha* on a deeper level. When a single girl asked Ohel Sarala to invite “her” couple to her wedding, they couldn’t attend – because the wife was on pregnancy-related bedrest!

Another woman called to say that her son was getting engaged. When the couple that was *davening* for him was informed, they had their own news to share. They had heard that very day of their own impending *simcha*!

Rabbi and Mrs. Ginzberg take great joy in every Ohel Sarala *simcha*. They feel that every *shidduch* and every baby is a personal *nechamah* - and a *zechus* for the *neshama* of their daughter Sarala, a”h. But the *shidduchim* and babies are *Klal Yisroel’s simchas*. Until every single finds a *zivug* and every couple is blessed with a child, Ohel Sarala will continue to offer people hope.

### Singles Celebrate *shidduchim*

With the number of *shidduchim* amongst Ohel Sarala members growing quickly, one member in Lakewood is especially enthusiastic. Leeba Lederer encourages others to join, and even organized a special event last spring to spread the word. Rabbi Bochner and Mrs. Ginzburg attended, and spoke to the crowd of over one hundred girls. Leeba explains why

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Ohel Sarala touched her so:

“I signed up for Ohel Sarala, and it felt so right, so real. It wasn’t just another *segulah*,” she said.

“I told a friend about it and she was excited about it, and then I told another friend and she was excited about it, so I thought, everyone is connecting to this. We have to let everyone know about this. We have to create awareness.” Leeba encourages girls to tell their friends about Ohel Sarala so that more people can merit miracles.

“When someone joins because of you, you get a *zechus*.” Which is really what this is all about.



To organize an event in your area, call Ohel Sarala at 718.252.1212 x216 or email [pb@ohelsarala.org](mailto:pb@ohelsarala.org). Ohel Sarala will help you with logistics, speakers and materials.

To sign up, visit our website at [www.ohelsarala.org](http://www.ohelsarala.org) or call 718.475.1357.

