

טוב הקהילה

בס"ד

יו"לע"י קהילת שנת בנית ד'

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טיב המערכת

לא כן נתן לך ה' – Not so has Hashem given for you

A little boy is standing on a chair in the kitchen, he checks all around and makes sure no one is watching. He stretches out his hand to the cabinet where the candy is, but then he remembers that his parents do not let him take candy by himself without permission. He draws his hand back, but the desire to eat candy stays with him so he again stretches out his hand to the desired candy, but then he again remembers that he is not allowed to take candy from the cabinet without permission, and again he stretches out his hand. In the end, he overcame his desire, and he did not take candy from the cabinet. Meanwhile, his mother stood and observed from a distance the whole time, and when she saw he overcame his desire and did not take the candy, she complimented him for overcoming his desire, and she gave him the candy he so desired, an even gave him a prize for his fortitude.

The holy Torah warns us (18:9) 'לא תלמד לעשות כותעבות הגויים – Do not learn to act according to the abominations of those nations', rather (18:13) 'תמים תהיה עם ה' אלקיך' – 'you shall be wholehearted with Hashem, your G-d', and why? כי 'גויים האלה... אל מעוננים ואל קוסמים ישמעו ואתה לא כן נתן לך' – 'For these nations... listen to astrologers and diviners, but as for you, not so has Hashem given for you' (18:14). Rashi explains, 'Not so has HaKadosh Baruch Hu given for you to listen to astrologers and diviners, for, see now, He has rested His Divine Presence [the *Shechina*] upon the prophets and the *Urim VeTumim*'. Rashi's intent is that a Jew is not allowed to go to astrologers and diviners, since Israel has the *Urim VeTumim* and the prophets, they stand against the powers of impurity. Why does a Jew have to seek by the *goyim* and powers of impurity when he has everything in purity [*kedusha*]? There is a famous Gemara (Chulin 109b) that for everything that the Creator prohibited for us, He gave us something corresponding that is permitted, for זה לעומת זה 'G-d made the one as well as the other' (Koheles 7:14)

We are all little children of HaKadosh Baruch Hu, and He sees us at all times. He even created our challenges and He gave them to us. He looks at us to see if we withstand the challenges, and when a Jew withstands the challenge and overcomes his craving, HaKadosh Baruch Hu sees him and gives what he wants permissively, for 'G-d made the one as well as the other'. Additionally, He adds reward to him for overcoming his desire, for HaKadosh Baruch Hu said, 'No one who listens to Me loses out'.

- Tiv HaTorah - Shoftim

טיב ההשגחה

'Father remains Father' – 'אבא נשאר אבא'

The story is told of Rebbe Hershele of Spinka who was a great Admor abroad, when he danced with the Sefer Torah in the *hakafos* on Simchas Torah. In the middle of *hakafos*, the Rebbe heard a large commotion that developed in the shul. He turned his head towards the noise and saw that there was indeed a quarrel at the side of the Bais HaMedrash. On the spot, the Rebbe handed the Sefer Torah to another man who would continue to dance with the Sefer Torah and headed to the area of the quarrel.

In the midst of the fight he saw his son who was a young man fighting with an older man, each of them was trying to shout above the other one while all the men surrounding them were fanning the flames, all of them siding with the older man. The Rebbe intervened on behalf of his young son and told the old man that if he could not stop, he should leave the Bais HaMedrash.

Afterwards, when everything calmed down and the old man was appeased and everything returned to peace, they turned to the Rebbe to teach them how it happened that the Rebbe sided with his son in such an extreme way and did not even try to reconcile them at the time? The Rebbe replied, "I heard the sound of a quarrel, I looked and realized that everyone had come out against my son, and no one tried to protect him and understand what was in his heart. At that moment, I decided to take off the mantle of the rabbinate! I removed the title of Admor from me, I set the *hakafos* on the side, and I approached my son to be his father! In a situation like this when everyone was attacking him, I felt that the child should know that he has a father who supports him and will be his father, no matter what!!!"

[Of course, afterwards he was treated properly.]

Our teacher, Rav Gamliel, told the story and said that he once received testimony from a man whose son had completely gone off the *derech* and left everything. The same man when he heard the story was very moved and turned to his son and said, "My son, I want you to know one thing. I want you to know and take to your heart well, no matter where you are or what situation you will be in, always remember that in any situation you may find yourself, I am your father!!! I was your father when you were a baby, and as a child, and I will always be your father!!!"

It was not long before the boy returned with wholehearted Teshuva, and he later said that this sentence had transformed him.

How appropriate is this story for the month of Elul! Hashem, Who is the King of all kings is our Father! And if we want, then He is able to act as an uncle for us, the main thing is that we get close to him, and earn a good writing and seal [*kesivah v'chasimah tovah*].

דע את האויב!
Know the enemy!

טיב הפרשה

כי תצא למלחמה על איבך וראית סוס ורכב עם רב ממך לא תירא מהם כי ה' אלקיך עמך המעלך מארץ מצרים: והיה כקרבתכם אל המלחמה ונגש הכהן ודבר אל העם: ואמר עליהם שהע ישראל אתם קרבים היום למלחמה על איביכם אל ירך לבבכם אל תיראו ואל תחפזו ואל תערצו מפניהם: (כ:א-ג)

When you go out to battle against your enemy, and you see horse and chariot, a people more numerous than you, you should not fear them, for Hashem, your G-d, is with you, Who brought you up from the land of Egypt. It shall be that when you draw near to the war, the Kohen shall approach and he should speak to the people. And he shall say to them, "Hear, O Israel, today you are coming near to the battle against your enemies; let your heart not be faint; do not be afraid, do not panic, and do not break down before them. (20:1-3)

Rashi explains: 'Let your heart not be faint; do not be afraid, do not panic, and do not break down. There are four prohibitions that correspond to four things that the kings of the nations do. They make their shields collide in order to make them bang against the other in order to produce a sound so those who oppose them would panic and flee. They have their horses stamp the ground and make them neigh to make the sound of the beating of their horses' hooves heard. They shout with their voices. They blow trumpets and other sound-producing devices.'

Our Torah is eternal, and we are forced to say that even the things that do not apply today come to teach us things that are hinted at. Therefore, when we think about the Torah, it is incumbent on us to understand what the intent of these *posukim* is for us nowadays. When we come to these *posukim* we see that the Torah is benefiting us by letting us know that our enemies present themselves as mighty warriors in order to instill fear in us, the Torah comes to reveal to us that this is just a ploy. That is, they use several tricks to make us think they are mighty, and as Rashi mentions, they sound four types of noises to instill fear in those who oppose them in battle. However, the truth is that it is really nonsense. Therefore, know who the enemy is and do not be afraid and do not panic before them. Aside from what the Torah is teaching us that there is no validity to them, it also lets us know that in the future we will be victorious over them, since Hashem, our G-d, is with us, just as He took us out of Egypt, He will show us more wonders.

Since the Torah is eternal, we can learn from here how to do battle against the *yetzer* which even exists in our day, and as we see the *yetzer* uses the same ploys. It also tries to trick and represent the empty ones of Israel as if they are respected people in order to entice those who want to elevate in *avodas Hashem* that they should be like them. He turns to them and says, "See how so-and-so goes with a straight heart and everything is well and fine with them, they enjoy this world, and they will also enjoy the World to Come, since at the end of the day they pray three Tefillos every day, and they also give 'a penny' to *tzedakah*, and they do other mitzvos and are even meticulous about them. Look how they chase after a beautiful esrog, and how they are helped from heaven to attain their requests, until everyone is amazed by the wonderful esrog they have purchased. If so, then you should also do as they do, and you will also earn both tables. Leave the walls of the yeshiva, go out to the markets and streets, go into business, and it will be enough for you to be like them and go to a *shiu* between Mincha and Maariv, and you will be rich." This trick is exactly like the tricks of the foreign nations. Just as they represent themselves as mighty warriors to weaken the minds of Israel and force to turn back, so does the *yetzer* represent the righteousness of its ways to weaken the minds of those who battle against it and want to be complete in their *avodah*.

Its hope is that they will abandon their objective once it demonstrates to them that the bitterness of their lives is for nothing. However, we must compare 'the battle of the nations' to 'the battle of the *yetzer*' and know that just as the Torah informs us that the tricks of the nations are only an illusion and we have nothing to worry about, so too are the tricks of the *yetzer*. We must know that the *yetzer* testifies falsely within us, and those people that the *yetzer* presents as upstanding even if it is right by the low bar it has set for them, this is not a reason to admire them. Even now we must fulfill the *posuk* 'let your heart not be faint' and continue in our lowliness and our effort to elevate in levels of *avodah*.

We must be brazen against our *yetzer* and castigate the 'good ones' of his. We must know this, that in order for a person to be truly upright it is incumbent on him to dwell with the Torah and the *avodah*, and any going out to the street of the city brings one to serious obstacles. This is so even if the 'empty ones' of Israel are filled with mitzvos, this does not prove that he really fears Hashem...

The *yetzer* already tried the same trick with our forefather Yaakov. It also tried to entice him to be a '*tzaddik*' like Eisav, as anyone who looks at the generations of Yaakov and Eisav can see. At first, the Torah testifies (Bereishis 25:27) that when the lads grew up Eisav was 'a man who knows trapping' and Yaakov was 'a wholesome man abiding in tents'. The meaning is obvious, Yaakov was secluded in the tent of Torah where he served his Creator through Torah and *avodah*. Eisav wasted his days in the forests hunting and enjoying the meat. However, in actuality we see that it was specifically Eisav who Yitzchak loved as it says (25:28) 'ויאהב יצחק את עשיו כי ציד בפיו' – 'Yitzchak loved Eisav for trapping was in his mouth'.

The reality is this caused Yaakov a great challenge, and he began to think that perhaps HaKadosh Baruch Hu did not want his *avodah*, and perhaps it was incumbent on him to follow after Eisav and act like him? The *Tzaddik's* face lit up... as we see in the holy *sefer* 'Ohr HaChaim' on the *posuk* (25:29) 'ויזד יעקב נזיד' – 'and Yaakov boiled a stew', that the reason Yaakov changed his way and was cooking food was because of the doubt that was aroused in him when he saw Yitzchak's face light up towards Eisav. Therefore, he also wanted to cook delicacies for his father, perhaps this really is the way to reach a person.

This happened two years after they grew up and each one went his own way, [when the *posuk* says they grew up, it means they turned 13, and when Yaakov cooked was when Avraham died and they were 15]. However, we see that once HaKadosh Baruch Hu saw Yaakov's doubts, He wanted to enlighten the way for him, and immediately on that very same day He revealed to him the true Eisav. As he was cooking, Eisav showed up and asked of Yaakov (25:30) 'הלעיטני נא מן האדום האדום הזה' – 'Pour into me now some of this very red stuff', and as Rashi explains Eisav was saying, 'I will open my mouth and pour a lot into it'... Yaakov understood from this that he was a bad influence and he would not follow him to deceive Yitzchak, and so he strengthened his way for the next 48 years. [When they were 63 Yitzchak wanted to bless Eisav, and after the ruse, Yitzchak understood who was the true *tzaddik*.]

This is the meaning of the next *posuk* 'therefore he called him Edom', and why did they have to add a name to him? Also, why did they name him for something he said? Look carefully at the tense, 'he called him Edom', the one who saw him for what he was, this was Yaakov, who knew that years later the *yetzer* would entice him to follow his ways, so he made a sign to remember that day when the voice of Eisav was revealed... we must act the same way. We must know the obstacles of the *yetzer*, and not to follow them.