SEGULOT FOR SHIDDUKHIM ” Easy going”

When someone asks me what matters most in a shidukh – beyond a decent family and compatible religious and moral values – for me, it is that the person be “easy going.” The opposite of “complicated.” Easy going is someone who knows how to let things go; in Hebrew, □□□□□□ □□ □□□□□. Someone capable of saying yes to an idea that isn’t theirs. And capable of changing their mind intelligently.

Think about what might wear a marriage down. It isn’t the big decisions – those come along only once in a while. It’s the small arguments, which are endless: where do we spend the first night of Pesach, what do we name the baby, are we going to this wedding or not, and who is right about what was said at Shabbat dinner. A marriage can be fifty years of minor disagreements. With an easy going person, each of those disagreements is simply a conversation. With a “complicated” person, each of those conversations can turn into a trial! Evidence must be presented, witnesses called, and a verdict awaited – a verdict that never comes, because the appeal remains open forever.

Modern psychology has a name for easy going. Of the five great traits that define a personality, Jordan Peterson insists on one he calls *agreeableness*: the disposition to cooperate, to yield, to put peace above being right. Its opposite, the disagreeable person, is the one who needs to win. And there you have the shortest definition I know of what to avoid:

Someone who cares more about winning the argument than arriving at the truth.

With that person, every disagreement becomes a battle that someone has to lose. And in a marriage there is no such thing

as one person winning: when one of the two loses, both lose. You won the argument but lost the evening.

Our Sages said it first, and in four words. In Pirqe Abot they describe four temperaments, and the best of them all they call a chasid: *kashe likh'os venoach lirtsot* – slow to anger, easy to appease. It is the exact definition of "easy going." This is not an American concept: it was in the Mishna eighteen hundred years ago. Notice that the Mishna does not ask us to never get angry. It doesn't exist – and anyone who claims to never get angry is not telling the truth. It asks for two measurable things: that anger be slow to arrive, and quick to leave. The first protects your wife or your husband; the second protects the marriage.

One important clarification: easy going does not mean weak. It doesn't mean having no opinions or convictions, or saying yes to everything to avoid conflict – that has another name, and it isn't good for a marriage either, because the one who swallows everything for ten years explodes in year eleven. The easy going person has positions and defends them. The difference lies in the goal: they argue to understand, not to win. They can say "you're right" without feeling they lost something. They can say "I was wrong" without their self-esteem collapsing. That is, perhaps, the simplest test of all: notice how hard it is for the person you are dating to pronounce those three words – "I was wrong." There are charming, brilliant, successful people who have never said them in their lives.

And how do you detect this on three or four dates, when everyone is showing you their best version? Because easy going is not something you ask about – nobody answers "No. I'm complicated." It is something you observe.

A practical test: Change your plans at the last minute and see what happens: the restaurant is closed, it's raining, what you had planned fell through. The reaction to a ruined plan says

more than three hours of conversation. Watch how they treat the waiter when the food is late, and how they talk about the driver who cut them off in traffic. And above all: disagree with them about something small. Not to provoke – to see. Can he or she hold a small disagreement without it turning into something big? Does he listen to you, or she is just waiting for her turn to answer?

Whoever passes those tests without knowing they were tests – that’s the one you can start talking seriously with.