

טיב הקהילה

Parashas
Va'eira
• 717 •
כ"ח טבת תשפ"ו
5786

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

English edition

באנגלית

טיב הפרשה

להשתתף בצרת ובשמחת הזולת

טיב המערכת

וידעתם כי אני ה'

And you will know that I am Hashem

A man came to HaRav HaKadosh Rebbe Yochanan of Karlin zy"a, distressed and worried, since his son was not feeling well, and the doctor who examined him raised a concern that his son might be ill with a dangerous disease. The Rebbe responded and said to take the child to a particular doctor and hear his opinion. The father did as the Rebbe instructed, and after the doctor conducted comprehensive examinations, he said that there was no concern whatsoever of any disease. The happy father returned to the Rebbe and informed him that the doctor had said that there was no illness and that nothing had ever been the case. The Rebbe rejoiced upon hearing the good news, but he remarked to the father and said to him: Say, "Baruch Hashem, we see no signs of illness," but do not say, "Nothing had ever been the case," for indeed there were things. After all, his son was not feeling well. Rather, he prayed well to HaKadosh Baruch Hu that the tests would be proper and that it would be found that his son was healthy and had no illness at all. It was only that the yetzer hara intervened and confused him to think that there had never been any illness here at all, and all of this was in order to diminish faith and gratitude toward the Creator Baruch Hu, who heard his prayer and healed his son without any medicine and not by way of nature. HaKadosh Baruch Hu sends Moshe Rabbeinu to take Bnei Yisrael out of Egypt and says to him (Shemos 6:6): 'והוצאתי אתכם מתחת סבלות מצרים והצלתי אתכם מעבודתם וגאלתי אתכם בדרוע נטויה ובשפטים גדולים... - 'והייתי לכם לאלוקים וידעתם כי אני ד' המוציא אתכם מתחת סבלות מצרים - "And I will take you out from under the burdens of Egypt, and I will save you from their labor, and I will redeem you with an outstretched arm and with great judgments... and I will be to you as G-d, and you shall know that I am Hashem who takes you out from under the burdens of Egypt." We need to understand why it is written again at the end of the verse, "and you shall know that I am Hashem who takes you out from under the burdens of Egypt," after it was already written at the beginning of the verse, "and I will take you out from under the burdens of Egypt."

When a Jew is in a time of distress, he lifts his eyes to heaven and asks the Creator for salvation. HaKadosh Baruch Hu hears and sends His salvation, but then the yetzer "intervenes" and places all kinds of thoughts into a person's heart, "I happened to meet a friend who happened to have money," and the like. In this way it causes us to forget the need to remember the kindnesses of the Creator and to thank Him for the salvation. This is what HaKadosh Baruch Hu says to Moshe Rabbeinu: "and you shall know that I am Hashem who takes you out from under the burdens of Egypt." Even after the salvation, remember the Creator who heard your prayers and sent you your request. Tiv Hakehila - Va'eira

To join in the suffering and joy of another

לכן אמר לבני ישראל אני יהוה והוצאתי אתכם מתחת סבלות מצרים והצלתי אתכם מעבודתם וגאלתי אתכם בדרוע נטויה ובשפטים גדולים: ולקחתי אתכם לי לעם והייתי לכם לאלהים וידעתם כי אני יהוה אלהיכם המוציא אתכם מתחת סבלות מצרים: (ו, 1)

Therefore, say to the Children of Israel, "I am Hashem, and I will take you out from under the burdens of Egypt, and I will save you from their labor, and I will redeem you with an outstretched arm and with great judgments. I will take you to Me for a people and I will be a G-d to you, and you will know that I am Hashem your G-d, Who takes you out from under the burdens of Egypt. (6:6-7)

It is stated in the Yerushalmi (Pesachim 10:1) that Rebbe Yochanan, in the name of Rebbe Bunaya, says that the four cups that we drink on the night of Pesach correspond to the four expressions of redemption in this verse: "And I will take you out," "and I will save you," "and I will redeem you," "and I will take you."

From his words you learn that these expressions indicate different aspects of redemptions. There is a redemption that is the aspect of "I will take you out," and there is a redemption that is the aspect of "I will save you," and so on. Since there were here four different redemptions, therefore we must give thanks for each and every redemption, and therefore we give thanks for this with four separate cups.

The essence of these redemptions we learn from the words of the Ari HaKadosh, who brought that the four expressions correspond to the four worlds: Asiyah, Yetzirah, Beriah, Atzilus. From his words you learn that in practice there was one redemption that was divided into four, because the perception of the essence and greatness of the redemption was not equal among everyone, and as a result, the joy of one was not like that of another.

For the expression "and I will take you out," which corresponds to the "World of Asiyah," indicates the redemption that the people of materiality merited, who have no involvement except in the world of action, for they did not know how to distinguish between servitude and freedom except in the fact that they suffered from the backbreaking labor that Pharaoh imposed upon them. They were informed of their redemption with the expression "and I will take you out from under the burdens of Egypt," because the expression that most vividly illustrates the aspect of redemption in "Asiyah" is "going out," whose simple meaning is going out from place to place. Since the primary servitude of these people was the "burden" in action, therefore they were informed that they would go out from the place where they suffered under the burdens of Egypt.

The expression "and I will save you" corresponds to those who elevated themselves and attained the light of the "World of Yetzirah," for these people the physical hardship no longer weighed so heavily, but rather the fact that the bondage of Egypt prevented them from the service of Hashem. Therefore, they were informed of salvation from the labor, and they would no longer be preoccupied with serving others instead of serving Hashem.

Those who elevated themselves further and attained the light of the "World of Beriah," these already merited to serve Hashem even within the very bondage to Egypt, for with their refined intellect they understood that this was the

will of HaKadosh Baruch Hu, and they did so with joy. However, they were pained by the concealment of the Divine Presence that was evident in the world, since the Egyptians did not recognize His G-dliness Yisbarach. They too were informed that they would be saved from this pain, with the expression “and I will redeem you,” meaning that they would merit a redemption that would be perceptible to the senses, for it would be with an outstretched arm and with great judgments.

Those who merited and attained the light of the “World of Atzilus” did not even feel the concealment of the Divine Presence that prevails in the world, for they merited closeness to the Superior Noble and sensed His existence at every moment. These were not pained except by the fact that they had not yet merited to be called children to the Omnipresent, and they were informed that HaKadosh Baruch Hu would fulfill their request: “and I will take you to Me as a “people, and I will be to you as G-d

The *posuk* concludes, “and you shall know that I am Hashem your G-d who takes you out from under the burdens of Egypt.” With these words HaKadosh Baruch Hu taught that even those who merited attainments in the higher worlds should arouse within themselves joy for the fact that they too merited the lesser redemption, which is going out from under the burdens of Egypt. As stated, this was primarily the joy of the masses who did not merit lofty levels.

For even those who merited levels and attainments are sometimes found in states of smallness, and then they have no attainment except in that lesser aspect of freedom from physical suffering. In order that they should always merit to thank their

Creator for the freedom that He granted them, therefore even at times of greatness they should contemplate that they also merited the freedom of Asiyah.

It can further be said that by this He instructed the righteous and those of attainment that in addition to rejoicing in the measure of freedom appropriate to their level, they should also pay attention to the joy of the masses and let their hearts rejoice in their joy. For the *posuk* states (Mishlei 27:19), ‘כמים הפנים אל הפנים כן לב, - האדם לאדם’ - “As water reflects a face to a face, so the heart of man to man.” When their hearts rejoice in the joy of another, they will also arouse within themselves joy in the aspect of the redemption of the righteous, and they too will give thanks for the lofty levels of the redemption. After they give thanks for this, they will also prepare their hearts to sense these sanctities, as is known that gratitude is a vessel to draw down kindnesses. Without a doubt, it is a drawing down primarily of that good for which one offers praise.

Accordingly, it is well understood why we truly require four cups, as stated that they correspond to the four expressions mentioned. For even though each person merited only a redemption of his own type, it is fitting for him to give thanks for all four redemptions and to rejoice with all of them for the reasons mentioned.

In the same manner, the Children of Israel conducted themselves while they were still in Egypt, for beyond the fact that each one suffered over his own troubles, additional pain was added to him over the troubles of his brother who was groaning under the yoke of Pharaoh. This matter hastened their redemption. As it is brought in the holy *sefer*

Bat Ayin (Parashas Bo) on the statement of the *posuk* (Shemos 12:40), ‘ומושב בני ישראל אשר ישבו במצרים שלשים שנה וארבע מאות שנה’ - “And the dwelling of the Children of Israel which they dwelled in Egypt was thirty years and four hundred years.” This is his language: “Behold, all four aspects were present for Israel in Egypt. That is, they had the aspect of unity as mentioned above, where each one participated in the suffering of his fellow. Therefore, the bondage of each one was difficult twofold, for the bondage of his fellow was as difficult to him as his own bondage. Therefore, the count of two hundred and ten years that they were in Egypt was considered for them as four hundred and twenty years. In addition, the nine years during which Yosef was enslaved to Potiphar and the warden of the prison were counted, making four hundred and twenty-nine years. Since Yosef drew for them the aspect of unity as mentioned above, and it is known that anything that joins a count is also considered one, Yosef, who includes the count, with his nine years of bondage as mentioned above, was counted as ten. Together with the four hundred and twenty of Israel, this *posuk* to thirty years and four hundred years stated in the *posuk*, to hint to the aspect of unity mentioned above. They were one soul, which has the numerical value of four hundred and thirty, like the numerical value of nefesh.” End quote.

From his words we see that by each one participating in the suffering of another, the length of the exile was reduced for them. Just as their participation in the suffering of another diminished their pain, so too participation in the joy of another increases one’s personal joy, as has been explained.

‘הצווארון הלבן’ *The white collar*

טיב ההשגרה

For years I have been suffering from black shirts at the collar, and I did not understand where the black color was coming from. I thought perhaps it was from the seat belt of the car, or maybe from my body chemistry that emits black, and all kinds of other thoughts. The situation was unpleasant, because every day at the end of the day I would see that black stain.

One morning I had had enough of the situation, and I *davened* to Hashem to help me get rid of this black stain. After the Tefillah, when I sat down to learn with the tefillin, I heard an avreich who was standing close to me saying to his friend: “I finally discovered the mystery of the black on my shirt!!!” My ears perked up like a tightly stretched spring, and then he continued telling his friend: “My wife went crazy from the dirty shirts, and I discovered that it comes from the tefillin straps that are dyed black on both sides, which shed color onto the collars of the shirts!!!” I heard this and I was in shock. Indeed, the matter had become known!!! I took a

piece of tissue and rubbed it on the straps from the inner side, and behold, a wonder, the paper turned black...

The avreich said that the solution was to buy tefillin straps without black color on the inside, like we used to buy in the past. The next day he arrived with new straps, black on the outside and light on the inside.

I went to my tefillin maker, and he explained to me that there are different qualities, and that he sells only the high-quality straps that do not shed color.

Indeed, I replaced them with the high-quality straps, and since then the shirts have remained white!!!

Years of suffering ended in a moment of prayer.

I will add and say that I almost never *daven* there, and precisely on that day HaKadosh Baruch Hu arranged for me to be at that minyan.

נ.ה.

The precision of the pasuk is evident. It begins by describing, he who feared the word of Hashem, yet concludes, he who did not set his heart to the word of Hashem. At first glance, the pasuk should have stated the opposite of what it began with: if it opened with one who feared the word of Hashem, its opposite would be one who “did not fear the word of Hashem.” Why, then, does the Torah choose a different expression — who did not set his heart — which appears unrelated to the initial phrase? Rather, the proof is clear: this is indeed the very contrast. The pasuk defines for us who is included in one who does not fear the word of Hashem. It is the one who does not set his heart. When one does not direct his heart to understand and to know what stands before him—his purpose in the world’s creation and the purpose of his arrival into this world—then inevitably he does not fear the word of Hashem. He Torah thus reveals the root of the deficiency in yiras Shamayim: it stems from a lack of attentiveness. When a person does not think, does not engage in contemplation—then automatically he is not careful in his actions and in each step he takes in his life. This is precisely the opposite of yiras Shamayim. Consider this well. Further on, after the plague of hail, it is written (Shemos 9:30), But as for you and your servants, I know that you still do not fear Hashem Elokim. At first glance, how can the pasuk group all of them together? It was stated explicitly earlier that among Pharaoh’s servants were those who did fear the word of Hashem. Not all of his servants were among those who still do not fear Hashem Elokim. Indeed, those who feared the word of Hashem demonstrated this practically by bringing their servants and livestock into the houses out of fear of Hashem. Clearly, not all his servants lacked fear. Targum Onkelos seems to have sensed this difficulty. At first he translates, he who did not fear the word of Hashem as לא דחיל — “did not fear.” Yet when translating the pasuk, I know that you still do not fear Hashem Elokim, he renders: לא כען לא עד כען לא — “until now you have not submitted yourselves before Hashem.” Onkelos intentionally avoids using the same expression לא דחיל — so that it should not be difficult in light of those servants who did initially fear. Rather, he shifts the meaning to teach that despite their fear which caused them to bring their livestock indoors, still, they had not submitted to the word of Hashem—to perform His commandments. Indeed, there are different levels of yiras Shamayim. The simplest level is fear of punishment. Higher than this is fear of sin, where one fears the sin itself—not only its punishment. There is also fear of Heaven, where one fears the Heavens because he believes in the Heavens, and the fear of Heaven rests upon him. And there is a level of awe higher even than love, called yiras haromemus—a sublime awe that is exalted

טיב המעשיות

He Who Feared the Word of Hashem

”הִירָא אֶת דְּבַר ה’ מֵעַבְדֵי פְרָעָה הַגִּיס אֶת עַבְדָּיו וְאֶת מִקְנֵהוּ אֶל הַבָּתִּים, וְאֲשֶׁר לֹא שָׂם לְבוּ אֶל דְּבַר ה’ וַיַּעֲזֹב אֶת עַבְדָּיו וְאֶת מִקְנֵהוּ בַשָּׂדֶה” (ט, כ-כא).

He that feared the word of Hashem among the servants of Pharaoh made his servants and his livestock flee into the houses, but he that did not set his heart to the word of Hashem left his servants and his livestock in the field (9:20–21).

and elevated beyond measure.

With this, the pesukim are fully resolved. At first it says, he who feared the word of Hashem: he did not fear Hashem Himself; rather, because of the word of Hashem, regarding the severity of the hail, he was seized with fear of the punishment—the simplest level of awe—and therefore brought his livestock indoors. Yet when the plague was removed, when the threatening danger was gone, the pasuk concludes: I know that you still do not fear Hashem Elokim. Meaning: although you feared the impending punishment, you still lack true yiras Shamayim—the awe of Hashem Himself—when no punishment hovers over you.

Every Shabbos Mevorchim, we mention in the [Yehi Ratzon] tefillah two expressions of yirah. First: “a life that has in it fear of Heaven and fear of sin.” And later it says once again: “a life in which there shall be love of Torah and fear of Heaven.” And yet yiras Shamayim has already been mentioned earlier.

But as explained, there are various distinct levels and dimensions within the attribute of awe; one is not comparable to another. Therefore, it adds again: “love of Torah and fear of Heaven,” meaning the level of awe that follows love—yiras haromemus, the higher awe.

The saintly admor of Mishkenos HaRo’im, the tzaddik Rav Chaim Rabinowitz shlita, related to me in the name of his father, the tzaddik Rav Binyomin Rabinowitz zt”l, dayan and moreh tzedek of the holy city, that he possessed a tradition from the Rebbe Reb Elimelech of Lizhensk zy”a, that a person cannot merit proper yiras Shamayim unless he learns Torah for several consecutive hours.

And in the commentary of the Bertinoro on the Mishnah (Avos 3:9), “He whose fear of sin precedes his wisdom, his wisdom endures,” he writes: “I have heard that he prepares in his thought fear of sin before his wisdom—that he thinks in his heart: I shall study so that I may become one who fears sin...”

However, our master the Rema zt”l, in the opening of the Shulchan Aruch (Orach Chaim 1:1), rules differently regarding acquiring yiras Shamayim. His words are: לְגַבְדֵי תָמִיד - I place Hashem before me always (Tehillim

16:8) is a great principle in the Torah and among the lofty qualities of the righteous who walk before Hashem... When a person sets to his heart that the great King, Hakadosh Baruch Hu—Whose glory fills the earth—stands over him and sees his actions, as it states (Yirmeyah 23:24), אִם יִסְתֵּר אִישׁ בְּמִסְתָּרִים וַיְהִי לֹא אֶרְאֶנּוּ - Shall a man hide himself in secret places, and I shall not see him?—says Hashem. Immediately fear, humility, dread of Hashem and shame before Him will come upon him constantly.” His pure source is in the words of the Rambam in Moreh Nevuchim (III:52).

Yet the Rambam writes in Hilchos Yesodei HaTorah (2:2): “And how is the way to love Him and fear Him? When a person contemplates His wondrous and great deeds and creations, and he sees in them His wisdom which is beyond measure and limit... he immediately recoils backward and is struck with fear, and he knows that he is a small, lowly, dark creature, standing with light and meager understanding before the Perfect Knowledge.”

The holy master Rav Aharele Rotte zt”l, author of Shomer Emunim, would say that in his youth he drew abundant yiras Shamayim through his study of the sacred work Yesod veShoresh HaAvodah, which is entirely filled and saturated with pure fear of Heaven.

And the Toldos Avrohom Yitzchok Rebbe shlita is accustomed to say that one who merited to see how the holy master, the Seraph, Rav Aharon of Belz zt”l, would recite even a single regular berachah... saw what yiras Shamayim truly is, for his entire being would become filled with awe and trembling at the utterance of the Name of Heaven with his holy mouth.

A God-fearing young scholar needed to travel on a city bus. Because of his great reverence, he was also meticulous in guarding his eyes, and throughout the ride he sat with his gaze lowered in holiness and purity. Whenever anyone passed beside him, he would close his eyes entirely.

The ride dragged on in extended traffic jams, and in the meantime the scholar dozed lightly—half-asleep, half-awake. In his dream he saw that there was a suspicious object on the bus! He awoke in alarm, but thought to himself (Zechariah 10:2), יְחַלְמוֹת הַשְּׁאוּ יַדְבְּרוּ - Dreams speak falsehood.

A few minutes later, drowsiness again overtook him, and the dream repeated itself: a suspicious item on the bus. He awoke again in fright, looked carefully around, his eyes darting in fear—and indeed discovered beneath one of the seats a suspicious bag that seemed ownerless.

He immediately approached the driver and reported the troubling find. The cautious driver refused to take risks: he stopped the bus at once, asked all passengers to disembark, and summoned the police.

Within minutes the bus was a s

surrounded by security forces and rescue services. The bomb-squad expert arrived, the passengers and curious onlookers were moved back, security tape was stretched around, and the robot advanced toward the target. It was then determined that the bag indeed contained a dangerous explosive! The bomb-squad conducted a controlled detonation; the bag and its contents were blown apart without causing harm.

All present gave thanks to Hashem for the great miracle, for their rescue from death to life. The man who discovered the device received a medal and public praise for life-saving alertness.

Deeply moved by the wonders of the salvation wrought through him, he traveled to Netivot to the tzaddik of the generation, the holy Rav Yisrael Abuchatzzeira zt"l, the Baba Sali. When the tzaddik heard the story, he said: "Be aware that a decree had already been issued upon you and upon all the bus's passengers—Heaven protect us. But the merit of your yiras Shamayim and your carefulness in guarding your eyes during that ride made a great impression in Heaven and drove the accuser far away from that bus—far, as with a bowshot. And since merit was granted to you, merit came also to your companions, and through your great mitzvah all were saved!"

A Merchant's Fear of Heaven

A distinguished group of scholars—lofty disciples of Slonim—once set out on a grand journey to their holy Rebbe, to bask in the shelter of his sanctity.

On their way, they were to pass through the renowned commercial city of Leipzig, a world-center of trade. A well-known merchant of their town, known to all as Reb Grinfinkel, heard of their departure in their decorated coach and asked to join them for a fair price, so that he might reach Leipzig in time for the major market day.

The chassidim gladly agreed. Reb Grinfinkel was known in the town as a God-fearing Jew, sincere and upright. Though not of the chassidic community—being a Yekke who had come directly from Germany—his simplicity and evident reverence were well-known, and the chassidim were pleased to have him join such a journey.

During the trip, friendly conversation opened between them. In its course, the chassidim were surprised to learn that in his large store he sold women's kerchiefs. This had been his trade and livelihood for many years.

The chassidim wondered greatly: how could this precious Jew stand firm in such a line of work with sanctity, safeguarding himself and his soul with pure yiras Shamayim? They asked him repeatedly, but he evaded the question wisely, revealing neither his secret nor the secret of his guarded sanctity. When Purim arrived in the great city, the chassidim met the distinguished merchant in the large synagogue, as is the custom in many communities to gather in great numbers for Purim rejoicing. When their hearts were gladdened with wine, they

honored him with a drink. As is the chassidic way on Purim, the joy increased—cup after cup—and they honored their longtime companion from the Leipzig journey with several generous cups. So now, while the wine warmed his heart, they asked again, with genuine curiosity, how he stood firm in sanctity and purity within such a business.

And since "drinking draws hearts close," the man's heart opened, and he revealed the truth: "You should know," he began, "that every evening before I retire, I pour out my heart in supplication before the living and eternal God, Who hears and listens to the prayers of His people Yisrael with mercy. I speak with Him in my own simple and straightforward language:

'Ribbono shel Olam! You know that my desire is to do Your will, and not—chas veshalom—the will of the inclination that denies You. You know precisely what awaits me tomorrow in the store. I plead before You: if there await me tomorrow trials so difficult that I will not withstand them—take my soul today, and do not return it to me in the morning! Leave me as one lifeless, so long as I will not violate Your will. For if I am destined tomorrow to live in transgression, what value have such days? Better death than a life of repulsive sin!'"

As he recounted the secret of his life before the chassidim, moved by the sanctity of Purim, he wept streams of continual tears and cried out from the depths of his heart: "What need have I of a life of wrongdoing and base desires? The animal of the field is better than I in such a degraded state!"

Now all became clear to the chassidim. His secret was simple: he poured out his soul each day in fervent prayer to his Creator to be spared from transgression. From Heaven, surely such a prayer of a Jew is heeded, and great assistance is given him to remain guarded in sanctity and purity.

And we too may derive from this an exalted piece of counsel for strengthening yiras Shamayim and maintaining the sanctity of Yisrael: to pray and plead with a broken heart to the eternal Living One to save and guard us from trials and from disgrace. A prayer from the depths of the heart surely brings salvation, Amen.

A few years ago, a Jewish merchant—an upright, God-fearing man—came before one of the great rabbanim of Yerushalayim and presented a difficult "business query." He had been offered the opportunity to purchase a large fish-store located in the Machaneh Yehudah market of Yerushalayim. It was an extremely fruitful and successful establishment, yielding very handsome profits, for the market is constantly teeming with buyers, and multitudes of residents of Yerushalayim and the surrounding areas come specifically to Machaneh Yehudah to purchase fish. There one can obtain all varieties, even the rarest kinds, as is well known. And since the owner of that store had fallen gravely ill with a malignant illness, his sons were anxious to sell the store as quickly as possible.

After thoroughly clarifying every detail, examining the location of the store, its size, its condition, and assessing income versus investment, it became clear that the net monthly turnover of such a store reached

several hundreds of thousands!

However, being a chareidi man, God-fearing from his youth, he struggled greatly with this question. Although he had entered the workforce, he had never worked in places of that sort... He guarded and protected his standing in Torah and yiras Shamayim in sanctity, set fixed times for Torah, and prayed three times daily with a minyan in the beis midrash. To work in such a low environment as the Machaneh Yehudah market seemed to him like a descent to the lowest rung. How could one possibly guard one's eyes there with proper sanctity? Was it fitting for a God-fearing chareidi individual to work in the Machaneh Yehudah market from morning until evening?

After the rav heard all sides and all details, and contemplated the matter well, he ruled that despite the great profit seemingly to be made from such a thriving business, it was not suitable for him, and it could endanger his yiras Shamayim. "For we are commanded in our holy Torah: And you shall not stray after your hearts and after your eyes!" explained the rav. "To work in a store in such a place is inevitably bound up with numerous Torah prohibitions each day, for the scenes seen there are far from pure and holy, to put it mildly... and each and every improper sight constitutes its own Torah transgression. Therefore," he concluded, "you must put the matter aside and not pursue this business."

And the rav recounted to him, at that very moment, a remarkable incident involving the tzaddik Rav Eliyohu Lopian zt"l. A young student once approached him—he had recently become engaged, in good and fortunate hour, to a girl his own age—and asked whether he was permitted to go out with his fiancée. He claimed that in his view this posed no challenge to him in terms of sanctity, and that his evil inclination was not aroused thereby...

Rav Eliyahu answered him in astonishment: "Azoy? I am going immediately to notify the other side that the engagement must be cancelled at once! Evidently you are ill... there must be some sickness here... How is it possible that your natural inclination is not aroused? I have already passed eighty years of age, and one of my eyes sees nothing at all—yet even so, I still possess an evil inclination! And you, in the prime of your years, only eighteen years old, with the heat of youth burning within you—how can it be that this does not trouble you?"

In a similar vein the rav concluded his words to that merchant, issuing a clear ruling: It is impossible ever to know from where the inclination will arise... and from such places one must flee as from fire! As the Gemara says regarding the nazir (Shabbos 13a and parallels): "We say to the nazir: go, go, circle around—do not approach the vineyard!"

The man accepted the ruling with complete and simple faith, and removed the business proposal entirely from his mind. And that very same day, toward evening, Hashem prepared for him another source of livelihood that brought fine and excellent profit—perhaps even more than the previous offer. May Hashem grant and increase His blessings for all who safeguard the ember of Israel and their yiras Shamayim, and who guard their eyes in sanctity: abundant blessing in both spiritual and material matters, and in all heartfelt requests for good. Amen, so may it be His will.