VAYOMER ELIYAHU

Inspiration and Encouragement on Topics of Trust and Faith in Hashem Yisborach
Based on the Weekly Torah Portion

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In English

ערב שב"ק פרשת
Chayei Sarah
שנת תשפ"ז

בס"ד

Hashem Yisborach Arranges Every Shidduch!

›› *The Difference Between Shidduchim and Other Matters of Hashgachah!*

The *pasuk* in this week's Parshah (Bereishis 24:50) states: "And Lavan and Besuel answered, and they said: This matter comes forth from Hashem. We cannot say anything good or bad to you. Behold, here is Rivkah before you. Take her and go, and she will be a wife to the son of your master, as Hashem has said."

The Gemara in Mo'ed Katan (18B) states: "From the Torah, from Nevi'im and from Kesuvim, we see that Hashem matches a man with a woman. From the Torah, we see this from the verse of 'This matter comes from Hashem.'" We may ask a question on this Gemara: We know that everything that occurs in this world comes from Hashem, as Chazal stress in many places. Why is it necessary for the Gemara to specifically say that *shidduchim* come from Hashem? Is this matter different than every other happening and occurrence in the world?

We may ask similarly on the Medrash Socher Tov (Tehilim 59) that states: "*Shidduchim* are extremely difficult. This is seen from the Torah, Nevi'im and Kesuvim…" The Medrash goes on to list the same verses cited in the Gemara, where we see that shidduchim come from Hashem, and it concludes by saying: "We see from here that Hashem places His name on a *shidduch*." What is meant by this statement?

The *minhag* in Klal Yisroel is that when a groom performs *kiddushin* under the *chuppah*, he places a ring on his bride's index finger, which is known in Hebrew as the "*etzbah*." Rings are usually worn on the "*kemitzah*" finger, the third finger from the thumb. Why is the custom for a groom to place the ring on the "*etzbah*", the first finger from the thumb? Shortly after the *kiddushin*, the bride will transfer the ring to her *kemitzah* finger. Why doesn't the groom put it there in the first place?

›› *It Is Clearly Obvious to All That Shidduchim Come From Hashem!*

We can answer our questions by quoting the words of the Chazon Ish *zt"l* (Sefer Maaseh Ish, Chelek Aleph, page 212). It is stated in his name that even in our times, when Hashem's ways are hidden, we can still clearly see His Divine guidance in *shidduchim*.

Although He sometimes hides His face so as to allow people to err and think they are in control of their own destiny, *shidduchim* are the one area in which it is openly obvious that He is in charge. It is clear to all that He is the one who causes events to occur to bring two people together in order to finalize a match.

›› *One Cannot Hasten or Delay the Appointed Time*

We can see for ourselves that everyone agrees that *shidduchim* come from Hashem. There are times when *shidduchim* seem doomed to fail because they "don't make sense", or because one of the sides seems deficient in some way, or because outsiders try to obstruct the match for some reason, or because of monetary issues; however, despite all this, if Hashem wants a *shidduch* to work, He sets events into motion that cause all problems to be overcome and for the match to be finalized. It is clear to all that nothing can stand in the way of His Divine plan.

On the other hand, if a *shidduch* is not the will of Hashem, there is no way that it can come to fruition. It doesn't matter how much one pushes for it to work, how wonderful both sides are and how suitable they seem for each other, or how much money they have. This match will never end up working because it is not Hashem's will.

Furthermore, Hashem decides who will marry whom, in which place and at what precise time. One cannot hasten or delay the conclusion of the *shidduch* by one minute, no matter how hard he tries.

Rav Michel Yehuda Lefkowitz *zt"l* expounds on this concept and explains that it is certainly true that every occurrence in this world is guided by Hashem; however, this is not always clear for us to see. The one area that it is always easy for all to see Hashem's guiding hand is that of *shidduchim*.

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Hashem's Divine guidance is usually hidden, and one must look deeply and contemplate events from all angles before he can see how Hashem orchestrated all

occurrences. Regarding *shidduchim*, however, it is easy to see how Hashem sends each person the appropriate match in supernatural ways.

We see very often that people extend much effort on a *shidduch*, and, ultimately, that does not help them, and often even hurts them. Yet, on the other hand, some *shidduchim* simply happen, with no effort extended. They simply happen out of nowhere. It is obvious that they could only have been orchestrated by Divine guidance.

This answers our question of why the Gemara specifically says that *shidduchim* come from Hashem. Of course, everything comes from Hashem, but Chazal are emphasizing that one can clearly see that *shidduchim* are guided by Him.

›› What Has Hashem Been Doing from the Time of Creation Until Now?

The Medrash (Bereishis Rabbah 68:4) relates a famous story. A noblewoman once asked Rav Yosi bar Chalafta how long it took Hashem to make the world. He told her that Hashem created the world in six days. She then asked, "What has He been doing since then?" He answered her, "He is sitting and making *shidduchim* and deciding who will marry whom."

The noblewoman's question seems nonsensical. Isn't it obvious that He is guiding the world at all times, providing for every living thing, sending the rain, etc.? Why did she ask what He is doing?

Rav Binyomin Mendelson *zt"l*, Rov of Komemiyus, answers that the noblewoman's question was not simply what Hashem has been doing all this time. Rather, she was asking what He does that clearly displays that He is in full control of the world. She saw that Hashem hides His face, and that He allows it to appear as if the world is functioning "naturally". Therefore, she asked what He does to show His Divine Providence to the world.

Rav Yosi bar Chalafta answered that He does this by making *shidduchim*, as everyone can clearly see that only Hashem is able to match two people.

"...We can now answer why the ring is placed on the "etzbah." This symbolizes how we see the hand of Hashem in shidduchim just like we did at Kriyas Yam Suf, when we pointed with our index finger and said, "This is our G-d and we will glorify Him!'..."

›› The Parents are Only "Mechutanim"

Rav Aharon of Belz *zy"a* uses this idea to explain why a parent of a bride or groom is called a "*mechutin*", rather than a "*mechasen*" (one who marries off his child).

He explains that the word "*mechutin*" is in the passive tense. It literally means "one who has a *chasunah* made." This word is used because, in truth, the parents are not marrying off their children. Rather, Hashem is the one making the *chasuna*, and they are merely in attendance.

He adds that the groom is referred to as an " *arus* " by Chazal. The Tosafos Yomtov asks why this word is used, as one who makes an engagement should be called a "*me'ares*". He answers that the word "*arus*", which is in the passive tense, is used because the groom is not really making the engagement. Rather, it is orchestrated by Hashem, and he is merely a passive participant.

›› The Father Stands on the Side!

The first *shidduch* in history is described in the verse (Bereishis 2): "And Hashem said: It is not good for man to be alone. I will make him a help-mate... Hashem made a slumber fall upon the man... And He took one of his ribs..." Some see a hint from this that Hashem makes a *shidduch* happen even if a person would normally vehemently object. Hashem tells a person, so to speak, "I will send you the right match by 'making you slumber'. While you are in a state of obliviousness, I will send your match, and you will accept her." Thus, one plays no role in choosing his mate. He can neither help nor hinder.

Rav Shloimke of Zhvil *zt"l* (Yesod Tzadik, page 283) explains the words in the Shtar Hatenayim: "The father stands at the side of his son, the groom." This indicates that the father merely stands aside, while Hashem takes care of everything. Furthermore, sometimes Hashem pushes the father to the side to stop him from obstructing a *shidduch* for his child.

In this vein, he explains the Gemara (Sotah 2A) that states: "40 days before a baby is created, a Heavenly voice rings out and says: 'The daughter of so-and-so will marry so-and-so." There are three partners in a baby – Hashem, the father, and the mother (Kiddushin 30B). Therefore, Hashem arranges the *shidduch* before the father and mother become partners, so they shouldn't even think that they have any say in the matter.

›› Hashem Guides the Shidduch Process!

The *pasuk* states (24:2-4): "And Avrohom said to his servant... "I will adjure you by Hashem, the G-d of the Heaven and the G-d of earth, that you will not take a wife for my son from the daughters of Canaan in whose midst I dwell. But you shall go to my land and to my birthplace, and you shall take a wife for my son, for Yitzchok."

Rashi states (ibid:7): "He said, 'Now He is the G-d of

Heaven and the G-d of earth, because I have made Him familiar in the mouths of people, but when He took me from my father's house, He was the G-d of Heaven but not the G-d of earth, because mankind did not acknowledge Him, and His name was not familiar on the earth.'"

Rav Gedaliah Eiseman *zt"l* explains that Avrohom was telling Eliezer that previously, Hashem had been the G-d of Heaven, but His ways were hidden from people. Since no one recognized that He was guiding every aspect of the world, He was not called the G-d of earth. Avrohom then came and taught people to recognize that He was in control of everything that occurs in this world, and their efforts bear no fruit. He told this to Eliezer before he set out to find a *shidduch* for Yitzchok in order to remind him that Hashem would arrange the match, so he should rely solely on Him and not attempt any plans of his own.

This lesson, which Avrohom taught to Eliezer, applies to every individual who reaches marriageable age and to every parent who needs to marry off a child. They all must know that Hashem will arrange the shidduch.

The pasuk continues to say that Hashem told Eliezer: "*Hu yishlach malacho l'fanecha*. (He will send his angel before you.)" The Pmei Menachem *zt"l* quoted his father, the Imrei Emes *zt"l*, as stating that the first letters of these four words spell the word "*himmel*" (Heaven). This is a hint that all *shidduchim* are arranged by Hashem. The Imrei Emes says that the angel mentioned in this verse is the angel that calls out from Heaven: "The daughter of so-and-so will marry so-and-so." Hashem sends this same angel to oversee a *shidduch* and take care of everything.

›› *Neither Yichus Nor Money Brings a Shidduch!*

The Chidushei Harim *zt"l* explains the Gemara that proves that *shidduchim* are made by Hashem by saying that people have many ideas when it comes to marriage. Some specifically want distinguished *yichus*. Others want good looks. Still others want money. Many people think that if they are blessed with these three things, they will have an easy time finding a *shidduch*. Chazal's intention is to correct this mindset. They teach us that *shidduchim* come from Hashem, and from no other source.

They prove this from three places, as each of these types of people is hinted at in one of the sources. The source from the Torah is that Avrohom sent Eliezer to find a girl with good *yichus* – a girl from his father's family. But the Torah tells us that the *shidduch* occurred because "the thing came from Hashem." The source in Nevi'im is the story of Shimshon Hagibor. He "went after his eyes" and sought a good-looking girl. The *pasuk* attests that this *shidduch* also came solely from Hashem. The *pasuk* in Kesuvim is (Mishlei 19:14): "A house and wealth are the heritage of the fathers, but an intelligent wife is from Hashem." Wealth doesn't create *shidduchim*.

He uses this idea to explain the *pasuk* (Mishlei 18:22): "He who has found a wife has found good, and has obtained favor from Hashem." This means that Hashem instills a person with favor towards his intended match, so that he feels pulled towards her. Similarly, the Gemara states (Makkos 10B): "In the way that a person wishes to go, he is led." The Pnei Menachem explains this to mean that even the way a person wishes to go in regard to *shidduchim* is decided by Hashem, and He leads him in that direction.

›› *Hashem Places His Name on a Shidduch!*

The Maharal (Beer Hagolah, Beer 4) explains that *shidduchim* do not work according to any natural rules. They are completely sent from Hashem. For this reason, the name of Hashem is found in the words "man" and "woman". The word for man, "*ish*" has the letter "*yud*" in it, while the word for woman, "*isha*", has the letter "*hei*". Together, this spells the name of Hashem.

This is the meaning of the words of the Medrash that says that Hashem "places His name on a *shidduch*." A marriage can only succeed if Hashem places His name upon it. Even if a couple seems to be 100% compatible, their marriage cannot even last one night if Hashem does not place His name into the *shidduch.* This is seen from the Medrash that says that the noblewoman tried to match up 1,000 pairs of her slaves, but was unsuccessful.

This is also why Hashem openly shows His Divine Providence specifically in the area of *shidduchim*. The entire concept of *shidduchim* is not natural or logical. It can only exist if Hashem places His name on the *shidduch*. Therefore, one will always be able to see how the *shidduch* is completely orchestrated by Hashem.

›› *The Only Hishtadlus is to Trust Hashem!*

The Vilna Gaon learns from all this that one should not exert undue efforts to find a shidduch and should only do a small amount of *hishtadlus*. He further sees this from the verse (Tehilim 127:1): "If Hashem does not build a house, those who build it are working in vain." A *shidduch* is called a "house." If Hashem does not build it, one who tries to build is working in vain. Therefore, one should trust Hashem and not do much *hishtadlus* for a *shidduch*.

›› *As Hard as Kriyas Yam Suf!*

The Gemara (Sotah 2A) compares *shidduchim* to the splitting of the Yam Suf. At the Yam Suf, every maidservant experienced a level of prophecy greater than Yechezkel ben Buzi. They all pointed with their fingers and proclaimed, "This is my G-d, and I will glorify Him!" They could clearly see the hand of Hashem and how He guided the entire world. This is why *shidduchim*, where the hand of Hashem is also clearly evident, is comparable to the splitting of the Yam Suf.

We can now answer why the ring is placed on the "*etzbah*." This symbolizes how we see the hand of Hashem in *shidduchim* just like we did when we pointed with our index finger and said, "This is our G-d!" .