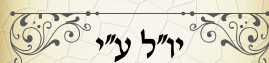


Parashas  
Mishpatim

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כ"ד שבט תשפ"ה  
5785



קהילת שבתי בבית ד'  
בנשיאות מורנו ורבנו הרה"צ  
רבי גמליאל הכהן  
רבינוביץ שליט"א

# טיב הקהילה

English edition

באנגלית



## טיב המערכת

כי הרס תהרסם

### You Shall Demolish Them

This time, unlike our usual practice, we will begin the *dvar Torah* from its second part, from its connection to our Torah portion. Hashem tells *Bnei Yisrael* that when they arrive in the land and encounter *לֹא תִשְׁתַּחֲוּהוּ*... לא תשתחוהו... לא תעבדם ולא תעשה כמעשיבם' 'the Amorite, the Hittite, the Perizzite, the Canaanite, the Hivite, and the Jebusite... you shall not bow down to their gods, nor serve them, nor act according to their ways.' (23:23-24) But it is not enough merely to refrain from worshipping them; rather, 'כי הרס תהרסם ושבֵר תשבֵר מצבותיהם' - 'you shall utterly demolish them and break their pillars to pieces.' And if they do so, the Torah promises us: 'ועבדתם את ה' אלוקיכם וברך את לחמך ואת מימך והסירותי מחלה מקרבך' - 'You shall serve Hashem, your G-d, and He will bless your bread and your water, and I will remove illness from your midst.' In other words, the promise is conditional—if Israel not only refrains from idol worship but also destroys their gods and shatters their monuments, then HaKadosh Baruch Hu will grant us a special blessing: that Israel will not have to struggle for sustenance, and He will also protect them from all illness.

In our generation, there are people who advocate the approach of 'live and let live,' or as some distort the *posuk* (Chabakuk 2:4) 'צדיק באמונתו יחיה' - 'The righteous shall live by his faith' and say, 'Each person shall live by his own faith.' In other words, do what is comfortable for you and do not interfere with what others do. However, this is not correct, because, as is well known, the people of Israel are all one— 'כאיש אחד בלב' - 'as one man with one heart.' If one person does something improper, it negatively affects everyone. And, of course, the opposite is also true—when a Jew performs a good deed, it has a positive influence on the collective, as 'כל ישראל ערבים זה לזה' - 'All of Israel are responsible for one another.' But what exactly is this referring to?

שבת טהרנו

### Shabbos of our Purity

This Shabbos, the last of the days of *Shovavim*, has been designated as "*Shabbos Taharenu*", a time dedicated to strengthening and reinforcing our commitment to guarding ourselves and purifying ourselves from the harms of technology— the idolatry of our times. Just as idol worship is not permitted "for the sake of livelihood," so too, these destructive and unrestrained devices are not permitted even "for the sake of livelihood." Especially since, as we have seen, the Torah promises that one who does not merely refrain from idol worship but actively destroys it will have an easy livelihood. Certainly, then, for the sake of livelihood, it is preferable not to use any tool or device that does not have the approval of the sages. One who believes and disconnects will surely merit the blessing of sustenance, as well as the blessing of "I will remove illness from your midst."

- Tiv HaTorah - Mishpatim

## טיב הפרשה

חומרת צער בעלי חיים

### The Severity of Causing Pain to Animals

...

והשביעת תשמטנה ונטשתה ואכלו אֲבוֹנֵי עֵמָק  
ויתרם תאכל חֵית הַשָּׂדֶה כִּן תַּעֲשֶׂה לְכַרְמְךָ לְיִתְדֶךָ:  
(בג:יא)

**And in the seventh year, you shall let it go and leave it alone, and the destitute of your people shall eat, and their remnant the beast of the field shall eat, so shall you do to your vineyard and to your olive grove. (23:11)**

In this passage, the Torah assigns value to the lives of animals and instructs us to be considerate of them. Just as there is a mitzvah to give to the poor, so too, there is a mitzvah of giving to animals. As long as they have not yet received their portion, a person is forbidden to gather what remains in his field for himself.

This virtue is not widely known among the masses, and we often fail to pay attention to the needs and suffering of animals. However, we must understand that according to the Torah's perspective, we are obligated to consider them and be careful not to cause them suffering.

Chazal (Bava Metzia 85a) tell us about the severe afflictions of Rebbe Yehuda HaNasi, who suffered for thirteen years. For half of that period, he endured pain from a stone lodged in his intestines, and for the other half, he suffered from a severe oral disease. His afflictions were unbearable, and when he would go to relieve himself, he would cry out in agony. To prevent others from hearing his cries, Rebbe's horsekeeper would feed his animals at the same time that Rebbe relieved himself. Rebbe owned countless horses, and

when they were fed, their sounds could be heard for three *miles*. The horsekeeper hoped that this noise would drown out Rebbe's cries, but in reality, his screams intensified and could be heard even by those at sea. The Gemara recounts that all of Rebbe Yehuda HaNasi's suffering came as a result of *tzar ba'alei chayim* (the suffering of animals). This is how it happened: There was a young calf being led to slaughter. Refusing to go, it hid itself under Rebbe Yehuda HaNasi's cloak. When Rebbe noticed it and understood its intention, he instructed it to accept its fate and surrender itself to slaughter, saying, "For this you were created." When this was heard in Heaven, they were astonished at how he disregarded the suffering of an animal. Because of this wrongdoing, he was punished with severe afflictions.

Just as his suffering came due to *tzar ba'alei chayim*, so too did his healing come through compassion for animals. One day, Rebbe saw his maid sweeping the house and chasing away two young weasels. He told her, 'ורחמי על כל מעשיו' - 'His mercy is upon all His creations' (Psalms 145:9). Upon hearing this, the Heavenly Court declared, "Since he has shown mercy to animals, we shall have mercy on him as well," and his suffering ceased.

From this story, we see how careful one must be regarding the suffering of animals. Rebbe Yehuda HaNasi did not physically harm the calf—he merely instructed it to accept its destined purpose—yet even so, he was subjected to bitter and severe suffering. [And although there was also an element of his own desire for afflictions, as mentioned in the Gemara, we still see that the justification for his suffering was this seemingly minor transgression, which led to his intense punishment.]

We must understand that *halacha* dictates that a person is forbidden to eat before feeding the animals under his care. Only after ensuring their needs are met, may he set his table and nourish himself. This means that, to some extent, the Torah is

even more stringent regarding the suffering of animals than that of humans. Even if a person is hungry and his hunger causes him distress, he is not permitted to ease his own suffering until he has addressed the suffering of the animals that depend on him.

My father, my teacher, was exceedingly careful about this matter. At times, he would even lose sleep in order to alleviate the suffering of a cat he noticed in distress. Not only that, but he also saw it as his duty to provide for the needs of animals. He would place jugs of water in specific locations to quench the thirst of stray cats in the streets. His reasoning was that while we are not obligated to feed them—since they can usually find food in the garbage—water is not available to them in the trash, and therefore, it is proper for us to provide them with drinking water.

It pains me deeply that in recent times, several towns in the country have installed deep garbage bins, preventing animals from accessing food from the trash. No one seems to take notice of the fact that this causes suffering to the animals and deprives them of sustenance. Those responsible for public welfare should pay attention and rectify this wrongdoing.

When I was a child, before modern cleaning products existed, lice were commonly found in the air, on beds, and on clothing. My father was extremely cautious and would warn us not to kill them. Instead, he would gently pick them up with his hands and throw them onto the ground, saying that they, too, are creations of Hashem Yisbarach, and we are forbidden to take their lives.

I heard from the renowned *chassid*, Rebbe Eliyahu Roth, who served in holiness alongside the holy Rebbe Shlemka of Zvill, that Rebbe Shlemka refused to be served by others. Anything he was capable of doing himself, he would not allow anyone else to do for him.

Rebbe Shlemka had a practice that

upon lying down in bed, he would study a specific *sefer*. One time, after getting into bed, he realized that the *sefer* was not beside him. He called his attendant, Rebbe Elya, and asked him to bring the *sefer*. Rebbe Elya was astonished, as he knew that Rebbe Shlemka avoided relying on others. He became concerned that perhaps Rebbe Shlemka was unwell and unable to get out of bed.

Sensing his attendant's confusion, Rebbe Shlemka showed him the reason: immediately upon getting into bed, a cat had sought shelter to sleep and had chosen to crawl under his blanket. Fearing that it had already fallen asleep, he refrained from getting up in order not to disturb it.

I also heard another story about this *tzaddik*: One time, in the middle of his sacred *Shabbos* table on Friday night, Rebbe Shlemka turned to his attendant and instructed him to go to the home of the *gabbai* of the *Beis Yaakov* shul and the *shtiblach* there. He was to ask the *gabbai* to unlock the door of one of the *shtiblach*, because a cat had hidden itself beneath the *Aron Kodesh*.

The cat, fearing to come out while people were still present, had waited until all the congregants had left, hoping to exit safely. However, when it finally attempted to leave, it was dismayed to find the door locked. Now it was trapped and in distress. Rebbe Shlemka, perceiving its suffering, requested that the door be opened so that the cat could go free.

When I once related this story, one of the listeners remarked to me that the fact that Rebbe Shlemka possessed *Ruach Hakodesh* (divine inspiration) was not the most astonishing part of the story. Rather, the truly remarkable thing was that at such an exalted moment—while the saintly *tzaddik* sat at his *Shabbos* meal, a meal considered to be Hashem's own banquet—he still concerned himself with the plight of an impure creature trapped in distress...

טוב לבטוח בה' מלבטוח בנדיבים  
**Better to trust in Hashem than to rely  
 on nobles**

A friend of mine frequently travels abroad, knocking on the doors of generous donors to raise funds for the institution he runs. He shared the following story with me: "I flew overseas to raise funds from benevolent donors, and on the plane, I was fortunate to sit next to a great Torah scholar. He inquired about my well-being and the purpose of my trip. I told him that I have an institution and that I raise funds to give Jews the merit of partnering in this mitzvah.

The great man said to me: 'If you listen to me, you will see a special blessing in your fundraising efforts.' He then instructed me: 'When you approach a wealthy person to ask for his support, do not speak to him until you first envision in your mind that you are standing before the holy *Shechina*. Ask HaKadosh Baruch Hu to help you. The wealthy person will hear what you need, but in your heart and thoughts, you should be speaking to the Creator Yisbarach with the same words you use when addressing the person before you!' I listened attentively and thanked him for the advice.

At the first address I visited, I followed the Rav's guidance, and indeed, I saw success beyond the natural order. I was overjoyed and continued using this method. Within just a few meetings, I raised far more than I had expected from the entire trip combined, and I thanked Hashem for the great salvation brought about by this advice.

After much travel and effort, I arrived at the home of a dear friend who always hosts me, a close companion with whom I share a deep bond. After enjoying his hospitality, as I did every year, I turned to him with my usual request for a donation. He reached into his pocket, pulled out a five-dollar bill, handed it to me, and casually bid me farewell. At first, I thought he was joking, but I soon realized that this was his entire donation for the year.

Immediately, I grasped my head in realization—unlike with the other donors, when speaking to my friend, I had felt comfortable enough to address him directly, as if I no longer needed the Creator's assistance. I had relied on my own ability rather than seeking divine help!

I rejoiced in this profound lesson and learned an essential principle for life! In His divine providence, HaKadosh Baruch Hu arranged for my salvation through the esteemed Rav who sat beside me on the plane and reinforced the message with my friend's five-dollar donation. This experience taught me that even when I speak to someone with whom I feel at ease, I must always remember to truly turn to the Creator Yisbarach alone for help!"

**Whoever Prepares on  
 Shabbos Eve Will Eat on  
 Shabbos !"**

**The Power of Shabbos  
 During Shovavim**

וַיִּשָּׁן כְּבוֹד ה' עַל הַר סִינַי וַיִּכְסֶהוּ  
 הָעָנָן שֵׁשֶׁת יָמִים וַיִּקְרָא אֶל מֹשֶׁה  
 בַּיּוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי מִתּוֹךְ הָעָנָן (כד:טז)

*And the glory of Hashem rested upon Mount Sinai, and the cloud covered it for six days; and on the seventh day, He called to Moshe from within the cloud." (24:16)*

Rashi comments: *And He called to Moshe on the seventh day — "To say The Ten Commandments... And some say that the cloud covered Moshe for a six-day period after the Ten Commandments were given, and these [six days] marked the beginning of the forty days that Moshe ascended to receive the Tablets. This teaches that anyone entering the camp of the Shechinah requires separation for six days."*

According to this interpretation (which concurs with the view of Rabbi Yossi HaGalili and Resh Lakish in Yoma 3b-4a—see there), the *pasuk* teaches us that the cloud covered Mount Sinai for six days for the sake of Moshe. Because anyone entering an area of sanctity must seclude himself for six days in preparation.

From here, we learn the concept of preparation and separation before entering a place or time of holiness. Just as anyone entering the *Beis Hamikdash*—considered the camp of the *Shechinah*—must purify and sanctify themselves for six days, so too, preparation is required before approaching holiness.

It is possible that this also alludes to *Shabbos Kodesh*, which is called *Yoma D'Neshmata* (the day of the soul) (Zohar 2:205b). The Shabbos is akin to the *Beis Hamikdash* in the dimension of time, as known from the concept of "*Olam, Shanah, Nefesh*" (World, Year, Soul). Just as the *Beis Hamikdash* is the holiest place in the world, so too, the Shabbos is the holiest day of the week.

The *pasuk* hints to us the proper way to draw close to the sanctity of Shabbos: one attains the supreme holiness of Shabbos through separation during the six preceding weekdays. Without preparation and withdrawal from mundane matters throughout the six days of work, one cannot properly sanctify the Shabbos. The Shabbos is the soul and life force of the entire week.

For this reason, it was instituted to recite at the conclusion of *Shacharis* each day the *Shir Shel Yom* (Psalm of the Day),



which begins with the declaration, “Today is the first/second/etc. day towards the Shabbos,” so as to remind and arouse a person to prepare throughout the week for the arrival of the Shabbos Queen. By doing so, one fulfills the mitzvah (*Shemos* 20:8), זָכוֹר אֶת יוֹם הַשַּׁבָּת לְקַדְּשׁוֹ - *Remember the Shabbos day to sanctify it*, for as explained by the Ramban, we should think of the Shabbos each day of the week in order to sanctify it, as it says (*Yeshayah* 58:13), *And you shall call the Shabbos a delight, holy to Hashem and honored.*

Similarly, the Arizal, in *Shaar HaKavanot* (beginning of *Drushei Seder Shabbos*, first *Drush* of *Vi’hi Noam*), teaches that one must intend each day to receive a certain measure of the holiness of Shabbos. He states explicitly: “Know that one must prepare oneself to receive the additional light of the Shabbos during the six weekdays. By doing so, one fulfills the words of the *pasuk*, *And you shall sanctify yourselves and be holy.* This is an important concept—to sanctify oneself during the weekdays with the holiness of the Shabbos, and this is its preparation, etc.”

This idea is hinted at in Rashi’s words: “This teaches that anyone entering the camp of the *Shechinah* requires separation for six days.” The intention is the tone should prepare himself during the six days of the week for the arrival of the holy Shabbos, when the *Shechinah* dwells among *Klal Yisrael*. Through this preparation, one will merit the sanctity of the Shabbos, fulfilling the words of the *pasuk*, *And He called to Moshe on the seventh day.*

This concept is also reflected in the words of *Chazal* in *Avodah Zarah* 3a: “They said before Him: ‘Master of the Universe, give us the Torah from the beginning and we will observe it.’ He replied, ‘Fools of the world! Whoever prepares on the eve of the Shabbos will eat on the Shabbos; but whoever did not prepare on the eve of the Shabbos—what will he eat on the Shabbos?’” See there for further discussion.

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### **A Shabbos with Rav Yisrael Salanter**

During one of his travels, the great Rav Yisrael Salanter, the father of the *Mussar* movement, arrived at a Jewish town

before *Shabbos Kodesh* to inspire the people to repentance and refinement of character. The townspeople, thrilled by his visit, eagerly invited him to stay in their homes. Ultimately, he accepted the invitation of one of his students, a wealthy and esteemed man, who was honored to host the great sage.

Rav Yisrael arrived several days before the Shabbos, and on Friday afternoon, he inquired about the town’s Shabbos customs, including *davening* times and communal traditions. His host described the practices at the grand synagogue, emphasizing their custom of prolonging the Shabbos meal, as many guests joined in, engaging in extensive Torah discussions and Shabbos songs.

Hearing this, Rav Yisrael paused and his expression became serious. He then made an unusual request of his host: “I have a favor to ask of you, and that is to change the order of the great and sacred meal of Shabbos. Instead of interspersing the meal with Torah discussions and songs, I request that all courses be served immediately, one after the other, without interruption. Only after all the food has been served should the singing (*zemiros*) and Torah discussions begin.”

The wealthy host was surprised at this peculiar request but, out of reverence for his teacher, agreed to adjust the usual order of the meal.

That Friday night, the Shabbos meal proceeded exactly as Rav Yisrael had requested. The guests were somewhat puzzled by the uninterrupted service of food, but the host reassured them that they would sing and study as usual after eating.

As the meal progressed, a maid approached the door and requested to speak with the revered rabbi. Rav Yisrael greeted her with a warm, *Gut Shabbos* (have a good Shabbos). Suddenly, she burst into tears, overwhelmed with gratitude.

“I don’t know how to thank the Rav for the great kindness he has done for me this evening,” she said emotionally.

She explained that she was a widow who had been working in the wealthy man’s household for years. Every Shabbos, the lengthy meal forced her to stay late at her employer’s home, and by the time

she returned home, her young orphaned children had already eaten alone and gone to bed. It pained her deeply that her children, having lost their father, were also deprived of a Shabbos meal with their mother.

“But tonight, because the food was served early, I was able to finish my duties much sooner. For the first time in years, I will return home early enough to sit and celebrate *Shabbos Kodesh* with my children!”

Overcome with emotion, she expressed her heartfelt thanks, praying that the rabbi would be blessed with joy and success in all his holy endeavors.

Rav Yisrael was deeply moved by her words. He later turned to his wealthy student and revealed to the secret behind his request—he had indeed intended it all along. During his brief stay before Shabbos, he had heard from the household members about the devoted service of the widow working as a maid. When he later learned of the family’s custom to prolong the Shabbos meal, it immediately occurred to him that this widow must be suffering due to the delay, as her duties required her to remain until the end of the meal. Therefore, from the outset, he sought to change the order of the meal so that she could be freed earlier to return home.

It became evident that the sage had displayed wisdom even greater than that of a prophet—his assumption had precisely aligned with the needs of the widow and her orphaned children. In doing so, he merited the fulfillment of the great mitzvah (*Iyov* 29:13), וְלֵב אֵלְמִנָּה אֲרַנֵּן - *I brought joy to the heart of the widow*, bringing comfort and happiness to the downtrodden orphans.

Upon hearing this, the wealthy host was deeply shaken. It had never occurred to him that the lengthy Shabbos meal was causing such distress to the maid. Right then and there, he declared in the presence of his household and all the guests at his table that from that Shabbos onward, the new order instituted by the righteous rav would be permanently upheld in his home: from the beginning of the meal, all courses would be served in honor of Shabbos, and only after everyone had eaten their fill would they proceed with the *zemiros* and Torah discussions.

In doing so, the host merited to fulfill the

explicit mitzvah found in our Torah portion, *Parashat Mishpatim* (*Shemos* 22:21-22): כָּל אֶלְמָנָה וְיָתוּם לֹא תַעֲבֹדוּ... אִם עֲבַדְתֶּם אֹתוֹ כִּי אִם צָעֵק יִצְעַק אֵלַי שְׁמַע - אֲשַׁמְעֶנּוּ צַעֲקוֹתָם - *You shall not afflict any widow or orphan. If you do afflict them, and they cry out to Me, I will surely hear their cry.*

And he thereby earned the great blessing promised by the Torah for this noble mitzvah (*Devarim* 14:29): וְהָגַר וְהַיְתוּם וְהָאֶלְמָנָה אֲשֶׁר בְּשַׁעְרֵיךָ וְאֶכְלוּ וְשָׂבְעוּ לִמְעַן יְבָרְכֶךָ ה' אֱלֹהֶיךָ בְּכֹל מַעֲשֵׂה יְדְךָ - אֲשֶׁר תַּעֲשֶׂה - *And the orphan and the widow within your gates shall eat and be satisfied, so that Hashem your God may bless you in all the work of your hands that you do.*

### **The Importance of Studying Mussar**

Regarding this story, Rabbi Yisrael Salanter would often say that it is yet another example of why it is crucial to study and teach the teachings of *mussar* (ethical refinement). Without engaging in the study of personal development and character improvement, one does not even realize the finer points of obligations *bein adam le-chaveiro* (between man and his fellow).

This story exemplifies such an instance: the wealthy host had never even considered how much the maid suffered from the late Shabbos meal. One who studies *mussar*, however, works on refining every aspect of their character, becoming sensitive to the needs of others.

Similarly, I once heard from my esteemed father, Rabbi Levi HaKohen Rabinovitch *zt"l*, author of *Ma'adanei HaShulchan* (who passed away on 2 Adar 5775), that the great Chafetz Chaim *zt"l* once hosted guests for a Shabbos meal. Upon entering his home, he immediately made *Kiddush* so that his hungry guests could begin eating immediately. Only afterward, during the meal, did he recite *Shalom Aleichem*, *Ribon HaOlamim*, and *Eishet Chayil*.

The Chafetz Chaim explained his practice: "The angels can wait a little, but hungry guests find it difficult to wait."

A wise person takes these lessons to heart—always thinking about and considering the needs, well-being,

and joy of their fellow Jews, ensuring blessings and kindness for them.



### **How to Greet on Shabbos**

It is a sacred Jewish custom not to greet each other on Shabbos night with *A Gutten Nacht* (Good Night) as on other nights of the week, nor on Shabbos morning with *A Gutten Morgen* (Good Morning). Instead, throughout all the hours of Shabbos, the proper greeting is *Shabbat Shalom* or *Gut Shabbos* (Good Shabbos).

This practice has a pure source in Ba'er Heitev (*Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chaim* 267:2), quoting the Shelah HaKadosh (*Maseches Shabbos, Ner Mitzvah*, end of section 61), who writes: "I have received a tradition that when a person visits his friend on Shabbos, he should not greet him as he would on a weekday, such as by saying "Good Morning." Instead, he should say *Shabbat Shalom* or *Gut Shabbos*, thereby fulfilling the mitzvah (*Shemos* 20:8), זְכוֹר אֶת יוֹם הַשַּׁבָּת לְקַדְּשׁוֹ - *Remember the Shabbos day to sanctify it.*

A remarkable story illustrating this is found in the holy *sefer* *Ramasayim Tzofim* (Chapter 2, in the section on what I heard from the holy mouth of the saintly Rav Shlomo Leib of Lentshna, end of section 23):

Once, the holy Rav Yitzchak of Vorki *zt"l* traveled for *Shabbos* to visit the righteous Rav Shlomo Leib of Lentshna *ztz"l*.

On Shabbos night, the Rebbe of Lentshna wanted to go to Rav Yitzchak's lodging to spend time together in love and friendship. However, when Rav Yitzchak of Vorki heard that the tzaddik wished to visit him, he quickly rushed ahead and arrived first at the Rebbe's house, surprising him with great joy and greeting him loudly with, *Shabbos Tovah!*

Rav Shlomo Leib of Lentshna was delighted to see him, for they had been dear friends for many years. When he heard the intensity and heartfelt warmth of the greeting, *Shabbos Tovah!* he smiled and asked, "Do you know, my beloved friend, why the Shelah HaKadosh ruled that Jews

should not say 'Good Night' on Shabbos night, as they do on other nights?"

Rav Yitzchak of Vorki remained silent, sensing that his friend had a profound answer.

Rav Shlomo Leib then spoke in holiness: "This custom has a deep mystical meaning. Aside from the simple reason given by the Shelah—that it fulfills the mitzvah of remembering Shabbos—there are also profound esoteric reasons in the secrets of Torah.

"One who understands the wisdom of kabbalah knows well that *Shabbos Kodesh* is entirely illuminated with pleasant and bright light. Shabbos night is fundamentally different from all other nights of the week.

"On regular weekdays, nightfall brings darkness upon the world—both physical darkness and spiritual concealment, as the forces of judgment hold sway. Therefore, it is appropriate to say, *A Gutten Nacht* (Good Night) to acknowledge the darkness.

"But on *Shabbos Kodesh*, the Shabbos itself shines and radiates from its arrival until its departure. Spiritual darkness holds no power on Shabbos at all! Therefore, it would be inappropriate to greet one another in a way that acknowledges darkness. Instead, we say *Gut Shabbos*—a greeting filled with the sanctity and light of Shabbos!"

Rav Yitzchak of Vorki was deeply moved by these words of holiness, spoken with fiery inspiration. The entire room was filled with light! He later declared: "It would be worth traveling a hundred *parsa'ot* (approx. 400 miles) just to hear such words of Torah!"

This concept is explicitly mentioned in the Zohar HaKadosh (*Parashas Yisro* 88b), particularly in the section on *Tikkunei Shabbos* recited during *seudah shelishis*. There, the Zohar elaborates on the difference between *Shabbos* and weekday nights, describing the immense light and joy of Shabbos. Because all judgments and harsh decrees of the week are nullified on *Shabbos*, there is no place for words associated with darkness.

Thus, the Jewish people maintain this beautiful custom of greeting one another with *Shabbat Shalom* or *Gut Shabbos* throughout the holy day.

## חובת הזהירות בגדרים וסייגים

### The obligation to be careful with fences and boundaries

וְכִי יִגֹּף שׁוֹר אִישׁ אֶת שׁוֹר רֵעֵהוּ וָמָת וּמָכְרוּ אֶת הַשׁוֹר הַחַי וְחָצוּ אֶת כֶּסְפוֹ וְגַם אֶת הַמֵּת יִחְצוּ: אוּ נֹדַע כִּי שׁוֹר  
נִגָּח הוּא מִתְמוּל שְׁלֹשָׁם וְלֹא יִשְׁמְרֵנוּ בְּעֵלָיו שְׁלָם וְשְׁלָם שׁוֹר תַּחַת הַשׁוֹר וְהַמֵּת יִהְיֶה לוֹ: (בא:לה-לו)

When a man's ox will push his fellow's ox which dies, they shall sell the living ox and divide its money, and the carcass, too, they shall divide. Or if it was known that it was a goring ox from yesterday and the day before yesterday, but its owner did not guard it, he shall surely pay an ox in place of the ox, and the dead body shall be him. (21:35-36)

חובת השמירה על הגדרים כשמירה על הגופי

החברה

#### The obligation to guard the fences that guard the fundamental commandments of the Torah

From the *posukim* before us, we see that the obligation to observe the boundaries and safeguards instituted solely to distance a person from sin is just as binding as the obligation to observe the fundamental commandments of the Torah. One who belittles these safeguards is considered as one who directly belittles the core prohibitions themselves, *Rachmana litzlan*.

Behold, the first *posuk* discusses the payment imposed on the owner of an "innocent ox" (*shor tam*) that killed another ox, which is "half-damages" (*chatzi nezek*), while the following *posuk* discusses the payment imposed on the owner of a "warned ox" (*shor mu'ad*), which is "full damages" (*nezek shalem*).

Now, one might ask: Why is the owner of the *tam* required to pay anything at all? After all, he had no knowledge that he owned a goring ox! However, the very fact that he owns an ox is already a reason for him to guard it carefully, as he must suspect that his ox might be prone to goring. And even if it has not yet demonstrated such behavior, he must be concerned that one day it may turn into a goring ox. For although habitual goring oxen are rare, he must worry that his ox might be among that small number, or that it may eventually join them in the future.

Nevertheless, the owner of the *tam* is only required to pay "half-damages" because, in practice, he was not explicitly warned to take extra precautions. The situation is different for the owner of the *mu'ad*, who already knows with certainty that his ox is prone



to goring, and he has also been officially warned about it ("and its owner has been warned" – *hu'ad bi'va'alav*). He was therefore *obligated* to exercise extra caution to prevent his ox from causing damage. Since he neglected these precautions, he is penalized *twice as much* and must pay "full damages."

Thus, we learn that negligence regarding safeguards and precautions is as severe as negligence regarding the transgression itself. Just as punishment is imposed for the transgression itself, so too is it imposed for failing to observe the necessary safeguards and precautions.

חמורים דברי סופרים מדברי תורה ובכלל זה גם דע"ש  
שבימינו

#### The words of the Rabbanim are stricter than the words of the Torah and included in this is even nowadays

Moreover, Chazal stated (Eruvin 21b): "My son! Be more careful with the words of the Rabbis than with the words of the Torah. For the words of the Torah contain positive and negative commandments, but one who transgresses the words of the Rabbis is liable to death."

This statement is astonishing, for there are many fundamental Torah laws whose violation does not incur the death penalty. Why, then, should the words of the Rabbis be considered more severe than those of the Torah? Some explain that the Written Torah represents the aspect of a "king," for its commandments are the decrees of the HaKadosh Baruch Hu. In contrast, the words of the Sages are merely safeguards and



fences designed to distance a person from sin, and they are akin to the “king’s guards,” who protect the king so that no harm befalls him.

Now, it is the way of the world that a king cannot punish or execute someone who violates his decrees without first bringing him to judgment, where all the details of the transgression are thoroughly examined. Only if it is determined that the offender is guilty beyond justification may the king issue his verdict. The situation is different, however, when it comes to the “king’s guards”—they are permitted to strike down and kill anyone who approaches the king suspiciously, as such a person is presumed to be an enemy seeking the king’s harm. In other words, although the king’s guards do not hold the same authority as the king himself, they are granted even greater power to eliminate the king’s enemies than the king himself possesses.

Accordingly, since the Chachmei Torah are in the category of “the king’s guards,” they are granted the authority to impose a death penalty upon those who transgress their words—even though the Torah itself, which represents the “king,” does not impose the death penalty for many transgressions.

Furthermore, we must understand that “the words of the Rabbis” do not refer only to the specific safeguards and decrees established by our holy Chazal in their time. Rather, any Chacham in his generation who establishes a fence to address a breach in observance—his enactment is also considered “the words of the Rabbis.” And regarding this, too, it was said that anyone who transgresses their words...

המחזיקים 'כלי משחית' אלו הם עוברים על דברי חכמים לכל הדיעות

**The ones who hold vessels of destruction are those who transgress the words of the Chachamim according to everyone**

Indeed, until recently, it was nearly unheard of for anyone among those who are devout in the service of Hashem to be classified as transgressors of the words of the Chachamim. After all, we are all careful to observe the safeguards and decrees established by our holy Sages, as well as the bans and ordinances instituted by the early and later authorities. Even the rulings of the great leaders of the most recent generations have been accepted throughout the Jewish world, and all are meticulous in adhering to them. True, there are matters subject to dispute,

and some follow the opinions of those who are lenient. However, such individuals cannot be classified as transgressors, for they ultimately rely on legitimate halachic authorities.

However, in recent times, such a phenomenon has indeed emerged. There now exist true “transgressors” who do not heed the words of the Chachamim—namely, those who possess **impure devices (kelim teme'im)**. For there is no great Torah authority in Israel who permits the possession of such devices. It is therefore impossible for those who are lenient to claim that they rely on a particular rabbi’s opinion. The conclusion is inescapable: they disregard entirely the authority of Chachmei Yisrael and thus fall under the category of one who “casts off the yoke” entirely!

שמירת הקדושה היא יסוד לכל התורה

**Guarding the sanctity is the foundation of the entire Torah**

Our holy Chazal (Berachos 12b) expounded on the **posuk** - ‘ולא תתורו אחרי לבבכם ואחרי עיניכם, **And you shall not stray after your hearts and after your eyes**’ (Bamidbar 15:39), explaining: “**After your hearts—this refers to heresy; after your eyes—this refers to immorality.**” The **posuk** concludes, ‘למען תזכרו ועשיתם את כל מצוותי והייתם, **So that you may remember and perform all My commandments and be holy to your G-d.**’ With these words, the Torah testifies that it is impossible to fully observe all the mitzvos properly and attain the status of “**holy to Hashem**” unless one sanctifies his eyes and refrains from gazing upon sights that arouse licentious thoughts, **Rachmana litzlan.**

Indeed, experience proves that this matter is a **foundation** for the observance of the entire Torah. Any weakening in fundamental religious principles stems from a disregard for this foundation. Initially, one who corrupts his eyes is drawn into sins of immorality, **Rachmana litzlan.** As Rashi explains on this **posuk**: “**The eye sees, the heart desires, and the body commits the transgressions.**” Once a person stumbles in this sin, he becomes increasingly distanced from Hashem Yisbarach. As a result, he becomes lax in his observance of all mitzvos and ultimately comes to degrade the very fundamentals of faith, **Rachmana litzlan.**

הכלי משחית הם כלי זנינה של הסטרא אחרא בעקבתא דמשיחא

**The vessels of destruction are the implements of war of The Other Side in the footsteps of Moshiach**

Unfortunately, we can clearly see these effects among those who possess these **impure devices**. In the past, the **yetzer** raged openly in the streets, and each individual was responsible for guarding himself only when venturing into the public domain. However, in our times—the **footsteps of Moshiach**—the forces of impurity have intensified, seeking to extend their grasp even into the private domain. A new creation from the world of technology has emerged at their hands—a **terrible device** that can now be passed from person to person, consuming souls without distinguishing between the righteous and the wicked, **Rachmana litzlan**.

Therefore, it is the obligation of anyone who desires to repent to **eradicate all forms of these corrupt devices** from his possession and to warn the elders concerning the youth—that these devices must be treated as **entirely forbidden**, subject to the prohibitions of **bal yera'eh u'bal yimatze** (they shall not be seen nor found). Only by doing so can one truly be considered a **ba'al teshuvah** (a penitent).

**גם לעניני פרנסה החובה להיוועץ ב'דעת תורה**

**Even regarding a livelihood one is obligated to seek counsel from a Rav**

There are those who claim that they **need** these devices for their livelihood. However, in such matters, a person cannot make decisions on his own without consulting **Daas Torah**. He must present before a competent Rav all the reasons that lead him to believe that he requires such a device, and it is the Rav who will determine whether his reasoning is valid. For sometimes, there is no real justification for possessing such devices, and it is merely **the yetzer hara speaking from within him**...

Even if it is determined that his reasoning is correct, **there is still no blanket permission** to possess a device unless it is equipped with a **strong filter** from a company that does not compromise under any circumstances—ensuring absolute protection from stumbling upon prohibited sights, **chalilah**. Furthermore, even in such a case, he should be careful **not to carry the device openly**, for at the end of the day, even a filtered device is a **b'dieved reality** (a less-than-ideal situation), and something that is only permitted **b'dieved** should be handled

discreetly.

To what can this be compared? To one whose doctors have ruled that he must eat on **Yom Kippur**. Even though he is fulfilling a mitzvah by eating, he still eats in private—out of embarrassment that he differs from the rest of the Jewish people. **How much more so in the case of these devices**—where even one who requires them for livelihood **cannot be considered as fulfilling a mitzvah**—that he should feel shame in displaying it publicly.

Additionally, this issue creates a **sense of laxity and a stumbling block for the public**. There are those who strongly desire these impure devices, but knowing that they will be denounced by the community, they refrain from acquiring them. However, if they see **so-and-so and another person** walking around with such devices, they may decide to also **cast off the yoke of communal responsibility**... They do not know that the device is filtered!

**בני חיי ומזוני להמתנורים מכלים אלו**

**Children, Life, and Sustenance for Those Who Refrain from These Devices**

The attribute of divine goodness is far greater than the attribute of punishment—by a factor of 500 (see Rashi, Shemos 37:7). If we have said that those who possess impure devices are classified as those liable for death, then it is inevitable that those who separate themselves from these devices are granted immense merits—for long life for themselves, their household, and all their descendants.

Just as they are deemed worthy of life, so too are they deemed worthy of children (**banei**), for within their homes, Hashem can entrust holy souls, knowing that they will be safeguarded in an environment of purity. Likewise, they are deemed worthy of sustenance (**mezoni**), for Hashem Himself has declared (Devarim Rabbah, Parashas Re'eh): “Listen to Me—for no person listens to Me and suffers loss.” If one overcomes the temptation to rely on these devices for his livelihood, Hashem will surely provide him with sustenance by other means.

Indeed, all those who abstain from these devices shall be blessed with the triple blessing: “**Banei, Chayei, U'Mezoni Revichei**”—children, life, and abundant sustenance. And in the merit of guarding the sanctity of our eyes, may we merit to see—eye to eye—the return of Hashem to Tzion, speedily in our days, Amein.