BITACHON LESSON FROM THE PARSHA

פרשת תּוֹלְדֹת תשפ"ז – Life's a Puppet Show

וַעֲשֵׂה לִי מַטְעַמִּים כַּאֲשֶׁר אָהַבְתִּי וְהָבִיאָה לִי וְאֹכֵלָה בַּעֲבוּר תְּבָרֶכְךָ נַפְשִׁי בְּטֶרֶם אָמוּת - *And make for me tasty foods as I like, and bring them to me, and I will eat, in order that my soul will bless you before I die.* (Bereishis 27:4)

Yitzchok planned to give the Brachos to Eisav. Hashem had other plans.

The Gemara (Yoma 38a-b) teaches:

אָמַר בֶּן עַזַּאי בְּשִׁמְךָ יִקְרָאוּךָ וּבְמְקוֹמְךָ יוֹשִׁיבוּךָ וּמִשֶּׁלְךָ יִתְּנוּ לְךָ אֵין אָדָם נוֹגֵעַ בְּמוּכָן לַחֲבֵירוֹ וְאֵין מַלְכוּת נוֹגַעַת בַּחֲבָרְתָּהּ אֲפִילּוּ כְּמִלְא נִימָא

Ben Azzai said: by your name they shall call you, and in your place they shall seat you, and from your own they shall give you. No person may touch that which is prepared for another; one reign does not overlap with another by even a hairbreadth.

Rashi explains: **לא ידאג אדם לומר פלוני יקפח פרנסתי כי על כרחך בשם יקראוך לבא ולשוב במקומך**, *a person should not worry that another will usurp his livelihood, as what has your name on it [from above] will be yours.*

We live in a live puppet show. People move. They seem to make moves. There seems to be a hierarchy of movers and shakers who pull all the strings. People seemingly move themselves up the corporate ladder. Yet, it's all a mirage. They are all being controlled by the Divine Puppet Master Who pulls all the strings and controls every move.

עֲצַת ה' הִיא תָקוּם

The episode of Yaakov receiving the Brachos that were intended for Eisav is a prime example of Hashem pulling the strings.

Yitzchok desires to bestow the Brachos on Eisav, his beloved son – **וַיֶּאֱהַב יִצְחָק אֶת עֵשָׂו** – who he was already very familiar with for 63 years. Yaakov and Eisav were as different as can be. Yaakov's complexion, voice, mannerism, demeanors, tone, was as different from Eisav's, as night and day. Unmistakably different, to the point that Yaakov didn't believe that his ruse would work. **וַיֹּאמֶר יַעֲקֹב אֶל רִבְקָה אִמּוֹ הֵן עֵשָׂו אָחִי אִישׁ שָׂעִר וְאָנֹכִי אִישׁ חָלָק - אוּלַי יְמֻשֵּׁנִי אָבִי וְהָיִיתִי בְעֵינָיו כִּמְתעַתֵּעַ וְהֵבֵאתִי עָלַי קְלָלָה וְלֹא בְרָכָה** - *Yaakov said to Rivka his mother, "Behold, my brother Eisav is a hairy man, whereas I am a smooth man. Perhaps my father will touch me, and I will appear to him as a deceiver, and I will bring upon myself a curse and not a blessing."* (Bereishis 27:11-12)

Indeed, Yitzchok was far from convinced, as the Posuk states: **וַיֹּאמֶר יִצְחָק אֶל יַעֲקֹב גְּשָׁה נָּא וַאֲמֻשְׁךָ בְּנִי הַאַתָּה זֶה בְּנִי עֵשָׂו אִם לֹא** - *And Yitzchok said to Yaakov, "Please come closer, so that I may feel you, my son, whether you are really my son Eisav or not."* (Bereishis 27:21)

Had this story played out "naturally" it should have been impossible for this charade to work and for Yaakov to usurp the Brachos.

But it did work. Because the Puppet Master wanted it to work. He pulled the strings in the direction that He desired. Hashem didn't want Yitzchok to recognize that it wasn't Eisav, so he didn't. It's as simple as that.

The fact that Rivka went through with this plan which naturally should have been doomed to failure is also part of Hashem's pulling the strings. When Yaakov expressed his reservations about this plan, and expressed his fear that it would lead to him being cursed instead of blessed, Rivka's response was **וַתֹּאמֶר לוֹ אִמּוֹ עָלַי קִלָלָתְךָ בְּנִי אַךְ שְׁמַע בְּקֹלִי וְלֵךְ קַח לִי** - *"On me is your curse, my son".*(Bereishis 27:13) . *Targum Onkelus* expounds: **עֲלַי אִתְאֲמַר בִּנְבוּאָה דְּלָא יֵיתוֹן לְוָטַיָא עֲלָךְ בְּרִי** - *I was told via prophecy that no curse will come on you, my son*. *Targum Yonasan* elaborates and tells us that she was even told via prophecy that Yaakov would receive the Brachos. Rivka would never have gone through with this stunt had she not known via *Nevuah* that it would work; she knew that there was no way **בדרך הטבע**, that this costume would fool Yitzchok.

So, why didn't Rivka just tell Yaakov to walk in as himself and ask for the Brachos, which prophetically she already knew he was getting? Why the whole charade? That was her Hishtadlus!

Not that the Hishtadlus worked – as naturally there was no way for it to work – but as with all Hishtadlus, it's not the Hishtadlus that ever produces results, it's Hashem. It's always Hashem. It's only Hashem Who pulls all the strings, all the time, and brings about the results that He desires. **אין עוד מלבדו**. Literally. It's all Him. It's always Him. It's only Him.

This applies to our Parnassah, our health, our Shiduchim, our station in life, our wins, our losses, our pain, our joy; it's all Hashem pulling the strings.

If the Bracha is meant for us, we will get it. If it isn't meant for us, we won't get it. **אֵין אָדָם נוֹגֵעַ בַּמּוּכָן לַחֲבֵירוֹ אֲפִילּוּ כְּמִלְא נִימָא**

The costumes we wear, the parts we play, the moves we make, the dances we dance, do not determine the outcome of our story; that's all in the Hands of the sole Puppet Master. **רַבּוֹת מַחֲשָׁבוֹת בְּלֶב אִישׁ וַעֲצַת ה' הִיא תָקוּם**

Good Shabbos!