SHABBAT: Iphone vs. iShabbat

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Shabbat is the day in which Jews celebrate Creation. On Shabbat we give our testimony that the world is not here by happenstance. Our beautiful planet and the whole universe was made by an Intelligent Creator. The way we celebrate Creation is by not disturbing Creation. We do not modify, recreate, ignite or activate anything. Similar to God’s purposeful lack-of-Creation on the seventh day, we too stop all forms of human creativity. The creative tasks applied to the construction of the Mishkan serve as the model of all creative tasks we refrain from on the seventh day.

But, beyond this, is Shabbat still necessary?

Well, I believe it is. I actually think that in certain sense Shabbat is today more relevant than ever in human history. Think about the newest addiction: “The average American teenager sends or receives 75 text messages a day, though one girl in Sacramento managed to handle an average of 10,000 every 24 hours for a month.” Says Pico Iyer in the NYT (December 29, 2011). Texting and Whatsapping became epidemic. And we are not communicating better. Actually “We have more and more ways to communicate…but less and less to say.”

Pico seems to believe that Shabbat is the future of human civilization “Since luxury…is a function of scarcity, the children of tomorrow… will crave nothing more than freedom, if only for a short while, from all the blinking machines, streaming videos and scrolling headlines that leave them feeling empty and too full all at once.”

Shabbat is needed to re-humanize us: “Two journalist friends of mine observe an ‘Internet sabbath’ every week, turning off their online connections from Friday night to Monday morning, so as to try to revive those ancient customs known as family meals and conversation.”

Lastly, Shabbat also helps us to save some money: “Those who part with $2,285 a night to stay in a cliff-top room at the Post Ranch Inn in Big Sur pay partly for the privilege of not having a TV in their rooms; the future of travel, I’m reliably told, lies in ‘black-hole resorts,’ which charge high prices precisely because you can’t get online in their rooms”

Disconnect your phones (and see that your children do the same!). And reconnect with HaShem, with your family and with yourself.