

CHAPTER ONE HUNDRED THREE

by Rabbi Yitzchok Rubin

It seems no sooner than you buy one new, must have gadget, that those whiz kids in techno land create another one. The problem is that after having spent a second mortgage on the first one you are hardly about to shell out yet more hard earned money on something new. So, you walk around with this chunk of obsolete junk in your pocket ashamed that you are stuck with such an old relic.

Recently one of my community members stumbled upon a really ingenious piece of equipment. It seems that every mobile phone emits a signal so that incoming calls can find their way to your set. (I always wondered how they did that.) Now, if for some reason there is a traffic jam somewhere, then all those emitting phones are standing in one place bleating to the heavens that they are stuck. My friend has found a way of tapping into this information and has devised a system where not only will a satellite tell you where to go, but it will be able to tell you which roads are blocked by thousands of stationary mobiles. This is great stuff; just imagine, if you will, Purim morning you get up early and take a truck load of mobile phones to shul. You leave them all together on some road and immediately the satellites will warn all that in Boro Park there is a huge traffic jam in front of the *Sefardishe* Shul. You then drive over to said shul and find an empty parking space without any bother. Trouble is...you probably won't get a *minyan*, but then again, no plan is fool proof.

I share all this with you because there are many new and wondrous external electronic devices that can tell us where we should be going. The problem for a Yid is that he needs to be tuned into an internal compass as well.

We are lost, and we have been for so long that we forget where we should be. Everything works against us, the media has become enormous, and its message powerful. You can't go out into the street without its filth creeping into your vision. Then there are the other purveyors of the secular dream. Radio, the computer, on and on the drumbeat of mindless materialism goes on. You may think that hiding away saves you - your home has no television, you have no internet in the house - fine, well done, but there is no insurance that the corruption won't creep up behind you. Kids are vulnerable, so are we.

The corruption comes with a buzz of excitement, you can't hear yourself think, and you are quickly lost in the vortex of loss. The neshama wants to grasp onto its holiness, however, it is sucked into the noise when its bodily host loses its way. The souls "signal" is seeking hope, calling out, telling of its traffic jam, and we, we must hope and pray that we hear its call.

Guttes Yidden explain that to turn about one's situation, all it takes is one movement. You have but to turn your back from the noise and you will find your salvation. It is this turn that is so hard, because the noise is so loud. This *kapitel* speaks of how we can each make that turn.

LeDavid, Barchi Nafshi ... "A Psalm of David. My soul, bless Hashem; and all that is within me [bless] His holy Name."

In these words we find David telling us time and again, for he will repeat this phrase, to allow our soul to bless Hashem. With this opening our entirety can follow suit. Every one of us has that bit of *kedusha* that is the soul. It is the beeping emanation that our being gives forth. We must strive to clear ourselves of the clutter so that this bit of us signals the rest. That soft emanation of warmth can mobilize our entirety.

Barchi Nafshi Es Hashem ... "My soul, bless Hashem; and forget not all His beneficial deeds."

When the soul calls out a blessing to Hashem, then the rest of our being can awaken from the stunned mindlessness and understand all the good we receive through our connection with Him.

Hasolei'ach Lechal Avoneichi ... "Who forgives all your iniquity; Who heals all your diseases."

When the static clears for just one moment we realize that everything comes from Hashem. If you focus for just one moment you will be astounded by the clarity of vision. "Of course it is Hashem, why didn't I live this truth all the time?"

Hagoel Mishachas Chayaichi ... "Who redeems your life from destruction; who crowns you with kindness and compassion."

This is a clear declaration of what is real to the *Yiddishe* soul. Our tragedy is that the heart deadening swamp that is the material world gets in the way. We sometimes end up saying these words without actualizing their holy intent. But it does not have to be like that; we can find hope. Hashem redeems us from self-destruction with sweet kindness.

Rachum Vechanun Hashem ... "Compassionate and gracious is Hashem, slow in anger and abundant in kindness."

It is certainly a wondrous thing. Here we are coming back to Hashem time after time sin after sin. We slip and fall, sometimes so far as to be almost entirely lost. Yet, Hashem still has time for us, and shows us bountiful kindness.

Lo Chachata'einu Asa Lanu ... "Not according to our sins has He treated us, and not according to our iniquities has He dealt with us."

Honest now, please let's be honest. This is between us, no one else. Aren't you ever astounded by Hashem's patience with us? We do so much foolishness, hurt so many with our anger, yet, Hashem gives us His gentle Love at all times. It is amazing, and worth remembering all the time.

Kirchok Mizrach Mimaarav ... "As far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed from us our transgressions."

The *Rebbe Nosson* David of *Sidlovitzer* said, "When we see this passage we can learn so very much. Just as when a man stands facing the east, he needs but a turning about to face west. Likewise a sinner needs but a slight mental turning to be far removed from his transgressions." You daven, you try to find hope, then, for a moment, you feel that it is possible. You can turn away from the darkness. This fleeting realization is Hashem's gift to us, it is His kindness that awaits us. It is what it means to be a Yid.

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