

טוב הקהילה

בס"ד

יו"לע"י קהילת שנת בנית ד'

בנשיאות מורנו הרה"צ ר' גמליאל רבינוביץ שליט"א

English Edition

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5782

No.

602.502

טיב המערכת

וגם מקננו ילך עמנו – And our livestock will go with us as well

As we know, the submission of Pharaoh was long. At first there was nothing to talk about regarding leaving Egypt. With every plague he received, he also submitted a little more and his uncircumcised heart submitted to the will of Hashem Yisbarach. And then, stage after stage he submitted more and more. At first 'only the men' (10:11), and then 'even your children may go with you' (10:24), and before the last plague, the plague of the firstborn, he already agree to let them all go, he asked only one thing, 'only your flock and your cattle will stay put' (10:24), but Moshe Rabeinu insisted and said "No!" (10:26) "וגם מקננו ילך עמנו לא תשאר פרסה כי ממנו ניקח לעבוד את ה'" – 'And our livestock will go with us as well, not a hoof will be left, for from it we shall take to serve Hashem'. We stand astonished and we try to understand the two sides of the debate, why were both sides so insistent on something so minor?

As is our way, it is possible to explain and learn from here the way in *avodas Hashem*. With a simple glance, perhaps we might think that the service of Hashem Yisbarach differs depending on the times, places, and situations. Sometimes we are involved in *avodas Hashem* and sometimes and some situations we are involved in mundane matters, and these matters are not relevant to *avodas Hashem*. For example, when we eat or take care of any needs for our bodies, which seemingly are not connected to *avodas Hashem*. This is what Pharaoh argued – leave the flock and the cattle, you do not need them for *avodas Hashem*, but Moshe Rabeinu said, "No!" 'And our livestock will go with us... for from it we shall take to serve Hashem', by us, there is nothing that is not connected to *avodas Hashem*, even mundane things!

This Shabbos was designated in our community, and many other communities, as a Shabbos of *chizuk* regarding cellphones. We are not getting into the topic of whether it is kosher or not, or how 'smart' it is, we are confident that every person who fears Hashem in his heart listens to his Rabbis on this topic. Even with a simple and kosher cellphone, the *yetzer hara* enters, if a person is sitting during *davening* while his cellphone is 'on and available', it is a denigration of Tefillah. Or if a father is sitting in his house and he is busy on his phone instead paying attention to his children. There are many other examples. Therefore, we took upon ourselves to be strong, each according to his situation to elevate at least one level, and place a barrier regarding his cellphone, for we are not Pharaoh. We do not need to receive plagues to understand that the mundane and spiritual are connected. We believe in Moshe Rabeinu, that even the mundane is directly connected to the spiritual, and they can be 'attendants' for *avodas Hashem*, or *chalilah*, a hindrance from advancing. How fitting during these holy days of *Shovavim*, which are holy days of Teshuva amidst simple weekdays, and it is fitting to strengthen and set up barriers and elevate even the mundane from one level to a higher one, 'for from it we shall take to serve Hashem'.

טיב ההשגחה

'פרוש עם הציבור' – 'Separate with the public'

A terrible argument broke out between me and a good friend at the entrance of *shtieblach*. We were arguing about bringing a cellphone into shul, my friend said it was forbidden and I did not understand what the problem was if it was on mute? Who does it bother? We both stood firm, but I must explain.

That night I came to a *shiur* and with *hashgacha pratis* the Rav was speaking about this very topic, if one can bring a cellphone into shul since it can cause the *davener* to be distracted. Even if he keeps it in his pocket, not even speaking of one who puts it on the table in front of him like a watch. Even worse is one who *davens* from the cellphone who is forced to look at it and if it rings, will be easily distracted.

The body will be in shul, but the mind will be elsewhere. The next day I was in a completely different *shiur*, and here too the Rav was speaking about how the separatists went outside the city to be alone so as not to be distracted by the bustle of the city. The Rav continued to explain that today we do not have to separate ourselves. The solution is simple, go to Kollel or the Bais HaMedrash or any place where one must be alone with his Maker without the cellphone, cut off from this world and technology.

Since this week's sheet is devoted to the pitfalls of technology, I will add a story that happened several weeks ago. A certain *tzaddik* who helps young boys cope, that one of the boys called him and told him he had tried 36 times to get through without luck, since the issue was not so pressing. He told Hashem that if the Rav answers now, then he knew that HaKadosh Baruch Hu did not want him to buy a new cellphone, and he accepted upon himself to let it go, and now he said that he would let it go...

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This Shabbos was designated by our Rabbis as a 'Shabbos Hischazkus' against the pitfalls of technology. Therefore, we chose to present a discourse from our Rav on the weekly Parsha together with the stringency of technology.



הרחק מן הכיעור ומן הדומה לו

Distance from the ugliness and anything similar to it

ויאמר ה' אל משה בא אל פרעה כי אני הכבדתי את לבו ואת לב עבדיו למען שתי אתני אלה בקרבו: (י:א)

Hashem said to Moshe, "Come to Pharaoh, for I have made his heart and the heart of his servants stubborn so that I shall place these signs of Mine in his midst. (10:1)

We must be precise in the expression 'bo', as if one says to a friend, 'Come, let us go together'. We can say that HaKadosh Baruch Hu told Moshe that He would accompany him when he went to Pharaoh, and He would be standing with him when he stood before Pharaoh.

The reason for this is that a person needs extra protection when he is in the environs of the wicked, for they can contaminate with the nonsense of their mouths *Rachmana litzlan*. Especially someone as wicked as Pharaoh of whom the Torah previously testified (1:8), 'לא ידע את יוסף' – that 'he did not know Yosef', that is, the holy character of Yosef, as he was very steeped in the uncleanness of Egypt. As we see from the very first time Moshe appeared before him, he already his words of refusal, and the matter repeated itself, (5:2) 'מי ה' אשר לא ידעתי את השם' – 'Who is Hashem that I should listen to His voice?' And again 'לא ידעתי את השם' – 'I do not know Hashem'. Although we already knew that he did not want to send Israel out, he added the words 'וגם את ישראל לא אשלח' – 'nor will I send out Israel'. He did this to cool the pure *emunah* of Moshe Rabeinu. When he person first hears refusal, he is gripped by fear and trembling, it is self-understood that no one wants to put up with the bitter reality that there are infidels in the world. However, since he refused three times, there was now a *chazakah* for his words, and this would *challah* affirm that his mind was made up.

All this despite the man standing opposite was none other than Moshe Rabeinu, the Father of the Prophets. Still, Moshe did not have the self-confidence to withstand that wicked man and not be affected, he Needed HaKadosh Baruch Hu to accompany him and protect him from the evil of that wicked man.

Even though this command after Pharaoh had already endured seven horrendous plagues, and he admitted to himself that his refusal was mainly nonsense. Moshe also understood that he was seeing Pharaoh's downfall and nothingness since he was not able to outsmart the plagues. Several times he had foregone his honor because he was forced to call Moshe to ask him to pray on his behalf. Still, it was dangerous for Moshe to stand in the environs of the wicked.

If we are talking this way about Moshe, how much more so regarding ordinary people like us who put ourselves in danger by associating with the wicked. Therefore, one who guards his soul distances himself from them, yet he still might be affected by the wicked one. It seems to him that the wicked one will not be able to influence him, he will not be smart enough to get close to him. The 'kosher' person does not recognize the inner nature of the wicked. He is not aware of the depth or the reach of his wickedness. Only when he comes near and he can hear his nonsense that affects the soul, then he can understand the need to distance from him. However, bit by bit he adds to his pain, for he realizes that it is already too late and the wicked one has already succeeded in giving him a dose of his poison *Rachmana litzlan*.

Nowadays, we clearly see the fortified wall that separates those who keep the Torah and the many people who have discarded the yoke of Torah and mitzvos *Rachmana litzlan*. However, when the *yetzer* saw that the G-d fearing person has strengthened himself to keep away from the evil of the wicked, it does not give up the battle. In these later generation it found a new tactic, a way to creep through the cracks into the camp. It does this through technology. All the ugly utilities of the internet are at its disposal. The internet is the tool of the sly wicked one who succeeds in disguising his poison, and in this way, to our dismay, it succeeds in instilling the corrupt spirit of the secular street even among those kosher *Bnei Yisrael*. Many of our innocent brothers have sought out their needs and livelihood in this environment and have been harshly burned by its glowing coals. It is not a secret that many *neshamos* have been burned and have forsaken the House of Israel as a result of using this destructive tool.

This is the wicked one from whom we must distance ourselves in our day! We must know that the *yetzer* changes its tactics from time to time, which becomes clear at the end of his tricks. If in the past we were not so aware of the venom in the mouths of the wicked, he was still able to test us through being close in proximity of the wicked themselves. However, over time the later generations became aware of this poison and its result. Those that instilled the word of Hashem began to gather within their camps. The *yetzer* found a new tactic how to contaminate the kosher *neshamos*, and that tactic is etched like a tattoo on the minds of Israel *Rachmana litzlan*.

Even the allure of the internet changes from time to time. While we are still reeling from the destruction caused by a new computer, we hear of another evil encrustation that has come about, which is also based on the cursed internet. This is also a part of the tricks of the *yetzer* that changes tactics, and since it has exposed the disgrace of the internet, and kosher Jews warn each other to distance from it, it tries new different tactics which have the person has not yet realized has poison hidden within it.

Since this is so, it is incumbent on us to be very careful to distance from any new device that has not yet been checked out by the guards of the camp who can determine the purpose of the device. Even one whose livelihood depends on using the internet must arrange it so that the sites he does not need are blocked.

We find that the Mishkan had to be built from 'עצי שיטים עומדים' – 'standing shittim wood' (Shemos 26:15) and Rashi there brings down that the beams had to be standing upright, and this hints to the personal Mishkan that a person must build within his soul. It relies on and stands on the condition there is a strong fence around it. These are the fences and barriers that surround the soul and protect it from the ugly. If the person is careless with these necessary fences, it is as if he is desecrating the Mishkan, and he is causing the Shechina to depart from Israel. However, when one strengthens the fences and barriers he adds sanctity to his soul, and he merits that the Shechina resides in his courtyard.

Hashem Yisbarach should place understanding in the hearts of those who err, to remove the tattoo from the wall of holiness, and we should merit to see the abundance of holy light in the Land, and the Land should be filled with the awareness of Hashem, speedily in our day, amein.