BITACHON LESSON FROM THE PARSHA

פרשת חַיֵּי שָׂרָה תשפ"ז – Choices

וַיַּעַן לָבָן וּבְתוּאֵל וַיֹּאמְרוּ מֵה' יָצָא הַדָּבָר
And Lavan and Besuel answered and said, "The matter has emanated from Hashem" (Bereishis 24:50)

The Gemara (Moed Katan 18b) teaches:
אָמַר רַב מֹשֶׁה רַבִּי רְאוּבֵן בֶּן אַצְטְרוֹבִילִי מִן הַתּוֹרָה וּמִן הַנְּבִיאִים וּמִן הַכְּתוּבִים מֵה' אִשָּׁה לְאִישׁ. מִן הַתּוֹרָה דִּכְתִיב "וַיַּעַן לָבָן וּבְתוּאֵל וַיֹּאמְרוּ מֵה' יָצָא הַדָּבָר" מִן הַנְּבִיאִים דִּכְתִיב "וְאָבִיו וְאִמּוֹ לֹא יָדְעוּ כִּי מֵה' הִיא" מִן הַכְּתוּבִים דִּכְתִיב "בַּיִת וְהוֹן נַחֲלַת אָבוֹת וּמֵה' אִשָּׁה מַשְׂכֶּלֶת" *- From the Torah, and from the Nevi'im, and from the Kesuvim we have proof that there is a divine decree that each woman is destined to be married to a specific man. From the Torah, as it is written: "Lavan and Besuel responded and said: The matter has emanated from Hashem...*

The fact that the Torah deemed it necessary to impart this lesson over and over again - **מִן הַתּוֹרָה וּמִן הַנְּבִיאִים וּמִן הַכְּתוּבִים** – teaches us just how important this lesson is for us to learn. It also tells us how difficult it is for people to internalize.

When it comes to Shidduchim, in particular, people tend to give much credence to their own Hishtadlus. People tend to think and feel as if they have something to do with it. People tend to place their trust in *Shadchanim* and their ability to "make" Shiduchim.

The reality, however, is that our input is nil. **מֵה' יָצָא הַדָּבָר** doesn't mean that Hashem has something to do with it; it doesn't mean that Hashem helps out a little; it doesn't mean Hashem does 50% or even 99%. **מֵה' יָצָא הַדָּבָר** means Hashem is absolutely, totally in charge, 100%.



The Gemara (Sotah 17a) teaches: **אִישׁ וְאִשָּׁה זָכוּ שְׁכִינָה בֵּינֵיהֶן.** The simple meaning of these words is: If a man and a woman have merits (i.e. they live harmoniously), the Shechina, the Divine presence, will rest between them. The deeper understanding of these words is: When it comes to a man and a woman (i.e. Shiduchim), it is meritorious to recognize that the Shechina was between them; Hashem is the One who put them together! It's all Hashem - **מֵה' יָצָא הַדָּבָר**

The Vilna Gaon (in Yahel Ohr ,Parshas Pikudei) writes:
אם ה' לא יבנה בית שוא עמלו בוניו בו שהוא הזיווג שנקרא בנין בית כידוע ...שוא הוא עסק בני אדם בענין הזיווג שהכל הוא מאת ה' *- The Posuk (Tehilim 127) states "If Hashem does not build the house, the laborers toil in vain"; this is referring to Shiduchim. Human toil in the realm of Shiduchim is in vain, as it is totally from Hashem.*

Shlomo Hamelech teaches (Mishlei 18:22): **מָצָא אִשָּׁה מָצָא טוֹב**, *He who has found a wife has found good.*
Shlomo Hamelech also teaches (Koheles 7:26): **וּמוֹצֵא אֲנִי מַר מִמָּוֶת אֶת הָאִשָּׁה** *And I find the wife more bitter than death.*

So which one is it?
The answer is it's up to each individual, based on their particular attitude and their perspective.

מָצָא אִשָּׁה - If one understands that it's all orchestrated by Hashem, and He decides who we "find" as a spouse, then **מָצָא טוֹב**, all will be good in a life lived with such clarity.

מוֹצֵא אֲנִי – If one thinks their own intellect, strength and expertise led them to the right idea for the Shiduch, and their Hishtadlus produced the match, then **מַר מִמָּוֶת**, a bitter life, filled with haziness and confusion lies ahead.

This is the case by Shiduchim, and this is also the case in every other area in life. **מֵה' מִצְעֲדֵי גֶּבֶר אָדָם מַה יָּבִין דַּרְכּוֹ**, *A man's steps are from Hashem, for man understands nothing of his way* (Mishlei 20:24). Yes, every step of our lives is orchestrated by Hashem.

The Gemara (Sotah 2a) tells us **ארבעים יום קודם יצירת הולד בת קול יוצאת ואומרת בת פלוני לפלוני** - Forty days before the conception of a child, a Heavenly voices goes out saying *"The daughter of so-and-so will be the wife of so-and-so".*

Hashem chooses our spouse for us, Hashem chooses our house for us, Hashem chooses our property for us (**בַּיִת פְּלוֹנִי לְפְלוֹנִי שָׂדֶה פְּלוֹנִי לְפְלוֹנִי** – Sotah ibid.); Hashem chooses our means of livelihood for us, Hashem chooses who our parents will be and who our children will be. Hashem chooses our entire life-plan for us.

People go through life thinking they are masters of their own destiny, when nothing can be further from the truth. Hashem is firmly in charge of every detail of our life, and already mapped it out eons before we even existed.

So, where does our *Bechirah*, free will, come in? We get to choose one thing – we get to choose what we do with all the things that we have no choice about! How will we live our lives with the set of circumstances that Hashem tailored for us? Will we serve Hashem faithfully despite the challenging Parnassah conditions He chose for us? Will we maintain Shalom Bayis despite the difficult spouse Hashem chose for us? Will we use the home that Hashem chose for us for our own pleasure or for hosting guests? Will we treat people kindly despite the health complications that Hashem chose for us? Will we rejoice in the *Simchos* of others despite the fact that Hashem chose for us to have to wait a little longer than we would have liked for our own *Simchos*?

Yes, our lives are filled with choices, but not the choices we think are ours to make; those are solely Hashem's choices. How we react to what Hashem chooses for us - therein lies our choice. Will we wisely go through life recognizing **מֵה' יָצָא הַדָּבָר**, or will we foolishly go through life thinking **מוֹצֵא אֲנִי**? That choice is ours!

Good Shabbos!