

The background of the cover features a group of people in a dark setting, possibly a lecture or talk. A bright light source on the right side creates a strong silhouette effect, highlighting the outlines of the individuals. The overall color palette is dominated by dark blues and blacks, with a bright white light source on the right.

Erev Rav Talks

Collection of Drashas
from the Author of
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EDITOR'S PREFACE

“*Erev Rav Talks*” is a collection of *derashos* of the Rav about the “Mixed Multitude”, the soul reincarnations of the Egyptians who escaped with the Jewish people at the time of the exodus, who did not have sincere intentions in converting to the Jewish people. They have been the ongoing troublemakers throughout history, and the source of all evil influences that have infiltrated into the holiness of the Jewish people.

The *Erev Rav* and its role in the exile of the Jewish people is written about by the Vilna Gaon in *Even Shelaimah* (11) and in *Peirush HaGra to Tikkunei HaZohar* 41. An in-depth study of the matter of “*Erev Rav*” is beyond the scope of this work. The purpose of this compilation rather focuses on how *Erev Rav* affects us today. Some of the chapters of this compilation do offer an in-depth look into the topic, and we have included those chapters here only for the sake of further research into this topic, but it does not replace studying these matters at their source.

This compilation of *derashos* can help us have a better understanding of the times we live in, of the unique *avodah* that is given to us during these times preceding the era of Mashiach; of staying loyal to Hashem and the values of the holy Torah, in the face of the threats to our spiritual situation and the confusion that surrounds us; and to make the separation between the holiness within us and the evil that may have become embedded onto us from all of the outside influences.

1 | EREV RAV TODAY

In *Shemoneh Esrei* we ask Hashem, **תקע בשופר גדול לחרותינו ושא נס לקבץ גלותינו**. “*And gather our dispersed, and rescue us from our land.*”

Our exile includes two parts: Being subservient to the nations, and in addition, we were exiled from our land of Eretz Yisrael and found in a strange land, in the *Galus* (Diaspora). Thus, we are asking for two things: To be gathered back together again and for all the ingathering of all exiled Jews, back to Eretz Yisrael. This blessing was enacted by the Men of Great Assembly, from the time period of the second Beis HaMikdash until today.

Throughout the generations, the Jewish people poured out their hearts to Hashem to be gathered from exile and return to Eretz Yisrael. There were always mistakes that were made about the *Geulah* (Redemption). The sage Rebbi Akiva thought that Bar Kuziva was Moshiach. There were many false Mashiachs throughout the generations, as discussed in *Igeres HaRambam*, in which there was a false Mashiach in the times of the Rambam. There was the false redeemer, Shabsai Tzvi, and his followers. There were false Mashiachs who came and went, and now that’s a thing of the past. We still remain with a bad mark from it, but for the most part, such a test is no longer here. It was a test in previous generations, but not anymore.

In our current generation, what is the test that we face? The test is that part of the Jewish people have returned to Eretz Yisrael, and part of them haven’t, but a recognizable chunk of *Klal Yisrael* has returned to *Eretz Yisrael* – and what does that mean for us? How should we view this situation, in terms of the *Geulah*?

We must understand where we are in history, what has been fulfilled so far and what are we *davening* for, when we *daven* for the *Geulah*. Those who are ignorant think that everything has been fulfilled already, but let us analyze the truth here and be clearer about this. We shall try here to clarify this matter, though understandably, this is a broad, complex, and sensitive issue.

GOOD CONTAINS EVIL AND EVIL CONTAINS GOOD

For everything that Hashem created in the world, there is a mixture of good and evil in each thing. Thus, we must see the good – and evil – in everything. Nothing is black-on-white – it will not be totally good and totally bad, it will always contain elements of both. If something is evil, it must have good in it, and if something is good, we must see how some evil is also contained in it. Nothing is totally good or totally evil. Everything is a mix (this is stated in *sefer Ruach Chaim* of Rav Chaim Volozhiner zt”l). Something good is trapped in something evil, and that is why a

prohibition is called *assur*, which means imprisoned, because the holiness is imprisoned inside the evil act. For example, even in learning Torah, there is some evil involved, because a person always learns with a little bit of *shelo lishmah* (ulterior motivations, not for the sake of Torah). So even something that is for the most part good will have traces of evil in it.

The fact that Jews have returned to Israel is also a stark example of something which has good and evil in it. It is good that Jews have returned, because Hashem has certainly brought them here as part of the process of the *Geulah*. But there is also another side to the coin here that has come along with it: **It is entirely the *Sitra Achra* (the Other Side).**

Just as there was a Pharaoh, a Nevuchadnezar, an Achashveirosh, a Haman, and an Antiochus, and just as we faced the evils of the *Galus* of Mitzrayim, Bavel, Yavan, Madai-Paras, Edom, and Yishmael, so do we face an evil today that is **the *Galus* of the *Erev Rav* (“Mixed Multitude”)**, which has had a part in the return of Jews to Eretz Yisrael. It wasn’t just a partial factor that accompanied the return to Eretz Yisrael – rather, **it was entirely overseen and allowed by the *Erev Rav*, and therefore, it was the *Erev Rav* which caused *Klal Yisrael* to come here.** Just as we had a Greek exile, so is there is an exile headed by the *Erev Rav*.

If we just look it from an immature perspective, we only see one side of the matter. Was this something bad which also had some good and holiness in it, or was it something good which also had evil in it? It was an argument of the *Gedolim*. At the root of the matter was: Is this all the beginning of the *Geulah*? Or is it all the work of the Satan, just as the Satan convinced the people to do the *Eigel* when they thought it was good?

It’s clear that it was a holy spark of good, a spark of returning to Eretz Yisrael, but it’s also very clear that this was allowed through the *Erev Rav* - that this was a holiness that was trapped in something evil. The “*heads of the Erev Rav*”, who are also the “heads of the 50th gate of impurity” (which no one can return from) had a big part in all this.

But as clear as this evil is, there was also a very holy spark here, just as any evil has good in it. If something is very evil, there will be a very holy spark contained in it. And therefore, there is good and evil mixed together as one, and in such a disturbing way!

But to be more precise, the fact that the part of the Jews have come back here is both a spark of the *Geulah* that came along with the *Erev Rav*’s control of the Jewish people here - is really a deeper part of our situation of *Galus*.

It’s not simply that the *Erev Rav* gets to be in power over here. It is a whole new kind of *Galus* which we didn’t have until now. There was a spark of the *Geulah* here, and because we weren’t *zocheh* to the *Geulah* fully, it became turned into a new depth of *Galus*. It would have been the beginning of the *Geulah*, had we been *zocheh* (worthy), but because we weren’t *zocheh*, it became a

whole new depth of *Galus*. It was a spark of the *Geulah* that “fell” to the *Galus*, which creates a new and deeper kind of *Galus* – the *Galus* of the *Erev Rav*.

There was the Egyptian exile, the Babylonian exile, the Median-Persian exile, and the Greek Exile. Now we are in the Roman exile (Edom) and within that, the Arab Exile (Yishmael) which surrounds us, and within the Arab exile is the exile of the *Erev Rav*.

The exile of the *Erev Rav* is very different from the other exiles, in the aspect that the Jewish people are very mixed with them. The *Galus* of the *Erev Rav* is that it is a “great mixture”, a *taaruvos rabah*, which cannot be sorted out through any human being.

There was never an exile like this before - and it takes place in Eretz Yisrael. Yes, there is a spark of good contained here, a spark of the *Geulah*, but this spark of good has been captured by *Erev Rav*, and therefore a new kind of exile has begun.

It is an exile of mixing with the *Erev Rav* – which is rooted in the word *arev*, sweet. It is when the sweetness of the words of Torah falls, *Rachmana Litzlan*, to the side of the *Erev Rav*. The *Erev Rav* are not just mixed with Torah-observant Jews – they make their lifestyle seem sweet and alluring to us.

The Chazon Ish said that he is not afraid of the decrees that the heads of the *Erev Rav* will make on the Jewish people in Eretz Yisrael. He was rather afraid of the fact that observant Jews will slowly lose their *yiras shomayim* by mixing with the *Erev Rav*. What he said then is what we can see with our own eyes happening now. We returned to Eretz Yisrael, from the holy spark that fell into this new *kelipah*, the *Erev Rav*. What should have been “the beginning of the *Geulah*”, as the Chofetz Chaim said it can be, ended up being turned into a new *Galus*. This is the very depth of *Galus*, not just another detail.

When we understand what *Galus* is, then we can know what our *avodah* is during this *Galus*. It's not that we are simply more mixed with the nations. That was the problem until now. The problem now is that people think that the *Erev Rav* is sweet. Their lusts and money offer a temptation to everyone.

One who understands the depth of *Galus* will understand the process we are in and the *avodah* that needs to be done now, and what Hashem is asking of us. But if one doesn't understand that this is a profound *Galus*, then he will wonder how much to mix with the *Erev Rav* or not. But when one understands it clearly, he sees there is only one path. There cannot be mixing with them and avoiding their allure. It is either, or. Many wonderful Jews want to serve Hashem here, but they don't understand the situation they are in. They simply see the problem here as another decree and another decree that the *Erev Rav* makes on us, and the attitude is, “We will stop this decree”, and then again with the next decree, “We will stop it.” Yes, there are decrees one after the other and we

must stop them, but those are just the details of a larger issue that's looming. The root of the problem here is far more encompassing.

The *Gra*, and also Rav Elchonon Wasserman, spoke a lot about the *Galus Erev Rav* at the end of exile, in *Eretz Yisrael*. We have entered the last few years into a test where we must not only refrain from mixing with them, but we must not fall into the mistake of finding them to be sweet.

Most people find the *Erev Rav's* benefits to be sweet, and they have come to accept it as part of a religious Jewish life in Eretz Yisrael. This is like a "strange god" that a person makes which one mistakenly makes into a part of his *Yiddishkeit*, precisely because he is so mixed with it.

When one's heart is purer and it's working and active, his heart burns for the truth, he has the fire of a Torah scholar, a holy fire of the Torah that burns within him. He sees clearly how the entire goal of the heads of the *Erev Rav* (as Rav Chaim Soloveitchik said) is to spiritually obliterate the Jewish people by wishing to uprooting the foundations of the Torah, which is really a war they are waging to prevent Hashem's revelation coming to the world. If our heart is pure, it is burning for the truth, and we will be clear that there are no 'two sides' here to the situation now - there is nothing to discuss, this is not a give-and-take discussion. It's very clear. It is a profound *Galus*, and Hashem is directing the Creation on a course that He has planned in order for it to reach its purpose, and part of this plan is that the *Erev Rav* is trying to uproot everything that's holy.

One who doesn't understand this is like a blind person stumbling in the dark. Any give-and-take discussion about this is a mistake from the start. It is like when Lavan tried to uproot everything by wishing to destroy Yaakov. The *Erev Rav* is trying to destroy us, and Chazal said that if someone is trying to destroy you, you must go and destroy him before he destroys you.

In the past, there were different sides to the issues, but now the path which we need to take is very clear. There always different sides to any issue, and the *Gedolim* differ about how to view a situation. In the past, there were different views of the *Gedolim*. The well-known view of the *kadosh*, Reb Yoelish from Satmar, was that we should not have any connection at all to the government, because it goes against the "Three Oaths" listed by Chazal. An opposite view, which was the other extreme, was that there are sparks of holiness here to connect to, but this was a very very dangerous path to take, and it was only for rare individuals to take, and almost anyone who took this path fell from their *Yiddishkeit* completely.

But now, everyone agrees that it's a whole different story than the *Galus* that began 70 years ago. The *Erev Rav* is now deemed sweet to everyone, and now every *Gadol* will agree that we must totally separate from them, just like we separate a fetus from its mother if the fetus is endangering the mother's life.

In the last few years, there is no other way for us except to separate ourselves from them. Mixing with the *Erev Rav* is not just another random problem we face in the exile. It is not merely like

when Yaakov wanted to be saved from Esav, even when Esav acted like a friendly brother to him and he was scared of how this would influence his soul. It is even more. This is not the return to Eretz Yisrael that we pray for, because it is a whole new depth of the exile, when observant Jews mix with them, enjoying a “sweet” relationship with them. This can be either because the *Erev Rav* offers people various indulgences of the world, and money, and that draws the Jewish people into mixing with the *Erev Rav* and finding them enjoyable. As long as the *Geulah* hasn’t yet come, we must understand very clear that this is the depth of *Galus*, in which we are found in the false sweetness of the *Erev Rav*.

We must use our holy *daas* and cut ourselves off from them, totally, and let our hearts burn with pain against this rebellion against Hashem from the *Erev Rav*, which even earnest Jews are falling in with, by becoming connected with them and finding benefits from them that seem sweet. It is impossible to mix with *Erev Rav* without being affected by them. They are not just “mixed” with us, they make us believe that what they have is “sweet.” Most of us are so mixed with them that we don’t even realize it, and how much they are negatively affect us. That is the depth of their evil - they are so mixed with us that they go unnoticed. This is the depth of our exile – that the *Erev Rav* appears so “sweet” to us.

If anyone wants to merit eternal life, he must cut off himself from any contact with *Erev Rav*. It must pain us that there are earnest, G-d fearing Jews who are connecting themselves with the *Erev Rav*, the evil souls who rebel against Hashem with their decrees on Yiddishkeit. Instead, we must connect ourselves only with *HaKadosh Baruch Hu*, and avoid the seemingly “sweet” relationship with members of the *Erev Rav*. If a *frum* Jew is connected with the *Erev Rav*, the *Erev Rav* will influence his life slowly but surely, and he will find the way of life of the *Erev Rav* to be “sweeter” than his...

So we ask Hashem to redeem us completely from exile. If, *chas v’shalom* we do not merit the *Geulah* yet, at least we can be *zocheh* to separate ourselves from the *Erev Rav*, and **designate ourselves to become connected solely with Hashem.**

2 | GREEK INFLUENCE TODAY

THE CURRENT EXILE OF "EREV RAV"

In *Al HaNissim*, the Greeks are described as “*zeidim*”, rebellious ones, who came to uproot the Torah.

Our Rabbis teach that we will go through seven exiles: Egypt, Bavel, Persia, Greece, Edom, Yishmael, and the *Erev Rav*.¹ Each of the exiles had a specific time that they lasted for. But the last exile, the exile of the *Erev Rav* (these are reincarnations of the “*Erev Rav*” [Mixed Multitude] souls who left Egypt together with the Jewish people, and influenced them to do evil) has no specific time, because it includes all of the exiles together. Therefore, the current and final exile – the exile of the *Erev Rav* – is not just the exile of the *Erev Rav*, but it includes all influences of the nations together.

The exiles of Egypt, Bavel, Persia, Greece, Edom and Yishmael each have their specific natures. But the exile of the *Erev Rav* includes ingredients of all of them at once! This is the depth of our final exile, and this is why it is so hard.

Now we can understand why the final exile is the hardest. No one knows when the current and final exile will end; it hasn't been revealed to anyone. But we are definitely in it, as our Rabbis wrote. The current exile is called the “exile of the *Erev Rav*” - which we are in.

The more subtle definition of explaining it is that it we are in the exile of Edom, and within that, the exile of Yishmael, and within that – the exile of the *Erev Rav*. The main part of the exile is the *Erev Rav*. It is an exile which includes all exiles; clearly, then, it is the most difficult of all the exiles. It pits us against the nations as never before. From all sides, we are surrounded with evil which we must fight. That describes the place and time we are in now.

THE UNIQUE NATURE OF THE GREEK EXILE

Even more so, the Greek exile was different than the other exiles. The Egyptian, Babylonian and Persian exiles all took place outside *Eretz Yisrael*, but the Greek exile took place in *Eretz Yisrael*, and not only that, but the *Beis HaMikdash* was still standing.

¹ Although we refer generally to the “four” exiles (Bavel\Babylonia, Yavan\Greece, Persia, and Edom\Rome) the four really subdivide for a total of seven, when we add on Egypt, the root of all exiles; and the last exile, Edom, which breaks up into two additional exiles: the exile of Yishmael/Arabs and the innermost layer of the exile, the exile of the “*Erev Rav*”.

The Greeks came to defile the *Beis HaMikdash*. It added a new dimension to exile: that even when we have *Eretz Yisrael* and a *Beis HaMikdash*, we are still susceptible to danger.

Normally, exile is defined by the fact that we are exiled from *Eretz Yisrael* and forced to live outside the land. But the Greek exile was a new kind of exile: That even when we are in *Eretz Yisrael*, and even when we have a *Beis HaMikdash*, we can still be in exile. It wasn't just a side aspect, it defined the whole Greek exile.

What was the concept of the Greek exile? It is defined by the fact that they came and defiled the *Beis HaMikdash*, contaminating all the oils for the *Menorah*. Their entire purpose was to come and contaminate our holiness. They went straight to the *Heichal* in the *Beis HaMikdash*, so that they could contaminate the oil for the *Menorah*. They came to the holiest site, with specific intentions to ruin the holiness.

It didn't begin with that. It really began with the decrees against certain *mitzvos* such as Shabbos, *Bris Milah*, and *Rosh Chodesh*, as our *Chazal* tell us. But it still didn't look so bad, because everyone thought that they weren't really in exile, because after all, the *Beis HaMikdash* was still standing. So although decrees were being made against us, decree after decree, people thought it wasn't so bad – because we still had the *Beis HaMikdash*.

What indeed is the difference between the Greek exile with the other exiles? The difference was astounding. During the other exiles, when we were exiled from *Eretz Yisrael* and we had no *Beis HaMikdash*, we knew we were in exile. But during the Greek exile, it did not seem to us that we were in exile, because we were in *Eretz Yisrael*, and we had a *Beis HaMikdash*.

The Greeks came to contaminate the oil – this did not just mean that we had a technical problem in that the Greeks had all the oil. It was all a result of what came before that. Olive oil (*shemen*) is seen by our Sages as a symbol of wisdom (*Chochmah*); the Greeks had control over all the oil, both on a physical level as well as on a spiritual level. They succeeded in confusing the wisdom and minds of our nation, with all their secular thinking. When the Greeks affected how we thought - that was how they were able to physically control our oil as well.

The *Beis HaMikdash* was the holiest site, but it was also the place that can contaminate everything [when it becomes contaminated]. If a person thinks that this was just another random detail in the Chanukah story, he is missing the whole point. When the Greeks came to contaminate the oil, their real intentions were that they wanted to destroy the holy power of thought which the Jewish people possess. The Jewish people were first conceived in Hashem's thoughts, and the Greeks wanted to destroy that too. When the Greeks affected our holy power of thought, they were really damaging the entire holiness of Jewish souls. That was the depth of the matter of how they contaminated all the oils.

THE GREEK EXILE REAPPEARING IN THE CURRENT EXILE

If we reflect a little, the exile of the *Erev Rav* includes all of the exiles, and that is the depth of our current exile. When a person reads about the words of our Rabbis concerning the exile, he can know on an intellectual level about what kind of problem we find ourselves in, how our minds are being threatened.

But even more so, the depth of the exile is that evil can enter even into the holiest places. That was the uniqueness of the Greek exile, and since our current exile includes the Greek exile, our current exile also contains that disturbing kind of evil: our very holiness is being threatened. The evil influences of the nations can spread into even the holy places and contaminate our holiness.

In our times as well, it can be said, *Rachmana litzlan*, that the nations are coming and contaminating our holy places. Only one jug of oil was found, and it was hidden in the ground. So too, in our times, the Greek exile is here with it. The real evil is that Jewish minds are being contaminated by the secular influences.

DEPTH OF THE CURRENT EXILE

When these words are absorbed, we can begin to realize what kind of situation we are in. First of all, we are in an all-inclusive kind of exile, which includes aspects of all the exiles, with all of the secular influences. But even more specifically, we are in an exile that resembles the Greek exile, for we live in *Eretz Yisrael*; and the exile that we are in is not only taking places in the streets, and in the buildings of secular people who make decrees against the Torah. Our very holy places are being contaminated by the modern influences, which are disturbingly reminiscent of the nature of the Greek exile.

It is not only the “*Heichal*” of the *Beis HaMikdash* hundreds of years ago which is being contaminated. **Every *shul* and *beis midrash* in this generation is being contaminated by the secular influences!** When a Jew walks into a *shul* or *beis midrash* nowadays, his mind is becoming contaminated from all of the secular ideas he hears about!

In this exile, “*Erev Rav*”, which includes in it the Greek exile, we find ourselves facing Greek influences all over again. But worse still is that the current exile includes all of the exiles – it includes all of the secular influences of every nation. Those influences are coming into every *beis midrash* and *shul*! A person is learning Torah in a *beis midrash* or davening in *shul*, and thinks that he’s being protected by the fact that *shuls* are called a “*mikdash me’at*” (abode of holiness) he is in, and that all the impurity is the street, while he’s safe and sheltered from it. After all, he is in middle of learning or *davening*, immersed in spirituality...

But the Greeks were able to contaminate the *Heichal*! If they can contaminate the *Heichal*, surely they can come into every *shul* and *beis midrash*. What this causes is the following: **the initial way of**

thinking of the average Jew who lives in our times is a contaminated kind of thinking. It is because the whole air around us is impure.

It's clear to all that there's impurity outside in the streets. But it's not clear that the impurity of the streets has entered the *shuls* and *batei midrashim*. The secular *de'os* (ways of thinking) have entered our circles and are ruining the mind of a Jew. The *daas* of the Torah has become exiled to the impure *daas* of the other nations.

We must know that the minds of all people have been contaminated by secular influences, except for a few rare individuals even if they are found in the *shuls* and *batei midrashim*. **One who doesn't try to find the "jug of oil" in our times – if he doesn't search for truth – will not see the truth.**

But the real difficulty is that people don't even realize that there's a problem. If we would know that there was an exile, everyone would cry to Hashem and beg Him that we attain a pure mind and have real *daas*. But people think that exile is only in the streets, not in the *shuls* and *batei midrashim*; a person is confident that his *de'os* are truthful. This is the depth of the exile; our *de'os* are being mixed up by the gentile nations, and we don't even realize.

If we would list all of the untruthful *de'os* that are affecting us nowadays, there would not be enough time. But we must know one thing: in the depth of exile we are in, in the last couple of years **secularism has succeeded in uprooting the entire proper Torah perspective** which *frum* people used to have. Not only are they making financial decrees against those who learn Torah; that is just the external part of the decree. They are uprooting all *de'os* of even those who learn Torah, and they are doing so to groups of people here and there; it all adds up. They are taking away the proper *de'os* which we received as tradition from our forefathers. They have even succeeded in causing us to doubt the most basic fundamentals.

Anyone born into this generation is a "*tinok shenishboh*" (captured child) among the nations, even if he is born into a Torah family, because there are very few *de'os* today which are truthful. In the Chanukah episode, only one jug of oil was found; the message of this is that nowadays, it is rare to find the truth, even in the Torah world. The actual words of Torah, of course, are never contaminated, as the *Nefesh HaChaim* writes. But in our souls, the words of Torah can definitely become hidden from the person, when his real mind is ruined by secular thinking. If one would research all his *de'os* in his mind, he would discover how much he has become influenced by secular thinking.

A SPIRITUAL HOLOCAUST TAKING PLACE IN OUR MIDST

The words here are harsh - but it is the reality which we find ourselves in. In previous generations, they were in a physical Holocaust. In this generation, we are in middle of a spiritual

Holocaust. The spiritual Holocaust is not only affecting those who have gone off the *derech* (OTD) and taken to the streets; it is affecting even us who are in the *beis hamidrash!* The true *de'os* are being uprooted, and the holiness of the Jew's soul is being extinguished.

It is all because of the influence of the *Erev Rav* because people are connected with “the heads of the *Erev Rav*”. And there is no end to how much damage they can cause when they enter our circles. When the Torah world becomes connected with the outside world – via the influences of the *Erev Rav* – the “heads of the *Erev Rav*” can mix together *Chareidim* with those who aren't *Chareidim*. How do they have the power to do this?? The answer is: **there is no more Chareidi society! The *Chareidi* society is already gone! There are only a few G-d fearing individuals left.** It's all gone, it's all destroyed.

We must understand that their influence upon us is a holocaust to us! Someone born into this generation is being born into a spiritual holocaust, no less than someone born into the generation of the Holocaust that was 50 years ago. The Jewish people are being burned; everything is burning! Maybe in our physical situation, there are some who are surviving. But in our spiritual situation, the souls of the Jewish people are being burned! Each individual must realize how much the ways of our fathers are being given up in favor of the secular influences.

The words here are just a brief description of the problems of today's exile. The depth of the exile is that each day, Jewish souls are being burned. There is no safe place anymore. Even the “*Heichal*” itself is being contaminated. It is not an external kind of impurity going on; it is the kind that enters the Jew's mind and ruins it.

THE ONLY HOPE

Every opinion that enters our minds needs to be carefully researched to see if it's truthful or not.

The truth must burn in our hearts. We need to *daven* and cry out to Hashem, from the depths of our hearts: “Save me from this generation that I am in, from all the impurity that is everywhere! Help me get through this lifetime properly!”

One must know the depth of the exile we are in – that there is no more *Chareidi* society anymore, except for a few rare individuals who fear Hashem. The only thing that we can do in this generation is to connect ourselves truthfully to Hashem, and one who is connected to Hashem, and he makes sure to have *mesirus nefesh*, he resembles the heroic *Chashmonaim* of history. Although we each have our various ups and downs in our spiritual level, we can still remain all the time connected with Hashem and pray to Him all the time that we remain connected with Him. We must be very afraid of the situation that we are in right now, because of the spiritual danger that surrounds us; that fear is what can protect us.

3 | MIXED UP WITH THE MIXED MULTITUDE

THE HOLINESS OF THE JEWISH NATION: APART FROM THE OTHER NATIONS

וקדושים בכל יום יהללוך סלה - “And the holy ones praise You every say, *selah*.”

The Jewish people are called *kedoshim*, “holy ones.” We are an *am kadosh*, a holy nation. We stood at *Har Sinai*, where we were made to be apart from the nations of the world. Holiness is in our entire makeup, in all our actions.

As the generations’ progress and we are distanced even more from *Har Sinai*, our separation from the nations of the world is less apparent. We become more and more mixed with the nations, and our holiness weakens with this. It is hard to tell these days how a Jew is that different from a non-Jew. It seems as if a Jew’s holiness is a long forgotten thing of the past.

We don’t know when the Redemption will come. We aren’t allowed to know the end. Our Rabbis gave us some signs, but we cannot know the exact time. We also don’t know the depths of their words, so we don’t even know with clarity if the signs are showing. But one thing we know for sure. The further we are from the time when we stood at *Har Sinai*, the more mixed we are with the nations.

At *Har Sinai*, hatred for the Jews entered the non-Jewish nations, because they realized that we are apart from them. It was clear then that we were apart from them. These days, when we are so mixed with the nations, it doesn’t seem to appear to us that Jews are really apart from the nations.

‘EREV RAV’: THE GREAT CONFUSION THAT HAS ENTERED OUR GENERATION

The “*Erev Rav*” (“Mixed Multitude”) were also at *Har Sinai*, but the Ramban says that they were standing apart from the Jewish people. By the Golden Calf, the *Erev Rav* joined us, but at *Har Sinai*, they were standing in a different corner, away from us. As the generations go on, we are further from the level of *Har Sinai*. Although the *Erev Rav* wasn’t mixed with us at *Har Sinai*, now when we are so ‘far’ from the level of standing at *Har Sinai*, they are mixed with us. Their souls are very mixed with us.

Some say that the word “*rav*”, which means “teacher”, implies that the evil souls of *Erev Rav* have become like a “teacher” to us in our times, in that people are so influenced by them. Others even say that the word “*rav*”, “most”, implies that most of the ‘Jewish people’ now are really souls of the *Erev Rav* [as they become more and mixed with us, which is the situation of the final days].² There

² See the words of the Vilna Gaon in sefer *Even Shelaimah*, 11: 6-8

are very few true Jewish souls, in comparison to the many souls of the *Erev Rav*, who are the majority. (On a more subtle note, there is also the rule of “becoming nullified as a “sixtieth”...) It is not clear today who is really Jewish and who is from *Erev Rav*.

If someone searches for the truth, this is an indicator that he stood at *Har Sinai* to accept the Torah. If someone doesn't search for truth, it shows that he did not want the Torah at *Har Sinai* [which was the *Erev Rav*]. This does not just mean to search for Torah, *tefillah*, and *mitzvos*. It is to search for a truthful kind of Torah, a *Toras Emes*, which Moshe *Rabbeinu* gave us, who is the paradigm of *emes/truth*.

As the generations increase, our struggles increase. We have struggles with our *yetzer hora* (Evil inclination) and with our *middos*. But in the later generations – especially in the last couple of years – we have entered a new kind of struggle: **We do not know anymore what is true and what is false.** People are searching and they aren't finding what they search for. *Chazal* say that the generation in which *Moshiach* will come will be a generation which is very confused, There is tremendous confusion today. If someone lives with even a little bit of feeling, with even a drop of purity, he can see clearly that there is little truth to be found these days.

We are confused from all we see. We see and hear about things going on in the world outside Torah, and this confuses us. We are confused as well by those who keep Torah and *mitzvos*, because we do not see enough pure and genuine Torah. If someone doesn't care about truth, than he feels fine as long as he learns *Gemara*, but if he searches for truth, he won't be satisfied with being superficial, and it bothers him greatly that there is a lack of truth.

People have a hard time knowing what the truth is as they try to raise their children in the right way. People want to know what truth is, what way to go in, but they are very confused; they don't know what is good and what is not good, what is true and what is false. This is really all because the *Erev Rav* has mixed up the world so much that we can't tell truth apart from falsity.

In our generation, the *Erev Rav* is stuck to us 'like a dog licking its food'. They are so embedded in us that it is very hard for us to sift out good from evil, even for those who try to gain clarity in their life. The amount of confusion and lack of clarity in the world today bothers any person who searches for truth.

So what should we do?

Chazal say to have a *Rebbi*, and that will save us from doubts. But what do you do if you still even doubt even after that? People don't even know what to do anymore, what to ask about; they don't feel like they have the heads to try to understand what's going on behind a problem, and therefore they don't even know what to ask about. They figure that matters should just be left to *Rabbonim* to be solved, as we do not have the heads to think properly. Even after asking, people have a hard time understanding what Rabbis are saying today. By the time he hears what the Rabbi

said, so many different versions of what the Rabbi said have already mixed him up that he doesn't understand what the Rabbi is really saying.

People are saying today that they don't feel what holiness is, or what purity is. The breaches in modesty today are appalling and it dulls a person's mind when he sees it. All kinds of foods today have a kosher certification – technology has a *hecsher*...but that doesn't make the food **really** kosher. The *Erev Rav* wants to uproot the little Torah that we do have. But we should know that the main war is not taking place in the outside world. The main war is taking place within the world of Torah - that we are confused, and we don't know what truth is.

THE ONLY HOPE

This world we live in today is like walking “in the shadow of the valley of death”. To anyone who lives a truthful life and who isn't satisfied with superficiality, this world feels like walking through death's valley. We have only one solution: even as we walk through death's valley, the *possuk* finishes by saying, “*I do not fear evil, for You are with me*”. Hashem is always with us.

Chazal state that Hashem saw that there would be few *tzaddikim* so He has spread out the *tzaddikim* throughout the generations. If we reflect deeply, we can realize that we have nothing to do with this world. Deep in our soul, the main “*mikveh*” we have to immerse ourselves in, is to realize that we are not part of this world. We are like strangers here. (If anyone in this generation has yearnings for Hashem, he's basically a *tzaddik* in this generation!)

The city that you live in, the community you live in – you should feel like a stranger towards it. It is not your real place. Your *neshamah* came from above, from Heaven; it is a piece of Hashem. Realize that you have nothing whatsoever to do with this world! The “*tzibbur*” (congregation) today is not either your real place. So if we are connected to this world, to where *are* we connected to? Our connection exists with Hashem, to His Torah, to His *mitzvos*, and to love others Jews – but **in a true way**.

We are living in very, very hard times. I am not referring to the wars that go on in the world today. I am talking about the indifference to spirituality. All connection to spirituality is being cooled off today; it is being uprooted.

What do people yearn for these days as they experience some moments of holiness? Does a person have yearnings for Hashem? Does he talk to Hashem and cry to Him when he's alone? Or does he wonder who he is, like if he's of Yemenite descent or if he's just plain different, because he's so confused about whom he really is...?

The simple feeling we need to feel, first of all, is to feel all the time that we are strangers in this generation. You are a stranger to the place you live in. We need to return somewhat to the life which our *Avos* lived – each person on his own level, as much as he can do.

We must disconnect ourselves from this lifestyle, even from things that have “*hechsherim*.” We must search for those individuals who are truthful. We must *daven* for *Moshiach* and believe that he will come, but in the time being, before he comes, we have to feel like we are strangers to this world – even if we live in *Eretz Yisrael*. Avraham *Avinu* also said he’s a stranger to this world. As long as we live in a world in which our holiness is concealed from us, we need to feel like we are a stranger to this world, [and thus it applies to *Eretz Yisrael* as well, in which the *Erev Rav* tries to uproot all holiness].

In our generation, anyone who truly searches for Hashem is a rare individual. Not everything that has a *hechsher* do we need to have. It doesn’t matter which community we are from – we all need to separate from the lifestyle of this generation.

MAKING THIS PRACTICAL: THE DAILY HISBODEDUS

To actually do this, you connect to an inner kind of life in which you feel solitude in your soul, apart from this world. Every day, make a deep *hisbodedus* (meditation) and connect yourself deeply to Hashem, to His Torah, and to His *mitzvos*.

IN CONCLUSION

We do not know what will be. But it is clear that we are living in a time of darkness. May we merit seeing the light of Hashem, the light of Torah, the light of our *neshamah* – and may we all merit to see the coming of *Moshiach*, speedily in our days.

4 | FREEDOM FROM THE EVIL INCLINATION

INTRODUCTION

Pesach is called *zman cheiruseinu* – “time of our freedom”.

There is a well-known Mishnah in *Avos*: “There is no *ben chorin* (free man) except for one who studies Torah.” If the Sages say that *cheirus*/freedom is only found by one who studies Torah, then why is Pesach called *zman cheiruseinu*? *Chazal* were very specific in saying that *cheirus*/freedom is only possible where there is Torah. If so, what does it mean that Pesach is a time of *cheirus*? Don’t these two statements of *Chazal* contradict each other?

THE TWO FACTORS WHICH PREVENT US FROM DOING HASHEM’S WILL

There is a well-known *Gemara* that says, “It is our will to do Your will (*retzoneinu laasos retzoncha*”), but it is the “yeast in the sourdough” (a reference to the evil inclination) and the jurisdiction of the government which is holding us back.” Our soul by its very essence wants to do the right thing, but the evil inclination, as well as the subjugation we have to go through in the exile – are the two factors which are getting in the way of us doing Hashem’s will.

What is the “yeast in the sourdough” and what is the “jurisdiction to the government” that are holding us back from doing the right thing?

THE “YEAST IN THE SOURDOUGH” – THE EVIL INCLINATION (EXTERNAL AND INTERNAL)

It is well-known that the “yeast in the sourdough” is referring to the *yetzer hora*, the evil inclination. What exactly is the *yetzer hora*?

Reb *Yisrael* Salanter wrote that there are two forces of evil present in a person. One kind of evil is an outer force, an angel, which convinces a person to do evil. Another kind of evil is an internal kind of evil that is enmeshed in our very heart, causing us to have evil desires.

The *Chovos HaLevovos* wrote that the *yetzer hora* is mixed into our being and enmeshed with our heart, an evil force that is inside us telling us to commit evil. This is describing the second kind of *yetzer hora* that Reb *Yisrael* Salanter wrote about.

What is the difference between the two kinds of evil that is found in man? The inner kind of evil is perceived by us as a part of our essence, so it is much harder to overcome. By contrast, the outer force of evil which can influence us is easier to overcome, since we are aware that it is not a part of

our being. It's harder to overcome our nature than to overcome this angel! This is written in *sefer Nefesh HaChaim*.

That is the “yeast in the sourdough” that prevents us from doing the right thing – the *yetzer hora*, which manifests in two forms: outer evil and internal evil.

THE “SUBJUGATION TO THE GOVERNMENT” – OUR RATZON IS IMPRISONED FROM US

The second factor which gets in our way is our “subjugation to the government.” Simply speaking, it is because we are enslaved by the exile and we have to be subjugated to the nations.

But the deeper meaning of this concept is that our very will is subjugated to evil. Our power of *ratzon* (will) can be taken over by the various evil desires that the challenges of exile tempts us with.

THE THIRD KIND OF EVIL WE FACE: AN EVIL INFLUENCE AMONG OURSELVES

When we left Egypt, we were no longer subjugated to the Egyptian exile, and the only thing holding us back from fulfilling Hashem's will was the *yetzer hora*. But as we left Egypt, there were other forces of evil that came with us – and this was the “*Erev Rav*”, a group of Egyptians who wished to join our people. The *Erev Rav* brought with them the evil influences of Egypt, and in this way, we still had an aspect of being subjugated to the influences of exile.

In fact, due to the *Erev Rav* joining us as we left Egypt, there was a whole new kind of subjugation that came with them. It was a secular government that entered us within our own camps – a whole different kind of influence that had never been here until then! Until the redemption from Egypt, the problem was that we had to endure the Egyptian rule. When we left Egypt, we were finally free from that exile, but then the *Erev Rav* entered us.

They represent a new influence of evil upon the Jewish people – an evil government that resides *within* the Jewish people. They brought about a third, deeper kind of evil that we face.

At *Har Sinai*, the *Erev Rav* didn't want to hear the Torah from Hashem. They were the ones who requested that Moshe should speak, instead of Hashem. They could not bear the holiness of Hashem's voice. While everyone else in the Jewish people were prepared to die in order to hear the Torah from Hashem – as *Chazal* say, that our souls left us as we heard Hashem speaking to us – the *Erev Rav* did not have this *mesirus nefesh* (self-sacrifice) that we had. They therefore chose not to hear the Torah from Hashem, and they requested that Moshe speak instead.

At *Har Sinai* when we heard the Torah, we were elevated, and we attained true *cheirus* (freedom). It was the completion to our *cheirus* from Egypt. We went free from all evil impurity of the Egyptian exile. But once we sinned by the Golden Calf, we once again descended to the level of

impurity that had been removed from us. The members of the *Erev Rav* were the ones who came up with the idea of the Golden Calf.

Every year, we can return to the freedom we attained when we left Egypt, as well as the freedom we received at the giving of the Torah. But at the same time, the evil influence of the *Erev Rav* returns as well in order to counter all of that holiness we can receive. And concerning our era - End of the Days - it is written in our *sefarim hakedoshim* that the *Erev Rav* will return to once again influence us and prevent us from attaining holiness.

At *Har Sinai*, our souls left us when we heard the Torah. The evil inclination left us as well – but the *Erev Rav* was still present with us. The same *Erev Rav* who didn't want to have *mesirus nefesh* to hear the Torah come back each year to prevent us from having *mesirus nefesh*.

PREPARING FOR PESACH AND SHAVUOS – THROUGH MESIRUS NEFESH

We must therefore prepare for the freedom of Pesach and for the giving of the Torah by being preparing ourselves to have *mesirus nefesh*. In order to receive the holiness that Yom Tov has to offer us, we must prepare for it by having *mesirus nefesh* for the Torah. If anyone seeks the truth, he should prepare himself to have *mesirus nefesh* for Hashem and His Torah. Any Jew of the past who succeeded in his life was only due to the *mesirus nefesh* that he exhibited.

If a person wants to make sure that he is not being influenced by the *Erev Rav*, he must have *mesirus nefesh* in learning the Torah. “There is no free person except the one who learns Torah.”

What does it mean to have *mesirus nefesh* for Hashem? It means “*Retzoinenu laasos retzoncha*” – It is our will to do Your will. We must reveal our innermost *ratzon* to only do Hashem's will. This will help us have *mesirus nefesh*.

May we be *zoche* to search for our true *ratzon* in life – that our entire yearning in life should be to do always reveal the will of Hashem.

5 | THE FINANCIAL STRAIN ON BNEI TORAH IN ISRAEL

ASKING HASHEM THAT WE BE DRAWN CLOSER TO HIM

In the blessing of **וקרבנו**, after asking Hashem to return us to the Torah, we ask Hashem, **וקרבנו מלכינו לעבודתך** - “And draw us closer, Our King, to Your service.” What is this closeness that we ask for?

When Hashem first created Adam, he was commanded to work the field of *Gan Eden* and protect it. After the first sin, the *avodah*/work of man is to work with the fields of the earth, as opposed to the fields of *Gan Eden*. Originally, man “worked” in *Gan Eden*, and after the sin, we work with the earth.

The world stands on three pillars – Torah, *Avodah* and *Chessed*. Our *Avodah* used to be with *korbonos* when we had a *Beis HaMikdash*; after the destruction of the *Beis HaMikdash*, we have no *korbonos*, but instead we have *Avodah* through *Tefillah* – prayer. Sin is what caused us to have to do any work. Thus, we ask Hashem to draw us closer to *Avodah* – to the *Avodah* of the *korbonos*, which we are missing. What is the depth behind this prayer of **וקרבנו מלכינו לעבודתך**?

BITACHON – A STATE OF GAN EDEN IN THE SOUL

When Adam sinned, he was greatly distanced from the original *Avodah* in *Gan Eden*. We ask Hashem that we be returned to our original *Avodah* that we had in *Gan Eden*.

The Alter of Novhardok *zt”l* would say that the concept of *bitachon* (faith in Hashem) is essentially to live in the state that existed before Adam’s sin (each person can reach this to a certain extent). All effort that we have to make is a curse placed upon mankind due to Adam’s sin.

Bitachon means to connect your soul to a world of *Bitachon*, to a state of *Gan Eden*; it is not just about placing your trust in Hashem and realizing that it is not your efforts which provide you with support. When a person has *bitachon*, not only will he be provided with livelihood, but he lives in a state of *Gan Eden*. If a person has “*parnassah*” (a livelihood) because he has *bitachon*, then he lives in a state of *Gan Eden* in his soul.

KNOWING WHERE OUR SUPPORT COMES FROM

But if a person thinks that his livelihood comes from this world, he is actually limiting his source of livelihood, because he thinks that the source of his livelihood comes from this world. He attributes his source of livelihood to this materialistic world.

This is not a side issue. It is relevant to the entire way a person lives his life.

When a person receives his livelihood from people, he must realize that it is really coming from Hashem. If he doesn't, he views his source of livelihood as mainly coming from this world, and then he is connected to this materialistic world. The food he buys with such money is coming from materialism, and when such food goes into his body, he becomes more and more connected to the materialism of the world.

DRAWING SUPPORT FROM AN EVIL SOURCE

Even worse than the above issue [of lacking *bitachon*] is the following: What happens if a person is getting his livelihood from an impure place?

There is no way the spiritual success will come to him through this. Not only won't he succeed in his Torah learning like this, but it will dull his spirituality entirely.

Chazal say that "the way a person wants to "go in" is the way he will be lead "to". Do we want our livelihood to come from a pure place, or from this world of materialism?

In the last couple of years, Torah learning is being supported by the heads of the *Erev Rav*!

How can people take money from people who want to uproot all *mitzvos*, all Torah, all spirituality?? It is not possible to see spiritual success if one takes money from such a source. *Chazal* say that if a child is fed by a father who cheats in business, the child will not see success in his Torah learning. The food entering him is spiritually contaminated, because it comes from an impure source – from sin. When people are connecting to taking money from the *Erev Rav*, it ruins the quality of one's Torah learning – completely.

The decrees being made on Torah are being made by *Erev Rav*. These are souls who started the sin with the Golden Calf and caused everyone to sin. The decrees are being made by souls of the *Erev Rav*, together with a couple of ignorant fools who join with them because they don't know any better.

We should **not** *daven* that the government should support us. Therefore, now that they have cut off support, we should instead **sing** to Hashem over this! It is really a great kindness of Hashem that this has happened!

Where should we get supported from, though? That is a good question. But we definitely can't get it from the *Erev Rav*.

We need to know what Hashem wants from us in this situation. Some people do not have financial problems, so they don't have to worry. But most people who are sitting and learning

Torah, who need support, are right now in a tight financial situation. What is Hashem telling us through this? What is He screaming out to us?

We must know that it is not possible for our Torah learning to survive if we get supported by the *Erev Rav*! We cannot take money from them and then hope we will get *siyata d'shamaya* (Heavenly assistance) and that everything will be fine!

If we can't come to terms with this, if a person doesn't see what the problem in this, it's because we have already been bribed by them by getting used to taking money from them. "*A bribe blinds the eyes of the clever.*" The *Erev Rav* is like [evil] Lavan, who sought to destroy the entire Jewish people in the hopes of killing Yaakov *Avinu*. The *Erev Rav* is trying to do just the same – they want to uproot all spirituality from the Jewish people; they want to entirely get rid of Torah, *mitzvos*, everything.

Hashem is telling us quite clearly: **קרבנו מלכנו לעבודתך**. He wants to draw us close to Him, thus, we must ask ourselves: Do we aspire to be in a state of *Gan Eden*, in which we being supported by a pure source – or do we want to be supported by an impure source?

This is not a question of how much *hishtadlus*/effort we need to make in order to make a living versus how much *bitachon* we need to have. This is a question of what Hashem is asking of us – that we should hopefully choose a life of holiness, and not to get swayed after the world.

Imagine if this government would give us even more money than before – what would *b'nei Torah* do? Would we take the money...?

They have already burned so many *neshamos* in the Jewish people. Now finally Hashem has had mercy on us and has taken away their support of us, so that we will be separated from them. Their hatred for us is really what saves us, similar to what the *sefarim hakedoshim* write about anti-Semitism of the Nations. When Jews are mixed with non-Jews and enjoy a relationship with them, we are in spiritual danger, while Anti-Semitism makes us realize that we are separate from them, which saves us from getting influenced by them. Thus, the hatred of non-Jews for us is really a blessing, since it reminds us that we are separate from them, and then we don't mix it with them.

WORK IS NOT EITHER AN OPTION

For a *ben Torah* to go work in secular places in order to get supported – can there be any greater lie than this?! Can our Torah learning be supported by working at these kinds of jobs?

If a person searches for truth, he wonders what Hashem wants from us. We need to seek truth. Surely we need to make effort on making a living and we can't have *bitachon* all day. We certainly need to have both effort and to have *bitachon*; for half a day, try to work on your *bitachon*. But if we make effort to make a living from places that are impure, this is not called 'effort'. Effort to

make a living was a ‘penalty’ placed on mankind; if a person makes effort to go make a living in any secular places, the concept of working to making a living simply does not apply. The ‘penalty’ placed on mankind to go to work does not require one to go work in any of these terrible places.

There are people whose *neshamos* have already been burned by the *Erev Rav*’s influence, so when they hear these words, they wonder what the problem is. This is the situation of the final generation, in which *Erev Rav* has influenced so many Jewish souls and burned them up. Hashem will of course have mercy on us and take us out of this predicament and bring *Moshiach* when the time comes, but as for now, there is so much confusion!!

WORK ON YOUR BITACHON, AND ASK A HALACHIC AUTHORITY IF YOU HAVE TO GO TO WORK

We must awaken our inner yearning for holiness and purity, for pure and true Torah. Then we will be able to sense all the falsity that is poisoning all people’s Torah learning and *mitzvos*. We must yearn for the eternal life in the Next World, and not for a better materialistic life on this world.

Any Jew who searches for the truth, who is having a rough time making a livelihood, needs to work on his *bitachon*. As for how much effort one needs to make in order to make a living – which includes being supported by the government – an authority needs to be consulted about this. Most of the sources of the livelihood today require a person to choose of what kind of life he wants to live....a life of truth, or a life of falsity.

MAKE A SOUL-ACCOUNTING

We must know clearly that our source of livelihood is where we are connected to. In these days especially, we need to make the following *cheshbon hanefesh* (soul-accounting): How much are we seeking to live a truthful kind of life? To where are we connected to? What are the things we are doing that connect us to the Next World, and what are the things we are doing that are connecting us with this world of materialism...?

May we merit to connect to the holiness of Torah and *mitzvos*. Even if we do not merit *Moshiach*, may we at least merit that our support for Torah learning should not be coming from the heads of *Erev Rav* that rule the government. If we have no support, let us subsist on bread and water, rather than have to rely on government support. May we merit help from Hashem to seek the truth, and that even if any of us has to make a living, that we should at least be surrounded with fear of Heaven – from the depths of our soul.

6 | EXILE – PAST AND PRESENT

VISUALIZING THE EXODUS: TWO METHODS

“One is obligated to see himself as if he [himself] had left Egypt.”³ In every generation, on Pesach, we have a *mitzvah* to feel like we are leaving Egypt – today, and now.

When Chazal said that we have this obligation, this doesn't mean in the sense that we need to imagine *then* what it must have been like. Rather, the intention of Chazal was that we need to imagine *now*, what it was like *then* [to attach the past to the present].

How can a person feel as if he left Egypt, though, when he doesn't remember what it was like? How can a person remember what it was like in his past *gilgul* (soul incarnation) when he left Egypt, if he doesn't remember his previous lifetime?

As time goes on and the generations continue, we are further from that time in history, and it becomes more concealed [and distant from us]. But through study and in-depth analysis of the Egyptian bondage, a person can come to visualize the terrible exile that Egypt was, and this will slowly but surely enable a person to feel, of what it was like to be exiled there - and in turn, what it was like to go free from there.

So by learning the words of Chazal in detail about the Egyptian bondage, we enable our mind to visualize what it was like to be there. That gets us to feel that we were actually there, and that draws us closer to feeling the exile that was Egypt. Only through feeling the exile – not simply through knowing about it intellectually – can a person feel what the redemption from it felt like.

This is the first method brought in our Chazal of how one can connect himself to the exile and to the redemption of Egypt: studying the words of Chazal about the Egyptian bondage. But there is also another method brought in Chazal: to connect ourselves with the present state of exile, which can get us to conceptualize what the meaning of exile is, and in turn, what it means to be redeemed from exile.

The gain of the second approach is that whereas we have never seen the past and we do not recognize it, the present is something we all recognize. The past is gone and we have a hard time relating to it, but in the present, we are still in exile, so the present is easier for us to relate to. By becoming aware of the current situation of our exile, that is how we can feel what exile was like in the past – the root of all exiles, which was Egypt.

³ As we say in the *Hagaddah shel Pesach*.

So we have two methods of how we can visualize leaving Egypt.

The first way is to learn the words of Chazal about the Egyptian bondage, which in turn helps us visualize it. That enables us to then picture in our minds of what it was like to have actually been there, and that helps us feel the pain of the Egyptian exile. This causes us to wish to escape it, and to cry out to Hashem to be saved. This method, of visualizing the exile and redemption from Egypt, is an *avodah* on our part, which requires *hisbonenus* (deep reflection); it doesn't come to us so fast.

The second, alternative approach, is to think about the meaning of present exile, which can help us conceptualize exile of the past. By realizing what the current exile is, it can get us to feel pained from the exile we are in, and when we feel the depth of this exile, it is then much easier for us to connect ourselves with the exile of the past.

REFLECTING INTO THE CURRENT EXILE

Using the second method will require us to think: Which exile are we in? According to the first method, all we have to be aware of is the Egyptian exile. According to the second method, we need to think into the current exile.

Here, we will elaborate upon the second method: visualizing the depth of the current exile. The purpose of this is so that we can cause ourselves to cry out to Hashem, from all the pain that we can feel from this exile – and in turn, so that we can connect ourselves to the exile that was in Egypt, the root exile of all exiles to come - including the present one.

THE SIX EXILES

The roots of these matters are stated in Chazal.

The Jewish people, ever since becoming a nation, have undergone four exiles, which really end up being five exiles; and in fact, there is a sixth exile⁴. Chazal list four exiles⁵: the first exile was Egypt, the second exile was Bavel (Babylonia), the third was Persia-Media, and the fourth was the Greek exile. The fifth exile is the exile of Edom. Within the exile of Edom, there is another exile: the exile of Yishmael. (We can all see in front of our eyes that we are in the exile of Yishmael; they surround us every day and at all times.)

Those are our exiles, ever since we have become a nation. The current exile we are in, Edom, includes in it “Yishmael”. From the exile of Yishmael will sprout the light of the redemption, as our

⁴ In another *derashah*, the Rav mentioned that this really adds up for a total of seven exiles: Egypt, Bavel, Persia-Media, Greece, Edom, Yishmael, and “Erev Rav.” See Chanukah #048 – Greek Exile Today.

⁵ *Beraishis Rabbah* 1:1

Chazal state. Chazal said that the nation of Yishmael will cause the nation of Yisrael to greatly suffer, which will cause the nation of Yisrael to cry out to Hashem from all of their suffering; and then Hashem will hear their prayers, and we will be redeemed. It will be “*shama keil*”, “G-d will hear”, which hints to the name of “Yishmael”, for we will cry out to Hashem from the exile of Yishmael, just as we cried out in Egypt to Him, when our prayers were heard and we were redeemed.

We have gone through all the previous exiles. We’ve been through the exile of Egypt, and we’ve been through the exile of Bavel. The exile of Yavan (Greece) is also over, to a certain extent [see footnote]⁶. The exile of Edom, though, is our current situation, and we have not come out of it yet. And more specifically, we currently face the exile of Yishmael.

UNDERSTANDING THE DEPTH OF THE EXILE OF YISHMAEL

To understand our current exile with greater clarity: If someone thinks that the exile of Yishmael is referring to the Arabs which surround us, he is mistaken. Although it is certainly true that we are surrounded by Arabs and we suffer from them, this is only the external layer of the exile. It is true that we are totally ‘exiled’ to Yishmael in the external sense, but there is a more inner layer to the exile taking place.

[The external aspect of the exile of Yishmael is that] there is a war of Yishmael against Yisrael, which takes place in Eretz Yisrael, concerning the ownership of Eretz Yisrael. The nation of Yishmael claims inheritance over Eretz Yisrael, for the *Zohar* states that Yishmael has a *zechus* (merit) over Eretz Yisrael, due to the *mitzvah* of *Bris Milah* which they keep⁷. Therefore, they fight Yisrael as they are in Eretz Yisrael.

But the inner layer of this exile is of a totally different nature. The Vilna Gaon⁸ discusses at length, as well as Reb Elchonon Wasserman zt”l⁹, that the final exile is called the exile of the “*Erev Rav*”¹⁰.

EREV RAV - THEN

6 According to many opinions, we are still within the Greek exile today. See the derasha of Chanukah #048 – Greek Exile Today.

7 And it is brought in many places in Chazal that there is a connection between Bris Milah and Eretz Yisrael; hence, the Arabs, who keep Bris Milah, have a stronger hold over Eretz Yisrael.

8 See Even Shelaimah, chapter 11: 1-8

9 In sefer Kovetz Maamarim

10 “The Mixed Multitude.” For more background on the Erev Rav, see Erev Rav_05_Amalek Exposed.

When the Jewish people left Egypt, the Torah writes, “And the *Erev Rav* went up with them.” Ever since we became a people, we have had an ‘addition’ that has been following us throughout: the ‘*Erev Rav*’.

They are the ones who were responsible for causing the Jewish people to sin. They gave the idea to make the Golden Calf, and they were the ones who kept causing trouble in the desert and influencing the generation to sin.

Back then, they were not the heads of the Jewish people, though; they were simply known as the ‘*Erev Rav*’. The leaders then were Moshe and Aharon. It was the *Erev Rav* who convinced everyone that Moshe was dead when he ascended to Heaven to receive the Torah; they thought of the idea to make the Golden Calf and convinced everyone else to do it. The souls of the Jewish people, by themselves, could never have conceived of such a false notion. It was entirely due to the persuasion and influence of the *Erev Rav*.

[Members of the] *Erev Rav* has been escorting us since we left Egypt, all the way until today. We left Egypt, but along with this, came another exile: the exile of the *Erev Rav*. We left Pharaoh, we left the Egyptians, but we weren’t redeemed from the *Erev Rav*. They have been following us since we became a nation, until today.

EREV RAV – NOW

However, they have gone through major changes since then. The Vilna Gaon writes that in the final generations, the *Erev Rav* are the “heads of the Jewish people, who are the ‘leaders’, and they have control over the “sons of Leah and Rachel”.

They are also called ‘*sapachas*’ by Chazal – a kind of leprosy that forms over the skin, embedded into the skin and atop it, but not a part of it. They came with us when we left Egypt and added themselves onto our nation, but they are not a part of our nation; thus they are called a *sapachas* \leprosy - a layer added onto the skin, which is not an actual part of the skin.

In the later generations, and especially in our current generation, the *Erev Rav* are wicked souls who lead the Jewish people towards evil. Their agenda is to lead the Jewish people astray from Torah, from all holiness, from *emunah*, and from *mitzvos*.

It doesn’t matter if he [a member of *Erev Rav*] wears a *kippah* or if he doesn’t have a *kippah*; whether he has a beard or whether he doesn’t have a beard.

This is the exile we are in. The exile we are currently in is the exile of the Erev Rav - who exercise ‘control’ over the Jewish people. The ‘heads of the Erev Rav’ are the souls of Amalek; Chazal say that the Erev Rav is made up of five kinds of people, and at the head of all of them is Amalek¹¹.

This has been true about our current exile ever since it has begun, but it has particular relevance to today’s times. We must understand the situation that we are found in. The exile we are in today is being headed by people who look like Jews - and they look like they are a part of the Jewish people. This is in vast contrast to the exile of Egypt. In Egypt, when we were exiled by Pharaoh, it was clear to all of us that Pharaoh was not of the Jewish people. But in the current exile, we are exiled under the jurisdiction of people who look like they are one of us. But although they look like Jews, Chazal said that their souls are not of the *Bnei Yisrael*.¹²

They do not understand, and they can never understand, what Torah is. They cannot understand what *mitzvos* are. They cannot understand the nature of the true bond that is between the Jewish people and Hashem.

THE GOVERNMENT’S DECREE ON BNEI TORAH TO JOIN THE ARMY

“In every generation, they [the nations] stand up to destroy us.”¹³ We must understand that in the exile we are in, the *Erev Rav* is also trying to destroy us, just as the nations of the past in each generation have sought to destroy us.

If we reflect on the situation, we can see the depth of our exile. In the situation we are in right now, according to the *Halachah*, it is a time of *shmad* (a decree of spiritual genocide)!¹⁴ If someone thinks that this is just another decree upon us, he doesn’t understand! This is not merely another decree. We are in a time of *shmad*! They want to uproot the entire Torah, from the root!

In a time of *shmad*, there are *halachos* that apply. Every Jew must become familiar with the laws of *mesirus nefesh* – to be prepared to give up our life, if we must. There is a *mitzvah* of *kiddush Hashem* during this time. These *halachos* are discussed in Rambam *Hilchos Kiddush Hashem* and *Sefer HaChinuch* by the *mitzvah* of *kiddush Hashem*. There is a *halachah* that during a time of *shmad*, one is not allowed to listen to the government even if they tell you to wear a certain kind of shoelace. A Jew has to let himself get killed rather than listen to them!

11 The source for this is Tikkunei HaZohar (41), brought in the words the Vilna Gaon in sefer Even Shelaimah (11). five groups are termed “Nega Ra” (Evil Affliction): Nefilim, Giborim, Anakim, Refaim, and Amalekim. Refer to the Rav’s five original Hebrew classes of “Erev Rav”, and to the English adaptation of “Erev Rav_005_Amalek Exposed”.

12 For further research, see Tefillah #109

13 Hagaddah shel Pesach

14 This is in light of the Israeli government’s recent announcement to enforce the draft of yeshivah bochurim into the army, which our Gedolim have declared as an open attempt to wage war against the Torah world; thus it is being seen by our Gedolim as a “time of *shmad*” (genocide), in which the halacha is, “yahasog v’al yaavor”, “be killed rather than transgress.”

THE SECULAR INFLUENCE ON OUR NAMES, LANGUAGE, AND CLOTHING

Let's think about this for a minute. Chazal said that in Egypt, the Jewish people did not change their names, their language, and their clothing. But look at what is going on today [with regards to changes in our names, language, and clothing].

With regards to names, in recent times, what kinds of names are people giving to their children? Are people always naming their children with names like Avraham, Yitzchok, Yaakov, Moshe, Aharon, Yosef, and Dovid? All kinds of 'new names' are becoming popular now, which have entered us from the outside world. We can't even tell if certain names being given today are a boy's names or girl's names!

I was recently in America and I met someone with his little daughter. I asked him, "What's your daughter's name?" He said, "Her name is Eli."

I am not referring to people who don't keep Torah and mitzvos; I hope that Hashem merits them to do true *teshuvah*. I am referring even to people who keep Torah and mitzvos, who are finding it acceptable to give all kinds of new names to their children.

And what is the language that people speak today? *Lashon HaKodesh* has become a foreign language today. How many words being spoken each day are words that have no root in *Lashon HaKodesh*? How do conversations begin? It used to be that in the average conversation between two *frum* Jews, the conversation began with "*Shalom*" and ended with "*Shalom*." Today, how do conversations usually begin? I don't have to mention examples. You already know.

A person might keep Torah and mitzvos, wear a *kippah*, and even have a beard, but the language he speaks is almost exactly like how they talk in the street (except with some minor differences).

In Egypt, our people didn't change their style of clothing. But in today's times, we all know that clothing 20 years ago looked very different than today's styles.

In Egypt, we didn't change our names, clothing, language. That was then. Today, we are in a different place than Egypt. Today, *frum* Jews are connected with the outside world, and this has placed us into an exile that is total.

AVOIDING SECULAR INFLUENCE

We must know that *Ahavas Yisrael* (love for other Jews) is not the same thing as *chibbur* (connection) to the ways of life all Jews. We must all have *Ahavas Yisrael*; we must burn with a love for other Jews, to love another Jew as you love yourself. But to become connected to the lifestyles of the secular world, and to what goes on outside the "four cubits of *Halacha*", is to become connected to a world of heresy.

Now I will ask a very simple question. How could it be that a *frum* person keeps listening to the radio, where he hears and absorbs a secular person's views, who doesn't believe in Hashem and who presents opinions which totally contradict the Torah? How can it be that a person keeps turning on the radio, morning afternoon and night, every half hour, to listen to the opinions of anyone who gets onto the radio to talk, to hear what one person says and what another person thinks?

Maybe a person justifies this by saying, "Don't worry. I can always hold onto my inner fire of holiness. All of these things I'm listening to don't affect me or influence me."

We must understand what kind of situation we are in. If we would know, we wouldn't be in this situation. It seems though that people have gotten used to it and that there's nothing wrong. It has become acceptable even for *frum* people to be very connected to the world.

A DECREE OF THE 'DEVIL' AND WICKED PEOPLE – OR A DECREE OF HASHEM?

Last week, I met someone who is considered a Torah scholar. He remarked to me, "I just don't know what Hashem wants from us. Since the times of Moshe, there was never as much Torah learning as there is today. What, then, does Hashem want from us??" He then said to me, "It must all be that it's all "*maaseh satan*" (the work of the devil), which is trying to bring us down, from of all the increase in Torah and mitzvos that it sees, which hasn't been here since the times of Moshe Rabbeinu".

Such a conclusion shows what kind of deep exile we are in. All of the harsh judgments that are taking place today are not being caused by the 'judgments'. Hashem is the Judge meting it out; He is behind it all. Yes, Hashem definitely wants something from us, in sending us all of the judgment we see. There are many messengers of Hashem who can mete out His judgment. There are plenty of people who act like scorpions and snakes to us; there is no shortage of them. But they are all messengers of Hashem!

What, indeed, does Hashem want from us? He is not 'saying' it to us or 'telling' it to us; He is not even yelling it to us anymore. He has given a decree upon us. It is Hashem who is behind the decree! No one else is behind the decree. It is Hashem talking to us, to all of us, to any Jew who has a soul. Hashem is speaking to every Jew who has a soul and sending a message.

If someone reacts to the decree by saying, "I'm fine. My children are too young [to get drafted], and I have plenty of money to move to a different place if I want" – he clearly does not realize the danger to his soul in having such an attitude. How many parents cannot sleep at night because they have children who are of age [to get drafted]! They have no idea what they will do about this!

Hashem is speaking to every Jew now. He is telling each and every one of us, "Enough! Put a stop to the entire way you have been living all these years!" The entire lifestyle that has become

acceptable in recent years is a life of total *hefker* (carelessness). It is not a life in which people are seeking to become close to Hashem.

What is Hashem asking from us, in the situation we are in? The possuk in the Torah says, “*What does Hashem your G-d ask from you?*” How does this apply today? He is asking of us one thing alone, and it is the internal truth which applies to the soul deep within every Jew. We are in a time of *shmad*, and it means exactly what it means, with all its ramifications.

LIVING IN A TIME OF 'SHMAD' (SPIRITUAL GENOCIDE)

The first thing Hashem wants from us is to be willing to give ourselves up for Him. This will require us to learn the *halachos* of *Kiddush Hashem*.

In this time of *shmad* we are in, we must all accept upon ourselves to avoid going to certain places that we were used to going to until now. Each person needs to have the *daas* to realize that he must resolve not to go to certain places that connect him to the outside world, places which he has been used to going to until now. This realization needs to be sealed upon the heart of any *frum* Jew today who fears the word of Hashem.

If someone thinks that this sounds too far-fetched, and that it's just another aspect of our exile, he is mistaken. They [the *Erev Rav*] make their appearance in several stages. They try to get involved in our Torah learning and make problems there, and at other times, they are behind pushing the seminaries to bring secular material into the Torah world.

The Vizhnitzer Rebbe zt”l said that even if they decree that we should learn Tractate Bava Basra, nobody should listen to the government and learn Bava Basra! This is because Torah cannot be nursed from the *Erev Rav*.

Most people don't see it this way, and they wonder, “What is so terrible? Most of what they [the government] seek is for our own good, with just a little bit of bad mixed in. It's mostly good with just a little bit of bad involved. All we have to do is collect a lot of money and pay them off, and then all the problems would go away....”

A person is slowly pulled after them and he becomes connected with them over the years. Chazal say that when you listen to the wicked government during a time of *shmad*, today they say “Do this”, tomorrow they say, “Now do this”, and in the end, they will tell the person to commit idol worship.

If someone doesn't know that he is in a time of *shmad*, he is totally blind!

The Brisker Rav zt”l expressed, “I see today what is going on in today's times, which almost no one else sees.” This was said many years ago. We are in a time in which most people do not even realize that we are in a time of *shmad*! It appears like another decree. People think, “There was a

Pharoah, there was a Nevuchadezzar, and we got past all of them, and we will get by this one too.” I hope we get through it, with Hashem’s help; Moshiach should come. But in order to get past this decree we are in, that means we need to be prepared to give up our lives for Hashem!

This is reality now. If someone is clear about it, he can’t fall asleep at night. It is hard to concentrate during these days for anyone who is clearly aware of the situation.

Imagine if a murderer is chasing somebody and he wants to follow him into his house so that he can kill him. If we see him running after the person, would we keep our doors open as he’s running by our house? Taking this further, would we want to be in the same room with him? Would we be comfortable if he’s near us? What if his hand is touching our body? And what if his hands are nearing our heart? What do we do if a murderer is right near our own heart?

If someone tends to live in denial, he will think that this kind of stuff only happens in nightmares, and that it cannot happen in reality. But the decree is pointing right at our heart! Our very heart is in danger, no less than a murderer placing his hand near our heart.

What more does Hashem want us to do, so that we understand that they [the Erev Rav] are coming to uproot the entire Torah...?

Pharoah made a decree to kill all Jewish boys. Lavan tried to destroy us entirely, in the attempt of trying to destroy Yaakov. What exactly did Lavan want to destroy? We will explain it clearly, for anyone who doesn’t understand yet at this point:

If a *frum* Jew is drafted into the army these days, is there anyone who thinks that his *Yiras Shomayim* (fear of Heaven) won’t be affected? Is he the same afterwards? By putting a *frum* Jew together with those who don’t keep Torah and mitzvos, who act brazen and improper, will he be able to hold onto his *kedushah* (personal holiness)??

IT’S NOT A FINANCIAL ISSUE OF THE GOVERNMENT

If someone thinks that they [the government] is trying to help us financially, and that the issue of the army is entirely a financial issue that the government is dealing with – he must know that this is all the ‘*Sitra Achara*’ (the ‘Other Side’) being is clothed in the garment of certain people who claim that they’re out for our best interests.

In fact, those people [who are pushing for the draft] might not even be aware that the ‘*Sitra Achara*’ is controlling them, and they might even be earnest in their intentions. Some of them actually are earnest, and they aren’t trying to be wicked. They simply don’t understand what they are doing to us.

But this is only concerning a certain amount of them. The rest of them simply have wicked intentions. And even those in the government who have earnest intentions to help us are

accomplishing the same purpose as the totally wicked members, in spite of the fact that they don't realize what they are doing: they are coming to uproot all of the Torah!!

'EMUNAH' IS NOT AN OPTION NOW

If we can remember that the government caused the closure of the yeshivah of Volozhin, can't we also understand that now that the government is trying to uproot the entire Torah?!

How can anyone sleep at night? How can anyone be so calm and serene these days? Why aren't we at least we crying out to Hashem to be saved? Instead, there is false and pseudo kind of '*emunah*' (faith in G-d) that people are having. If someone honestly believes that it's all fine, he would be correct if he indeed had total *emunah*. But the average person does not have such a high level of *emunah*. [If so, we must *daven*.]

REALIZING THE SITUATION

Before the Holocaust, the same thing happened. The *tzaddikim* of the generation were telling *Klal Yisrael* that they are seeing "black clouds" descending towards *Klal Yisrael*. There were many who heard their words, but they did not actually believe them. They didn't believe that our enemies would reach the gates of Jerusalem. Nobody believed that the government would make decrees like this on us. Did anyone believe it would come to this?

How much longer can this go on for?? We must all know that Hashem is telling us one thing clearly: It is a time of *shmad*, and we must give up our life for Him; we must not listen to the government no matter what they tell us to do, even if it's something minor, even if it is something permissible. Until we realize that we are actually in a time of *shmad*, we don't realize and deal with the situation properly.

If someone would come and decree on us that we cannot keep the *mitzvos* of the Torah, we would all understand that it is a time of *shmad*. Our situation is a bit different than such a decree, but it is still the 'Snake' coming toward us with its 'cleverness'. It's the same kind of argument.

These words are not being said so that you should hear them and be inspired. It is so that you understand what is going on.

It is like living in the time of Haman's decree. It can be said of today that Haman and Achashveirosh are sitting and drinking together, while "the city of Shushan is weeping". Even if we succeed in removing part of the decrees of the government, we still remain in a time of *shmad*. Haman's decree was to take effect at a later date, but in the interim, everyone was crying. Just because the decree of the government isn't taking effect today doesn't mean we can be calm today.

Every Jew must realize that we are in a time of *shmad!* If the government tells us to do anything, we must be ready to scream back at them, “I am a Jew! I am giving up my soul for my Creator. I believe only in Him!” These words will eventually become clear to everyone in *Klal Yisrael*. The only question is how much time it will take. But this is our situation, this is reality, this is what we are in now.

How did we get to this point? It was because there were many steps in the process that took place until now. We were not being staunch enough in keeping the Torah until now, and all of this laxity happened slowly and in steps; now we have hit the last straw. This is the exile we are in.

SOMETHING TO THINK ABOUT BY THE PESACH SEDER

Every Jew must realize the following. If the current situation does not bother him, he wouldn't have been bothered either if he would be in Egypt. Had he been in Egypt, he would have said too, “It's fine. It'll pass. Pharaoh is killing all the Jewish baby boys? It will all be fine. This decree will pass too.”

If someone does not feel the depth of the current exile, he would have been complacent like this in Egypt as well. It can be said of him, “Had he been there, he would not have been redeemed.”¹⁵

When a person is sitting at the *seder* this Pesach, and he's doing his various *minhagim* (each to his own), if he doesn't feel the situation of the present exile we are in, how can he feel the past?!

Hashem has sent us a decree this Erev Pesach. But it is really a gift that He has sent us. It enables us to feel the exile. It is easy for a person to sit by the *seder* and imagine the Egyptian exile, using his power of imagination; and that the present situation we are in is fine. But our inner *avodah* to prepare for the night of Pesach is to realize the current situation of our exile.

If someone isn't feeling sick in his heart over the situation of *Klal Yisrael* now, he must know that his soul is not connected to the situation now. When one has empathy with the pain that the young boys of *Klal Yisrael* now face, this is already enough of a reason to lose sleep at night. We must now join with the pain of others who are facing this predicament [of the government's decree to draft the boys into the army], just as Moshe Rabbeinu went out to join with the pain of his brethren.

What Hashem wants from us is not that we merely become inspired! If anyone here thinks that the words being said in this *shiur* are for the purpose of becoming inspired, he has totally missed the point.

Hashem has sent us a decree; this is one side of the coin. But the other side of the coin is that He has sent us a gift. The gift of it is that He is waking us up from our slumber. We are being woken

¹⁵ This is said of the “wicked son” in the Hagaddah shel Pesach.

up from the sleep we have been from all these years, having gotten used to a lifestyle that was a spiritual slumber.

CELLPHONES

I will now ask you a simple question, one of the simplest questions that can be asked in the world. For the last 10 years already, cellphones have been on the market. Is there anyone here who believes that a person can be a real *ben aliyah* (growing, spiritual person) if he has a cellphone and maintain a true kind of life? Did cellphones elevate anyone, or did they only bring people down? Gradually, it has brought a person's spiritual level down.

If you agree that it's bad for your *ruchniyus*, why didn't you get rid of it and throw it in the garbage? I'm not talking about the "non-kosher" phones. There is actually no such thing as a 'kosher' phone; they are all bad devices. It is just an issue of how much it brings the person down – the non-kosher phones are worse, the kosher phones are not as bad, but they're all detrimental.

Don't we understand that the entire way we are living now is incorrect? How can we just continue peacefully, with all that is going on now? Hashem is coming to each of us and saying, "My son. You are my son, and I am Your Father. I love you, and I desire you. I have pain that your other holy brothers are captured by the materialism of This World, swayed by the *Erev Rav* on This World."

A person might be a *ben Torah* and look *frum*, but when he's walking in the street as he is talking and taking and talking [on a cellphone], this is all a lifestyle that is totally *hefker*.

Hashem is telling each of us, "Enough! You must put a halt to the kind of life you are living!" What should we search for, then, after we realize that? We must *daven* to Hashem and cry out to Him!

BEING PREPARED TO TOTALLY CHANGE

If Moshe Rabbeinu would come to us today and tell us that we have to leave our current lifestyle and to go live in tents in the Negev desert, would anyone come with him? Would anyone leave behind his current lifestyle and go join Moshe Rabbeinu in the desert? Maybe a person would question if this is the real Moshe Rabbeinu, or if he just some impostor, and he would request a sign to see if he is a real prophet....

Hashem said, "*Follow after Me into the desert.*" It is very possible that the recent calling of Hashem is a message only to the holiest Jews, who are prepared to follow Him no matter what. But the truth is that all of us, deep down, want to follow Hashem and do His will. It is just that many of us, even if we would decide to follow Hashem into the desert, would probably get stuck along

the way and give up in the middle. Even so, each Jew [no matter what his level is] must be able to put a halt on his current lifestyle.

Obviously, we can't put a stop to our Pesach preparations on Erev Pesach, when we are busy. But we must be able to put a stop to our lifestyle and realize that if we are in a time of *shmad*. Hashem is telling us that if we need to change our life entirely.

IN CONCLUSION

There will be those who will hear these words and mock them. Others will say, "It's an opinion of just one person." Others will say, "It's the truth, but it's too hard for me to accept". Others, though, after hearing these words, will realize that they need to seek the truth.

The words here were not said, *chas v'shalom*, out of hatred for any Jew. They are being said out of love. The words here were said out of a will that each Jew should search for Hashem, to disconnect from the whole way of life we are in, to leave the 50th Gate of Impurity which we have fallen into, and to reveal the depth of our bond with Hashem, His Torah, and His *Klal Yisrael*.

If we want to have true freedom on Pesach, we must go through a true process of freedom. If Hashem has sent us this decree before Pesach, it is not because we must go free from our enemies, but from the exile that has formed within ourselves, in which we have become enslaved [to the influences of society].

I am certain that all of you who listened to this will think that the words here are strange, and that they lacked *derech erez*. But my intention here is that I hope, from the depth of my soul, that you understand what kind of situation we are in. Instead of going home after this *shiur* and discussing if I was right or if I was wrong about what I said here, and that even if I am right there's nothing that can be done anyway, you should know that there is one thing you can do for sure: you can begin to learn the *halachos* of *Kiddush Hashem*.

When you learn the *halachos*, realize that they are very applicable now. Rabbi Akiva wondered his whole life if he will ever get to fulfill the *mitzvah* of *kiddush Hashem*, and he awaited it. So too, we must realize that now is a time in which we might have to fulfill the *mitzvah* of *kiddush Hashem*, because we are now in a time of *shmad*.

If one doesn't realize the situation we are in, the words here seemed strange. If one does realize the situation as it is, though, he knows that the words here are actually a softer description of what is really going on.

It is painful for me that the souls of the Jewish people are facing a predicament. I hope that all of us, together, will see the redemption, and to leave the exile with Hashem's wonders, just as when

we left Egypt. Then, we can all merit to truly give ourselves up for Hashem, in sanctification of His Name.

Hashem is the One who saved us from the past exile, and Hashem is the One who will save us this time as well. But this time, when He saves us, He will save us with the coming of Mashiach, may he come speedily in our days. Amen.

7 | KIRUV IN ERETZ YISRAEL: THE DANGERS INVOLVED

CONVERTS: SOULS WHO JOINED THE JEWISH PEOPLE, TAUGHT BY AVRAHAM AVINU

In the blessing of **על הצדיקים** we ask Hashem, **ועל גירי הצדק יהמו נא רחמיך** “And on Your righteous converts, please show Your compassion.” We ask Hashem to specially protect the righteous and the elders, as well as the converts.

There are three categories of people in the world. The Jewish people are on one side and the 70 nations of the world on the other side. In between the two sides are the *geirim*, the righteous converts, who cross over from 70 nations of the world and become part of the Jewish people. Any of the nations can convert into the Jewish people, except for Amalek [according to most opinions].

We have a tradition from *Chazal* that all souls who converted into the Jewish people are really reincarnations of the souls which Avraham *Avinu* and Sarah *Imeinu* taught about belief in Hashem in *Charan*. These souls would become the future converts that would enter the Jewish people. Even more so, the Sages state that the soul of every convert was present at *Har Sinai* and heard the Torah.¹⁶

Thus, it is clear that a convert does not “happen” to convert to the Jewish people; rather, every convert’s soul was really a part of the Jewish people all along which is apparent from the fact that all converts were present at *Har Sinai*.

THE PURPOSE OF EXILE: GAINING FROM CONVERTS

The Sages also state¹⁷ however, that “converts are difficult upon the Jewish people as a sore on the skin”. Rashi explains that when a convert isn’t careful in carrying out the *mitzvos* properly, a Jew who sees this will become lax in his own observance. *Tosafos* explains that since we were exiled in order to “gather” converts of other nations, a Jew might leave the Land of Israel and become negatively influenced them, thereby endangering their spirituality.

Our Sages state that we have to endure exile so that converts can get annexed onto us.¹⁸ We have to endure four exiles, and the purpose of all of these exiles, according to our Sages, is so we can gain converts. What is the deeper meaning of this? *Chazal* were not coming to stereotype all converts. In every exile, we are always surrounded by other nations. When we are in exile, we have the

¹⁶ *Shabbos 146a*

¹⁷ *Tractate Yevamos, 109b*

¹⁸ For explanation of this concept, see the *shiur of Tefillah #090 - The Purpose of Exile – Accepting Others*.

opportunity to take the good from our surroundings and thus gain from what the nations have to offer.

As we know good and well, there is far more evil amongst then nations than the good that we can learn from them. In spite of this fact, the Sages still said that the purpose of our exile was so that we can gain from converts – that we should gain some good from the other nations. There are ways to gain from their clothing and language. This fulfills the purpose of exile, which is to gain the good that the world has to offer during our stay in exile. As an example, there were Sages who had names of gentiles. One of the Sages praised the Greek language for being beautiful. The Sages were able to take the good from other nations and sift it out from the evil.

The nations of the world are a mixture of good and evil, and the Sages knew how to sift out the good from the evil and thus gain from whatever good points that other nations did have to offer.

CONVERTS THAT CAUSE DIFFICULTY: CONVERTS FROM “EREV RAV”

But, although *Chazal* said that we need to gain converts when we are in exile and thereby gain the good from our surroundings, there is one group of converts whom we do not gain from. These are the souls of Egyptian converts who left Egypt together with the Jewish people, the “*Erev Rav*” (Mixed Multitude). They can never be returned to good, and thus even when they came into the Jewish people to convert, they did not bring in any good with them.¹⁹

When the Jewish people left Egypt, they left together with the “*Erev Rav*”. These were converts who left Egypt together with the Jewish people, but they were not real converts. They did not become part of the good in the Jewish people. They did not come to bring good into the Jewish people and to leave behind their evil ways. [They may have “Jewish” bodies, but their soul is still “Egyptian” and their descendants exist today].

A complete convert is an earnest one and he leaves his past behind and only brings good with him when he enters the Jewish people. It was this kind of convert that *Chazal* say it is worth it for us to endure exile and we will be inspired by these converts and gain from them.

But souls of the *Erev Rav* who converted only caused confusion amongst the Jewish people by bringing in a mixture of good and evil. And when a member of “*Erev Rav*” entered the Jewish people via the means of conversion, he only brought evil with him. It is written, “*And the Erev Rav also came with them*” – in other words, the *Erev Rav* always remains as the *Erev Rav*, even after they converted [at that time.]

¹⁹ Later on in the shiur, it is explained that even the good which *Erev Rav* brings us is ultimately evil in the sum total of things, because it is mixed with all their evil influences, to the point that even the good points in them are tarnished from the evil.

The evil power of the “*Erev Rav*” manifests itself in mixing together “*daas tov v’ra*”, “good and evil knowledge”, together, in a way that causes great confusion. Whatever “good” that they do have is mixed with so much evil that all it does is mix up a person who gets influenced by it which is the subtlety of their evil.

This is the meaning behind the statement in the Sages that “converts are difficult upon the Jewish people”. It is referring specifically to converts from the “*Erev Rav*” [not to all other converts, who are righteous], because anyone with a soul from “*Erev Rav*” who converted into the Jewish people will undoubtedly mix up another Jew because they always remain as a mixture of good and evil [that cannot be sifted out and cleansed].

ERETZ YISRAEL TODAY: A GIANT MELTING POT OF MANY NATIONS

All of the previous exiles [Egypt, Babylonia, Persia-Media, Yavan/Greece, and Rome/Esav, which we are currently in] contained a mixture of good and evil, and the Sages knew how to sift out the good from the evil and thus gain from the good that the nations had. This we can see from the fact that the Sages would sometimes adapt gentile names or the style of dress from these places; they knew how to take these things and sanctify them for good uses.

But right now, in our times, we are at the end of the exile of Esav, [where *Erev Rav* begins to rule over us, as the Vilna *Gaon* has explained]²⁰, and we are amongst a mixture of the *Erev Rav* that is unprecedented. Much good has entered, and much evil has entered as well, and now there is a huge mixture, of good and evil, mixed together.

In the last few years, Jews have returned to Israel. However, this is not the kind of redemption that our Sages prayed for. When we merit the complete redemption, all Jews will return at once, with the Clouds of Glory. But when we don’t merit it, the return to *Eretz Yisrael* is infiltrated by the *Erev Rav*. Of course, everything is Divine Providence, Hashem’s plan. But we can see that the whole return is permeated with the *Erev Rav*.

Some people feel, “What’s the big deal! What is the difference if nations of the world come here with holy intentions or with unholy intentions? What difference does it make if this influx of Jews is due to *Erev Rav* or not? The main thing is that Jews are returning to *Eretz Yisrael*”.

But since the entire return of these nations to *Eretz Yisrael* is happening due to the “*Erev Rav*”, a tremendous mixture of good and evil has come with them - they have brought with them **all** of the impurity from every nation in the world, into *Eretz Yisrael*!

We have an *avodah* to sift out what is good and what is evil in everything we come across in *Eretz Yisrael*, since there is a great mixture that is resulting from “*Erev Rav*”. That is one part of our

20 <http://www.bilvavi.net/english/tefillah-085-erev-rav-today>

avodah – to be aware that there is much evil here. And even if we come across any good that comes from “*Erev Rav*” [the mixture of all these nations], that ‘good’ itself is mixed with evil.

This is a subtle matter, but these are the facts, this is the reality now. *Eretz Yisrael* is still holy, of course, but we are being ruled by “*Erev Rav*”, and therefore, they have created an enormous mixture here of all kinds of evil influences. The impurity of all the nations of the world has arrived here, due to the arrival of members of the *Erev Rav*. If someone doesn’t feel this impurity, then it can only be because his feelings for holiness have become deadened [or he is a member of the *Erev Rav*].

...THE REQUIREMENT FOR ENGAGING IN KIRUV

In this blessing of *Shemoneh Esrei*, we ask Hashem specially to protect the converts. We mention this in the blessing of **על הצדיקים** in connection with our request that Hashem should guard the righteous, and this implies that it is only the truly righteous who are able to connect with the converts and guide them. Therefore, if someone is not of the truly righteous, he will get influenced by the convert in the process of trying to draw him closer to Judaism.

Therefore, only someone who has a burning desire for truth and holiness is someone who can engage in *Kiruv*. If someone doesn’t have this quality – if he is lax in his own keeping of *Halachah* and he is not afraid that he is susceptible to influences – then he does not possess the quality of searching for the truth, and therefore he is endangering his spirituality when he attempts *Kiruv* with others who are not observant.

Only a *tzaddik* has special protection from Hashem not to get influenced from evil. Thus, entering *Kiruv* with the non-observant is like entering a spiritual minefield, unless the person doing *Kiruv* is someone who is very careful in his own observance and he possesses fear of Heaven, and feels a burning desire for truth.

IN CONCLUSION

These words are relevant to anyone who is involved in *Kiruv* - whether they are involved in *Kiruv* as a *parnassah* (livelihood); whether they feel a true need in their soul to engage in *Kiruv*; or whether it is none of above, and a person is doing *Kiruv* because he heard that there is an “obligation on the *tzibbur* (general public) to do *kiruv*” [which is not so simple]. Anyone who goes out into the world of *Kiruv* is in endangering his spirituality.

Hashem wants all Jews to return to holiness, but if we ourselves don’t burn for truth as we draw others closer to Judaism, then we aren’t able to do it. Hashem wants everyone to return to holiness, but He wants it to be done according to His will.

Thus, when we ask Hashem to protect the converts, we should so out of a request that they convert in a holy manner, and not in a way that brings in any evil influences.

8 / PROTECTION FROM ILLNESS

"רופא חולי עמו ישראל" - At the end of the *Refoeinu* blessing of *Shemoneh Esrei*, we say, "Blessed are You, Hashem, Who heals the sick of His nation, Yisrael." We emphasize the fact that Hashem heals the Jewish people from their sicknesses; this implies to us that even though Hashem heals the entire world, He heals the Jewish people with a special kind of healing. He gives special healing to "His" nation, *Yisrael*.

A non-Jew is healed in a different way than a Jew is healed. A non-Jew is at the mercy of doctors – as *Chazal* say, "Permission is given to the doctor to heal." The Chasam Sofer²¹ stated that we cannot bring any medical proof from a non-Jew's body to how we heal a Jew's body, because since a Jew has a higher soul than a non-Jew, the healing is not the same. The Chasam Sofer revealed to us a very novel concept – not only is a Jew's soul vastly different than a non-Jew's soul, but even their physical bodies are different.

Even more so, if a Jew would never be influenced by a non-Jew, he would never even get sick! Yaakov *Avinu* only got sick when he came to Egypt. This was not a coincidence. As soon as he entered the impure surroundings of Egypt, he was able to get sick.

Hashem says, "I will separate you from the nations." This is the key we need in order to merit the promise that Hashem made to us: "Any illness which I placed upon Egypt, I will not place upon you, for I am Hashem, your healer." That is how we are truly healed – when we are separated from the nations. But when we are influenced by the nations, we are susceptible to their various sicknesses which Hashem brings upon them.

The more a person reveals his "*Yisrael*" from within – the more he identifies himself as being of the Jewish nation - the more he is of "His nation, *Yisrael*", and he gains special healing from Hashem.

Egypt was the root of all the exiles. When we left Egypt, Hashem said, "Any illness which I placed upon Egypt, I will not place upon you." The meaning of this is, as much as **you** leave Egypt's influences – to that extent, I will not place any sicknesses on you that the other nations have.

When the Jewish people were in the desert, they complained, and they wished to return to Egypt. They missed certain foods they used to have there. What happened? There was a plague, and they got sick. Because they reconnected themselves to Egypt, they became susceptible to sickness.

We were all in Egypt; our souls were there. When we were in Egypt, although we were mixed with them, we did not change our style of dress, speech and names. This shows us that we have the power to remain uninfluenced by the nations even as we are mixed among them.

21 *Shabbos 86b*

Every day we make a *beracha*, “*Shelo asani goy*”; we thank Hashem that He did not make us a non-Jew.

EXILE OUTSIDE ERETZ YISRAEL, AND EXILE INSIDE ERETZ YISRAEL

However, sometimes it can happen that a Jew wishes to return to Egypt. This is due to the influence of the *Erev Rav* in our nation. But either way, it is possible for a Jew to yearn to return to his root exile - Egypt.

It appears in the physical sense that we have left the exiles of Egypt, Bavel, Persia-Media, and Edom. But there are other exiles which we are still in. The Greek exile did not really end; it continues even as we are in *Eretz Yisrael*, in which we are in the exile of Edom and Yishmael.²² Right now we are in the deepest kind of exile, and it contains elements of all the exiles.

One kind of exile affects those who don't live in *Eretz Yisrael*. These are the Jews who live in countries outside of *Eretz Yisrael*, and they live a very enjoyable kind of life. It seems that everything is fine, even though they are mixed with other nations and influenced by them. That's one kind of exile – the fact that they are not in *Eretz Yisrael*, and exiled among the nations instead. Although Jews in other countries are influenced by their non-Jewish neighbors, at least they are aware that they are in exile.

But there is another kind of exile going on, and it takes place in *Eretz Yisrael*. It is no less of an exile than the exile to Jews in other countries. It is the exile of the *Erev Rav* – the fact that we are exiled among people who wish to uproot religion and Torah.

It is not as obvious, because Jews here think that we are not found together with non-Jews, while in reality, we are.

Most people in Israel are not even Jews – simply speaking. Most of Israel are people from other nations who have come here, and they claim to be Jews, but they are not, from a purely Halachic perspective. In addition, there even people who are *Halachically* Jews, but they are really not, because they are from the *Erev Rav*. These are “Jews” who get worse and worse, bringing down others with them in their influences.

How many Jews are there really in *Eretz Yisrael*? In reality, very few.

If a Jew lives in another country, like if he lives in Africa, it's clear to him that he's living in exile. But if a Jew lives in *Eretz Yisrael* and he thinks that he lives among Jews, he is mistaken, because most of *Eretz Yisrael* is not Jews. Most of the “Jews” here are souls from the *Erev Rav*! That is the depth of the exile in *Eretz Yisrael*, and it is caused by the *Erev Rav* themselves. The *Erev Rav* are so mixed with us that it is hard for a Jew to think that he is really mixed with them.

²² See the shiur of Chanukah 048, “Greek Influence Today”.

Most of the Jews in *Eretz Yisrael* are not even Jews in the *Halachic* sense; they are people from other nations who have come to live here and mix with us. And even those who are “Jews” here are mostly from *Erev Rav*.

This is yet only the outer layer to our exile – the fact that there aren’t even so many Jews in Israel.

But there is a deeper aspect to the exile here. A Jew who lives outside *Eretz Yisrael* is clearly in exile. A Jew who lives in Israel is also in exile, but in a more subtle and deeper way. The exile of the *Erev Rav* in *Eretz Yisrael* is a subtle kind of exile, because it’s hard to notice. It’s an exile within an exile within an exile – and this is due to the influences that keep creeping into Torah society.

INFLUENCES OF THE WORLD UPON TORAH JEWRY

For example, as soon as something new comes out in the non-Jewish world, there is immediately a thought amongst Jews: How can we manufacture this in a kosher way to the Jewish world? There are new foods that come out all the time in the world, and immediately there are Jews who seek to introduce it to the Jewish world – with a *hechsher* of course, and finding *Rabbonim* to back them. When people seek to make non-Jewish foods kosher, what is the intention? Giving in to physical desires, making money from it, and to get honored for introducing them to our society...

New styles of clothing that become acceptable in *frum* society are being introduced by non-Jews. Most of the clothing we have today is designed by a non-Jew – that is their source.

Even *sefarim* today that come out are authored by many people who borrow non-Jewish ideas. And they even get *Rabbonim* to give them approbations. The whole spirit of the author is often taken from a non-Jew’s ideas about life.

REFLECTING

If a person is truthful, he sees that the exile surrounds us from every possible angle.

We are very influenced by them – sometimes willingly, and sometimes it is because there is nothing we can do about it, but either way, we are still influenced by them, and we must be aware of this. A Jew needs to ask himself each morning if he truly feels grateful to Hashem that he was not made a non-Jew, “*Shelo asani goy.*”

If a person never reflects about this, he doesn’t see the problem. He thinks, “What’s the big fuss about? The main thing is to learn Torah, keep the *mitzvos*, and dress modestly.”

If anyone reflects, he will discover that most of the things we make use of are coming from non-Jews. We are not only exiled in a *place* in which there are non-Jews. The main part of our exile is

that we *ourselves* have been influenced by them. We are influenced by them in so many aspects – in our food, in our clothing, in our vacations, and in many other areas.

One should first become aware of this, at least intellectually, and then he should proceed to feel this in his heart: We are among non-Jewish influences, and we are very affected by them. We must yearn to separate from all of the influences that are upon us (knowingly and unknowingly), because we are supposed to be separate from the nations.

IN CONCLUSION

There are all kinds of illnesses in the world today. There are many reasons, but one of the reasons for this is because when a Jew doesn't wish to be of *Yisrael* and he would rather connect to non-Jewish influences, he separates himself from the nation of *Yisrael* and then he does not gain the special healing which Hashem gives to the Jewish people, as we say in the *Refoeinu* blessing.

Hashem said, “*Any of the illnesses I placed on Egypt, I will not place upon you, for I am Hashem, Your healer.*” In order for us to have healing coming from our true Doctor, Hashem – we need to separate ourselves from “Egypt”, from non-Jewish influences of the exile.

In everything we come across, we must trace its source. Is it coming from holiness, from the Torah – or is it coming from a non-Jewish source...?

We can't change the world. There is no single Jew who can come and change the world. But, what we can do, is that each of us can separate ourselves, on a personal level, from the non-Jewish influences – and instead identify ourselves as being of Hashem's people, *Yisrael*. Whereupon we can then merit to gain special protection from Hashem from sicknesses – to merit the exclusive healing of what we say in the end of the *Refoeinu* blessing: “*The Healer of His nation, Yisrael.*”

9 | SEPARATING FROM EREV RAV (HOSHANAH RABBAH)

UNDERSTANDING THE DEPTH BEHIND HOSHANAH RABBAH

On Sukkos, we take four species²³, one of which is the *aravos*²⁴. The *aravos* serve two purposes. They are part of the four species, and they are also used as “*hoshanos*”²⁵ [the additional pair of willow branches that we take on the day of *Hoshanah Rabbah*].

On the seventh day of Sukkos, *Hoshanah Rabbah*, in the *Beis HaMikdash*, we would circle the *Mizbeiach* (Altar) seven times and then bang the *Hoshanos* on the side of the Altar. There is an argument in the Gemara if the *Hoshanos* were shaken along with the other Four Species or not.

Sukkos is for 7 days. The 7th day of Sukkos, though, is different than the other days of Sukkos entirely; it is a day that is all about the *Aravos**Hoshanos*. We would circle the Altar for 7 times on the 7th day of Sukkos with the *hoshanos*, and it had special *halachos*.

The 7th day of the week is Shabbos, which comes after the 6 days of the week. Shabbos is from the word *shevisah*, to rest, and it is also called *yom hashvii*, the seventh day. We have Shabbos and we have the three festivals; Shavuos is one day, while Pesach and Sukkos both have a seventh day. What is the difference between the 7th of Pesach and the 7th of Sukkos, though? The 7th day of Pesach is a Yom Tov, whereas the 7th day of Sukkos is *Hoshanah Rabbah*, which is not a Yom Tov; as we see that we may perform work on *Hoshanah Rabbah*. It has some *halachos* similar to Yom Tov²⁶, but it does not have the status of an actual “Yom Tov”.

Shabbos is called “*shvii*” (the seventh), and it is also called “*zecher l’maaseh Beraishis*”, a remembrance of the act of Creation. Where else do we find the concept of “*shvii*” in time? We find a concept of *shvii* on Pesach and Sukkos, which each have 7 days of Yom Tov. But there is a difference: On Pesach, the seventh day is a Yom Tov, whereas the seventh day of Sukkos is not a festival like Shabbos or Yom Tov.

The 7th day of Sukkos, *Hoshanah Rabbah*, therefore, reveals an entirely novel concept to us.

23 Lulav (palm branch), esrog (citron), hadasim (myrtle branches), and aravos (willow branches)

24 Willow branches; “*aravos*” is plural for “*aravah*”

25 On the seventh day of Sukkos, which is called *Hoshanah Rabbah*, we bang five *Aravos* on the ground after we recite *Halel* and *Hakafos*.

26 See *Shulchan Aruch: Orach Chaim 664* and *Mishnah Berurah* *ibid*.

GENTILES AND SUKKOS

The Gemara states that a non-Jew who keeps Shabbos is liable to the death penalty²⁷. Shabbos is called the “inheritance of the Jewish people”, which the gentiles have no connection with, and therefore, they have no right to keep it. But what about Yom Tov (the festivals”) - do the gentiles have connection with any of our festivals?

With Pesach and Shavuos, we see clearly that gentiles have no connection to these festivals. Pesach is about the redemption from Egypt, in which the Jewish people were made into the nation of Hashem, which clearly has nothing to do with gentiles. Shavuos is about the giving of the Torah to the Jewish people; it also has nothing to do with the gentiles. When it comes to the festival of Sukkos, however, we find that the gentiles do have some kind of connection with it.

1) First of all, the 70 *korbonos* brought on Sukkos are parallel to the 70 nations of the world, as the Gemara said. This was not merely to ward off the impurity of the nations. It shows us that they have some connection to Sukkos, because if they would have no connection to Sukkos, then there would be no need to have the 70 *korbonos* on Sukkos!

2) A second proof is that it is brought in the book of *Zechariah*²⁸ that gentiles in the future who brought *korbonos* will merit to rejoice in Yerushalayim. So we see that gentiles can have a connection with Sukkos.

3) Even more so, the Gemara²⁹ states that the gentiles will want reward in the future, and Hashem will give them an “easy *mitzvah*” – *sukkah* - which they won’t be able to keep. This hints to us that gentiles do have some connection with Sukkos. Hashem will allow the gentiles to enter the *sukkah* on Sukkos, so it must be that they do have some connection to it.

4) Our Sages state that each of the festivals is parallel to one of our Avos. Sukkos is parallel to Avraham Avinu, for Avraham had the Clouds of Glory, and the Sukkos are in remembrance to the Clouds of Glory. Sukkos is also parallel to Yaakov Avinu, who made Sukkos (huts) when he camped. Of Yaakov the possuk says, “*U’lmikeneihu, asah sukkos*”, that when he camped, he made *sukkos* huts for his family. The Sages state that the gentiles in the future will serve the Jewish people, so we see that they will connect with us. The Gemara states that the Jewish people are called *adam* (man), while gentiles are not called *adam*; if they are not *adam*, what are they? They are called

27 Chagigah 13a

28 One of the books of “*Trei Asar*” of the Prophets.

29 Avodah Zarah 3a

“*miknehu*” (possessions), for in the future, they will become the possessions\servants of the Jewish people. The concept of *sukkah* is connected with the possuk “*U’lmikeneihu, asah sukkos*”, thus, once again we see that there is some connection between *sukkah* and gentiles.

5) Furthermore, the Zohar says that the three guests who came to Avraham were told to wait under the “shade” of the tree, and this alludes to the “shade” of the *sukkah*, so again we see that gentiles have a connection with *sukkah*.

The question is, though: What do gentiles have to do with the *sukkah*?

When the guests came to Avraham Avinu, the Midrash says that they looked like “*aravayim*”, Arab nomads. The word *aravayim* is from the word “*aravah*”. From all the four species, the *aravah* is considered the least important [as the Sages compare the *esrog* and *lulav* and *hadasim* to the righteous, and the *aravos* are compared to the wicked]. Yet, although the *aravah* is the least prominent, it is still part of the Four Species; it can connect to the other species and become lifted together with them.

If gentiles have a connection with *sukkah*, it must mean that they also have a connection with the Four Species. This we can see from *Aravos*. *Aravos* have no taste and no smell, as Chazal say; they are parallel to the wicked people of the world. Yet, we take the *aravos* with the Four Species in one *agudah*\bundle and we shake all of them together, so that the *aravos* can become rectified.

Thus, we see that the nations of the world (represented by the *aravos*) are able to connect themselves to the Jewish people.

HOSHANOS\ARAVOS AND “EREV RAV”

Sukkah is called “a remembrance of the redemption from Egypt”. When we left Egypt, the Torah says that “*Erev Rav*” (the Mixed Multitude) also came with us. The *Erev Rav* connects themselves to the Jewish people, who are called the *agudah achas* (one bundle). The *aravos* represent the *Erev Rav* souls who annex themselves onto the *agudah* (bundle) that is Yisrael.

The *Yom HaShvii* (seventh day) of Sukkos is called *Hoshanah Rabbah* – why is it called so? Why do we call it *Hoshanah Rabbah* specifically? The simple meaning of this is because we take many *hoshanos* on this day; we have a *ribuy* (plethora) of *hoshanos*, hence, it is called “*Hoshanah Rabbah*.”

However, the *Shulchan Aruch* states in the name of the *Rokeiach* that on *Hoshanah Rabbah*, we remove the knot binding together the four species; normally, the Four Species must be tied

together, but on Hoshanah Rabbah, we remove the binding of the Four Species [which symbolizes a breach in our *agudah achas* – caused by the Erev Rav amidst us].

But what causes the disconnection from amongst ourselves in the first place? What causes the disparity amongst us that we need to bind ourselves together? The *Erev Rav*. The Sages state that *Erev Rav* married the women of the tribe of Shimeon; they mix with us, and this breaks up our unity.

There is the *Erev Rav*, and there is also a small group of Egyptian souls that converted, who are called “*Erev Zeir*” [whom Yosef circumcised]. The *aravos* of the first six days represent the *Erev Zeir*.³⁰ The *aravos* of *Hoshanah Rabbah* represent *Erev Rav*; for the word “*rav*” is the same concept as the word “*rabbah*” (they both mean “many”).

There are five groupings of *Erev Rav*³¹, and we take five *aravos* on *Hoshanah Rabbah*. It is because on *Hoshanah Rabbah*, a new mixture enters us: the *Erev Rav*. The *aravos* of *Hoshanah Rabbah* represent the mixture of the *Erev Rav*, who connect themselves to the Jewish people.

HOSHANAH RABBAH – THE “SEAL WITHIN A SEAL”

Thus, *Hoshanah Rabbah* is called the “seal within a seal” (*chotam b'toch chotam*). On Rosh HaShanah, our decree is written, and on Yom Kippur, we are sealed. On *Hoshanah Rabbah*, we are “sealed within a seal”, similar to the *halachah* that wine must be sealed within a seal [or else it becomes *yayin nesech*, wine which is suspected of being used by a gentile for idol worship].

Why isn't one seal enough, though? Why it is necessary for us to have to be sealed again within the seal?

“The seal of Hashem is truth”. There are levels of truth – *emes* (truth), and *emes l'amatih*, a more refined level of truth. On *Hoshanah Rabbah*, we are within the seal [being that we were already sealed on Yom Kippur], but we are still not sealed from the *Erev Rav*, because the *Erev Rav* connects themselves to the Jewish people; they are amidst us, so it is not enough if we are merely sealed once. *Erev Rav* is within the bounds (*techum*) of the Jewish people; thus, one seal\chotam is not enough to be sealed from them.

³⁰ Editor's Note: It seems that the souls of “*Erev Zeir*” requires a lower kind of rectification, for they are not as evil as *Erev Rav*; for we only take two *Aravos* in the first six days. Whereas the *Erev Rav* souls require five *Hoshanos* to rectify them, which implies that it is harder to rectify them.

³¹ *Tikkunei HaZohar* 41b

Therefore, we need another “*chotam*” **within** the *chotam*”. (*Chotam\techum* have the same letters). That is why we need *Hoshanah Rabbah* to save us from the influences of the five kinds of Erev Rav.

BANGING THE HOSHANOS ON THE GROUND

This is the deeper meaning of why we bang the *hoshanos* on the ground. Why do we bang the *hoshanos* on the ground? The simple understanding is that when we bang them on the ground, it causes the Heavenly sustenance to descend from Heaven down to this lowly earth.

But there is also a deeper understanding, as following.

The tree of Avraham Avinu, which came before the *sukkos* of Yaakov, is the root of the concept of *sukkah*. Avraham Avinu converted the gentiles who came to him; however, he did not convert everyone. Chazal state that the guests would first take shade under the tree outside his tent. If the tree allowed the guest under its shade, it was a sign that the guest was proper, and then Avraham would allow him to become converted; but if the tree did not take the guest under its shade, it was a sign that the person was not worthy.

We find two roots of trees in Creation - the root of the tree of the *Eitz HaChaim* (the Tree of Life), and the root of the tree of the *Eitz HaDaas* (the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil). By Avraham’s guests, only those who were worthy were allowed by the tree to come under its leaves. Avraham’s tree is parallel to the *Eitz HaChaim*. The guests who weren’t worthy were rooted in the *Eitz HaDaas* (which is the root of the Erev Rav), thus, the “*Eitz HaChaim*” did not take them.

The tree of Avraham, which provided shade (for worthy guests), is reminiscent of a *sukkah*, which is called the “*tzeila d’hemunasa*” (to sit under “the shade of *emunah*”) – otherwise known as the *Shechinah* (Hashem’s Presence on this world); otherwise known as the “*Eitz HaChaim*”.

On *Hoshanah Rabbah*, we take five *aravos* and bang them on the ground, which is the earth – in other words, we take the “tree” and bang it on the earth, which alludes to the sin, for sin is associated with the element of earth and the curse of death.

Of a Torah scholar, it is written, “*And his leaves will not wither.*”³² The Torah scholar resembles a perfect tree, whose leaves do not wither; this is parallel to the *Eitz HaChaim*. When we bang the *hoshanos*, the leaves fall off, and this is parallel to the leaves of the *Eitz HaDaas*, whose leaves can wither.

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The *Erev Rav* parallels the leaves of the *hoshanos* that that must be banged, so that the leaves fall off; this shows that we want to knock off the *Erev Rav* from amidst us.

Thus, the *aravos* that we take on the seventh day of Sukkos, so that we can bang *hoshanos* with them, have a special role which the *aravos* of the first six days aren't able to accomplish. The *aravos* of *Hoshanah Rabbah* which we bang contains the mystical power to separate the *Erev Rav* from us, who wish to latch onto us.

The *Erev Rav* is the root of all the nations of the world, which want to connect to us. Whereas the other nations of the world are given some degree of connection with us, the *Erev Rav* may not ever be allowed into our nation.

On Pesach, we left Egypt, and that was when the *Erev Rav* first came to mix with us. At Shavuot, right after we received the Torah, they mixed with us again to cause the sin of the Golden Calf. On Sukkos once again they come back once again to connect with us, but on *Hoshanah Rabbah*, we are given the power to separate them from amidst us.

Thus, when the *aravos* are banged on the ground on *Hoshanah Rabbah*, we separate them from us by sending them down to the earth.

THE SEAL OF HOSHANAH RABBAH AND THE SEAL OF THE BRIS KODESH

Hoshanah Rabbah is called a “*chotam b'toch chotam*”, a seal within a seal. The *Bris Kodesh* (or *Bris Milah*) is also called “*chotam*”, the sign that is stamped into our flesh, “*And on the covenant which You have sealed in our flesh*” [as we say in *Birchas HaMazon*].

Erev Rav mixed with Yisrael by marrying the women of Shimon, meaning, they attempt to connect with Yisrael through the *Bris Kodesh* [because marriage is called “*bris*”]. The fact that the *Erev Rav* connects to Yisrael through *Bris Kodesh* is what causes damage to our *Bris Kodesh*. On *Hoshanah Rabbah*, though, we have a “*chotam b'toch chotam*” – the seal within a seal - we seal ourselves from even the *Erev Rav*.

HOSHANAH RABBAH: RECTIFYING THE GENTILE NATIONS OF THE WORLD

Shabbos, besides for being called Shabbos, is also called *shvii*, the seventh day. The festivals which have seven days are Pesach and Sukkos. The 7th day of Pesach is called *shvii* because it's a Yom Tov, and also because it is called “*Shabbos hi lachem*”; it is forbidden from labor, just like Shabbos. It is a

Yom Tov on the level of Shabbos. But the 7th day of Sukkos, *Hoshanah Rabbah*, which is also called Yom Tov, is not on the level of Shabbos, because it is permitted to work on *Hoshanah Rabbah*.

What, indeed, is the difference? If a gentile keeps Shabbos, the Gemara says that he is liable to death. This shows us that a gentile has no connection with Shabbos. On Sukkos, however, there is a “seventh day” which is not Shabbos – *Hoshanah Rabbah* - which enables a gentile to connect to *Yisrael*. They can connect to us either for good purposes or for evil purposes.

Hoshanah Rabbah is thus the point in time that enables the gentiles of the world to come into the Jewish people and connect with us, whereupon they can be uplifted and rectified. The evil side of this, however, is the *Erev Rav* coming in. The holy side of this is the converts which Adam and Sarah converted. So *Hoshanah Rabbah* contains both evil and good kinds of connection. The good part of it is the fact that gentiles have the opportunity to connect with the Jewish people and become rectified, but the evil side is that *Erev Rav* is coming in, who cannot be rectified and who must not be allowed entry.

Thus, on *Hoshanah Rabbah*, we need to separate from the *Erev Rav* coming in to us through the many *hoshanos* that we bang. At the same time, it is the time which enables converts to come into the Jewish people; as we see that the souls of the converts can come under Avraham Avinu’s tree, the “*Eitz HaChaim*”, and become rectified.

Herein lays the light of the redemption: Moshiach comes from converts, from Dovid, who is from Rus, a convert.

SUKKOS – THE CONNECTING POINT BETWEEN ROSH HASHANAH AND YOM KIPPUR

In the seventh month we are in, Tishrei, we have Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur, and Sukkos.

The world is judged four times a year – Pesach, Shavuos, Rosh HaShanah, and Sukkos. That is one revelation of Tishrei: Rosh HaShanah is the root day of judgment, and the three festivals are branches of the judgment of Rosh HaShanah.

Yom Kippur is about atonement, and it extends into Rosh Chodesh, which is called *moed*, and the Sages said that Rosh Chodesh is a time of *kaparah*, atonement, because on Rosh Chodesh the moon is lessened.

So we have two roots of judgment: Rosh HaShanah, the root judgment of the three festivals (which each have specific judgments), and Yom Kippur, which is the root of Rosh Chodesh.

Yom Kippur and Rosh Chodesh are both about atonement. On a more subtle note, however, there is *kaparah* also on Rosh Hashanah, as the shofar is blown to cover up sin from the Satan.

Even more so, however, it is Sukkos which connects Rosh Hashanah to Yom Kippur. What is the connection? Rosh Hashanah is the time of judgment; therefore, Sukkos is related to Rosh HaShanah. Sukkos is the time of judgment over water. Sukkos is also a continuation of Yom Kippur, so it is a time of atonement: Yom Kippur was when we were atoned from the sin of the Golden Calf, which was caused by the *Erev Rav*. On *Hoshanah Rabbah*, we are atoned from the Erev Rav - through banging the *hoshanos*.

Thus, Sukkos contains two different aspects: it is part of the three festivals and therefore it is a judgment, which makes it similar to Rosh HaShanah, but it is also a time of an atonement, similar to Yom Kippur; it is an atonement from *Erev Rav*, and it is the time to ward off the effects of the Erev Rav.

This is the depth behind the time of *simcha* (joy) that is Sukkos. There are ten days between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, which are about getting sealed for the judgment. Sukkos combines Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur together because Sukkos is a time of both judgment and atonement, which enables us to have *simcha*.

Thus, we have seen here another facet of understanding in the concept of the “*chotam b'toch chotam*” that is on *Hoshanah Rabbah*.

HOSHANAH RABBAH – COMBINING THE SEAL OF ROSH HASHANAH WITH YOM KIPPUR

Another facet of understanding to the concept of “*chotam b'toch chotam*” is as follows: there is another *chatimah* taking place, even after we have been sealed on Yom Kippur.

On Rosh Hashanah, there is a *chatimah* (seal) on the *tzaddikim* (for a good year) and the wicked (for a bad year), and on Yom Kippur there is a *chatimah* on the *beinonim* (the average people). On *Hoshanah Rabbah*, though, there is a “*chotam b'toch chotam*” - meaning, the *chatimah* of Rosh Hashanah is combined with the *chatimah* of Yom Kippur.

On Rosh HaShanah, we sing, “*If we are like children, have mercy on us like a father on his children, if we are like servants, have mercy on us like a master on his servant*”. Either we are like a *ben* (child) to

Hashem or we are like an “*eved*” (servant) to Hashem, but either way, we asked to be sealed. On Yom Kippur, we have either been sealed as a “*ben*” or as an “*eved*”.

When it comes *Hoshanah Rabbah*, there is a “*chotam b'toch chotam*” – meaning, the levels of “*ben*” and “*eved*” are combined, through the inner seal that takes place on *Hoshanah Rabbah*.

A SEAL WITHIN A SEAL: THE POINT OF NO SIN

There is yet another facet of understanding to this concept of “*chotam b'toch chotam*”, as follows. The Gemara says that Adam delayed his *Bris Milah*; he was born circumcised. The fact that he delayed his *Bris Milah* is linked to the sin. In other words, he only had one *chotam* on his flesh. A “*chotam b'toch chotam*” on his flesh would imply that when there is no possibility for evil.

There is *orlah* (foreskin) on the *Bris Kodesh*, which we remove, and there is also *orlah* on trees, which forbids the fruit of the first three years to be eaten. Connect this with the fact that there was a tree outside Avraham’s tent, which was like the *Eitz HaChaim*, which only allowed proper guests. On *Hoshanah Rabbah*, when there is a “*chotam b'toch chotam*”, it represents the level in which it is not possible for there to be any damage to the *Bris*. Thus, the “tree” which we see under in Sukkos – the *sukkah* - is not affected by *orlah*. An *esrog* is the only fruit which has the same taste as the bark, therefore it has no *orlah*. This refers to a tree which has no *orlah*, the tree of Avraham Avinu, the *Eitz HaChaim*, the *sukkah*.

The “*tzeil*” (shadow) of the *Eitz HaDaas* is the *tzeil* that symbolizes death, whereas the “*tzeil*” of the *Eitz HaChaim* is like the “*tzeil*” of *sukkah*. The *esrog* is a fruit which has no *orlah* - like the *Eitz HaChaim*.

THE ARAVOS OF SUKKOS: RECTIFYING THE NATIONS

Of the Four Species, it is the *esrog* which is a fruit. The *lulav* is not a fruit, but it bears fruit. The *hadassim* have a scent, while the *aravos* have no taste and no fruit. The Sages revealed that *aravos* represent the wicked, who have no Torah and no mitzvos, and that they are rectified through taking them together with the other species, which symbolizes that that they can have become connected to the Jewish people and become rectified.

On Sukkos, we are judged on the water. Water has no taste – which really means that it is above taste. We make a blessing of *shehakol* on water, which says that everything belongs to Hashem. Water symbolizes “everything”, that “everything” belongs to Hashem. Thus, when we are judged

on Sukkos for the water, we are being judged for the *klal*, for the collective unit of things. A gentile asked one of the Sages, “When is the entire world happy?” The Sage answered, “When it rains.” When it rains, the whole world is happy. On Sukkos we are judged on the water, and on Sukkos we have happiness; it is universal happiness, because the entire world needs water. Sukkos is a joy about water - and the *aravos* grow near the water. So the judgment on water is not just about *Klal Yisrael*; it is about the *klal* (collective unit) of the entire world. Every day we make a blessing that we are not a gentile. A woman makes the blessing, “That You made me according to His will”. This alludes to the concept behind the *shehakol* blessing we make on water, that everything is according to Hashem’s will.

Sukkos is the judgment on water. Rosh HaShanah is judgment over all the people in the world, Yom Kippur is an atonement only for the Jewish people, and Sukkos comes to connect Rosh HaShanah with Yom Kippur together, so that there can be an atonement for the rest of the world as well; thus, Sukkos is the concept of how converts can enter the Jewish people, that it is possible for the nations of the world to become elevated.

'EREV RAV' IS RECTIFIED ONLY THROUGH BEING DESTROYED

But there is *Erev Rav* too coming along with them, who also wish to connect with the Jewish people. We are not allowed to let them come in. Therefore, on *Hoshanah Rabbah*, we bang the *hoshanos*, to nullify the *Erev Rav*, the root of the nations. The only way to rectify them is to destroy them, so we send them back to the “earth”, by banging them on the ground. This is contrast with the rest of the nations of the world, whom we can accept, and these are rooted in the converts that Avraham took in. This is the depth of why the rest of the nations of the world can be atoned for on Sukkos.

On the last day of Sukkos, we bring 7 *korbonos*, parallel to the 7 root nations of the world, which each became 10 nations; that is how the 70 nations were formed. These 7 root nations can be allowed to convert. Thus, the 7th day of Sukkos, *Hoshanah Rabbah*, represents the idea of converting the 70 nations of the world and elevating them to holiness. This is another depth behind the “*chotam b'toch chotam*” on *Hoshanah Rabbah*.

In contrast to Yom Kippur which atones only for *Klal Yisrael* and not the gentiles, Sukkos connects the gentiles to *Klal Yisrael*, so that they can be atoned for. The gentiles will go to the *Beis HaMikdash* in the future, as the possuk in *Zecharya* says, so we see that the nations will become

rectified. This is revealed through the concept of *Hoshanah Rabbah*, through the “*chotam b'toch chotam*”, which represents the point that is above all *cheit* (sin) - the point in time before there was even a possibility of sin: the point of before Creation. This is the original, pure light which can rectify the nations of the world in the future. Thus *Hoshanah Rabbah* represents that idea of rectifying the entire world.

But the *Erev Rav* cannot be rectified. They can only be rectified when we destroy them. And so, we bang the *hoshanos* on the ground on *Hoshanah Rabbah*, to nullify the effect of the *Erev Rav*, to symbolize how their rectification will only lay in their destruction. Sukkos thus reflects the concept of returning all of the nations [except *Erev Rav*] of the world to the perfected level of Creation before the *cheit* – and that is the pure point which rectifies them.

THE DEPTH OF SHEMINI ATZERES AND SIMCHAS TORAH

In the future, the gentiles will be rectified, as the verse in *Zecharyah* says. However, *Klal Yisrael* will still be more important than the gentiles, even when the gentiles are pure again.

This is the secret behind *Shemini Atzeres*. The *Midrash* states that on *Shemini Atzeres*, Hashem tells us to remain with Him for one more day. The deeper meaning of this is because on the 7th day of Sukkos, we have unified the gentiles with Yisrael, and when the 7 days are over, now comes the next level: *Shemini Atzeres*, which contains *Simchas Torah*.

There are two kinds of *simcha* (joy) found in the month of *Tishrei*. On Yom Kippur, we received the second pair of *Luchos*, which can be considered to be a degree of *Simchas Torah* to us. And we also have the actual *Simchas Torah* that is on *Shemini Atzeres*. So there are two kinds of *Simchas Torah* that we have.

What is the difference between the two kinds of *Simchas Torah*? The *Simchas Torah* that we have on Yom Kippur was that the second *Luchos* rectified the sin of the Golden Calf. But the *Simchas Torah* of *Shemini Atzeres* comes after *Hoshanah Rabbah*, after we have been sealed in the “*chotam b'toch chotam*”, which is the level that is beyond any possibility of sin.

The Sages said, “Praiseworthy is the one who never sinned” – this refers to the inner light, the original light that was around before Creation, the point in the soul in which there is no possibility of sin. The revelation of this point is on *Shemini Atzeres*, after we have the “*chotam b'toch chotam*” of *Hoshanah Rabbah*; it calls for a new kind of *Simchas Torah*, which we have on *Shemini Atzeres*.

The *simchah* that we have on *Simchas Torah* is called a “*simcha l’gomrah shel Torah*”, a joy upon completing the Torah. When we make a blessing in the morning to learn the Torah, we ask Hashem, “*V’haarev na*”, that Hashem should make the words of Torah sweet to us. The sweetness of Torah learning, which is called “*areivus*”, is especially what can counter the *Erev Rav*, the evil souls in Creation who wish to take us away from the Torah.

On *Simchas Torah\Shemini Atzeres*, it is revealed the light in which there is no sin, thus, it is the time where we make a *simcha* over the completion of the Torah. After *Hoshanah Rabbah*, we can come to the level of *Simchas Torah*.

The *Shemini Atzeres* we have in today’s times is a lower kind of “*shemini*”, for on the eighth day there is a *bris*, which removes *orlah*. But the perfect level of Sukkos [which will be in the future] is to have a kind of *Shemini Atzeres* in which the concept of *shemini* is not about removing *orlah* - rather, it will be a level of “*shemini*” which reveals the “*gomrah shel Torah*”.

The “*shemini*” of the future will be about this. Concerning the future, it is written [in the Shabbos Zemiros] that *sasson* and *simcha* (joy and happiness) will remove all *yagon* and *anacha* (worry and groans). The word for being “joyous”, “*sameich*”, has the same letters as the word *chamesh*, which means “five”, because it will counter the “five” kinds of *Erev Rav*³³.

This will not just be *sasson*, a deep joy; it will be the original heavenly light, the light of *shmini* - which was around before Creation. The Sages revealed that Shabbos is really the eighth day, because there was a Shabbos that came before the world. This is not a Shabbos in the sense of resting from labor. The Shabbos that came before the world is like *Hoshanah Rabbah*, where there is no *shevisah* (rest) from *melachah* (labor). The root of this is before creation, in which there was no *melachah* yet. That power is what will rectify the entire world in the future.

Klal Yisrael is essentially that power that preceded the world. It is *Klal Yisrael* in the future will rectify all the other nations. Thus, we see that even though all the nations will be perfected in the future, the nation of *Yisrael* will still be above them.

The *Shemini Atzeres* of the future will reveal that even in the future, when there will be no possibility of sin, the nation of *Yisrael* is still above the nations. For on *Shemini Atzeres*, Hashem requests that *Yisrael* stay with Him for one more day after Sukkos ends, alone with Him. And when that perfected level of *Shemini Atzeres* comes in the future, it will be revealed the perfect level of

33 Refer to the shiur of Amalek In-Depth

“Hashem, the Torah, and Yisrael, are one.” That will be the perfected level of *simchah* on Sukkos which is followed by *Shemini Atzeres*.

10 | IN-DEPTH UNDERSTANDING OF AMALEK & EREV RAV

EREV RAV/AMALEK

When the Jewish people left Egypt, the *possuk* says “*And the Erev Rav also went up with them.*”

*Chazal*³⁴ use an acronym to describe five different groupings of “*Erev Rav*” souls: “***Nega Ra***” (Evil affliction), which stands for “***Nefilim***”, “***Giborim***”, “***Anakim***”, “***Refaim***”, and “***Amalekim***”. The Vilna Gaon lists³⁵ the five groups of “*Erev Rav*” as follows:

1. *Nefilim* are those who seek lust
2. *Giborim* are those who seek to gain an honorable name for themselves, even building synagogues and donating items for the Sefer Torah so that their name can be honored
3. *Anakim* are those who ridicule Torah scholars
4. *Refaim* are those who slacken off from doing kindness and charity for those who learn Torah
5. *Amalekim* are those who are at the heads of the nation of Yisroel during the exile and steal from poor Jews

They are all rooted in one root, however. First, we will delve into the roots of *Erev Rav* (the “Mixed Multitude”) and then we will examine the particular kind that is “Amalek”. The five types of “*Erev Rav*” are also termed by the Zohar as “*chometz v’soehr*”, “leavened wheat and barley.” They are also called “*kash* and *teven*” (chaff and straw). Who is the “*Erev Rav*”? The Sages identify them as the Egyptian sorcerers. When Moshe gave signs to Pharaoh that He will redeem the Jewish people with miracles, the sorcerers came forth and copied all the signs. These very same sorcerers were able to get themselves to resemble the Jewish people.

The root of “*Erev Rav*”, as *Chazal* explain, is contained in the mixture of good and evil that was introduced by the *Eitz HaDaas* (The Tree of Knowledge of good and evil). All mixtures, which contain evil, are thus rooted in and caused by the force of evil in the world that is the “*Erev Rav*”.

THE EREV RAV IS COMPARED TO THE RAVEN

The Talmud³⁶ identifies “*Erev Rav*” as people who never do kindness. Elsewhere, the Sages also compared “*Erev Rav*” to the “*oirev*”, the raven. A raven is known for its cruelty to its children. The

³⁴ In *Tikkunei HaZohar* 41b

³⁵ Editor’s Comment: Refer to the translation of the Vilna Gaon’s words about the *Erev Rav*, adapted from Sefer “*Even Shelaimah*” (11: 6-8) of the Vilna Gaon.

³⁶ *Sukkah* 32a

cruelty of *Erev Rav* is like the cruelty of the raven. An allusion to this is that the word “*erev*” is similar to the word “*oirev*.”

Our Sages also said that the concepts of Moshe *Rabbeinu*, *daas*, and *Erev Rav* are all rooted in one root. The power of *daas* exists in both the sides of holiness and evil. Moshe is the holy side to *daas*, and *Erev Rav* is the evil side of *daas*.

In contrast, *Klal Yisroel* is compared by our Sages to the *yonah*, the dove³⁷, and the *Erev Rav* is compared to the *oirev*/raven. The deeper meaning of this is as follows. We know that Noach first sent a raven out of the Ark to report to him if it was safe to leave the Ark, but the raven did not return. *Chazal* learn from here that the raven is a rebellious kind of bird. Noach then sent a dove, and the dove was loyal to Noach and returned. Thus, *Chazal* compare the *Erev Rav* to the evil raven, and *Klal Yisroel* to the loyal dove. Just as the raven rebelled against Noach, so did the *Erev Rav* rebel against Moshe [when they instigated the sin of the Golden Calf].

EREV RAV – A MIXTURE THAT CANNOT BE SIFTED

Erev Rav is the source of all mixtures. They are compared to *chometz*, as we stated before; *chometz* cannot be nullified to any amount of *se'ohr*, because *chometz* in a mixture always stays *chometz*³⁸. So too, when *Erev Rav* is part of a mixture, it is not nullified to the mixture – rather, it is always there. That is the depth behind *Erev Rav*.

LEAVING EGYPT WITH NO CHOMETZ: THE KEY TO SEPARATING FROM EREV RAV

When we left Egypt, we weren't allowed to have *chometz* with us. We had to leave in a hurry, and there was no time for us to bake any bread; thus, we left with unleavened bread, with *matzah*. The *Erev Rav* came with us, though. They were the “*chometz*” that came with us.

However, although the *Erev Rav* came with us when we left Egypt, at least we were still separated from them, since we only had *matzah* with us and no *chometz*, while they were completely *chometz*. In this aspect lies the key of how we can detach ourselves from the *Erev Rav*; it paved the way for us to be able to separate from them. [Later, we will return to this point and elaborate upon it].

Although this distinction didn't totally separate us from the *Erev Rav* at that point, still, at least there was some tiny degree of separation from them. This hints that we do have hope in separating from them. And at Har Sinai, again, we separated from them, because the *Erev Rav* didn't want to hear the Torah from Hashem, so they stood at a distance from the Jewish people; at that point, we were once again separated from them.

³⁷ *Berachos* 57b

³⁸ Editor's Note: Unless it is nullified of ownership, or burned; as we know from the laws of getting rid of *chometz*. Get the idea...

When we left Egypt, they were with us, just, they weren't totally mixed with us **yet**. The fact that we didn't have *chometz* with us is what helped us begin to separate from the "*chometz*" that is the *Erev Rav*.

Thus, when we reveal the power to separate from mixtures, this can take away the entire strength of *Erev Rav*, which draws its strength from us being mixed with us. When we take away their evil power of mixture, this is what allows us to separate from them. We separate from *Erev Rav* not merely by trying to separate from them in the simple sense, rather, when we separate from the concept of "mixtures"; when we separate from mixture, the strength of *Erev Rav* is taken away as a direct result, and herein will lay the key in ridding ourselves of them.

LEAVING THE "MIXTURE"

So the entire power to "mix" thrives on *Erev Rav*. Thus, the way to separate from *Erev Rav* is by leaving "mixtures".

The Maharal says that *chometz* consists of several ingredients; *matzah*, however, is just plain water and flour. *Chometz* is thus a mixture, which is complicated to mix, while *matzah* is a simple combination that involves no mixing. *Matzah* is thus seen as a revelation of a concept in which there are no mixtures.

The *Erev Rav* is called "*se'ohr v'chometz*" – "yeast and leavened bread", and they are also identified as the sorcerers of Egypt, people who got themselves to resemble the actions of the Jewish people. Their souls thrive on the fact that they can "mix" with us. They can mix us by trying to copy us, just as they copied Moshe's miracles.

Moshe represents the power of good in Creation, and *Erev Rav* is the equally powerful force of evil. Whatever good can do, evil can also do; that is the depth of evil. Evil "copies" good, and that is the depth of evil, which is represented by the force of *Erev Rav* in the world. That is how *Erev Rav* "mixes" with things. If something doesn't mix with something, it is not *Erev Rav* which is always coming to mix. Mixing³⁹ thus defines nature of *Erev Rav*.

The depth behind the concept of "*Erev Rav*" is as follows. There are 70 gentile nations of the world, and the Sages state that *Erev Rav* is the head of all of them⁴⁰. In other words, the *Erev Rav* **includes** all of them together, and in addition, it **mixes** them all together. This shows us that *Erev Rav* contains two distinct evils. It has the power to "mix" everything - it can "mix" the 70 nations together, [and thus unite them all together to fight the Jewish people]. Even more disturbing than this is that it can mix the Jewish people into the other 70 nations, in order to lower the holiness of the Jewish people into the status of the other nations.

³⁹ In Hebrew, mixing is called "*taaruvos*"

⁴⁰ *Gra: Yeshayahu 11:1*

THE EREV RAV AND KAYIN

Chazal also state that the sons of Kayin are part of *Erev Rav*, and in another statement, *Chazal* state that Kayin himself is the root of the *Erev Rav*. The Talmud says that the Snake placed a “*zuhama*” (spirit of impurity) into Chavah when it sinned with her, and this is what led to the conception of Kayin.

Adam and Chavah had two sons named Kayin and Hevel. Hevel was for the most part pure; it was Kayin who was mainly affected by the *zuhama* that was placed into Chavah. We also see that Kayin was given a choice by Hashem: “*If you repent, good, and if not, you are opening the door to sin*”. Kayin represents the free will to break up the mixture of good and evil that came from the *Eitz HaDaas*.

There are both holy and evil ways to use mixtures. Had Adam not sinned, there would have been no mixtures. After the sin, mixtures came into Creation, and Kayin’s soul came about from this mixture. The *Erev Rav* comes from this mixture.

EREV RAV AND AMALEK

The root of *Erev Rav*, though, is Amalek. *Chazal* state that the two sons of Bilaam [who come from Amalek] are the heads of *Erev Rav*. The mixture of the *Erev Rav* is thus most apparent in Amalek. Amalek is called *reishis goyim*, the “first” nation, meaning, that they were the first of the nations to fight against the Jewish people [after we became a nation].

The wicked Sancheriv, who mixed up all the nations, was only able to do as a result of the *Erev Rav*’s power to “mix”. Amalek is the root of all this mixing that *Erev Rav* can cause. Amalek is a nation to itself, but they also serve as the root of *Erev Rav* (these are two distinct matters).

AMALEK: COMBINING YISHMAEL AND ESAV TOGETHER

In the side of holiness, there were three *Avos*. Each of our *Avos* revealed a holy power in the world; Avraham was *chessed*, Yitzchok was *gevurah*.⁴¹ Yaakov Avinu is the connecting point between Avraham and Yitzchok. From Avraham came one major root of evil, Yishmael, and from Yitzchok came Esav. And Esav and Yishmael are mixed together through Amalek.

Amalek combined Yishmael and Esav. Yishmael and Esav are the two roots of the 70 nations. Amalek connects both Yishmael and Esav to their root. It reveals how they are all one evil, and this one evil comes to counter the Jewish people, who are called “one” nation. When the nations are

⁴¹ Editor’s Note: However, because each of these traits is an extreme, there were evil sides to each of these traits which came from them. Yaakov Avinu’s avodah was to balance the traits of Avraham and Yitzchok, thus, only good came from him.

unified against *Klal Yisroel*, this is the evil kind of “oneness” that fights the holy “oneness” of the Jewish people.⁴²

Where did we see this actually take place?

There were four exiles. Egypt is the root of all exiles, but the four exiles are the Babylonian exile, the Persian exile, the Greek exile, and the exile of Edom (Esav). Within the exile of Edom, though, is the exile of Yishmael. What, indeed, is the connection between Edom/Esav and Yishmael? We can see it clearly. We are in the exile of Edom, but within that, we are surrounded by the Arabs. Anyone who thinks is aware of this and sees it clearly. But what is the connection between Edom and Yishmael? If we are in the exile of Edom, how is it that we also in the exile of Yishmael? The answer is: they are connected together through Amalek. The exile of Yishmael is all due to Amalek.

The roots of Amalek were already present in Egypt, which is the root of the four exiles; soon, we will explain how Amalek was in Egypt. Amalek also reappears in our history in the exile of Edom, by connecting Yishmael with Esav. Thus, the deeper way to define the current exile is by understanding that we are in the exile of Amalek.

Amalek is compared by *Chazal* as one who jumps into a scalding bath, who burns himself but cools it off for others. After Amalek fought with us, this allowed other nations to fight with us.

So the connection between Edom and Yishmael, the exile we are in, is all because of Amalek. They are all called “*reishis goyim*”, the “first of the nations”, and simply speaking, this was because they were the first nation to fight us, after we left Egypt. But upon a more subtle understanding, they were already in Egypt.

It is written, “*L’achariso adei oived*”⁴³ – “Their end will be that they go lost.” Amalek is both the *reishis* (beginning) and the *acharis* (end) of evil in the world. They are called “*reishis goyim*”, they are the first nation to attack the Jewish people and thus they are the beginning of evil, but they also show up again at the *acharis*/end of days.

In the end of the exile, Amalek reappears. Soon, when the end of the exile actually occurs – in which Hashem’s Name will once again be one - Amalek will once again reappear right before the end happens, since Amalek comes in order to fight the revelation of oneness of Hashem. The force of evil that is Amalek doesn’t want the oneness of Hashem to be revealed, therefore, it connects all the nations as one in order to fight the oneness of the Jewish people, so that the oneness of Hashem doesn’t become revealed.

That is what lies behind the exile of Amalek. Now we will delve a bit more into this.

⁴² See *Tefillah #019 – Revealing Oneness*

⁴³ *Bamidbar 21:20*

THE SECRET MEANING OF THE KORPON PESACH

Amalek will be destroyed on the 14th of Nissan, as stated in the Zohar. What is the depth behind this? Earlier, we mentioned the words of *Chazal* that sorcerers of Egypt were the first Amalekites. Amalek is the evil kind of *reishis*/beginning. The 14th of Nissan was the day in which the firstborns of Egypt perished. The connection is that the 14th of Nissan is the day in which evil beginnings are destroyed.

However, according to this reason, Amalek should really be obliterated on the night of the 15th, not on the 14th, just as the firstborns were slain by Hashem on the following night, which was the 15th. Why, then, will Amalek be slain on the 14th? The reason is as follows.

The 14th generation [after the giving of the Torah] is called the generation of Dovid, and the 15th generation is the generation of Shlomo who represents the perfected level of mankind. The 14th and the 15th, when added up together, equal 29, which is the amount of days in the month. The deep implication of this is that when “Dovid” and “Shlomo” are connected, there is the power of the new month.

The *Korbon Pesach* (the paschal sacrifice) is on the 14th [*Erev Pesach*]. Pesach is observed on the 15th. The Talmud states that although we begin the festival of Pesach on the 15th (which is the night after the 14th), the 14th is still considered to be like a festival, since we ate the *Korbon Pesach* on the 14th. In other words, the 14th and the 15th of Pesach are connected since they are both called a festival.

The month of Nissan is called *Rosh L'Chodashim*, the head of the months. When we fought Amalek, we had the name of Hashem with us – as it is written in the Torah by the war with Amalek, “*Yad al keis kah*”⁴⁴ (“The hand [of Amalek is on the throne of G-d]”, which uses the four-letter name of *havayah* - and the Name of Hashem contains either the letters *yud* and *daled*, or the letters *yud* and *hei*. The *Korbon Pesach* was eaten on the 15th, the night after the 14th, and not on the 14th. Interestingly, it was called “Pesach”, which means to “skip over”, even before Hashem performed the miracle of skipping over the Jewish homes to kill the Egyptian firstborns. Why indeed was it called the *korbon Pesach* if it wasn't Pesach yet? It is because the *Korbon Pesach* connects the 14th of Nissan with the 15th of Nissan.

The simpler understanding is that Amalek fights the letters of *yud* and *hei* in the name of Hashem, as *Chazal* state. The deeper meaning of this as follows. Let's reflect: Which is a holier day – the 14th of Nissan, or the 15th of Nissan? In other terms, the question is: Are the letters *yud* and *daled* together a greater name of Hashem, or are the letters *yud* and *hei* a greater name of Hashem? Simply, we would say that the letters *yud* and *hei* is the higher level, because *yud* and *hei* is 15,

which represents Shlomo, who is the more perfected level of Dovid. In Shlomo's time was the Beis HaMikdash, which had 15 steps leading to the *Heichal*.

But the deeper understanding is that 14 is a higher level than 15, because 14 is the numerical value of the word *yad*, and the *yad*/hand can reach above the head, which shows us that *yad*/hand/14 is the point that extends above a person.

The *yad*, the hand, represents the point that was before Hashem made Creation. Dovid represents 14, and he is also called *bar nafli*, which means to “fall”, because he “falls” in This World. He “falls” in this world, meaning, he cannot be in This World, for he is really above it.

THE NATION OF YISROEL

The Sages state that Yisroel was conceived in Hashem's thoughts even before Hashem created the world. Yet, we are also in this world. How do we reconcile this paradox? Is the nation of Yisroel above Creation because they come before it, or are they found within Creation?

The answer is: the nation of Yisroel has the power to connect to the beginning that came before the actual beginning of Creation. Since we came before Creation, and since we are in the Creation, we are able to connect “after” Creation with “before” Creation. Creation is also called *maaseh yodov* (the handiwork) of Hashem, alluding to the power of “*yad*” that Hashem made Creation with. All of Creation is really *yad Hashem*, and Yisroel has the power of *yad*, which represents the power to go “above” Creation. In other words, Yisroel can link together the point of “after” Creation with “before Creation”, and connect the two endpoints together.

Amalek is the beginning nation of creation, “*raishis goyim Amalek*” (“the beginning of the nations is Amalek”) and the nation of Yisroel is also called the beginning, for the Midrash states that “Yisrael is called *reishis*.” But Yisroel possesses a deeper kind of *raishis* that Amalek does not have. Yisroel can connect to an even earlier beginning than the beginning of Creation. Yisroel can connect to the state of **before** the Creation. Amalek, by contrast, has a *raishis* beginning and a *sof* end, for Amalek is called *raishis goyim*, and it is also called “*L'achariso adei oived*”⁴⁵, “Its end will be that it goes lost.”

The ongoing war between good and evil, between Amalek and Yisroel, is essentially about what the beginning is. Amalek begins with the beginning of Creation, therefore, it can fight within the bounds of this Creation, but it is limited to the Creation itself. But Yisroel begins with the point that came before Creation, so Yisroel possesses the power to connect to the beginning that came before the beginning of Creation.

TAARUVOS/MIXING – BOTH IN THE SIDES OF EVIL AND IN HOLINESS

Now we can understand better what constitutes the *Erev Rav*, which are about *taaruvos*/mixtures. There are different kinds of mixtures. The simpler kind of mixture is the kind of mixing that the *Erev Rav* can do, which is evil; but there is a **higher** kind of mixture, which is holy, and it is the power which the Jewish people have.

Erev Rav mixes up things **within** Creation. They are the simpler kind of mixture. But there is a holy kind of mixture which can mix together Creation (or the point after Creation began) with the point of “before” Creation; this is the holy kind of “mixing” that Yisroel can do.

The *Erev Rav* is rooted in Amalek, and Amalek is the beginning of Creation, so *Erev Rav* can only mix things that are within Creation. They have no understanding of anything **before** Creation; all of their mixing is done **within** Creation. The Jewish people, who were conceived in Hashem’s thoughts before creation, can mix the Creation with the point of before creation, by combining the two points together.

“*Hashem, the Torah, and Yisroel are one*”⁴⁶ – thus, Yisroel is the connecting point of “after” Creation with “before” Creation. This is the holy kind of *taaruvos*.

Erev Rav gets its strength from mixing, but all of that mixing takes places **within** Creation. The *Eitz HaChaim*, the Tree of Life, actually contained a holy kind of *daas*, which was also able to mix, but it contained a kind of *daas* which could mix together the point of after creation with the point of before creation.

In other words, Yisroel has the power to connecting our life to the point of before creation – to connect our life with Hashem. Moshe has the power of *daas*, and *Erev Rav* is the evil side to *daas*. Moshe, though, can connect to what came before creation. *Erev Rav* can only connect together things that came after creation.

Thus, the deep root of *Erev Rav* is that they mix together “new” things. Holy mixing, though, doesn’t involve anything new; the holy kind of mixing is to connect together what came after creation with what came before creation.

That is the secret behind the concept “*Kol Yisroel areivim*”, “All of the Jewish people are mixed together.” It is the concept of *arvus/areivus*/combining/mutual unity. It is the holy kind of *taaruvos*. It is a *taaruvos* which does not create a *taaruvos* of *tov* and *ra* (mixture of good and evil) that the *Erev Rav* brings; rather, it is a *taaruvos* which brings *areivus*, togetherness.

The depth of holy *taaruvos* is described in the words⁴⁷: “*You existed before the world was created, and You existed after the world was created.*” It is also what is written, “*I am the First and I am the*

⁴⁶ Zohar In Parashas Achrei Mos

⁴⁷ In the prayers said before Shacharis (after the morning blessings): “אתה הוא משנברא העולם ואתה הוא לעולם”

Last.” The state of after Creation can become connected with the state of before Creation [and this is the role of the Jewish people].

THE DEPTH OF AMALEK'S POWER OF "REISHIS"

The power of mixing which Amalek uses, though, comes to fight the holy kind of mixing that the Jewish people can do.

Yishmael and Esav came from Avraham and Yitzchok. Hashem told Avraham to expel Yishmael from his home, so that he should not influence Yitzchok. This was really what paved the root of the redemption from Egypt. Hagar was the daughter of Pharaoh, and by the redemption from Egypt, Pharaoh was told that he must “divorce” the Jewish people from Egypt. The redemption of Egypt was called a “divorce”.

The first “divorce” that the Torah speaks about is the divorce of Adam from Gan Eden. It was really a hint to him that he needs to divorce evil from his midst.

So there were three kinds of divorces from evil – when Adam was sent out from Gan Eden, when Avraham sent out Yishmael, and when Pharaoh sent out the Jewish people. The root of all “ruin” of mankind was when Adam was expelled from Gan Eden. This the rectification process began when Avraham sent out Yishmael. That rectification wasn’t revealed yet, though, but the roots had been laid. It became manifested in reality when Pharaoh sent out the Jewish people, in which we separated from evil.

This signifies how we can separate from the *Erev Rav*. A bridge, which is called *gesher* in Hebrew, connects two points and enables them to mix together. The opposite of *gesher* is *geresh*, to divorce, to separate.

Amalek is called *reishis*, and it connects Esav and Yishmael. These two concepts are interconnected. Yishmael was born to Avraham, but not to Sarah. Esav, though, was born to both Yitzchok and Rivkah. Yishmael and Esav were both firstborns. Yishmael was totally thrown out of the house, and Esav sold his firstborn rights to Yaakov. But they both fought about their *reishis*. Amalek combines Yishmael and Esav – what does it combine? It combines the *reishis* of Yishmael and the *reishis* of Esav. Yishmael was born first, and Esav was born first – that is what Amalek connects together. Thus, Amalek is called “*reishis*”.

EDOM, THE YETZER HORA, KAYIN, AND AMALEK/EREV RAV

There is also another way of describing this concept. Edom ruled before Yisroel became kings. Amalek can fight with Yisroel because there were already kings of Edom. The *yetzer hora* (the evil inclination) is called by our Sages as “an old king”. Why is he called an old king? Simply, it is because he is around for 13 years before the *yetzer tov* comes to a person. But the deeper meaning is

because the kings of Edom, which represent the *yetzer hora*, were around for many years before the kingdom of Yisroel.

The world for “old” is *zaken*, which alludes to Kayin, for Kayin’s name is rooted in the words “*zeh konoh*”, “This, I acquired.” Kayin is all about acquisition. What is the difference between Kayin and Hevel? Kayin, the root of *Erev Rav*, is about *kinyan*, acquisition. Hevel means to making things into “nothing”, as the Maharal states. In other words, Hevel represents the power to connect the point of after creation to the point of before creation. Kayin mixes together good and evil within Creation. He represents the choice between good and evil; he allows evil to be a possibility in creation. But Hevel makes everything in this world into *hevell*/nothing. He turns it into nothing by connecting it to the point of before creation. Kayin is about after creation, and Hevel is about before creation. Kayin is about *taaruvos*, to mix around good and evil within creation.

Amalek connects together the *reishis* of Esav and Yishmael, and of this evil kind of *reishis* it is written, “*L’achariso adei oived.*”⁴⁸ The holy kind of *reishis*, by contrast, is to connect oneself to the *reishis* that comes before me, as opposed to connecting to my *reishis*. Thus, Yisroel is called “*Li Rosh*”, “A head unto Me.” [The essence of] Yisroel “is what comes before the *rosh*/head – the point before the beginning.

Kayin is about what “I acquire”, that acquisitions begin with “me.” Kayin/Kinyan is the voice of evil: “I am the beginning of everything.” That is the concept of Amalek/*Erev Rav*. Hevel, though, represents the power to be aware of what comes before the beginning. This is the power of Yisroel.

The side of holiness is about what came before my existence, while the side evil says that “I” am the beginning point.

THE TWO POWERS OF THE EREV RAV: MIXING AND DESCENT

The Vilna Gaon explains two different aspects of *Erev Rav*. They have the evil kind of *daas*, which is also called “*reid ra*” (“evil descending”), which has the same numerical value as “*Erev Rav*.” The Vilna Gaon said that part of the *Erev Rav* has been rectified, and part of the *Erev Rav* is not rectified. The part in them that is “*ra*” has already been rectified, but the part that is “*reid*” is not yet rectified.

The *Eitz HaDaas* contained *daas tov v’ra* (good and evil “*daas*”), and this is the root of *Erev Rav*, as we brought before. There were two aspects of the “*daas tov v’ra*” in the *Eitz HaDaas*. One aspect is that it simply mixes together *tov* and *ra*, and the other aspect is that it causes *reid/yeridah*/descent.

Adam separated from Chavah for 131 years; this rectified the sin partially. Some of the sin still needed to be rectified. The descent to Egypt, which was called “*reid*” in the Torah (“Go down to

48 Bamidbar 21:20

Egypt”), is what rectified the other remainder of the sin of the *Eitz HaDaas* that hadn’t been rectified yet. Adam fixed the “*reid*” aspect of the *daas tov v’ra*, but he didn’t rectify the “*ra*” aspect of the *daas ra*. So even when *ra* is rectified, we still remain with “*reid*”.

Moshe was told “*Leich reid m’habar*” (“Go descend from the mountain”). The *Erev Rav*, who instigated the sin of the Golden Calf, caused Moshe to descend from where he was, because the *Erev Rav* has this power to cause spiritual descent. Egypt is personified by the word “*reid*” – “Go down to Egypt”. *Reid/Yeridah*/descending is the opposite of “going up” to *Eretz Yisroel*. Egypt is the epitome of *yeridah*, descent. When we left Egypt, we began to “go up” to *Eretz Yisroel*.

When we left Egypt, the *possuk* says, “And the *Erev Rav* also went up with them.” The *Erev Rav* “went up” with us when we left Egypt. This alludes to the concept of the Vilna *Gaon* that part of them was rectified.

“*Reid*”, or *yeridah*, the force in Creation which pulls a person down, and it is the power of the *Erev Rav*. There are two powers in the *Erev Rav*, as we mentioned: *ra* (evil/mixing) and *reid* (descent) *Erev Rav* pulls a person after evil due to its power of *taaruvos*, mixing. This aspect was discussed earlier. *Erev Rav* can also cause *reid*, descent - they pull everything down. One of the groups of *Erev Rav* is called “*Neflim*”, those who cause “falling”, and this refers to the aspect of “*reid*” in the *Erev Rav*: they cause a spiritual descent and pull people down with them.

EREV RAV COMES WHEN THERE IS A LAXITY IN KEEPING THE BRIS

Moshe Rabbeinu circumcised the *Erev Rav*. Yosef also circumcised the Egyptians, and those were called the *Erev Zeir* (a “small” group). That was how he fought with them – by circumcising them. The *Erev Rav*, though, fought against Moshe, even though Yosef circumcised them. It is brought from the words of our Sages that *Erev Rav* comes when there is damage to the *Bris Kodesh*, which is symbolized as the trait of Yosef. Yosef connected heaven and earth, because he is called “*ki chol bashamayim u’varetz*” (by ruling over Egypt, he is considered to be ruler over heaven and earth). The *Bris* removes *orlah* (the foreskin), and *orlah* contains the words *al* and *ra*, The *ra* of the *orlah* represents *Erev Rav*, and the *al* in *orlah* represents Amalek, who, as our Sages report, threw the *Bris Milah* of Yisroel into the sky when they came to fight with us.

THE “YAD” /HAND OF AMALEK AGAINST THE “YAD” OF YISROEL

Amalek came when we were “*rafu yedeihem*”, when “our hands were weak.” The *yad*, the hand, can either be raised upward or it falls downward. Amalek fights through their *yad* – “*yad al keis yad*.” They seek to use their *yad* to raise it upward, as we see from the fact that they threw the *Bris Milah* upward. This is the evil use of *yad*. By contrast, the Jewish people possess the holy kind of *yad*, the power of *yud daled*, which is 14; earlier, we explained that 14 represents the power of Yisroel to connect to the point before the beginning of Creation.

EREV RAV – RIV/STRIFE

So far we have explained that *Erev Rav*'s power is through using *taaruvos* of *ra*. *Erev Rav* contains *ra* and *reid*. This is their *taaruvos* - they combine *tov v'ra*, they combine *se'ohr* with *chometz*, and they combine *ra* and *reid*.

Erev Rav can also cause **riv**, strife. One root of *Erev Rav* is Bilaam, as the sons of Bilaam are called the heads of the *Erev Rav*. Another root of *Erev Rav*, though, took place within the Jewish people from Dasan and Aviram. These are two different roots of *Erev Rav*. Bilaam is the root of an external kind of *Erev Rav*, and Dasan and Aviram are the root of an *Erev Rav* within the camps of the Jewish people. They instigate *riv*/strife amongst the Jewish people.

Dasan and Aviram were rectified, when they were swallowed up with the sons of Korach. Therefore, this aspect of the *Erev Rav* was rectified when Dasan and Aviram were destroyed. However, the name of Hashem, which is still incomplete due to the presence of Amalek/*Erev Rav*, still didn't get rectified yet.

IN CONCLUSION

The “*Erev Rav*” is one of the most complicated, deep matters of the Torah. We have only covered a bit of it here, as all parts of the Torah are an endless ocean.

May we all merit the complete redemption, speedily – today. *Amen*.

11 | FIGHTING SADNESS CAUSED BY AMALEK & EREV RAV

THE ROOTS OF HAPPINESS AND SADNESS

Hashem created the power of happiness in Creation, and for every force in Creation, there is something else with equal force to oppose it. Whatever is holy has something else that is unholy to oppose it, equal in strength. Happiness is opposed by sadness.

The Gemara says that in today's times, there is no happiness except in wine; in the Temple era, there was no happiness except in meat.⁴⁹ Where can we find the root of this? Before the sin of Adam, the angels were roasting meat for him and straining wine for him. Here we can see the roots of happiness: before the sin, which was the perfect kind of happiness, we can find meat and wine.

The root of happiness is found before the sin, in Gan Eden. When a couple gets married, we bless them that they rejoice “just as Your creator gladdened you in Gan Eden of old.” The state of Adam in Gan Eden was the root of happiness. In the future, we will once again have this happiness. The power of sadness will receive its rectification, for Chazal say that Tisha B'av will be transformed into a Yom Tov.

We have explained what the root of happiness is. What is the root of sadness? Sadness is enabled by Amalek; for as long as Amalek is in the world, the Name of Hashem is incomplete,⁵⁰ and therefore our happiness will never be complete until Amalek is destroyed.

Amalek is called “the first” of the nations, and they are also the heads of the *Erev Rav* (the “Mixed Multitude” of Egyptians who left Egypt together with the Jewish people). The *Erev Rav* consists of five groups: *Amalekim* (Amalek), *Refidim* (“pursuers”), *Giborim* (“warriors”), *Anakim* (“giants”) and *Nefilim* (“fallen ones”).

TWO KINDS OF SADNESS IN CREATION

Amalek thus causes sadness in the world because they are the first of the nations, and also, because they are the heads of the *Erev Rav*. Each of these two aspects in Amalek creates a different kind of sadness in Creation, which we will explain.

There are two root kinds of sadness in Creation. One kind of sadness comes to us because of our element of earth in the soul. This is a materialistic kind of sadness that stems from the body's desires⁵¹.

⁴⁹ *Pesachim 109a*

⁵⁰ *Rashi Shemos 17:16*

There is another kind of sadness, which stems from our mind. This is the sadness caused by our doubts. “There is no happiness like the clarification of doubts⁵²”, which implies that when there is doubt, there cannot be happiness.

Both of these kinds of sadness came about through Adam’s sin. There were two curses of sadness that came because of this sin – “*With pain shall you eat,*” and “*With pain shall you bear children.*” The sin of eating from the *Eitz HaDaas* damaged our *daas* and created a sadness that can come from our mind; this is the sadness that results from the pain of childbirth, which Chava was cursed with. The other kind of sadness comes from materialism – this is the pain of having to work hard in order to make a living; this was the curse given to Adam.

Amalek induces “coldness” (*kerirus*) into Creation. Of Amalek it is written, “*And they met you on the way.*” The word “met”, *korcha*, is rooted in *kor*, “cold.” This shows us that sadness also causes a person to feel certain coldness toward spiritual matters. When a person feels indifferent to spirituality, he’s affected by the sadness of Amalek.

When we gain the perfect happiness of the future, it will destroy the damage caused by Amalek, and it will also fix the damage caused by the *Erev Rav*. The five “sounds” by a wedding (*kol sasson, kol simcha, kol chosson, kol kallah, and kol mitzhalos chassanim m’chupasam*) are really meant to counter the five evil groups of the *Erev Rav*.

CHOCHMAH AND DAAS

In our mind, there are two distinct powers – *chochmah* (wisdom) and *daas* (understanding).

Had Adam and Chavah not eaten from the *Eitz HaDaas*, they would have remained with their *chochmah*. The whole temptation to eat from the *Eitz HaDaas* was because they wanted to exchange their *chochmah* for the knowledge of *daas*, which is a higher kind of knowledge that they wanted to have. But when they ate from the tree, not only did they not receive this *daas*, but they received an evil kind of *daas*.

What is the difference between *chochmah* and *daas*?

Chochmah is the knowledge that one receives from his teachers. In our *chochmah*, we sometimes make use of our power of imagination, by comparing facts. But *daas* is a kind of knowledge we use which does not involve our imagination. It is above the imagination.

When Hashem created man, He said, “*Let us make man in Our image and in Our likeness.*” The aspect of “in Our image”, “*betzalmeinu*”, is the root of our *daas*. The aspect of “In our likeness”,

⁵¹ *Shaarei Kedushah.*

⁵² *Toras HaOlah.*

“*kedemuseinu*”, is the root of *chochmah*. Thus, *chochmah* and *dimayon* (imagination, which is the power of “*kedemuseinu*”) have some relation, while *daas* is a power that is above the imagination.

When a person has doubts, his *daas* has been impaired and lowered to the level of imagination. Doubts are essentially a mind that has been taken over by imagination.

We have so far mentioned the two roots of sadness – sadness rooted in materialism, and a deeper kind of sadness, which is the sadness of doubts. Both kinds of sadness can be fixed through happiness.

FIGHTING AMALEK THROUGH DANCING

Channah said, “עלץ לבי בקרבי”, “*My heart rejoices in me*”. The word עלץ*olatz* has the same letters as the words לץ ע’, “*leitz eiyin*”, to “scoff with the eyes.” There is an evil kind of scoffing, *leitzanus*, which is the power represented by Amalek.

To counter this, we “scoff” back at them. How do we do this? This is when we have our own *leitzanus*, which is our power of “*olatz*.”

What is *olatz*? The term *olatz* is associated with dancing. When we use our feet to dance, we lift our feet off the ground, and in this act we are able to make “light” of the evil of Amalek. With *olatz* – dancing – we are able to ward off the evil of the other nations, represented by Amalek.

FIGHTING THE EREV RAV THROUGH INNER HAPPINESS

But in order to fight off the *Erev Rav*, we need a higher kind of happiness. Dancing is only happiness that manifests itself in our feet. But the *Erev Rav* can only be defeated by a higher kind of happiness – the true happiness, which is found only in the heart – as it is written, “*And to the upright of heart (yishrei lev) He has implanted happiness.*” We need to have *yashrus lev* – an uprightness of heart – which gives us the real happiness, and though that, we can defeat the sadness caused by *Erev Rav*.

The happiness we have on Purim is a “happiness of the heart”. “*And the city of Shushan was full of tzahalab (rejoicing) and simcha (happiness).*” The joy that is called “*tzahalab*” is precisely the kind of happiness which can fight off the evil of the *Erev Rav*.

What is the happiness of *tzahalab*? *Tzahalab* is a happiness of the heart. It is not the same thing as *olatz* - it is a more internal kind of happiness. *Olatz* is symbolized by dancing, which is not the deep happiness of the heart; it’s only a happiness of the feet. *Olatz*\dancing is enough of a level of happiness to ward off the evil of Amalek and the other seventy nations, but it’s not enough to fight the evil of the *Erev Rav*, which is a deeper kind of evil. To fight off the evil of the *Erev Rav*, we need a deeper happiness – a happiness of the heart.

What exactly is this happiness? “There is no happiness like the clarification of doubt⁵³.” When we are free of doubts, there can be happiness. The whole idea of Purim is to remove our doubts, to repair our damaged *daas*.

To attain this, we must remove our “*cheshbonos rabim*” – the various “many calculations” we have, our *retzonos* which do not involve serving the Creator – and then we can come to *yashrus lev* (uprightness of the heart). Only through *yashrus* can we have happiness – like it is written, “*And to the upright of heart, happiness.*”

TWO WAYS TO FIX SADNESS

To summarize, there are two different ways to fix our sadness. It depends on what the root of the sadness is.

If we are sad because of our materialism, such sadness comes from the element of earth in us. Earth is heavy; the way to oppose our inner heaviness is by being “light”. We use the power to be “light” by dancing, which is the happiness that is called *olatz\alitzah*.

But if one is sad because of his doubts, his sadness is deeper. It is rooted in his *daas*, which has been affected by the doubts (and as a result, his mind has become lowered to the level of imagination). The way to fix this kind of sadness is through *yashrus halev* (uprightness of the heart).

How does a person attain *yashrus halev*? The way to have *yashrus* is to remove the “*cheshbonos rabim*” – the various “many calculations” that a person has, desires which have nothing to do with serving the Creator. When a person removes the *cheshbonos rabim*, he comes to reveal his inner *yashrus* – like it is written, *ולישרי לב שמחה*, “*And to the upright of heart, there is happiness.*”

THE PERFECT HAPPINESS OF THE FUTURE

In the future, a third kind of happiness will be revealed, which will be the perfect happiness. This is a happiness that will be derived from the Creator – as it is written, *נגילה ונשמחה בך*, “*We will rejoice and be happy in You.*”

The happiness of Yom Tov comes to counteract the sadness caused by the seventy nations of the world, headed by Amalek. Yom Tov is called *shalosh regalim*, which hints to the term “*regel*” – “foot”. The happiness of Yom Tov is manifested through our feet – when we dance out of happiness.

Purim comes to counteract the sadness caused by the *Erev Rav*. The happiness of Purim is happiness in one’s heart, which is when one reaches his *yashrus halev*, by removing his *cheshbonos rabim*.

The most perfect kind of happiness will only be attained in the future. This is even deeper than the happiness of the heart. This will be a happiness in Hashem alone; נגילה ונשמחה בך - "In You."

The whole world today is full of so much sadness! The deep reason for this is because really, there is no real *chiyus*\vitality to be found on this world. It is written, והחכמה תחי' את בעלה, "Wisdom sustains its owner", thus, it is *chochmah*\wisdom which sustains people. *Chochmah* is the source of *chiyus*. But in the world today, there is not much *chochmah* being pursued, and thus the world today is devoid of any real life.

There is no real life to be found on this world. We live in a death-like kind of world, with no real life taking place, because *chochmah* has become nonexistent.

But there will be a perfect happiness which will be revealed in the future, when Hashem's full presence will be openly revealed on the world. Chazal say that in the future, Hashem will rule over every single part of the body. This is the most perfect happiness – happiness from just living with Hashem.....

12 | REPAIRING THE COSMIC MIX-UP

THE CREATION BEGINS AND ENDS WITH MIXTURE

B'siyata d'shmaya, we are in the month of *Elul*, the month in which the world was created, in preparation for the day of *Rosh Hashanah*.

The first explicit statement in the *Torah* of the ten statements in which the world was created is, “*Hashem said, ‘Let there be light’, and there was light.*⁵⁴” This is the first occasion that *Hakadosh Boruch Hu*’s statement is explicit. But immediately afterwards it says, “*Hashem saw the light that it was good, and Hashem separated between the light and the darkness. Hashem called the light - ‘day’, and the darkness, He called ‘night’...*⁵⁵” Our Rabbis taught us, as is well-known, that the light, at its inception, consisted of both light and darkness functioning as a mixture. “*And Hashem separated (vayavdel) between the light and the darkness,*” there then became a reality of separation - *havdalah*.

Upon reflection, the first thing that was revealed in the world - light - at its point of revelation, is found to be a mixture. *‘Light and darkness functioning as a mixture’*⁵⁶. *Rosh Hashanah* is called “*ori*” (my light)⁵⁷ - “*LeDovid Hashem ori*⁵⁸”. The dissolution of that original light, of which was said: “*Hashem said, ‘Let there be light’*” - this is *Rosh Hashanah*, “*LeDovid Hashem ori*”. Nevertheless, the first thing to be revealed in the world was revealed as a mixture (light and darkness functioning as a mixture). Afterwards, Hashem brought about a separation, light by itself and darkness by itself, “*Hashem called the light, ‘day’, and the darkness He called ‘night’*”. But its origin was as a mixture.

The last thing to be created in *ma’aseh bereishis* also shares this same root. “*Hashem said, ‘Let us make man’*⁵⁹”, and afterwards, *Hashem* cast “*a deep sleep upon the man and he slept; and He took one of his sides...*⁶⁰” From the outset, man and woman were created mixed together (according to one opinion - with two faces, and to the other she was his tail⁶¹). *Hakadosh Boruch Hu* then cast a deep

⁵⁴ Bereishis 1:3

⁵⁵ *Ibid.* 1:4-5

⁵⁶ See *Rashi’s* commentary, *ibid.*

⁵⁷ *Vayikra Rabbah* ch. 21, 4

⁵⁸ *Tehillim* 27:1

⁵⁹ Bereishis 1:26

⁶⁰ *Ibid.* 2:21

⁶¹ *Gemara Berachos* 61a

sleep upon him (them) and took one of his sides, separating that mixture. If so, the first thing created in the world (light) started as a mixture, light and darkness functioning as a mixture. The last thing to be created (man) was also created as a kind of mixture. First a mixture was made of man and woman and then they were separated from one another.

Any perceptive person understands that the root of existence that was revealed during the days of *ma'aseh bereishis* is, in essence, the inner depth of all creation. If the first thing to be created was as a mixture, and the last thing was created as a mixture, this means that the reality of all creation was built in the form of a mixture. This is the reality of creation - that even that which was created in the intermediate days was created in the same manner, whose foundation is essentially a mixture.

Let us sharpen this idea further. “*And there was evening (erev) and there was morning...⁶²*” - evening is called “*erev*”, as is well-known, from the lingual root (*ayin-reish-beis*) meaning mixture (*ta'aroves*). “*Hashem called the light, 'day', and the darkness He called, 'night'*”. Is there really complete darkness at night? “*The great luminary for dominion over the day, and **the small luminary for dominion over the night.***”⁶³ Therefore, at night there is not complete darkness. And so, when it is said, “*and darkness He called, 'night'*” - darkness is night, but there is still a bit of light in it. This is the meaning of, “*And it was **evening (erev)** and it was morning*”. Day is illumination, but the night, which is darkness, is not a total darkness. Night is a mixture of light and darkness functioning as a mixture, therefore it is called “*erev*” (from the word *taaruvos*/mixture).

According to this, how do we perceive the Creation? Is it a recurring process of day, night and then day, or is it a process of night, day and then night? Or, in other words (but it is really the same concept): Is it a cycle of morning-evening-morning, or is it evening-morning-evening? For most *halachos*, the order is evening and then morning. “*And there was evening and there was morning*” - this is the order of the beginning of the day. Where does *Yom Rishon* (the first day) begin? From the night. The same goes for *Yom Sheini* (the second day). For *Yom Rishon*, there is less of a practical difference (though there is of course a practical difference), but the most fundamental example of a day when there is an outright practical difference is *Shabbos Kodesh*. When does *Shabbos* begin? It starts from the evening until the end of the next day. Indeed this applies to many other *halachos*, *in fact most halachos* are built upon evening being first and then morning. So what is the order of the creation at its root? Evening, morning, and then evening. In the language of the *posuk* it is called “*from evening to evening⁶⁴*”. This is the perception of time.

If so, the depth of the matter is that time begins in the evening and ends in the evening. Therefore the order of time is not morning, evening and morning. With *korbanos*, there is such a

⁶² Bereishis 1:5

⁶³ *Ibid.* 1:16

⁶⁴ Vayikra 23:32

law. A *korban* is not sacrificed at night. If there are organs that have not been consumed in the daytime, then they are sacrificed, but what is the time of the offering of the *korban*? First the morning *tamid*, and then all the other sacrifices - “upon it complete all the other sacrifices”, ending with the afternoon *tamid*, but, they are consumed for a day and night, or two days and a night. This is an opposing example, nevertheless the fundamental order of things is evening, morning and evening. In other words, the perception is that we start with a mixture and end with a mixture. And in between, we have a point of clarification, which is called morning. If so, the **inner** order of creation is that the beginning of everything is built as a mixture.

Where do we find a clear and tangible example of this in man? “*Night was only created for sleep,*” as the Gemara says⁶⁵, but when a person goes to sleep, does he fall asleep immediately? In general, the way in which the world was created is that it is a process. “*Asleep yet not asleep, awake yet not awake.*”⁶⁶ Even when a person wakes up, does he wake up immediately? It is written explicitly⁶⁷ that one should not get up immediately when he wakes up, but should remain in place for a while so that he should not get up in confusion, since a person does not wake up immediately, rather he initially wakes up to a mixed state, and then he wakes up completely. If so, at the beginning of every day, and at the end of every day, it is not that a person passes from a state of sleep to a state of awake, and from a state of awake to a state of sleep, but rather he passes from his initial state to a state of mixture and then to second state and so on and so forth. This is the order of the creation of the world. This example is very fundamental.

Everything in creation follows its beginning. In the language of our Rabbis, as is well known, “*The body is drawn after the head.*”⁶⁸ So if the “head” was morning, then it is the mixture that would be drawn after the morning. But if the beginning is evening, a mixture, then the whole day, how is it characterized? As a reality of mixture. This is the essential definition of the reality of creation as we recognize it.

The Tree of Knowledge was “mixed good and evil”. How did there come to exist within it both good and evil? There existed in it a mixture, since that is the root of creation: “*And there was evening...*”. Why were *Adam Harishon* and *Chava* inclined to eat from the Tree of Knowledge? Because at the basis of the beginning of their perception was a reality of mixture. So if they are inclined towards mixture, to which way did they incline, towards the Tree of Life or the Tree of Knowledge? They inclined towards eating from the Tree of Knowledge, because their reality is one of mixture.

65 Eruvin 65a

66 Gemara Ta’anis 12b

67 Gemara Gittin 70a

68 Gemara Eruvin 41a

ROSH HASHANAH – THE TIME WHEN WE ARE SIFTED

Now we can understand clearer what happens when *Rosh Hashanah* arrives. *Hakadosh Boruch Hu* sits and judges the world's inhabitants. A person did very many deeds throughout the year. There were good deeds and, *Rachmana litzlan*, there were also deeds to the contrary. *Rosh Hashanah* is a day of judgment, it is a day for the “process of *borer*”, a time to sort and sift things out. What does Hashem do on *Rosh Hashanah*? He sorts through all the deeds that were done as a mixture throughout the entire year, to see “where the person is holding” [what the person's general spiritual level is].

What happens when there is a *ta'aroves* (a mixture)? Of course, there are dry mixtures, there are wet mixtures, and other laws of mixtures such as with *terumah* or *orlah*, but the simple and fundamental dry mixture, what is the *din*? We go after the majority (*rov*). Every mixture (*ta'aroves*) has in it the letters *resh-vav-beis* (*rov*). With which *din* do we judge a mixture? We go after the *rov* (majority). This is the definition of the judgment of *Rosh Hashanah*. How does Hashem judge man on *Rosh Hashanah*? “Three books are opened on *Rosh Hashanah*⁶⁹”, one book for the *tzadikim gemurim*, one book for the *reshoim gemurim*, and a book for the *beinonim*. Are the *tzadikim gemurim* those who are perfectly righteous and have never sinned? It refers to those who have mostly merits, and conversely, the *reshoim* have mostly sins. Man is judged according to his majority.

If so, what then is the entire definition of *Rosh Hashanah*? What does it come to define? Although “*there is no righteous man who will do good in the land and will not sin*⁷⁰”, if he repents he can be a *tzadik gamur*, but for the vast majority of human beings, what is their reality? It is a reality of mixture. The majority is what defines which way the point of the mixture inclines. If it inclines towards good, he is a *tzadik*. If, Heaven forbid, it inclines towards bad, he is a *rasha*. The entire foundation of *Rosh Hashanah* is built upon the perception that when a person arrives at judgment, usually he is coming from a reality of mixture. It is from within that mixture that they come to judge the person. They decide his judgment, by rule of majority, to which side he belongs, to this side or to the other side.

If we have understood up to this point, that everything at its inception is a majority, a mixture, and the end of everything is also a mixture, how therefore does the year start? It starts by way of clarifying this mixture, nonetheless it starts from a mixture. And the end of the year is also evident as a reality of mixture.

69 Gemara Rosh Hashanah 16b

70 Koheles 7:20

According to this, what we have said about the beginning of the world, and what we have said about *Rosh Hashanah* of each year, so too one can say with regards to an encompassing view of all of history.

Let us refine this point. There are two perspectives that a person should have when he comes to view *Rosh Hashanah*: There is a lower perspective, and a higher perspective. The smaller perspective is a person's own self-accounting. "*Who relates the end from the beginning...*"⁷¹ "*A land that... the eyes of Hashem you G-d are on it, from the beginning of the year to the end of the year.*"⁷² So when man reckons his soul's accounting (and likewise they reckon for him from above), what is the perspective? "*From the beginning of the year to the end of the year*" - what he did from the beginning of the year until the end of year. This is one perspective of *Rosh Hashanah*.

What is the second perspective of *Rosh Hashanah*? A perspective from the beginning of days to the end of days. Where is this perspective written? We declare on *Rosh Hashanah* the *Malchuyos*, *Zichronos* and *Shofaros*. What are the *Zichronos*? "*You remember all deeds, and also none of the creations are hidden from you.*"⁷³ We begin to mention from the beginning of days. Hashem remembered *Noach*, and so on and so forth, from the beginning of days until where we find ourselves. If so, when we mention *Zichronos* on *Rosh Hashanah*, what is the definition of the remembrance? "*You remember **all deeds***", everything. From the beginning of days to the end of days. As for *Shofaros*, our Rabbis have said, as is explained by Rav Saadia Ga'on, that there are ten reasons for blowing the *shofar*. One of the reasons is to remind us of the *shofar* of the end of days: "*It will be on that day the great shofar will be blown.*"⁷⁴ So what does the *shofar* evoke for us? The end of all the world's days. What will be then? "*On that day Hashem will be one, and His name will be one.*"⁷⁵ Then His kingship will be revealed in its entirety.

Consequently, each and every year that we work to accept *Hakadosh Boruch Hu* as King over us, there are two perspectives. One perspective: We accept Him as King in relation to the situation we are in now. The King sits on the throne of law and judgment over what happened with each person this past year. This is one judgment, one perspective.

The second perspective is that, as our Rabbis say and is brought in the *Rishonim* and also in the *Gr"a*, man is judged about the next world, as *Tosafos* states⁷⁶. In other words, it is a judgment on

71 Yeshayahu 46:10

72 Devarim 11:12

73 From *Rosh Hashanah Mussaf*

74 Yeshayahu 27:13

75 Zechariah 14:9

76 *Rosh Hashanah 16b* ד"ה ונחמתין

the whole entire creation, on who will be a *ben olam haba* (destined for the World To Come) due to the entirety of his deeds, and not necessarily this year specifically. Consequently, when we accept His kingship, it is a form of acceptance of the kingship that will be at the end of the days of the world, “*On that day Hashem will be one and His name one*”. The *Zichronos* bring to mind all the days of the world, whereas the *Shofaros* evoke the light of the end: “*On that day the great shofar will be blown*”.

If so, *Rosh Hashanah* presents us with two ways of seeing things. One way is a perspective of this year, for each and every individual there is a judgment on this year. And there is also a deeper, more encompassing way, a second way, which is the more complete understanding: A perspective of all the days of the world, from beginning to end. And when it is understood this way, then if at the beginning of the creation of the world and at the end of the days of *ma'aseh Bereishis*, at the beginning of every day and at the end of every day, and so too at the essence of *Rosh Hashanah*, the foundation is a mixture - then likewise, there is the great mixture of all the days of the world.

THE MIXTURE AT THE END OF TIME: THE EREV RAV

What is the great mixture of all the days of the world? To understand clearly: At the beginning of time, in whom was revealed the element of mixture? The Serpent tempted Chavah to eat from the Tree of Knowledge of good and evil, where good and evil were mixed with one another. So what is the power of the Serpent? What is its seduction? Its power is to connect human beings with mixture. This was at the beginning of the world.

At the end of days, as our Rabbis have taught us, as is well-known and is much explained by the *Gr'a*, and is evident and tangible to anyone observant, there will be the ascendancy of the *Erev Rav* (the Mixed Multitude) that will rule over the entire generation. What is the depth of the matter that the *Erev Rav* rules at the end of days? The *Erev Rav* rules at the end of days because the *Erev Rav* is means “mixture”. The translation of the word *Erev Rav* literally means “great mixture”.

There is a small *Erev* - a small mixture (called *Erev Zeir*), and there is also a great *Erev*, a great mixture (called *Erev Rabbah*, or *Erev Rav*). Just as in the beginning of days, the day *Adam* was created, the Serpent's seduction was to eat from the Tree of Knowledge of good and evil mixed with each other, a mixture - thus began the order of creation, as was explained *besiyata d'shmaya* until now - so too, the end of days is also built in the same way. The end of days is built in the manner of, “*From evening to evening.*” The world began with a mixture, and what will be the end of the world? It too will be by way of a mixture.

But just as we blow the *shofar* now, but the *shofar* that we will blow at the end of days will be a great shofar, “*And it will be on that day the **great** shofar will be blown*”; so too the mixture that will be at the end of days is not a small mixture, it is a **great** mixture. What is the difference between a small mixture and a great mixture? The meaning of a small mixture is that it starts in the “evening”

and ends in the “evening”, begins with a mixture and ends in a mixture. What is a great mixture? That even everything in between becomes a reality of mixture.

This is the force of the great mixture that exists. If only the beginning and end are a mixture but the middle is not a mixture, then is the majority a mixture or not a mixture? The majority is not a mixture. But if the force of the mixture applies to the whole scope of existence, then the mixture includes its entirety. This is the force called the *Erev Rav*.

These matters are the clear and fundamental understanding. When a person makes an accounting of his soul for the whole year, each person according to his standing, he must first understand: What is the existence in which we live in? We live, according to our Rabbis, in an existence called *Erev Rav*.

It is not only that there are people who are *Erev Rav*, the leaders of the shirkers who are the *Erev Rav*, though certainly this is true, as stated by our Rabbis. But what is the deeper definition? That through them, since they control the deep, inner helm of the leadership, then everything is in a form of mixture. What type of mixture? Not a small mixture, but a large mixture. As a result of this, man’s deeds are **all mingled in the mixture**. The deepness of the mixture surrounds reality from all sides, every aspect of it is impacted by the existence of mixture.

HOW THE EREV RAV AFFECTS ALL OF OUR DEEDS

The consequence of this and the practical difference to us, is that when man comes to think about the deeds he has done throughout the year, each man according to his soul’s accounting, there is of course the first and fundamental perspective: Is what he has done a *mitzvah*? Is what he did an *aveirah*? What are his deeds? This is the first step.

The second stage, which is our focus, at present: The things that we do, each and every thing we do, does it consist of a mixture? This is not a question of either right or left, of positive or negative, rather this is a question of the things that we have done, are they done in the form of a mixture? Certainly this was true for all the days of the world, the beginning is mixed and the end is mixed. But, in depth, as has been explained, the force of the mixture encompasses everything. And so everything is mixed with one another in a mixture of majority. Everything turns into a mixed reality. And therefore each and every act that we do, and in more precise language, most of the deeds - and the majority defines the entirety - in what way are they done? They are done in the form of an act that a person does that contains a reality of mixture. A reality of a mixture means that the act is not clean, is not pure, but instead it consists of a mixture.

Let us give the most fundamental and clear example of *Rosh Hashanah*. We have two fundamental approaches to *Rosh Hashanah*. One approach is to accept *Hakadosh Boruch Hu* as King over us. The second approach is that *Hakadosh Boruch Hu* judges us and decides for everyone what

will happen in the coming year. To accept *Hakadosh Boruch Hu* over us as King, is an *avodah* for the sake of Heaven. The aspect of *din* and of judgment that He metes out to us, this is for our sake, in that it relates to us, each one according to his portion.

When man is found on *Rosh Hashanah* and *Hakadosh Boruch Hu* judges him, each according to his standing, is *Rosh Hashanah* itself a mixture - or does it have one root point that is purely for Heaven's sake? Whoever wants to come out *zakai* (vindicated) in his judgment, *zakai* from the word *zach* (pure), what does he need to have? Of course, there is the first test - his actual deeds. The **second** test: Is there a part of him that is pure, that is clean, that is not mixed? Does he have one deed, one word, one thought that is pure?

Our Rabbis have said that if it is clear to a person that he has done one clean thing in this world he already has cause to feel at ease. Why? This is the place where there is no mixture, there is no "evening". There is one clean reality, which is solely for *Hashem* alone. One thing that is clean. If he has one clean thing, then in this thing *Hakadosh Boruch Hu* can dwell.

This is the depth of the well-known words of *Chazal*, "Open for me an opening like the tip of a needle and I will open an opening for you like the opening of a hall," or "like an opening that carts and carriages can enter"⁷⁷, and other variants in the words of *Chazal*. What is an opening like the tip of a needle? An opening like the tip of a needle means, one clean thing for *Hashem* alone. One thing, like the tip of a needle. One small thing, but it is one small thing for *Hashem* alone.

Now let us understand deeply, whoever does not achieve one thing for the sake of Heaven, does not know *Hakadosh Boruch Hu*. Why? *Hakadosh Boruch Hu* is entirely good, and that person, what is he? He is a mixture. Where does *Hakadosh Boruch Hu* reveal himself? "Open for me an opening like the point of a needle," at the point of a needle is the point of revelation of *Hakadosh Boruch Hu*. A person may do many good deeds, but if the context of his deed is a mixture, then for this mixture, of course he will be rewarded, and he also has a spiritual illumination from it, but the revelation of *Hakadosh Boruch Hu* within his deeds he will not have, because his reality is a that of mixture.

This is the depth of why the revelation of the *Shechinah* that is found in our generation is far from being what it was in its most exalted state. Why is this the case to such an extent? Sure, there is a lot of Torah, there are a lot of acts of charity and a lot of good deeds, but everything is mixed, almost everything is a mixture of things, an actual mixture of good and evil, a mixture of jealousy, physical desire and the craving for honor that encompasses everything. Even if it belongs to the world of Torah, jealousy, physical desire and the craving for honor can apply there also.

In order for there to exist a true revelation, one must have one clean point.

⁷⁷ *Shir Hashirim Rabbah* ch. 5, 2

THE ULTIMATE SOUL-REPAIR: TO DO ONE ACT THAT IS COMPLETELY PURE

Let us now illustrate this practically. If a person really wants to make *Hakadosh Boruch Hu* King over him, of course the first stage is accepting the yoke of the kingdom of Heaven, the actual observance of the commandments. The second stage that we have been discussing is, that he should take one deed for the coming year – either a deed, a word or a thought – and one will strive to do that deed, word or thought from the utmost purity that exists, for the sake of Heaven, without any other consideration. Not for the sake of good in this world and not for the sake of good in the next world, neither for reward in this world nor for reward in the next world, but simply to please the Creator!

One such point is the root from which the whole soul is illuminated! This is called, “*Accept upon yourselves my Kingship,*⁷⁸” to accept His kingship, may His name be blessed. “*You shall surely place a king over yourself*⁷⁹”, to accept the kingship of the Creator, may His name be blessed. That there should be one thing in which He, so to speak, and His kingship should be revealed in the most complete way. A person who conducts himself in this way, attains one point in his soul that is not part of a mixture. It is upon this point in the soul, that it is revealed to him, “*leDavid Hashem ori*” - this is the source of his light in his soul.

More broadly, we are in a generation that is entirely *Erev Rav*. Whoever has a clean point such as this, by doing this he distinguishes himself from the *Erev Rav*, and he is a *ben olam haba*, and he has attained a prominent degree of self-nullification. Such a person may of course have other parts of his soul that are far from being unmixed, yet he is connected and tied to a separate reality, a reality that is unmixed - one clean and pure point.

However, in order to achieve what has just been said, it is not merely a matter of acceptance, of a person accepting to do something for the sake of Heaven. It requires that “He who *examines the kidneys and heart,*⁸⁰” will testify about him that this is his intention in his mind”, this is his intention in his emotions, and that he is wholehearted in doing so, truly for the sake of His name, may it be blessed, with love. When it is an act that *Hakadosh Boruch Hu* testifies about this person that his intentions were completely pure, this is called that the person came out *zakai* in his judgment - that is, such a person has the inner *zoch* (purity), from which comes the root of all illumination.

Let us refine this point and reiterate it. It is not just that he has done one small thing that was done in cleanliness and unmixed purity. Rather, that this one small thing is the source of the root

78 Gemara Rosh Hashanah 16a

79 Devarim 17:15

80 Yirmiyahu 11:20

of illumination through which the whole soul will be illuminated. It is the “*opening like the tip of a needle,*” by means of which there can be a root for accepting His kingship, may His name be blessed, that will illuminate the full scope of the entire year and all the days of the world.

Obviously, as a person progresses further and further and increases, so does this point need to be expanded more and more - “*Expand the place of your tent...*”⁸¹ But the basis for a true acceptance of the yoke of the kingdom of Heaven, besides accepting the boundaries of law, which is the clear first stage, the second stage which we have been talking about is to accept upon oneself one clean point in its full purity, to break free from the context of mixture.

On the day of *Rosh Hashanah*, *Adam HaRishon* ate from the Tree of Knowledge of good and evil mixed with each other, thereby imputing this day with a perception of sin in which everything is revealed to be a reality of mixture. On this very day, our work is to correct that sin. How, according to what we have explained? It is by revealing one point from within us that is not mixed, but completely clean and pure.

When this point is discovered in our souls and our souls connect together and these points will join together also, this will be the root of the light of *Moshiach*. This is the root of, “*It will be on that day the great shofar will be blown,*” - the antithesis of the force of the *Erev Rav* that rules almost without straits - the opposite point of this phenomenon will be revealed. Through this, there can be a root source of true illumination for one’s soul.

IN CONCLUSION

I hope these matters were understood with the appropriate subtlety that they contain. This is not to be defined as a small piece of advice, or just a small resolution. It is a small resolution, but it is very, very, very deep. And it touches the depths of a person’s *pnimiyus*, at the purest point within him, by means of which he emanates and becomes attached to Hashem, may He be blessed. He will be able to feel tangibly that Hashem is so close, an utter closeness and attachment, to Him.

⁸¹ *Yeshayahu 54:2*

13 | FINDING HOLINESS TODAY

KILAYIM – FORBIDDEN MIXTURES

Parshas Kedoshim discusses the laws of “*kilayim*”, forbidden mixtures. The Torah discusses the details of these laws regarding certain kinds of plants, clothing, and animals which may not be mixed together. The underlying theme of *kilayim* is that there are certain things which are meant to remain apart from each other, and thus the Torah doesn’t want them together.

Certainly, there is also a higher point than this, where everything in Creation is integrated, and there is even a hint to this from the word “*kilayim*”, which contains the word “*kalul*”, “integrated”. But in the current world, we are in an *alma d’piruda*, a “world of separation”, where certain things must remain separate from each other and not be joined together.

THE ROOT OF KILAYIM – THE EITZ HADAAS

The concept of *kilayim* also has deeper roots.

The entire Creation is a mixture of good and evil, ever since Adam ate from the *Eitz HaDaas Tov V’Ra*, the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil. When Hashem placed Adam in *Gan Eden*, He showed him all the trees of *Gan Eden* and said to him, “Look at all of this beautiful handiwork I have made. Give thought to this, and don’t ruin My world.”⁸² When Adam sinned by eating from the forbidden tree, not only did he sin and become removed from *Gan Eden*, but the state of the world was ruined also.

What was wrong with the *Eitz HaDaas*? It was a form of *kilayim*, a forbidden mixture, because it contained a mixture of good and evil – two forces which are not meant to be together. *Kilayim* is therefore rooted in the evil mixture that was in the *Eitz HaDaas Tov V’Ra*, which contained the two ultimate forces that cannot be together – the forces of good and evil. Just as *kilayim* is forbidden, so was the *Eitz HaDaas* forbidden, for the same root reason – they were both forbidden mixtures.

This World – A Mixture of Good and Evil

Adam ruined the world when he ate from the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, by making the world into a place where good and evil were mixed with each other. This mixture spread to the rest of the world, and now the entire Creation became one giant form of “*kilayim*”, a mixture of

⁸² *Koheles Rabbah* 7:13

forces which is not the ideal state of Creation. This is the current world we are found in – the “world of action” where good and evil are mixed with each other all the time.

For this reason, we are always amidst a “sifting process”, and we always need to clarify the good and bad parts of this world in anything we encounter. But, before we try to sift out the good from the bad, we need to first understand the very idea that there is a mixture of good and evil in everything.

Rav Chaim Volozhiner (in the *sefer Nefesh HaChaim*) explained that before the sin, the evil inclination was an external force. The Serpent was outside of Adam and Chavah and didn't yet enter into them. After the sin, the evil inclination, or the Serpent, entered into man. The evil inclination resides in the heart, and is enmeshed with our soul, as the *sefer Chovos HaLevovos* describes.

Thus, we first need to be clear that each thing in Creation has become mixed with evil, ever since the sin. That is the reality today, and it is the result of the sin, not the ideal state of Creation as things were meant to be.

CONNECTING TO THE EITZ HACHAIM – THROUGH TORAH AND HASHEM

But when one merits a connection to the Torah, which is called the “*Eitz HaChaim*” (Tree of Life) – for the Torah is *chayei olam*, “eternal life” - he partakes of the *Eitz HaChaim*, and he is thereby connected with *HaKadosh Baruch Hu*. He is not simply partaking of a life that is externally good, in the same sense as partaking of the fruit of the *Eitz HaDaas*. Rather, he connects himself to the holy Torah, which is “*A tree of life it is, to those who are steadfast in it*”.⁸³ The Torah is the revelation of the *Eitz HaChaim* that was in *Gan Eden*.

Through connecting to the Torah, one becomes connected with Hashem, where no evil can occur, for it is written “*In His place, evil shall not visit you.*” Evil cannot affect the place where one stands with Hashem. The more that a person connects with the reality of Torah and with the reality of Hashem, with true, inner *d'veykus*, the more he enters into the innermost chambers with Hashem, where there is no mixture of good and evil. This is the state of the pure soul with which Hashem created man with.

As long as a person hasn't yet connected himself to the depths of Torah with *d'veykus* in Hashem, the life he lives is a mixture of good and evil, a life of “*kilayim*”. Within this mixture, one still has the *avodah* to sift out the good and evil. Even if he does sift out the good from the evil, he will always be found within a world that is a mix of good and evil, until *Moshiach* comes, may he come speedily in our days.

⁸³ *Mishlei* 3:18

When one accesses the inner world, by connecting himself to the world of Torah which is Hashem's world, there is no mixture of good and evil. There is only good there, for Torah is called "good". It is a reality that is entirely good.

THE INFLUENCE OF THE "EREV RAV" ON THE JEWISH PEOPLE

Therefore, when a person lives in the external world, he lives in a world of *kilayim*, of mixtures. This was always true ever since the sin of Adam. Ever since the Jewish people left Egypt, the Torah says that there was also a group called the "*Erev Rav*" (Mixed Multitude), who followed the people out of Egypt.⁸⁴ The word "*Erev Rav*" is from the word "*taaruvos*", mixture. Simply speaking, they were a mixture of different nations. No slave ever left Egypt until the exodus, and therefore there was already a mixture of many nations in Egypt. That is why they are called the *Erev Rav*, because they were a *taaruvos* (mixture) of many nations together.

But the deeper understanding, as explained by the *Gra*⁸⁵, and later elaborated upon by Reb Elchonon Wasserman⁸⁶, is that the *Erev Rav* are souls who contain an inherent mixture of good and evil.

In that way, they are very different from the nation of Yisrael. The nation of *Yisrael* stood at *Har Sinai* to receive the Torah. This wasn't just an event, but a revelation of the *Eitz HaChaim* to them, where they received a world which is free from the mixture of good and evil. But the *Erev Rav* didn't join in this experience. The Ramban says that the *Erev Rav* stood apart from the people when the Torah was being received at Har Sinai. Although they had the status of Jews, they didn't actually stand together with the people at the foot of the mountain, choosing instead to stand apart from them.

After the exodus, the *Erev Rav* became mixed with the Jewish people up until the point where the Torah was received. At the very apex of the giving of the Torah, Hashem's Presence was revealed – it was a sublime experience. It was the revelation of the Torah that is entirely life, with no mixture of good and evil. The spirit of impurity of the Serpent was removed from them.

But the *Erev Rav* didn't partake of this experience, because they were an inherent mixture of good and evil. When the rest of the Jewish people remained together with the *Erev Rav* afterwards, the mixture of good and evil affected them, and continues to affect us until today, obscuring the light of the Torah from completely elevating the Jewish people.

⁸⁴ *Shemos* 12:28

⁸⁵ *sefer Even Shelaimah* 11:1, and *Perush HaGra Tikkunei HaZohar* 41a

⁸⁶ Reb Elchonon Wasserman (student of the Chofetz Chaim and the foremost Gadol in Europe, Rosh Yeshivah of Baranovitch, and author of *Kovetz Maamarim*, *Kovetz He'aros*, and *Kovetz Shiurim and Epoch of the Messiah*).

Therefore, it is clear, says the Ramban⁸⁷ that the *Erev Rav* stands on their own as a “separate nation” [to the Jewish people]. Otherwise, their mixture with the Jewish people wouldn’t have allowed the “impurity of the Serpent” to have left the Jewish people at Har Sinai. The Sages state that the “impurity of the Serpent” left the Jewish people at Har Sinai⁸⁸, and therefore, the Ramban says, the *Erev Rav* must have stood apart from the Jewish people during that time, as their own independent reality.

This perspective offers us greater insight into these days before preparing to receive the Torah on Shavuot. When we received the Torah at Har Sinai, we separated from the external world around us, which is entirely a mixture, and we entered into an internal life, which is entirely life. But it is only accessed by one who is attached, in the depths of his soul, to the holy Torah and to Hashem.

When the people sinned with the golden calf, due to the influence of the *Erev Rav* (the other “nation” who influenced them to sin), the mixture of the *Erev Rav* re-entered the Jewish people. The very fact that the people became mixed with that external world, where there is good and evil mixed together, was a terrible decline in their entire spiritual level, for they left their internal world where all is pure and good, and were now connected to a world where everything is mixed up.

“EXILE OF THE EREV RAV”

The *Gra* wrote - and Rav Elchonon Wasserman explained his words further⁸⁹ - that in the final generation, the influence of the *Erev Rav* upon the Jewish people will once again re-assert itself.

In the previous generations, we went through the exiles in Egypt, Babylonia, Media-Persia, Greece, and later the exile of Edom (Rome). Currently, we are in the *galus* of *Yishmael* [the suffering from the Arabic nations] – and within this exile, we also face the “exile of the *Erev Rav*”. The exile of the *Erev Rav* is the final exile, where we are being tested with all kinds of “forbidden mixtures”.

At the giving of the Torah, the Jewish people were separated from the *Erev Rav*, and even the wicked Bilaam understood that there was a separation, saying “*They are a nation that dwells alone, and with the nations they do not think.*”⁹⁰ The Jewish people were understandably separated from the rest of the nations when they were in the desert, but even more so, they were separate from the *Erev Rav*. This separation between the Jewish people and the *Erev Rav* was evident when the people stood at Har Sinai.

⁸⁷ The Rav further explained that although the Ramban doesn’t prove to his words, it is the “straightforward logic” (*sevara yeshara*) of the Ramban, and therefore we should honor it as the “straightforward logic of the Rishonim, which is self-explanatory.”

⁸⁸ *Shabbos 146a*

⁸⁹ “*Epoch of the Messiah*” – the period preceding the arrival of the Messiah of the Jewish people

⁹⁰ *Bamidbar 23:9*

After the sin with the golden calf, though, the Jewish people fell from this sublime spiritual level into the influences of the *Erev Rav*. (Of course, Hashem is always with us, and He can be revealed even now amidst the mixture with the *Erev Rav*.) But we are in a generation that is entirely a state of “*kilayim*”, the very opposite of our pure state when we stood at Har Sinai. In this final generation, we are within the exiles of *Edom*, *Yishmael* and *Erev Rav*. It is not merely the kind of “*kilayim*” that the Torah describes, such as *kilayim* of plants, clothing and animals, which are external kinds of mixtures. It is rather a form of *kilayim* that takes place on an internal level.

There will always be a pure place in our souls which remains unaffected by this mixture, but to the extent that we are influenced by the mixture of the *Erev Rav*, that is how much we will spiritually suffer from the “exile of the *Erev Rav*”, which is like the forbidden mixture of *kilayim*.

DESIRE AN INTERNAL KIND OF LIFE

What then? In order for a person to live in a true world, he needs to penetrate to the depths of the Torah and to the depths of their own relationship with Hashem.

Certainly, every person has the *avodah* to separate as much as he can from the superficial world and to enter inward. But even more so, as we have been explaining here with *siyata d’shmaya*, the very definition of our *avodah* today requires one to enter inward. For as long as one does not enter inward, he is still connected to the mixture of the world today, and that means he will be found in the depth of our exile. Even if a person is able to draw out the good that is available in the mixture of the world today, he is still living in the mixture, so he will be missing the inner truth and he will be deeply entrenched in the exile. This is the meaning of the statement, “*Torah, Torah, don a sackcloth!*”⁹¹

If we understand these words, it should awaken in us a desire, in the depths of our soul, to seek an inner kind of life, where a person is attached to the holy of Torah, in the depths of his intellect and heart, where there is nothing else in his life other than Torah. Where the Torah fills all of his life and that is where one is connected to, and that is where he lives. This does not require one to be on a high spiritual level. Rather, all it requires from us is that we not be so spiritually callous.

When one merits reaching a deep connection to the holy Torah and to Hashem, this is a redemption for the soul, as in the verse, “*My soul is close to her redemption*”.⁹² It is a way for one to leave the depths of exile. It is not a total redemption from the exile, but it enables one to at least touch upon a place of redemption. That is where purity and holiness resides. That is where a person can merit to feel the holiness of the Torah, and then he becomes transformed.

⁹¹ a statement of mourning which conveys the passing of a great Torah leader

⁹² Tehillim 69:19

Understandably, even when one is mainly living within the mixture of this world, he can still be affected by Torah, because the light of the Torah illuminates every place. However, the holiness of the Torah will be obscured by the mixture one is in, and he won't be able to feel the holiness that clearly.

But when one merits to penetrate inward, to the place where there are no mixtures, the soul can then feel the truth of the Torah, as in the statement, "Moshe is truth, and his Torah is truth".⁹³ Then a person will feel the truth with clarity, and his soul will become more and more connected with the truth of Torah. As a result, his soul will naturally recoil from what is found on the outside world today, for the soul will be aware of what the truth is.

TIMES OF SOLITUDE EVERY DAY

It is written, "*Go my nation, come into your rooms, close the doors behind you, wait for the moment until the wrath passes.*"⁹⁴ Just as we can close the doors in our physical world, so can we also 'close the doors' in our own soul from whatever is taking place in the outside world. We can live in the inner world, by being connected only with the holy Torah and Hashem. There, a person can discover the *kedushah* (holiness) of the *neshamah* (Divine soul) of a Jew. There, a person can discover that "My G-d, the soul You gave to me is pure."⁹⁵ It is **pure!**

To live with this perspective on a 24/7 basis is, understandably, not possible. But every person who searches for a life of truth, a life of Torah, needs to have times every day where he disconnects from everything, when he lives only in the inner world.

PREPARING FOR THE TORAH: DESIRING NOTHING BUT HASHEM'S WORD

This is the very idea of the days we are in now. When the Jewish people left Egypt, they left behind the mixture that was in Egypt, and prepared themselves to receive the Torah. Their entire focus was on listening to Hashem. They didn't want anything else and they had no other goal.

That is what it means to prepare for the Torah – when one prepares his soul to enter into the innermost chambers with Hashem. The more one is connected to the outside world, the more he is found amidst the mixture in this world. The more one lives inwardly, the less he is mixed with the world – until he can reach the ultimate level, where there is no mixture at all. That was the state of receiving the Torah.

Every person needs times every day where he totally disconnects from the world around him – starting with an external disconnect from the world, and continuing with an internal disconnect

93 *Bava Basra 77a*

94 *Yeshayahu 26:6*

95 *Recited in the morning prayer of "Elokai Neshamah"*

from the world, by separating your mind (thoughts) and heart (emotions) as much as you can, from all of the troubles of this world. During this quiet time, one needs to bring the mind's thoughts and the heart's desires into the depths of the Torah. One should prepare oneself, during this time, to enter into the innermost chambers with Hashem.

Of course, a person cannot accomplish this all at once. It is a gradual process, of slowly disconnecting from the rest of the world, whereupon one merits discovering the inner world. At first, when one begins to try this, it will only be a momentary experience. But as one gets used to it, one will find that it settles the soul, and the inner world opens up to a life that is entirely pure, free from all unsavory 'mixtures' of this world.

DIRECTING OUR LIFE TO HASHEM AND HIS TORAH

The light of the Torah, the light of Hashem which shines within man, is the same light where nothing else exists other than Hashem's Presence, revealed through His wisdom, which is the Torah. That is where all of our life should be directed towards. If one is not trying to reach this point, then he is still 'eating' from the mixture of the *Eitz HaDaas Tov V'Ra* every day, and every hour...

In contrast to this, when one directs his life towards the light of Hashem and His Torah, he leaves behind the life that resembles "*kilayim*" (forbidden mixtures). For the "*kilayim*" that we are found in in this world are not our true *ratzon* – it is against our true will. When we awaken our true *ratzon*, our *neshamah* will want a pure place which is free from any mixtures that are unsavory and unwanted.

IN CONCLUSION

When one realizes that one is living in the state of "*kilayim*" on this world, an unwanted mixture, a desire can then be awakened in oneself, for an inner world that is pure, where there are no mixtures. When one accesses that perspective, one will then be prepared to give one's soul for it, and to disconnect from everything else around oneself, and penetrate into an inner place that is inclusive of everything. One's entire being is contained in that inner place, and it includes *Klal Yisrael*, as well as the entire unit of the holy Torah, and, more than anything, the greatest *Klal* of all: Hashem, Whom there is none other besides.

On a personal level, this refers to the complete level of revelation of Hashem's Presence in the depths of one's soul.

14 | SEEING A CLEAR WORLD

A WORLD OF MIXTURE

Hashem appeared more clearly to Moshe than He did to the Avos. To the Avos, He appeared with the name *Kel Sha-kai* (G-d Almighty) but to Moshe He appeared with the Name of *Havayah*.

The prophets saw visions of Hashem through an unclear vision, while Moshe saw through an illuminating, clear lens. The prophets said “So said Hashem”, but Moshe said “This is what Hashem commanded.”

The *Eitz HaDaas* was good and bad together. It wasn't simply that there was a good part of the tree and a bad part of the tree, as if the right side was good and the left side was bad (just as the right side of the heart contains the yetzer tov and the left side of the heart contains the yetzer hora). Rather, in the Eitz HaDaas, good and bad were mixed with each other. The bad in the Eitz HaDaas created a mixture. The word mixture, *eiruv*, contains the letters *ra*, bad, to hint that it was bad mixed with good.

When Adam ate from the tree, he ruined the world. Hashem showed him the entire Gan Eden and said “Look at these beautiful trees I made. Do not destroy My world.” So when Adam ate from the tree, not only did he destroy his own perfection but he destroyed every soul, and the entire world. The destruction of the world and every soul meant that now everything in Creation contains evil in it, which really means that everything in creation contains a mix of good and evil in it.

Ever since then, a person understands things from a mixed perspective, in which good and bad is mixed into his perspective. Before the sin, Adam could grasp something as it is with nothing else mixed in. After the sin, everything changed, and now man would understand the world and himself and everything else with a mixed perspective, in which good and evil are mixed together in his mindset.

Even good things contain bad mixed into it. For example, the words of Torah are spread all over the place, poor in one place and rich in another place (*Yerushalmi Rosh HaShanah 3:5*). A sugya of Gemara is mixed with many different concepts together and it has to be sorted out. Shulchan Aruch is arranged according to four orders, but Shas isn't arranged according to Shulchan Aruch. The laws of Orach Chaim are not only contained in Berachos and Shabbos, they are spread all over Shas. The laws of Choshen Mishpat are not only found in Bava Kamma through Bava Basra, they are spread out all over Shas. The Torah is presented to us in a way that it's all mixed together. Even in the Chumash, the verses are not always in chronological order. The words of Torah are presented to us in an unorganized, mixed manner, and all of this is a result of Adam's sin. Creation changed

ever since the sin, and therefore even the way the Torah is revealed to us is on the level of after the sin. Our entire perspective is from a world where good and bad are mixed together. Even in a mixture of two good things, where it's entirely good, it's two different kinds of good mixed together. The words of Torah are all good, and there is no good except Torah, but because everything is mixed, two good things are mixed together and it's still a mixture.

The outcome of this concept is, that not only does a person meet bad elements when he wants to look for something good, but even when he analyzes something good, it is unclear to him, because we do not live in a clear world. Hashem looked into the Torah and created the world – He looked into a world of clarity from the Torah. After the sin, our current world, everything is mixed, so that even when a person learns Torah, he doesn't see it all organized in front of him, everything is mixed together.

When we want to sort out a mixture and separate the elements from each other, this act is called sifting. In the laws of Shabbos, it is prohibited to sift out a mixture. In the act of sifting, we sort out all the different elements, either separating bad from the good or the good from the bad. But it is even more than this. It is to take a mixture of many parts and show how each element is separate. When everything is mixed together, it is not sifted – it is not clear to us. Through sifting it, we can put each element in its proper place, and even more so, we can return each element to the root that it came from, before it got mixed.

In our world, everything is mixed together. But in the higher world, everything is in its proper place. It is called the “clear world”. The Gemara (Bava Basra 10a) says that one of the Sages got deathly ill and his soul left his body, and later his soul returned. His father asked him, “What did you see?” He said to him, “I saw an upside-down world. The higher ones are below, and the lower ones are above.” His father said to him. “You saw a clear world.” In the clear world which he had seen, he saw a world where there were no mixtures.

Moshe was on a higher level of prophecy than all other prophets. The other prophets said “So said Hashem” while Moshe said it more clearly: “This is what Hashem said.”

OUR AVODAH TO GAIN CLARITY

Now we shall see how all this applies to our own *avodah*.

The prophets saw through holy imagination, meaning that their imagination could take two things mixed together, see if there was a comparison or not, and then they would infer a holy comparison between the two things. But even though it was holy, it was still at the level of a mixture. The Gra and Sforno both explained that the Eitz HaDaas was the imagination. There is either holy or impaired imagination, but either way, imagination is always a mixture of several elements. The prophets deemed it fit to compare two different things that they saw in their vision,

but their vision was all within the mode of mixtures. But Moshe could see further. In Moshe's visions, he could take different elements and separate them, putting each one in their proper place, so that each thing was as it is without a mixture, and this was a clear world.

Moshe Rabbeinu took the *Erev Rav* out of Egypt. Since he had the power of holy daas, he wanted to bring the *Erev Rav* into holiness, and the *Erev Rav* is equal in gematria to daas. The *Erev Rav* represents the entire concept of mixture, *taaruvos*. They were not just a mixture, but a completely mixed entity, as implied by their name, *Erev Rav*, a great mixture. This was an absolute mixture, which could only be sorted out by Moshe, the only one who was capable to taking a mixture and separating it, returning it to a clear world. Thus, it was Moshe who tried to repair the *Erev Rav*.

But what happened in the end? Moshe was told to go down from Har Sinai because the "nation" was doing destruction. When Moshe came down, he asked Aharon what great sin has this nation done? It was that nation, the *Erev Rav*, which caused all the ruination for Klal Yisrael. Moshe had the ability to sort out each thing and return every mixture to a clear world, and who had tried to sort out the *Erev Rav*. The only possibility to sorting out the *Erev Rav* was through Moshe's power.

We are not on the level of Moshe, nor the prophets. We cannot say "This is what Hashem said" nor do we even have the holy imagination of the prophets who could say "So said Hashem". But these two abilities are two different paths which exist in each person's soul. There are things which we can be certain about, and things which are uncertain but which we can guess.

We can know for certain if it is day or night right now. But if it is in middle of sunset, the answer isn't clear. In middle of the day, with the sun above our heads, it is clear that we are in the day. Every person has a line of where certainty ends and where uncertainty begins. At the point where uncertainty begins, things are mixed and unclear. Chazal said that "if a matter is as clear to as your sister" means that just as you know that it is prohibited to marry your sister, then you can say it. If not, then don't say it." The way to learn Torah is to turn uncertainty and guessing into clarity and certainty. Although this was taught about learning Torah specifically, it is really a principle for all of life. We are found after the sin, where everything is mixed, where everything is uncertain and we have to guess. Our *avodah* is take all the uncertainties and be clear about them.

The first step in this is in learning Torah. In every *sugya* of Torah learned, one has to see to it that he is becoming clearer about concepts, and that unclear concepts are getting lesser and lesser, because his clarity is growing. Contradictions found in the Gemara and in the Rishonim and Acharonim are all a mixture, and if we return each matter to where it belongs, there is no contradiction. In every *sugya* that one learns, one has to make sure he ends it with clarity. And if one is unclear about something, it should be clear to him that a certain concept is unclear. Know what you are clear about, and know what you are not clear about. Never continue to the next *sugya* if there is nothing clear to you. You have to take leave of the *sugya* only when you are clear about

certain concepts (and you also know what you are unclear about). Then, with this ability, one can approach all of life through a “clear world”. The root of this power is gained from clarity when learning Torah, and it has to be extended to all of life as well – to see all of life through a clear lens.

In most areas of life for most people, in the generation and situation which we are found in, our perspective is very far from that clear world of certainty. If a person has never gotten used to learning Torah in a manner of clarity, he has never seen a clear world, and when he encounters various parts of life, from where will he get clarity? He has never gotten used to the idea of gaining clarity in matters. When he will learn sefarim that explain the principles of Torah life - from our Rishonim and later - he will certainly get information and fundamental knowledge, but he won't see a clear world. Everything will be cloudy to him. When one is unclear about fundamentals, his entire life will be lived with uncertainty and he is not able to be clear about anything.

When Mashiach comes, Hashem will make a circle for the tzaddik and He will sit amongst them in Gan Eden, and each of them will point with His finger and say “This is Hashem, we hoped for Him.” But **a person who lived without clarity won't be able to point with his finger and say “This is Hashem”, because he never lived in clarity, so even when he recognizes Hashem in the future, it will be cloudy and unclear to Him.** If we never try to clarify the important matters of life, we will certainly be far from clarity. But even if we are involved in trying to clarify things, if we don't arrive at clarity then we cannot apply the fundamentals of the sefarim and Chazal.

For most people who have not clarified these matters enough, they don't live in a clear world. But even if one tried hard to clarify the matters, he needs to sift out the matter with ‘13 sieves’ – he needs to work very hard at refining it - until he gets to a very refined level of clarity. When learning a *sugya*, he has to know what all the steps are, and what is agreed upon by everyone, and where the arguments are, what the main points in the discussion are - and to make it all clear.

When a person doesn't have a clear world, he lives in a perspective of mixtures. Not only will words of Torah be unsorted to him, but he will also live in a mixture of good and bad.

THE EREV RAV TODAY – AND HOW IT AFFECTS US

The *Erev Rav* is essentially about mixing everything together. The *Erev Rav* can take the greatest holiness on one hand and the depths of depravity (*tumah*) on the other hand and mix it all together! And that is the depth of what's taking place in our generation.

We live in a world where everything is mixed in such a frightening way. The superficial way to understand the matter of the *Erev Rav* is that there are souls of the *Erev Rav* today, and that is true, but it is more than that. The level of the generation today is the very way that the Erev thinks. The sefarim revealed that in the final generation, most of the generation will be the *Erev Rav*, but this

doesn't only mean people, it means a certain way of thinking, a generation that thinks like the *Erev Rav*. Any sensible person can see clearly how everything is mixed together.

Certainly there are many people who are of the *Erev Rav*, simply speaking. There are 70 nations of the world, with the root of all of them, the *Erev Rav*, who are the root of all ruination. They are the souls of the *Erev Rav*. But the very level of the generation is the *Erev Rav*!

At Har Sinai, there was a separation made. The impurity of the Serpent let us and we were entirely good, with evil separated from us. After that, by the sin with the golden calf, good and bad became mixed together again, through the *Erev Rav*, who caused that sin. The *Erev Rav* causing everyone to sin essentially meant that they returned everything back to a mixture. But that was only the beginning of the mixture, when good and bad were still separated from each other, and the mixture was only minimal. As history continued, and finally at today when we are at *ikvesa d'Meshicha*, the mixture has gotten more and more, and that is the way to define the *kelipah* of the *Erev Rav* which is found in the Final Days.

The depth of the *avodah* in our generation is to go in the opposite direction of the *Erev Rav*. It is to live in a clear world, where there are no mixtures.

It is very understandable why it is hard to live today in a clear world. Since everything is mixed together, it is hard to see a clear world. When things are so mixed together, anyone with a bit of holiness can see how it's all mixed, and how this necessitates to enter into a clear world.

It can be compared to a person on a cloudy day. He thinks he can see good, but he doesn't see that clearly. Yet, he can see. But if it is so cloudy that he can barely see in front of him, and certainly if he is being careful when he walks because any moment he can fall, he knows that he can't see well. This describes our situation today. We are found in a world, in a place, and in a situation of our souls, where most of the people today have the perspective of the *Erev Rav*, to mix everything together.

FROM MIXTURE TO CLARITY

But it is precisely from amidst the mixed perspective of this generation, the light of the clear world has to sprout forth from. The way of a true Talmid Chochom is that whenever he analyzes a matter, he first clarifies it by seeing all the parts that comprise it, and then he puts each matter where it belongs. He sees a clear world. He learns Chumash and sees a clear world in it. He learns Gemara and sees a clear world. And when he lives in this generation, he sorts out everything.

It was always true for all the generations that people needed certainty, but all the more so in the final generation. The *Erev Rav* can mix everything together, and that necessitates us to sort out everything.

Our goal has to be that when we walk out of the Final Days, we can point to Hashem and say “*This is My G-d, I hoped for Him.*” How will we be so certain and say “This is My G-d”? It is only because if we lived in this final generation, we had to become clear about it.

In previous generations, this clarity was only the avodah of Moshe Rabbeinu [and tzaddikim who had a spark of Moshe Rabbeinu of that generation]. In the past, the mixture caused by the *Erev Rav* was only just beginning. But when we are found in the current generation - where the entire way of thinking follows the *Erev Rav* - what was once Moshe Rabbeinu’s avodah has now become the avodah of today’s generation. That is why it is indeed a difficult avodah for us. For this, we need to make use of the words of the Rambam, that anyone can become a tzaddik like Moshe. This means that any person today can become a tzaddik like Moshe, *mamash* (in the actual sense)! And as Reb Elchonon Waserman zt”l taught, “Any person on his level and according to his capabilities is able to become a servant of Hashem like Moshe Rabbeinu, according to what he’s capable of.” To become like Moshe essentially means, when we gain the perspective of living in the “clear world”.

To the extent that every individual today is *zocheh*, and all of Klal Yisrael, to come out of the mixture and to live in a “clear world” – becoming clearer and clearer, until we can see very clearly similar to how Moshe saw his vision clearly – that is how we will be *zocheh*, speedily in our days, to “Each person will point with his finger and say, “*This is My G-d. I hoped for Him.*”

15 | LIVING IN ERETZ YISRAEL

THE TEST OF ENTERING ERETZ YISRAEL

In *Parshas Shelach*, Hashem says to Moshe, “Send for you men who will spy out the land of Canaan.” Rashi says, “I am not commanding you, but if you wish, you may send according to your own understanding.”

Eretz Yisrael is the most superb of all lands, and that is why going to live in *Eretz Yisrael* is called *aliyah*, “ascending,” because it is an ascent to this highest of all places.

Whenever a person tries to ascend and go higher, he faces challenges along the way, and he might decide to run away from it. Entering *Eretz Yisrael*, which means making *aliyah* to *Eretz Yisrael*, is always going to be a difficult test for anyone. Just as the generation in the desert was tested when trying to enter *Eretz Yisrael*, when they heard bad reports from the Spies, so is there a test for anyone who wants to enter *Eretz Yisrael* in order to live there. It will entail a test.

Let us think about what this test is – the test of trying to enter *Eretz Yisrael*, and the test for all those who are living in it.

THE UNIQUE SPIRITUAL QUALITIES OF ERETZ YISRAEL

The Gemara says that when Hashem was forming the body of Adam *HaRishon*, He formed the head from *Eretz Yisrael*, his body from Bavel, and all other body parts from all the other lands.⁹⁶ The main part – the head – was taken from *Eretz Yisrael*. Thus, *Eretz Yisrael* is the head, the most elite, of all lands.

It wasn't a coincidence that Adam's head was taken from *Eretz Yisrael* - it wasn't simply a matter of giving importance to the head because *Eretz Yisrael* is an important place. It wasn't simply because the most important part of the body, the head, had to be taken from an important land, *Eretz Yisrael*. Rather, the depth of this matter is because *Eretz Yisrael* is the head, by its very concept.

The mental faculties are in the head, and *Chazal* said that the “air of *Eretz Yisrael* makes one wise.” Just as the head contains the mental faculties, so does *Eretz Yisrael* reveal the true mind of a person. But even more so, Hashem said “Not like the land of Egypt which you were taken out from,”⁹⁷ Egypt was irrigated by the Nile River, but *Eretz Yisrael* is irrigated by “rains from Heaven,” and it is the land which “*the eyes of Hashem your G-d are on, from the beginning of the year until the end of the year.*”⁹⁸ Hashem watches over *Eretz Yisrael* with His “eyes,” so to speak.

Simply speaking, the difference between Egypt and *Eretz Yisrael* was that Egypt was irrigated by the Nile while *Eretz Yisrael* was irrigated from Heaven. But the deeper, clearer difference is because the land of

⁹⁶ Talmud Bavli Sanhedrin 37a

⁹⁷ Deuteronomy 11:10-12

⁹⁸ Ibid.

Egypt had to be worked with sweat and toil, for it was cursed ever since Adam was banished from Gan Eden, whereas the land of *Eretz Yisrael* is reaped with *emunah*, by believing in Hashem. There are special agricultural laws of the Torah only in *Eretz Yisrael*, because the land of *Eretz Yisrael* is a different kind of land, which is cultivated not from hard work, but from believing in Hashem. Working the land in *Eretz Yisrael* is not simply effort like other kinds of work. It required only a bit of work, with the rest being completed by Hashem. Planting and harvesting in *Eretz Yisrael* was entirely run with Divine Providence. Anything grown in *Eretz Yisrael* is from the air of *Eretz Yisrael*, which brings wisdom with it. The special “fruits of *Eretz Yisrael*” which the land is praised with can only be a product of the special “air” of *Eretz Yisrael*.

THE SPIRIT OF FOLLY WHICH COUNTERS THE WISE AIR OF ERETZ YISRAEL

Chazal said that when a person sins, it is only because a “spirit of folly” enters him.⁹⁹ This is true about all sins, but especially about sins committed in *Eretz Yisrael*. The test of the Spies, is also in every generation. Just as there is wisdom that comes from the special air of Divine Providence that fills *Eretz Yisrael*, so there is also an urge to follow their “spirit of folly” - one's evil inclination. The greatness in *Eretz Yisrael* is equally countered with a force of evil - a more powerful evil inclination. “The greater a person is than his friend, the greater his evil inclination.”¹⁰⁰ A person living in *Eretz Yisrael* is living in the source land of spiritual consciousness and in the place where the air makes people wiser, so he is greater there than his friend living outside *Eretz Yisrael*.

A person living in *Eretz Yisrael* has greater access to wisdom that's inherent in the very air of *Eretz Yisrael*, opposed by the side of evil, a “spirit of folly,” which can sway him in the opposite direction. “From *Tziyon* comes forth Torah, and the word of Torah from *Yerushalayim*.”¹⁰¹ Wisdom, Torah, would come forth from the *Aron* in the *Kodesh Kodashim*. Countering all of this wisdom is “the spirit of folly.” This was the depth of the test for the Spies. They were all great, important leaders who were known to be prestigious, but in the end, they fell into a “spirit of folly” that is just as strong as the wisdom found in *Eretz Yisrael*.

This is the depth of the test for every person. Every person has access to wisdom from the Torah, but every person can also be swayed after foolishness. *Chazal* said that a person doesn't sin unless a spirit of folly entered him, and there are two ways to understand this - a simple way and a deeper way. Simply speaking, it means that if a person would only settle his knowledge upon his heart, he would never sin, so if he sinned, it is because he never settled his knowledge on his heart. The *Ramchal* says in *Derech Eitz Chaim*, “If a person would really be afraid of what a sin is, he would not be able to sin.” When a person sins, his knowledge of right and wrong leaves his mind, because it certainly isn't on his heart. But the deeper understanding of why a person sins due to the spirit of folly is because his thought process becomes swayed and crooked.

⁹⁹ Talmud Bavli Sotah 2a

¹⁰⁰ Talmud Bavli Succah 52a

¹⁰¹ Isaiah 2:3

Eretz Yisrael contains an air that makes people wiser, and true Torah comes forth from *Eretz Yisrael*, and therefore *Eretz Yisrael* is also the best land with the best fruits, which is the physical byproduct. But corresponding to all of this is a certain “spirit of folly,” which is the entire reason that a person sins. The spirit of folly causes a person’s wisdom to leave him, where he becomes similar to an insane person, or a child, or anyone who lacks *daas*. But even more so, the spirit of folly makes the mind crooked. Rav Chaim Volozhiner would say that the entire praise of the earlier generations is that they could think with upright reasoning. Without this upright thinking, one’s thinking patterns have a spirit of folly. *Chazal* said, “The thinking of laymen is the opposite of *daas Torah*.”¹⁰² Without a thinking process that is aligned with Torah, a person is not insane and lacking *daas*, he is rather a person with a crooked kind of *daas*, a *daas* that is opposite to *daas Torah*.

A “spirit of folly” is a certain way of thinking that doesn’t follow the straight, upright thinking of the Torah. It is written, “*G-d made man upright, but they sought many calculations.*”¹⁰³ With all kinds of calculations, one’s thinking becomes crooked, like the “thinking of the Serpent,” which has to crawl in a twisted manner. Although there is great holiness in *Eretz Yisrael*, there is also a *kelipah*, a “peel that covers the fruit,” which can turn *Eretz Yisrael*, a place of wisdom, into a spirit of folly which reveals a crooked path, a way of thinking that is against the Torah’s thinking.

THE CROOKED THINKING OF THE EREV RAV

Hashem said that spies can be sent “according to your understanding / *daas*” – implying that the mission would be successful only if they went with the *daas* of Moshe.

The group of Egyptians called the “*Erev Rav*” (Mixed Multitude) left Egypt together with the Jewish people at the exodus. The *Erev Rav* is the embodiment of the ruined *daas*, the opposite of the holy *daas* of Moshe. As a hint, the word *Erev Rav* is equal in *gematria* to the word *daas*. The *Erev Rav* have an evil, impaired *daas* that counters the holy *daas* of Moshe. Their *daas* is crooked and “seeks many calculations.”

The Spies had the choice to either go with the holy *daas* of Moshe, or with the crooked *daas* of the Serpent. The test of sending the Spies was a test if they would choose to connect to the *daas* of Moshe. Had they done so, they would have seen the good in *Eretz Yisrael*, the special holy spiritual consciousness that is in *Eretz Yisrael*. But once when they veered from the *daas* of Moshe, they instead turned into messengers of the *Erev Rav* which caused *Klal Yisrael* to see everything from then onward through a crooked viewpoint. They saw a certain negative version of *Eretz Yisrael*- the way it simply appeared to their eyes. And that is what led to the tragedy of being unable to enter *Eretz Yisrael* and having to die in the desert.

Thus, entering *Eretz Yisrael* was a test if they would enter holy *daas*, the *daas* of Moshe, *daas Torah*, versus the ruined, crooked *daas*, the way the Serpent thinks – the *daas* of the *Erev Rav*. That was the test concerning the very first time they would enter *Eretz Yisrael*, in which they had left Egypt in order to enter *Eretz Yisrael*. It is the same test whenever one is coming to enter *Eretz Yisrael*, or when he is found in it.

¹⁰² Choshen Mishpat 3 §13

¹⁰³ Ecclesiastes 7:29

THE EREV RAV'S MOVEMENT OF MASS ALIYAH TO ERETZ YISRAEL

In the end of days as well, had they [and we] been *zocheh*, the entire Klal Yisrael would have returned to *Eretz Yisrael* in a holy manner, through “clouds of Heaven.” But they [and we] weren’t *zocheh* to this, and *Raboseinu* wrote [prophetically] that when we are not *zocheh* to be returned to *Eretz Yisrael* correctly, then part of *Klal Yisrael* will return there by being thrown out of the non-Jewish countries they live in. This is an entry into *Eretz Yisrael* that is not through the *daas* of Moshe, but through the opposite of this holy *daas*.

The *Gra*¹⁰⁴ wrote, and Rav Elchonon Wasserman zt”l¹⁰⁵ elaborated this, that at the end of exile, the “heads of the *Erev Rav*” will be the ones who are seemingly returning *Klal Yisrael* to *Eretz Yisrael*. Their leadership and their way of thinking is from the same source as the *daas* of the Serpent, which is crooked and which doesn’t follow the Torah. Entering into *Eretz Yisrael* in the final days is due to the *Erev Rav*’s power which they are given in the final days. Certainly at the inner core of this it is all Divine Providence of Hashem, Who is watching over everything and Whose eyes are on *Eretz Yisrael*, and He is the One behind this entire movement. But Hashem is covered over! The *Erev Rav* acts like a garment that conceals Him. The *Erev Rav* are those who present themselves as the leaders of *Klal Yisrael* who are leading and running everything along, and they do everything through their impaired *daas* which is the opposite of the holy *daas* of Moshe.

When living in *Eretz Yisrael*, there is a big test. Firstly, one has to live with a level of holiness, because *Eretz Yisrael* is the place of holy spiritual consciousness. But there is also another test of living in *Eretz Yisrael*. Anyone who can see just a little bit is able to see that those who returned the Jewish people to *Eretz Yisrael*, are trying to re-educate the Jewish people by introducing all the foreign thinking and lifestyles of all the “enlightened, educated nations,” which is all the *daas* of the *Erev Rav*. They want to do this until they will ‘sink the whole ship’. If a person only has a superficial perspective, he just sees one part and another part but he doesn’t connect it with the bigger picture. For example, he will think that this entire movement of mass *aliyah* to *Eretz Yisrael* is needed so that everyone will have a livelihood. But if someone has true vision, he sees and understands clearly that this is entirely the *daas* of the Serpent.

It was the same test given to the Spies when entering *Eretz Yisrael*. The same test which was endured by the first generation of the Jewish people is once again happening in the final generation. Of course, the variables have changed. We are not in a physical desert now, we don’t have the Spies, and we don’t have Moshe sending them for us. But the inner variables of that very same test are once again here.

CHOOSING WHICH SIDE WE WANT TO BE ON

When we understand the depth of the test, we can see that we have a choice in front of us.

We have the choice to become connected to those “who had a different spirit with him,”¹⁰⁶ Yehoshua and Calev, who remained as messengers of Moshe. Yehoshua would not leave the tent of his teacher Moshe, and Kalev connected himself to the Avos by praying at their graves in Hevron. They remained

¹⁰⁴ Gra: Tikunei HaZohar 41, sefer Even Shelaimah 11

¹⁰⁵ Sefer Kovetz He’aros

¹⁰⁶ Shemos 14:24

connected to their roots (Yehoshua to Moshe, the root of Torah, and Calev to the *Avos*, the roots of Klal Yisrael). Either way, Yehoshua and Calev connected themselves to their root which enabled them to enter *Eretz Yisrael* and find the wise air of *Eretz Yisrael* instead of the *daas* of the Serpent.

They weren't looking to become connected to the inhabitants there, who belonged to the seven nations dwelling there. They had no desire to be like the nations. They only wanted to separate from the nations. So too, to the extent that we are connected with the thinking of the Torah, we are separated from the nations. But, *chas v'shalom*, that a person connects himself with the ways of thinking of the *Erev Rav*, to this modern-day "Haskalah" that is penetrating into the homes of Klal Yisrael! If one is identifying himself with the thinking of the *Erev Rav*, all under the pretext of the need for *parnassah* (livelihood), then the thinking of the *Erev Rav* will penetrate into his mind more and more, and then those Jews will feel small and swallowed up by the nations. The nations of the world are large in their numbers, and they are like the fearsome giants that the Spies saw in *Eretz Yisrael*.

When these words ring true, we can understand the depth of the test which we have now in the end of days. We are being tested if we will live a life of holiness and to become totally separated from the ruined *daas* which surrounds us and which is amidst us. Of the future, the prophet says that a "*new Torah will come forth from Me.*"¹⁰⁷ The Redemption will be revealed speedily in our days and the *daas* of Hashem will fill the world. Who will be *zocheh* to that new Torah? Who will be *zocheh* to the *daas* of Hashem then which will fill the world? If one's way of thinking remained clean and pure and he didn't allow his thinking to resemble the thinking of the nations of the world and he didn't allow the thinking of the *Erev Rav* to penetrate his mind and steal his *neshamah*— if he will put up a strong wall and a total separation between his mind and the way of thinking of the nations, and he will fill his thoughts only with Torah and of Hashem's conduct - then his mind becomes a vessel to contain the new Torah when Mashiach comes, the *daas* of Hashem. But if one's mind was dirtied with the thinking of the nations, "a wind can come and uproot him." How will he the light of the future, of holy spiritual consciousness, shine in such a mind...?

IN CONCLUSION

May it be Hashem's will that the *Beis HaMikdash* be built speedily in our days, and may He give us a portion in His Torah, which we ask for daily. In order for that request to be true, we must separate totally from the ways of thinking of the nations around us, from all of this pseudo-wisdom that surrounds us from all sides, in all of its different titles and masks. We must remain clean, pure, and holy, connected deeply to the wisdom of the holy Torah, which is the revelation of Hashem's wisdom. "He and His will are one, He And His wisdom are one." When we remain connected to the Creator's wisdom, as revealed through His holy Torah, then we are connected to Him and we are transformed into a vessel to contain the light of the future Torah that Hashem will reveal with the coming of Mashiach.

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[We have purposely left in all repetitions to understand clearly the points the Rav, Shlit"a is expressing]

¹⁰⁷ Isaiah 51:4

Q&A

QUESTION

What should our personal attitude be towards the Medinas Yisrael (the Israeli government) now that they are reaching 70 years of establishment?

ANSWER

The Light of Hashem is clothed by the “Erev Rav” (the Mixed Multitude). Our attitude towards towards them contains two aspects: If we would merit it, the Light of Hashem would become clothed in the Beis HaMikdash and Mashiach, but when we do not merit it, it becomes clothed by the “Erev Rav”, where everything becomes mixed.

On a subtle note, they are called “Erev Rav” because there is an opposition between Yisrael and Amalek, and the “Erev Rav” contains both “Yisrael” and also the root of Amalek, together. This is an “overturning fiery sword” which confuses people.

Recognizing this mixture, and placing each element where it belongs, is the “clarifying” [process] through the “light of Mashiach.”

QUESTION

I don't understand why we must be totally opposed to the *medinah* (the Israeli government). True, they do a lot of bad things, but how can we ignore the good things they do, such as giving money to yeshivos? Thank you to the Rav, and I'm sorry if I'm asking a silly question.

ANSWER

In anything that's bad, you can always find something good in it. These are referred to as “sparks” of holiness, known as “288 sparks of holiness that descended into the broken vessels”, which provide G-dly vitality to the ruined aspects of Creation. The Gemara in Bava Basra says that when one takes charity from idol worshippers (gentiles), he is sustaining them. It is the same thing when it comes to how we should relate to the *medinah* – whenever we take money from them, that gives vitality to them and upkeeps their existence. Therefore, we should not even allow ourselves to become connected with whatever good things that the *medinah* does for us, because this sustains them and allows their evil existence to continue.

QUESTION

I very much want to make *aliyah* to *Eretz Yisrael*. I understand that Mashiach is very close and that now it's time for us to “return home” now. However, I'm afraid of transgressing the “Three Oaths” [as taught by the Satmar Rebbe zt"l]. I know that now's the time for *aliyah*, and if not now, then never. However I need to make the move correctly and I need to know how to live in *Eretz Yisrael*

with the proper attitude and *hashkofos*. How can I live in Eretz Yisrael without transgressing the Three Oaths?

ANSWER

Aliyah is about moving to Eretz Yisrael (the Holy Land) - and it is not about “moving to the country of Israel.” There is no *halachic* issue of going to live in “Eretz Yisrael” – there are only *halachic* issues for a person who wishes to live in “Israel”, the country of Israel that is associated with what is called “*Medinas*” *Yisrael*, the Israeli government.

The Vilna Gaon wanted to come live in Eretz Yisrael, and so did the Baal Shem Tov, and Baba Sali came to live here, and so did many other great holy leaders from all different sects of Jewry from the past. And even many *chassidim* of *Satmar* are living in Eretz Yisrael. The attitude you need to have towards *aliyah* is that you will be moving to “Eretz Yisrael” [the holy land], and not to the “*Medinas Yisrael*” (the country of Israel, which is the secular, Zionist culture that is not Eretz Yisrael).

QUESTION

The Chazon Ish said that the *medinah* (government in Israel) cannot last for more than 60-70 years. But we see that the *medinah* is still around, and they are soon giving out a vaccine [for corona], etc...?

ANSWER

It [the *medinah*] is in the midst of falling apart, from within itself, and deeply – both in the inner sense and also in the actual sense.

QUESTION

(1) Can the Rav explain to us what the proper perspective is, about the financial aid which the USA provides to Jerusalem? (2) What is the proper perspective to have towards the Netanyahu government, and Netanyahu specifically? Are they good or evil? Are they well-meaning towards the Jewish people, even though they are defined as Chiloni (irreligious)? Or are he and his government just the Erev Rav, evil people who are opposed to G-d and His children?

ANSWER

The “Erev Rav” in this generation is mixed with everything, and therefore, everything has good and evil in it. In each thing, one must see the good parts to it, and the bad parts to it, and this is an *avodah* for people who have already purified their hearts. But the general *avodah* is for a person to separate from all of this mixture, and not to

think about them at all, because the very thinking about them is the idea of mixing with them. Therefore, a person should not speak of them at all. **We should have a total disconnection from them.**

QUESTION

The Baal Shem Tov said that one must love every Jew, even those who are total *reshaim* (wicked people). Does that include even “*Erev Rav*” as well? And, is this a level only for *tzaddikim*, or was he saying that every Jew needs to love *reshaim*?

Also, I heard in the name of the Chazon Ish that the *Chilonim* (non-observant Jews in Israel) are in the category of *tinok shenishbah* (abducted children) who cannot be considered *reshaim* since they grow up not knowing any better, and therefore one has to have *ahavas Yisrael* towards them. That was in his generation, and certainly it should apply to our generation, where all the non-religious Israelis grow up with an attitude of contempt for Torah and mitzvos, and a general disliking of religious people and the entire Chareidi world. But what’s difficult to understand is that the Gra said that there will be a wicked government in Israel before Mashiach comes, and they will be controlled by the heads of the *Erev Rav*. How can that be, if the people on the government today grew up as *tinokos shenishbu*, not having known any better? Did the Gra mean that only once they become part of the government and make decrees against religion then it’s a sign that they have a soul of “*Erev Rav*” and that they’re not merely people who don’t know any better? Even if they do make decrees against religion, why can’t we argue that it’s because they grew up in an atmosphere of contempt for Torah and religion and therefore they don’t know any better?

ANSWER

1) We need to love every single person without exception, because they are all Hashem’s creations. But at the same time, you also need to have a revulsion and a hatred towards wicked people, such as those who the “*Erev Rav*”. In the practical sense, you need to be able to love them and hate them at the same time. It’s like when a child does something very bad and angers his father, and the father feels hatred towards his own child. The father still loves his child, but at the same time, he feels hatred towards his child when the child deeply angers him. Yet, even as he’s feeling the hatred towards his child, his love for his child is still there, deep down, and it cannot ever go away. It is the same when it comes to the *Erev Rav*: Love them, but also hate them, at the same time. And when you hate them, you need to hate them because they are wicked, just as Dovid HaMelech said, “*With utter hatred, I hate them*”.

2) Part of the government is from the “*Erev Rav*”, and part of them is not. The mere control that the anti-religious government has in Israel today is due to the general evil spiritual power of the “*Erev Rav*” in the final days, which allows them to have control. But, individually speaking, if we want to say that each person on the government is a soul of the “*Erev Rav*”, each case would have to be judged separately.

QUESTION

We all know that we are immediately before Mashiach’s arrival, with all that this means and what is going to happen. I live in Eretz Yisrael but I am asking this question on behalf of those who live

outside of Eretz Yisrael. Do those who live outside of Eretz Yisrael need to come live in Eretz Yisrael?

ANSWER

The Talmud (*Kesubos 110a*) says that everyone should move out of their country to go live in Eretz Yisrael, and Tosafos there says, “This is not practiced in our times, because it is dangerous to travel. And Rabbeinu Chaim would say that in our times there is no *mitzvah* to live in Eretz Yisrael, because there are many *mitzvos* which apply only in the land of Eretz Yisrael and there are many punishments for those who are lax in keeping them, and we are not able to so careful in keeping them.” According to Rabbeinu Chaim in the Tosafos, there is both a physical danger and a spiritual danger to go live in Eretz Yisrael, so there is no obligation today to live in Eretz Yisrael. [Even according to the opinions that there is a *mitzvah* today to live in Eretz Yisrael] there is also a dispute if the *mitzvah* is Biblical or Rabbinical in nature: this is discussed by the Ramban in *Sefer HaMitzvos L’Ramban*, and in sefer *Pe’as HaShulchan*, and others.

Now, there is an obligation upon a person to connect himself to *kedushah* (holiness), in terms of soul, time, and place. Therefore, besides for the matter if there is a *mitzvah* or not to live in Eretz Yisrael today, there is still a level of *kedushah* which can only be attained by one who lives in Eretz Yisrael. That is clear, and simple. In spite of this, however, the view of Rabbeinu Chaim in the *Tosafos* is that if there is any physical or spiritual danger in moving to Eretz Yisrael, there is no *mitzvah* to go live there. The “spiritual danger” he is referring to is the laxity of people in observing the unique *mitzvos* of Eretz Yisrael and the subsequent punishments for those who do not properly adhere to the *kedushah* of Eretz Yisrael. However, there were still some *Gedolim* throughout the generations who risked their lives in order to go live in Eretz Yisrael.

In our times, though, besides for the above danger, there is also an additional danger, which we will clarify here, with *siyata d’shmaya*. Our Sages taught that in the final days, before the coming of Mashiach, when we are not yet meritorious of Mashiach’s arrival, the jurisdiction over the land of Eretz Yisrael is given over to the “Other Side”. In the active sense, this means that the wicked souls of the “*Erev Rav*” are in charge of controlling *Eretz Yisrael*. These are very reincarnations of the souls whom Moshe Rabbeinu allowed to convert and be brought up from Egypt. These are the very same souls who later instigated the sin with the golden calf, by convincing the people that Moshe Rabbeinu was no longer with them. They represent an alternative leadership to Moshe Rabbeinu. These are the people who rule Eretz Yisrael in the final days: the heads of the *Erev Rav*. They are called *Erev Rav* from the word *taaruvos* (mixture) which connotes an *iruv rav* (great mixture), a huge and disturbing mixture of all elements within one place.

Therefore, one who lives in Eretz Yisrael in in spiritual danger of becoming mixed with the *Erev Rav*, in terms of seeking prestige, money, power, etc. from them. As time goes on, they increase the influences of their great mixture, to the point that every single boundary which our Sages and *Gedolim* have built is being trampled upon and uprooted. Their mixture of influences affects all people who live in *Eretz Yisrael*.

Making matters worse, the recent organization “*HaShamayim HaPetuchim*” (trans. “Open Heavens”) has allowed millions of non-Jews to come live in Eretz Yisrael. Jews leave Eretz Yisrael and mix with the gentiles and become influenced by them, and then return to Eretz Yisrael with all of these influences that they have brought back. This is all due to the *Erev Rav*’s agenda, which seeks a totally mixed society with every possible influence. They want to incorporate every existing influence into [Israeli] society - and they don’t want to leave anything out. In that way, the *tumah* (spiritual defilement) of countries outside of Eretz Yisrael differs from the *tumah* today in Eretz Yisrael.

Outside countries contains the *tumah* of the gentile nations, whereas Eretz Yisrael today contains the *tumah* of the *Erev Rav*.

In order to cover all of the details of the disturbing mixture of the many different secular elements that the *Erev Rav* has so far succeeded in bringing to *Eretz Yisrael*, we would need several thick volumes. But there isn't enough time to publish all of the details, so we would only be destroying our precious time, instead of the *Erev Rav*. For we are currently found deep in the "50th Gate of Defilement", where evil is covering us on all angles, in front and behind us, and from every possible direction. Basically everything is found in the "exile of the *Erev Rav*" today.

Therefore, it is proper for every Jew to live in Eretz Yisrael, but only if one has a total separation from the "*Erev Rav*" here. On a personal level, every individual needs to clarify his personal situation [to see if he should live in Eretz Yisrael or not]. For example, if one is needed by many others, or if one is of spiritual influence to others [in such cases, he should not move to Eretz Yisrael, because others need him]. Also, if raising one's children in Eretz Yisrael will not be conducive to them, or if moving to Eretz Yisrael will be too hard of a change for them [because they will be switching schools], this is also a factor not to move to Eretz Yisrael, and it needs to be carefully thought about. Also, if one cannot make ample livelihood in Eretz Yisrael, one will need to examine how much *bitachon* (reliance on Hashem) he really has [and then he can decide].

We are hoping and awaiting the Redemption that it should come speedily. There is a great spiritual gain to be in *Eretz Yisrael* at a time like this...

QUESTION

Is the "exile of the *Erev Rav*" only in Eretz Yisrael, or does it also apply to the rest of the world?

If the "exile of the *Erev Rav*" is only in Eretz Yisrael, does that mean that the rest of the world is found only in "*Galus Edom*" or "*Galus Yishmael*"?

Also, what about the other countries of the world, such as Europe, Australia, Russia, etc. – are those countries only within the *galus* of *Edom*?

Also, does "*Galus Yishmael*" apply more specifically to Israel and the continents of Asia and Europe, because this is geographically closer to the Arab countries?

ANSWER

The exile of the "*Erev Rav*" is mainly in Eretz Yisrael. The *Erev Rav* mixes together (the countries/exiles) of Esav (Edom) with Yishmael (the Arabs), who are called the roots of the gentile nations. The exile of the "*Erev Rav*" also mixes the nation of Yisrael (the Jewish people) into it. That is why it is called the "*Erev Rav*", which literally means "a great mixture", the biggest and worst mixture [of different gentile nations] there is. So it is mainly centered in Eretz Yisrael, and from there onward and spread to the rest of the world.

Today, as a result of the "exile of the *Erev Rav*", the countries of "Yishmael" [the Arabs] have mixed with the countries of "Edom" [the rest of Europe], and vice versa. In most cases, even after mixing with each other, Yishmael and Edom each remain apart from the other. Slowly, one mixes with the other. For example, the countries of Saudi Arabia, Qatar and others are mainly "Yishmael", but slowly these countries are becoming filled with more and more of "Edom". The same is true vice versa, that "Edom" is slowly becoming filled with more and more of "Yishmael".

As an example, a large part of Europe [which is the main stronghold of “Edom”] has been occupied by “Yishmael” (Muslims) already for many years, and the Muslim population in Europe keeps increasing, and there is a movement of politicians from Africa and from Syria and other countries who now control Europe.

QUESTION

Is the *Erev Rav* only in Eretz Yisrael or also in America?

ANSWER

Both.

QUESTION

The Rav explained in a *derasha* that when part of the Jewish people returned to Eretz Yisrael, it became turned into the “depth of *Galus*”, because it was a “spark of the *Geulah*” (as the Chofetz Chaim had said at that time) and in the end we weren’t worthy of the *Geulah*, so the “spark of the *Geulah*” fell into the *kelipah* and became turned into a new depth of *Galus*.

Who among our *Gedolim* had the view that the return of Jews to Eretz Yisrael was an added depth to our *Galus*?

From what I understand, the *Gedolim* only said this regarding the fact that we have to live under a heretical government in Eretz Yisrael that goes against the Torah, but as the events played out it doesn’t necessarily seem that making *aliyah* to Eretz Yisrael depended on the government’s rule in Eretz Yisrael. Jews could have made *aliyah* to Eretz Yisrael even through the help of the *goyim* [and not necessarily through the founding of a state of Israel]. Why can’t we say that the mass *aliyah* of Jews to Eretz Yisrael was all part of the process of *Geulah*, that it was all a preparation for the *Geulah* and for the ingathering of exiles where everyone will come to Eretz Yisrael to serve Hashem, and yes, perhaps this was all made possible through *reshaim*, but maybe issue that was irrelevant.

To say my question differently: Does a “spark of the *Geulah*” always become turned into the “depth of *Galus*” whenever the *Geulah* was supposed to happen and it didn’t end up happening? Had the mass *aliyah* to Eretz Yisrael been done under the jurisdiction of *tzaddikim* and *daas Torah*, would this not have become a situation of preparing for the *Geulah*?

ANSWER

That was the view of the *Satmar Rebbe* – if the Jewish people would have been at a level worthy of the *Geulah*, yes. But to our great pain, most of European Jewry weren’t careful with keeping Torah and mitzvos. So the entire *aliyah* to Eretz Yisrael was made possible through them [the *reshaim* of the *Erev Rav*], so the issue isn’t only that Jews in Eretz Yisrael now have to live under their jurisdiction.

QUESTION

The Rav explained that the Erev Rav is the most dangerous of the previous exiles because they are mixed into Klal Yisrael. Does that mean that the Erev Rav can be Chareidim?

And, what is the confusion that they are able to introduce into the Torah-observant community?

Also, what's the difference between the Erev Rav with other groups that mixed into Klal Yisrael such as the Tzadukim (Saducees) and Misyavnim (Hellenists)?

ANSWER

Yes [the Erev Rav can even be those who look “Chareidi”]. The Erev Rav’s influence includes:

(1) Views that are contrary to *daas Torah*.

(2) A cold indifference [to *halachah*].

(3) A way of life of becoming connected with the world at large and mixing with the world. That is the goal of the Erev Rav, which literally means “big mixture.”

In simple language, the Erev Rav’s influence is the permissive attitude of “Everything is permitted, except for....”

QUESTION

What does it mean that the *Erev Rav* are in the Jewish people and they look like Jews but they do not have a Jewish soul? What is the source of this? And is this referring to the *neshamah*, or to the *nefesh habehaimis*?

ANSWER

Refer to the *sefer HaDor Ha’Acharon* which collects together many statements of the Sages on this matter.

The *Erev Rav* are the evil parts of the *Nefesh* (soul) of Moshe Rabbeinu. They came from the *kelipas noga* in Moshe’s soul, and this is the root of all bad *middos* in *Klal Yisrael* (as explained in the beginning of *sefer Tanya*). On the outside it is not recognizable who is from the *Erev Rav*, but this is what they are on their inside.

QUESTION

1) Is a *moiser* (a Jew who tells on Jews to the authorities) part of the Erev Rav? What is the definition of this? Does this mean that any Jew who tells on another Jew to the authorities is of the “Erev Rav”?

ANSWER

Only if the person does so on a consistent basis.

QUESTION

2) What about a *baal machlokes* (an instigator of strife)?, if he also part of the *Erev Rav*? Is this only if the person intentionally creates a *machlokes*? Or is it true even if he unintentionally causes *machlokes*?

ANSWER

Only if he does so intentionally, and on a consistent basis - when it's the very nature of his soul to do so.

QUESTION

3) Even if a Jew does bear signs of "Erev Rav" (i.e. he is clearly defined as a *moiser* or *baal machlokes*, etc.), does this mean that he is actually a member of the souls of the "Erev Rav"? Or does it mean that he merely has a "spark" of "Erev Rav" in his soul?

ANSWER

It can either mean that he has a "spark", or that he has several "sparks", of "Erev Rav", in his soul. It is a very subtle matter to know which parts of one's soul are "Erev Rav", being that every Jew contains some "Erev Rav" in his soul, and the "Erev Rav" part of one's soul is "nullified by the majority" of the rest of his soul. In order to be an actual "Erev Rav" soul, one's soul would have to be mostly "Erev Rav".

QUESTION

4) The Rav has said that the *tikkun* (soul remedy) for one who has a spark of "Erev Rav" in his soul is, is to be ready to give up his soul in order to sanctify Hashem's name. In this way, one fulfills the mitzvah of "erasing Amalek" in his own soul. My understanding of this is that when one is willing to die to for Hashem and give up his soul, he attains a *bittul* (self-nullification) to Hashem and he becomes integrated with *havayah* (the true reality), where everything can be repaired. It seems from all of this that even absolute evil can ultimately attain a *tikkun*: through using the power of *mesirus nefesh* (giving up the soul). If so, why is it said that there is no *tikkun* for Amalek and "Erev Rav", if even absolute evil can ultimately be rectified?

ANSWER

Their *tikkun* is when they are destroyed. They cannot achieve a *tikkun* while they exist. Their *tikkun* is only when they become nullified. This is the depth of the mitzvah to erase Amalek - erasing them is what rectifies them. Amalek/Erev Rav is rooted in the "empty void" of Creation - the absence of existence.

QUESTION

5) It is written in sefer *Shomer Emunim* that most of the souls in our generation are reincarnations of "Erev Rav", and therefore, ever person needs to suspect that maybe he is from the "Erev Rav", and that is why every person needs to work a lot on emunah, so that he can repair his soul. Is this

the actual perspective which each person needs to have? Most people would probably become depressed from such a view towards themselves. Does it mean that every person needs to suspect that he might have a spark of “Erev Rav” in his soul? Or does one need to suspect that he may actually be an “Erev Rav” soul?

ANSWER

One needs to suspect that he may have some “sparks” of “Erev Rav” in his soul. Because there are certainly sparks of “Erev Rav” in every person’s soul, as you said.

QUESTION

How can we tell if someone is from the Erev Rav?

What is the meaning of the words of the Vilna Gaon that “leaders” of the Jewish people in the final generations in Eretz Yisrael are really the Erev Rav?

Does this mean that any of the known Gedolim or any Rav can be from the Erev Rav?!

ANSWER

Our Sages said that even people who look pious and dressed completely in white garments can be from the Erev Rav. Rav Elchonon Wasserman authored *Kovetz Hearos*, and collected different teachings of the Sages, about this topic.

QUESTION

The *Gra* said that there are 5 kinds of Erev Rav: People who run after honor, money, and various lusts, people who cause strife amongst others, and people who are fakers who are not the same on the inside as they act on the outside. Doesn’t this describe a lot of people? Does that mean that anyone who does any of the above is from the Erev Rav?

ANSWER

Only if a person acts this way (running after honor, lusts, money, strife, etc.) out of being truly bad on his inside, with intentions to hurt another Jew, is he from the Erev Rav. The Erev Rav souls have no compassion on a Jewish soul, unlike the souls of the Jewish people, who have a primary trait of compassion on others.

QUESTION

What should you do if you suspect that another person might be from the Erev Rav? Should you daven for him that he should do teshuvah? Or should you not be concerned about him at all?

ANSWER

The Erev Rav mixes with everything in Creation, including the souls of the Jewish people, and therefore there are traces of Erev Rav in every Jewish soul. You need to daven for the “Jewish” part of a Jew’s soul.

QUESTION

How can you love every Jew with *ahavas Yisrael*, maybe he’s from the Erev Rav?

ANSWER

Ahavas Yisrael is to love the “Jewish” part of a Jew’s soul, and there is also a concept of loving even the non-Jewish part of the Jew’s soul - just not the “Erev Rav” part of the Jew’s soul.

QUESTION

Now that we are in the time of the “final sorting process” [*birur hanefashos*], does that mean that we are in the midst of a process that is showing who is really from *Klal Yisrael* and who is really from the *Erev Rav*?

ANSWER

Yes.

QUESTION

Besides for Internet, is there anything else that is the 50th level of *tumah*?

ANSWER

The root of the 50th level of *tumah*, is this device (internet).

QUESTION

Those who remain *chas v’shalom* connected to the 50th level of *tumah* [through internet use] and to the “Erev Rav” – does that mean that it is revealed “retroactively” that they were never part of the Jewish people in the first place? Or does it mean that they are really Jewish *neshamos* who have “fallen” into the side of the *Erev Rav*?

ANSWER

If they remain intrinsically connected [to the 50th level of *tumah*, the internet], it becomes revealed “retroactively” that they were never part of the Jewish people.

QUESTION

If any Jews don't withstand the final test (the internet) and they fall into the 50th level of *tumah* which makes them "fall into the side of the *Erev Rav*" (*chas v'shalom*) and they can't get into *Olam HaBa*, since they are really Jews and it's just that they have fallen in with the *Erev Rav*, will they still get into *Olam HaBa* at a later time, such as after the 7th or 8th century, etc.?

ANSWER

If they have merely "fallen" into the side of the *Erev Rav* [meaning that they didn't become intrinsically and emotionally connected to the Internet], then it is very possible that they can get eventually get into *Olam HaBa*.

QUESTION

How can it be that a Jewish *neshamah* can become part of the *Erev Rav*? It is because the final test reveals "retroactively" who is really part of the Jewish people and who really isn't..?

ANSWER

Same as answer to #3.

QUESTION

The Rav quoted sefer *HaDor HaAcharon* which says that even Gedolim leading the generation can be from the *Erev Rav* (scary) – does that mean that they can actually have an "Erev Rav" soul, or does it mean that they just have a "spark" of Erev Rav in their soul, a "part" in them that's Erev Rav (pure evil) but not that their entire soul is *Erev Rav*...?

ANSWER

It can be either [In some cases it can be a mere 'spark' of *Erev Rav* in their soul, and in other cases it can be that they can have an actual *Erev Rav* soul].

QUESTION

The Rav said that if a person still has Internet and he doesn't want to give it up, and he remains inwardly/emotionally connected to the Internet, he has a part of "Erev Rav" in his soul, and in terms of how we should view such a person, we need to hate only this "Erev Rav" part of the person which remains evil, but we must love the rest of the person. However, the Rav also said that if a person remains emotionally connected to the Internet and he doesn't give it up by the moment before the Geulah, he falls into the Erev Rav's side, meaning that it becomes revealed how retroactively he never had a Jewish soul in the first place – he not only had an Erev Rav "spark" in his soul, but he was an actual Erev Rav soul, who is not part of the Jewish people. It's frightening to

even think about! So anyone who has internet-capable devices and has no interest in giving it up, might end up being from the Erev Rav! How then can we love another Jew at all if he has Internet, since he is possibly from the Erev Rav?

ANSWER

If at the very last moment before the *Geulah* there are any Jews who do not want to give up their Internet use, *chas v'shalom*, it is then that they have proven who they really are, by choosing with their own *bechirah* (free will) at that very moment, that their will is to be eternally connected with evil, *chas v'shalom*. [So as long as the Redemption isn't here yet, you are still obligated to love every Jew and you cannot assume that he might be from the *Erev Rav*].

QUESTION

What should a person do if he suspects that he may have a parent who shows signs of being from the Erev Rav (or at least who seems to have a very big "Erev Rav" part to their character) or if he just sees that his parent(s) has a lot of evil in them? And what about in a case if he knows that his parent had a rough childhood or was born with a very a lack of balance in their personality or if they went through certain unpleasant experiences that shaped them into who they are today? Does the mitzvah of kibud av v'aim dictate that (1) One is obligated not to see evil in his parents at all and he should only think about their qualities (as it is brought in halachah to do, that one should view his parents as being the Gedolei HaDor when it comes to a special quality they have), and therefore one should not suspect that his parent may be from the Erev Rav and he must honor them, both in deed and in his heart by thinking good about them. (2), Or, should one hate the evil that he sees in his parent and he should suspect that he doesn't know how to identify "Erev Rav" in another's personality and therefore he should not think about this at all.

ANSWER

One should suspect that he doesn't know how to identify "Erev Rav" characteristics in another's soul, and therefore he should not be thinking such kinds of thoughts at all, either about his parents or about others. The only exception would be people who are well-known *reshaim* who are known for their wickedness.

QUESTION

If someone is regularly a "moser", he tells on his Jews to the government to get them in trouble, is he possibly from the Erev Rav?

ANSWER

Similar to the above answer [don't think about others around you if they are from the Erev Rav]. Only a person who is known to be a *moser*, who regularly tells on other Jews to the government, is from the *Erev Rav*.

QUESTION

One of the groups of Erev Rav, as described by the Gra, are *baalei mammon*, those who who try to control *Klal Yisrael* through their money. Are there rules by which we can know if these wealthy people who have power are from the Erev Rav, *chas v'shalom*?

ANSWER

Same answer as before [don't be busy thinking about which wealthy supporters are Erev Rav or not, and only people who are known to regularly abuse their positions of power and money are Erev Rav].

QUESTION

Should a person not think about the Erev Rav topic at all because this kind of thinking can make it impossible for him to love every Jew, because instead of judging others favorably and not seeing faults in others, he is instead hating other Jews and he is suspicious that another Jew might be from the Erev Rav, *chas v'shalom*?

ANSWER

Yes! But we do need to separate ourselves from all evil, from all of the evil deeds, evil *middos*, and non-Torah perspectives and opinions out there, and we need to stay away from those who are involved with this [evil behavior, evil character, and non-Torah outlook on life]. We need to become connected only with good people, and we should draw close others who are distant from the Torah only if doing so will not be very dangerous to your own *ruchniyus*.

QUESTION

Is it possible that Hashem is making a separation now between the true *tzibbur* of Klal Yisrael – who are choosing not to own smartphones and Internet – with those who are choosing to own this device in their lives and using it publicly without any shame? Are they separating themselves from the true *tzibbur* that is Klal Yisrael, and instead joining with the side of the *Erev Rav*, *chas v'shalom*?

ANSWER

Yes. But some are doing this simply because they lack clarity. Before Mashiach comes, they will be awakened and then they will have true *bechirah* (free will) of what they will choose – if they will choose to separate from all of it, or if they will choose the opposite *chas v'shalom*.

QUESTION

The pursuit of luxury has skyrocketed in the last few years. Is this one of the 5 groups of the Erev Rav who are identified as “those who pursue pleasure”, who live mainly for physical pleasure, with the Torah being secondary to them and with their pleasure and comfort being their main goal in life? Some people were *bnei Torah* to begin with but they later went out to work and later chose a lifestyle of running after pleasure and luxury, or because they were influenced by their surroundings, or because they truly wanted it all along. They tasted the taste of Torah but they stopped desiring to grow in their *ruchniyus*. Others never had a Torah lifestyle to begin with and therefore it wouldn't make sense to ask them to be more into *ruchniyus* if they spent all of their lives until now in *gashmiyus* and without accepting the burden of Torah on them, they never had a Torah way of living to begin with. So maybe they can be given the benefit of the doubt that their enormous pursuit of pleasure doesn't mean they are from the *Erev Rav*, it's just that their hearts are so stuffed and blocked for all of their lives, because they weren't successful in their learning or when they were in yeshiva, etc. What is the proper way to view this entire situation?

ANSWER

It is all the “spirit of the *Erev Rav*” sweeping through the world. The word “*erev*” means “sweet”, because the false view of the *Erev Rav* that is dominant in the final generations is a false kind of “sweetness” which is the antithesis to the true sweetness, the sweetness of the words of Torah in our mouths. That is the root of all the increase of chasing after all pleasures and *taavos* (all the physical desires of life) in the generation today. Understand that very, very well.

QUESTION

1) If there are any Jews who don't withstand the final test, which is to separate from the 50th level of *tumah* which is the Internet – and because of this they are not *zocheh* to the Geulah because they have become turned into the “Erev Rav”, having been from the Erev Rav all along – does that mean that they become turned into the Erev Rav? Or does it mean that there are parts of their soul which are Erev Rav and it is those parts of themselves which will disappear when Mashiach comes?

ANSWER

The parts of their souls which are not “Erev Rav” will become joined with the Klal Yisrael, and the parts of their soul which are Erev Rav will be destroyed together with the Erev Rav. The part of them which chose to connect to the Erev Rav – which is their “*Ruach*” point of their soul – will also become part of the Erev Rav and be destroyed together with Erev Rav.

QUESTION

2) Those who *chas v'shalom* don't withstand the final test and won't be by the Geulah – will they die in the events preceding Mashiach or will they disappear and become nothing when Mashiach comes? Will they just disappear when Mashiach comes?

ANSWER

Some of them in the first option [they will die in the events preceding Mashiach] and others in the other way [they will disappear when Mashiach comes]. [As explained in answer to #1, this only concerns the Erev Rav parts of their soul].

QUESTION

3) Can the Erev Rav do *teshuvah*?

ANSWER

Most of the Erev Rav cannot be returned to *teshuvah*, but a few can. Through *mesirus nefesh*, one can separate the Erev Rav parts from his own soul.

QUESTION

1) One person had a strong reaction to the Rav's words concerning those who remain connected to 50th Gate of Impurity who become part of the Erev Rav, who become "retroactively" never part of the Jewish people. The person said, "*Chas v'shalom* to say such a thing." He was angry at this statement of the Rav, and while I understand that it's a sensitive topic, what should we do, just be silent about this and not publish the Rav's words about it, the bitter truth which must be heard, which the Rav is revealing to us in his ahavas Yisrael to us? Should we not try to help others merit the Geulah...?

ANSWER

The perspective of *yediah* (the higher knowledge above *bechirah*/free will) is that everything becomes revealed "retroactively". That is the light in the end of days, where we are getting to closer to the era of Mashiach which will be "days in which I have no desire", no more *bechirah* (free will) because there will instead be *yediah*, the knowledge above free will, in which everything becomes revealed "retroactively". But from the viewpoint of *bechirah*, something can only be revealed "from now and onward".

QUESTION

Is there a source for the words of the Rav that those who remain connected to evil and fall into the Erev Rav become "retroactively" never part of the Jewish people? I suspect that this is not the Rav's novelty but something which is already revealed in our sefarim hakedoshim, can the Rav please elaborate on this since there were those who were perplexed at this entire concept (perhaps because their hearts didn't want to accept the truth)?

ANSWER

Refer to answer to question #1. It is because in the future, there will be *yediah*, which reveals what everything really was “retroactively” [it becomes revealed in the future that those who choose good were really good all along and they were from *Klal Yisrael*, whereas those who chose to remain connected with evil are revealed in the future as being from the Erev Rav, meaning that it becomes shown retroactively how they had never been part of the Jewish people]. **This is the final sorting process**, in which we are transitioning from the plane of *bechirah* (free will) to the plane above *bechirah*, to “the days in which there are no desire” [the future, the level of *yediah*].

QUESTION

Is the Erev Rav aspect in the soul (or the “spark of Erev Rav” in the soul) found at the point where there is total evil, which is below the animal soul, or is it found within *kelipas noga* within the animal soul that is mixed with good and evil?

ANSWER

The Erev Rav aspect of the soul mixes everything within it: The *Nefesh Elokus*, the *kelipas noga*, and the three impure *kelipos*, containing all of them at once within it. There are 5 types of Erev Rav and the acronym for them is *Nega Ra* (evil affliction): *Nefilim*, *Giborim*, *Anakim*, *Refaim*, *Amalekim* (Amalekites). They are called *Nega* (affliction), the opposite of *oneg* (holy and good pleasure), and *Ra*, the opposite of good. *Noga* is the opposite of *Nega*.

QUESTION

What are the characteristics of the Erev Rav in the soul and what are the characteristics of the evil that’s found in the soul?

ANSWER

Erev Rav in the soul is a mixture of all every characteristic, while *ra* (evil) in the soul varies depending on what kind of evil it is.

QUESTION

In the future after the Geulah, and in Olam HaBa, when the Erev Rav parts of our souls will be destroyed and only our “Jewish” parts will remain, does that mean that in the future those who were more purified will “exist” on a greater level, whereas those who were dominated by the Erev Rav parts of the soul (who didn’t separate themselves from the 50th level of impurity) will not be “existing” as much, because there is very little “Jewishness” in their soul?

ANSWER

Yes!

QUESTION

Will the Erev Rav – the Israeli government – first disappear before the war of Gog and Magog?

ANSWER

We are already found within the war of Gog and Magog! This is the war with the Erev Rav.

QUESTION

What did the Rav mean in the response that the “Erev Rav includes the souls of Amalek and Yisrael together”? If Erev Rav is the worst of Amalek (or the other way around, that the Amalekites are the worst kind of Erev Rav), and the souls of Yisrael within the Erev Rav are not really part of Klal Yisrael but goyim who are part of the Erev Rav/Amalek, then what does it mean that the Erev Rav includes souls of Yisrael and Amalek?

ANSWER

The Erev Rav is a mix of everything, and in every Erev Rav soul there is also a part which includes a soul of “Yisrael”. Therefore he can sometimes have a status of a Jew, like if he is born from a Jewish mother, within his soul there is an aspect of “Yisrael”, and therefore he has the status of a Jew, he has a Jewish body, and his soul has a part in it that’s “Yisrael”.

QUESTION

If an Erev Rav soul inside a Jewish body is still part of the Erev Rav (and not part of the Jewish people) then how it can be that halachically he is a Jew but in the inner dimension he is really Erev Rav? How can that be – how does it make sense that there is an inner reality here (the fact that he is an Erev Rav soul) which totally contradicts the halachic reality (the fact that he has the halachic status of a Jew)?

ANSWER

See answer to previous question. He has in his soul a part that is a Jewish soul.

QUESTION

In our generation, there are many contradicting aspects in all of our souls, and as the Rav explained, because most of the generation today have souls that are a combination of many souls together in one body. Does this mean also that there are souls of completely wicked people as well as souls of completely righteous people who can be inhabiting one soul? Can any of us be a combination of both a total *rasha* and a total *tzaddik* (or more)? And, would that be the reason

why we can feel a pull towards the most evil things possible, yet we can also feel the pull towards *d'veykus* and *hiskalelus* in Hashem, and all the other qualities of *tzaddikim*?

ANSWER

Yes! And, it is also because we are in a time period (End of Days) where opposites are becoming integrated together all at once, “like a bolt of lightning”.

QUESTION

If there exists a “spark of Erev Rav” within our soul, as well as part of ourselves that are a total *tzaddik*, and if we choose to let the *tzaddik* part of ourselves dominate over the evil parts of our being, does that raise the “*Erev Rav* spark” within us into holiness? And if yes, does that mean that this evil part of our soul achieves a *tikkun*? Or do we have to look at it that we need to destroy and erase the “*Erev Rav*” within us (the parts of our character that are totally evil) by choosing truth, righteousness, and living a life of holiness, etc.? And would that make the “*Erev Rav*” parts of ourselves fall away, leaving us with only the parts of ourselves that are completely a *tzaddik*?

ANSWER

[The evil parts in us need to become] nullified, integrated into holiness, through the secret of revealing our soul's deep yearning for Hashem, to be burned up and destroyed so that we can go back to Hashem – to reach the state of *hiskalelus*, becoming integrated with Hashem.

QUESTION

What should I do if I recognize this “Erev Rav” aspect in my soul? How do I rectify it?

ANSWER

First of all, let's understand that if someone has a large percentage of “Erev Rav” in his soul, he won't be that insulted from the words here.

However, there are many people who do have some “Erev Rav” aspect in their souls. This is the part of the soul upon which we have a “mitzvah to erase Amalek”. If a person recognizes that he has some trace of ‘Erev Rav’ in his soul, he should *daven* to Hashem that he merit to die *al kiddush Hashem*. **If a person is truly willing to die *al kiddush Hashem*, that very decision to have *mesirus nefesh* for Hashem is like a “death” to that evil part of his soul;** just as the *neshamah* leaving the body is considered to be ‘death’. In this way a person is left with an entirely holy soul.

The question you have asked is very important, because there are indeed many people in this generation who contained a mixture of good/Jew and evil/Erev Rav in their souls [*as explained in sefer Shomer Emunim and others*].

QUESTION

What is the source of what the Rav said that if a person suspects that he may have a “Erev Rav” part in his soul, he should fulfill the mitzvah of “erasing Amalek” in his own soul, specifically through being ready to die *al kiddush Hashem*?

ANSWER

The root of the *Erev Rav* is the evil that counters the holiness of the *kutzo shel yud* (the apex of the letter *yud* in the name of *HaVaYaH*). In the side of devastation, the root of the *Erev Rav* belongs to the *chalal hapanuy* (the vacant space which is empty from Hashem’s infinite light), but in the side of *tikkun*, dying *al kiddush Hashem* repairs it.

QUESTION

.... From what I understand, the Rav’s *divrei Torah* focuses on all the darkness and concealment of G-dliness that there is on our world, how the generation is so far from feeling Hashem and how bad the world has become. With all due respect to the honor of the Rav, this doesn’t sound anything like what Mashiach ben Dovid will reveal, the light that will come to the world, the G-dliness that will be revealed in the world. Will Mashiach ben Dovid ask everyone to close themselves off into an “inner silence” and be cut off from the world (as the Rav emphasized as the main way to serve Hashem in the final generation)?...Why focus on all the darkness and concealment of Hashem’s Presence? Why not instead focus on the revelation of G-dliness that will soon come to the world, when the whole world will be filled with light?

I very much respect the Rav and I hope I’ve been understood. Have a *gmar chasimah tova*.

ANSWER

Thank you. May you rise and succeed!

Everything you are saying here is true and correct after the *Erev Rav* will be cut off, and not before that. Before the *Erev Rav* is destroyed, we are currently in the peak of the 50th gate of *tumah* which is in control, something which wasn’t around 1 or 2 generations ago. And that results in a major difference, which necessitates a change of direction [on our *avodah* in this generation].

VIGNETTES ABOUT "EREV RAV"

BEIN HAMITZARIM 016 - EXILE OF THE SOUL

There is exile in time, such as the Three Weeks. There is also exile in a place, such as how Adam was exiled from *Gan Eden*. There is also exile in our own soul – when our soul is exiled! How does the soul become in exile?

The Jewish people have been exiled among the nations, but there is also an exile within the Jewish people: we are exiled among the *Erev Rav*. The current exile, Edom – which has also recently entered into a new phase, the exile of Yishmael – has just now expanded into the exile of the *Erev Rav*. This is a more inner exile than the exile of Yishmael, because it is an exile within the Jewish people itself – since the *Erev Rav* lives with us.

BEIN HAMITZARIM 018 - FROM EXILE TO REDEMPTION

Today, we are in the exile of the *Erev Rav*. The evil power of the *Erev Rav* is that they mix in evil to our people; the word “*erev*” can also mean “mixture.” All the evil in the world has been mixed up with all the good.

We do not know when the end of the exile will be; it was never revealed to anyone. It is supposed to remain a secret; of this it said, “*liba l’pumei lo galya*”, “matters of the heart are not revealed by the mouth.” But we do know that there is a certain plan that must happen, and we know that there is a general way how we can come out of the exile. Evil and good are mixed together, more than ever before – and we need to disconnect from this mixture, in order to leave the exile.

DROSHOS 0102 - INNER WORLD TODAY

There are always exceptional souls in every generation, even when the generation around them is evil. The *Arizal* explains that Moshe was named so because he was drawn from the water (“*ki min hamayim mishisihu*”), because even Moshe’s soul is from *Dor HaMabul*, in which there was a decree that involved water, and he was saved from water because he was the exceptional soul of *Dor HaMabul* who merited not being a part of the decree of the Flood. His soul was contained in Noach. Sodom was not a generation of Sodomy, but it was rather an evil city, but Lot was saved from it, because he was the exceptional soul in Sodom that deserved to be saved. Our souls are from those generations and we are sent here to this world to rectify their sin.

Therefore, our souls are the holy parts of those previous souls. Just as in those generations there were very few souls that were holy while most of the generation was evil, so is our generation mostly evil, with a few souls that are holy and pure.

Most of the souls in this generation are totally from the “*Erev Rav*”, according to the writings of our Rabbis. *Erev Rav* is rooted in the three elements of fire, water, and wind. Sodom was the roots of the *Erev Rav* souls rooted in **fire**, *Dor HaMabul* was the root of *Erev Rav* souls rooted in **water**, and *Dor Haflagah* was **wind**-rooted souls of *Erev Rav*. Therefore, in our souls there is evil in our elements of fire, water, and wind. If a person merits to make himself holy, he merits to use his “fire”, “water” and “wind” in the soul for holiness.

DROSHOS D103 - SURVIVING SPIRITUALLY TODAY

Our soul can feel torn at this - to anyone who has a little feeling for holiness. All the outside influences have entered! Not only has the outside entered the inside, but even those who used to be on the inside have gone out to the outside to go learn in those places. Those places that people go learn\work in are full of people who are very connected to the outside world, some aren't even Jewish, and even those who are Jewish can still be from *Erev Rav*; either way, the entire outside world is in the 50th gate of impurity!

10 years ago it was already dangerous for one's *ruchmiyus* to enter these places. Surely in our times it is much worse. The outside world doesn't even bat an eyelash at the three cardinal sins of murder, idol worship and illicit relationships. **The generation today is as impure as the cities of Sodom and Ammorah** - and this is not an exaggeration. The government leaders of this generation have laws in their countries that are like Sodom, and people consider it to be justice, a world in which anyone can do as he feels.

FIXING YOUR FIRE ANGER _D13_ DANGEROUS RAGE - EREV RAV EMBEDDED IN THE SOUL

There are people who have very destructive *middos*. Instead of quickly taking action against the person whom they feel wronged by, they will wait a long time until they can take revenge, plotting for a long of time on how they can get back at the person. The person might wait for a few days, a few weeks, a few months and even several years until he eventually strikes back, carefully waiting until he can execute his plan for revenge. This does not stem from anger, however, but from the trait of revenge, where a person is resentful for a long time against another and he wishes to be destructive to another.

A Jew's soul may know what it's like to be very angry, but plotting to harm others and waiting a long time to take action against the other person is a nature that is rooted in the wicked souls of the "Erev Rav" (the Mixed Multitude)¹⁰⁸, because the soul of a Jew is not able to do such a thing.

Angry outbursts may be commonplace in a Jew's life, and the Sages describe a person who is quick to anger and difficult to appease; but at least he has much good in his soul which can do many good things, and it is just that he has an imbalance in his element of fire, which causes him to lose control when he gets angry. But if someone can plot against another person for a long amount of time and wait years until he can take revenge against the person, his very soul is rooted in a destructive nature – and such a nature is a sign that he is not of the souls of the Jewish people.

In the later generations, and in our generation especially, there are some people who have different parts to their souls – part of their soul is "Yisrael" (Jew), and part of their souls come from the wicked souls of "Erev Rav".

On a deeper note, every soul contains the entire universe, so there is also "Erev Rav" manifest in every soul. But on a more specific level, there are many people in the generation today who have a great mixture of good\Jew and evil\Erev Rav in their souls.¹⁰⁹

Our Sages wrote that in the final generation especially, the parts of the soul which did not yet receive a rectification in previous lifetimes (whether it is their aspects of "nefesh", "ruach", or "neshamah") will return in later generations to receive their rectification, but even more so, the Sages write of a concept where parts of different souls can join together in one person's soul, in order to receive their rectification.

This is the inner reason of why a person can feel so many inner contradictions inside himself. He has a "split" in his personality, and it will seem to others that he has some kind of "split personality" disorder, but the truth of the matter may be because there are parts of different souls contained in him, so he can really be two people at once.

With regards to our current discussion, in our generation, there are people who are partially Jew and partially "Erev Rav". When people are ignorant of this concept, they are baffled by the

¹⁰⁸ Refer to the pdf of "Erev Rav Talks".

¹⁰⁹ After this class, the Rav was asked, "What should I do if I recognize this "Erev Rav" aspect in my soul? How do I rectify it?"

The Rav responded, "First of all, let's understand that if someone has a large percentage of "Erev Rav" in his soul, he won't be that insulted from the words here. However, there are people who do have some "Erev Rav" aspect in their souls. This is the part of the soul upon which we have a "mitzvah to erase Amalek". If a person recognizes that he has some trace of 'Erev Rav' in his soul, he should daven to Hashem that he merit to die al kiddush Hashem. If a person is truly willing to die al kiddush Hashem, that very decision to have mesirus nefesh for Hashem is like a "death" to that evil part of his soul; just as the neshamah leaving the body is considered to be 'death'. In this way a person is left with an entirely holy soul.

"The question you have asked is very important, because there are indeed many people in this generation who contain a mixture of good\Jew and evil\Erev Rav in their souls."

contradictions that they may notice in the personality of many people, who come across as having some kind of split personality, where one day they are very kind and the next day they can act very destructive.

Sometimes we can see a person who has a very good heart, and he can daven with fervor and with tears, and soon afterwards he acts destructive, where he belittles things that are holy, and he enjoys it. He might be a person who causes the public to sin, *chas v'shalom*, yet when it comes Rosh HaShanah and Yom Kippur, he looks so earnest and he is seen *davening* and *crying*. People who see this contradiction in the person will wonder: “What is going on over here? Who is he? Is he genuine, or not?!”

There are even some people who have caused others to sin, and part of their harm was due to the fact that they look like G-d fearing people, who can be seen learning in a *Beis Midrash* or in an earnest *davening*, with passionate feelings for the spiritual, but it may all be like one big joke to the person, and it is not genuine. Some people look merciful, it seems that they possess the Jewish trait of *rachamim* \compassion, but if you look deeper under the surface, there is a lot in his character that contradicts this.

Sometimes a person simply has some *middos* that aren't good, and that is not what we are talking about here. He may be very lazy, or he is very gluttonous, or he is too talkative, or he has a bad temper; but that doesn't show that he has the evil nature of “destructiveness”. “Destructiveness” is not to be viewed simply as a bad *middah*; it is a far more serious ruination of character. When a person has a nature in himself to act destructive to others and to things that are holy, this is a “spark of the *Erev Rav*” contained in his soul, which does not come from the Jewish people.

These people have two major parts to themselves. There is a part of them which is Jewish, and a part of them which is not. The part which is “Jew” is the “pure heart that G-d created me with”, which can be manifest in either the traits that he shows of either compassion, love for Hashem, or crying to Hashem in prayer. Shortly after displaying these earnest Jewish traits, this person might become act destructive towards others and become involved with dissension with others.

It is not simply because he is acting in error and that he's mistaken. There is a more inner reason to his destructive nature. It is because in the depths of his soul, he enjoys the transition from holiness to evil – which is stemming from the evil that lays deep in his soul.

We are encountering these kinds of people all the time, but we don't always notice it. We should understand that when we are involved with such people, we must adapt an attitude of “Honor him, but suspect him.” It is difficult to decide who falls into this category or not. But because there do exist such people in the world today, we must be very careful with who we bond with. We should only allow ourselves to bond with someone who is good at his root, which means that he does not

have the issue of being destructive. Instead of allowing yourself to be around someone who acts destructive, better hang around people who are not.

We have digressed here to discuss this, in order to point out this very important point to know about. If a person recognizes in his soul that he has a bit of this nature of “destructiveness”, he must realize that this comes from a “spark of the *Erev Rav*” that is embedded into his soul. If the destructiveness dominates him totally, or on a very large scale, then it is a sign that he is, *chas v’shalom*, of the souls of the “*Erev Rav*”; simply speaking.

However, we are not coming to discuss such a person here and how he is rectified. Those people are completely dominated by **earth-of-fire-of-fire**, and they are able to hold onto resentment for many years against someone until they take action against the person, which is like what Esav did to Yaakov. A person who has this nature dominant in himself is living a lie. He might be a person who helps people, making sure to get a very good name for himself, but he also feels that he is right to take action against others in a destructive way.

Anyone who knows the world a bit will understand exactly what we mean. These people are dominated by **earth-of-fire-of-fire**, and when they are angered, they are capable of destroying entire communities, they are capable of causing dissension in marriages, they are capable of destroying father-son relationships, and they can do it all very quickly, and all in the name of holiness. But it does not come from genuine holiness. We aren’t discussing at all here about these kinds of people; it requires its own discussion.

AMALEK, THE EREV RAV AND THE YETZER HORA – THE EVIL POWER TO LOOK SIMILAR¹¹⁰

It is written, “*The first of the nations is Amalek.*” Amalek was the first nation to fight against the Jewish people, and because of this nation, other nations were able to copy suit and do the same. In doing so, they enabled other nations to compare themselves to Amalek, starting up with the Jewish people the same way that Amalek did. Amalek thus enabled the other nations to use their evil power of *medameh*.

The evil of Amalek was that they created something new. In essence, it is not really impossible to fight the Jewish people, but Amalek came and created a new reality: It’s possible to fight the Jews. Amalek taught the other nations that they can fight the Jews – this nation is the teacher of the other nations, and there is no greater false reality than this. They used the evil power of *medameh*, which is to create new realities that were previously nonexistent.

110 From Getting to Know Your Thoughts – 015 Detrimental Effects Of Imagination

There is another evil that exists, the *Erev Rav* (the “Mixed Multitude” of Egyptians who left Egypt together with the Jewish people). These were people who looked like members of the Jewish people, but in reality they were not. Only the Jewish people were in the plan of Creation; the members of the *Erev Rav* are not part of the souls of the Jewish people.

In Persia as well, after the events of the Purim story, there were non-Jews who tried to save themselves by claiming that they are of the Jewish people. All of these instances were the use of the evil power of *medameh* – the power to create new realities which Hashem did not intend.

How are the Jewish people different from these fakers, the *Erev Rav*? The souls of the Jewish people are all part and parcel with the wisdom of Hashem; “*Hashem, the Torah, and the Jewish people are one.*” The *Erev Rav* used the power of *medameh*, making themselves “similar” to the Jewish people, but they are not part of the collective wisdom of Hashem.

This is the prime example of the evil of imagination – *medameh*, which also means to compare and resemble. All the forces of evil - ***Amalek***, the *Erev Rav* and the *yetzer hora* – use the evil power of *medameh*. Amalek creates false realities, which is evil *medameh*. The *Erev Rav* makes themselves look similar to us, which is also an evil kind of *medameh*. And evil itself, the *yetzer hora*, uses *medameh*/imagination to convince a person to sin.

PESACH 002 - REDEEMING YOUR SOUL

In the redemption from Egypt, even though it was a redemption of our *daas*, it was only a redemption of each person’s private *daas*. We are still different from one another, because we each have our own opinions. It wasn’t yet a total redemption.

There are two ways how we can see this. First of all, Moshe *Rabbeinu* was afraid that the people wouldn’t be worthy of being redeemed, because of the wicked individuals present. This was already a lapse in the unity of the Jewish people. In addition to this, even when they were redeemed, the *Erev Rav* (“Mixed Multitude”, Egyptian non-Jews who escaped Egypt together with the Jewish people) came with them, which affected the unity of the Jewish people.

The future redemption, though, will be a total redemption of our *daas*. It will be nullification of our *daas* and in its place a revelation of the higher *Daas*, the *Daas* of the Creator. The revelation of Hashem by the redemption will be a revelation of the *achdus* of the Jewish people.

PIRKEI AVOS 082 - EREV RAV IN THE SOUL

When a person has no inner order in his soul, what happens? Each part of himself will seek many ‘*rabbonim*’ for all different kinds of areas. He will seek one *rebbe* when it comes to *halachah*; one *rebbe* in *Agadta* matters; one *rebbe* to learn good *middos* from; one *rebbe* to learn *hanhagah*

(conduct) from... This is all because his soul is scattered, and therefore he needs a different *rav* for each specific area.

But when the parts in the soul are unified together, each part of the soul will properly receive from another part in the soul. This is the depth behind the concept of *eiruv* (to mix), for holy purposes. The holy use of the concept of *eiruv* is expressed in the concepts of *eiruv techumin* and *eiruv parshiyos*. It represents the concept that each part of the soul can be a *rav* for a different part of the soul. It is the opposite concept of *Erev Rav*, who rebelled against Moshe, the *Rav* of Klal Yisrael.

This is how we use the force of “*Erev Rav*” for holiness: when the parts in our soul are each receiving from different parts of our soul, so that each part of our soul is a *rav* for a different part of our soul [in order to become unified and connected].

The *Erev Rav*, who opposed Moshe, represents the concept of opposing the entire idea of “making for yourself a *rav*”. *Erev Rav* means that they are causing *eiruv* (mixture) to the concept of *rav*. They made the Golden Calf because they claimed that Moshe wasn’t around anymore; in other words, they were attempting to blame Moshe for making the Golden Calf, which was a way of trying to mix in Moshe with the Golden Calf. That is the simple definition of *Erev Rav*. Moshe was the *Rav*, and the *Erev Rav* said Moshe is not here anymore; they wanted a different *Rav*.

But the deeper understanding is as follows. Each part of our soul can receive from a different part of our soul, as we explained. This is the “holy” kind of *Erev Rav*. There is “Moshe *Rabbeinu* within” that is in every soul, and in every generation, as the Rambam says. (There is also a degree of each of the *Avos* are also in our soul). That is the “*rav*” in our soul.

One who is wise learns from all people, as the Mishnah teaches – meaning, one who learns from all the parts in the soul. When they are mixed together and teach each other, this is called the holy use of “*Erev Rav*”. It is a way to mix the soul together and cause it to become unified and connected, as opposed to being a random mixture. The evil kind of *Erev Rav* is exactly the opposite: to mix up and confuse things.

TEFILLAH DID - WHAT OUR MATRIARCHS REVEALED

When the Jewish people left Egypt, the “*erev rav*” came with them. Whenever the redemption is imminent, the *erev rav* is always present.

There is a part in us which is affected by non-Jewish influences, a part in us which is not yet rectified. We all have a part in us which was inherited from our *Avos*, but we also have a part in us which contains *Erev Rav*’s influences.

Even Avraham *Avinu* was fathered by the wicked Terach, which implies that there are traces of evil in the Jewish people, which we need to get rid of. In order to rectify the evil within our soul, we need to reveal G-dliness and let it fill our entire being, and let it penetrate into the evil and unrefined parts of the soul. How? Through revealing Hashem from within ourselves, just like Avraham *Avinu* recognized Hashem from within himself! This is the power that can dispel all our inner evil.

The *Erev Rav* clings to our soul – how? All of us have times in which we have doubts in our *emunah*. That is all due to the *Erev Rav*'s influence. Sometimes our soul doesn't accept *emunah* as an answer - this is the *Erev Rav*'s influence on the soul.

How do we rectify it? Through revealing our power of “Avraham *Avinu*” within us. Avraham *Avinu* revealed G-dliness in the world by converting those who did not believe. So too, **we can convert our own, personal “non-Jew” within us, by revealing G-dliness in ourselves.**

In the future all will know about Hashem, but as for now, each person has a personal *avodah* to rid of his personal “*Erev Rav*”. That part of the soul can be rectified within oneself, when one lets the light of *emunah* shine upon his entire soul.

TEFILLAH 020 - THE LONGING FOR A SMILE

When a person wishes that other people give him *he'aras panim*, and he wishes very much that he could get it, the simple advice that people try is to put on smile at others, in the hope that eventually, everyone else will smile at him back.

But we must know the following: there is a large amount of souls today who are from the “*Erev Rav*”, and souls of *Erev Rav* will never give you real *he'aras panim*. Even if an “*Erev Rav*” soul smiles at you for 1000 years, he will never be able to give you a true *he'aras panim* that comes from the purity of the soul. Only a Jew's soul can give you real *he'aras panim*...

TEFILLAH 047 - SELF SACRIFICE IN AN IMPURE WORLD

It wasn't such a long time ago that people were dying *al kiddush Hashem*. Millions of Jews died *al kiddush Hashem* only recently. Although it was a time of destruction that came to the world, and we cannot know Hashem's ways, the fact that so much *mesirus nefesh* was going on caused a great spiritual light to enter the world – the light of *mesirus nefesh*. This was a preparation for the redemption. Although things looked bleak, it was still the preparation for the redemption. Similarly, the Rambam said that even the movement of Christianity prepares us for the redemption, because when so much spiritual darkness enters the world, the more spiritual light we receive to counteract it, thus, the redemption is actually closer.

Millions of Jews died *al kiddush Hashem*. This caused a great spiritual light to enter the world. It was not a coincidence that so many Jews died. It was all a preparation for the redemption. The fact that so many Jews could die *al kiddush Hashem* – so many souls, even more than there were at Har Sinai – is what paved the way for the redemption. How? We are in the final generations, which are very lowly, and we are very far removed from the concept of dying *al kiddush Hashem*; but at the same time, a great light of *mesirus nefesh* entered the world ever since all these Jews died *al kiddush Hashem*, and now we have that light.

“From the wound itself comes the recovery.” The light of *mesirus nefesh* was brought into the world, due to all the *mesirus nefesh* that millions of Jews revealed in that time of destruction. And it had to be this way, because *mesirus nefesh* is really the only power which can help us survive the current world, in which we are in exile from the “*Erev Rav*”.¹¹¹ The only way to survive this exile we are in is through *mesirus nefesh*, and this power was given to us recently by the previous generation.

The *mesirus nefesh* of the previous generation helps the later generations survive, and it especially helps our generation. We should tap into this power of *mesirus nefesh* that has now been given to us by all these millions of Jewish souls that died *al kiddush Hashem*, and this power of *mesirus nefesh* will help us get by anything in this exile.

TEFILLAH 055 – SEARCHING FOR TRUTH

If a person never gets to a greater recognition of Hashem through his learning, as long as he was searching for truth in his efforts to know the Torah, he may come back again in another lifetime so that he can reach it. He may come back down as a person who is learning-disabled, who can't understand his learning no matter how much he tries to, or he will suffer greatly when trying to understand his learning. But eventually, anyone who puts effort into learning the Torah, with a search for truth, will be returned to the good - to a recognition of Hashem through the Torah. The only question is how much each of us will have to go through until we get there.

As an aside, we can also see many who learned a lot of Torah but they never become improved through it. Why didn't their Torah learning return them to good? It is because they are souls from the *Eirev Rav*, who didn't want the Torah when they stood at Har Sinai. These souls are not part of the Jewish people. There are many such souls of *Eirev Rav* in this generation. But anyone who did stand at Har Sinai to accept the Torah will reach closeness to Hashem through the Torah, as long as he perseveres in his learning with a search for the truth.)

¹¹¹ See Tefillah #085 Erev Rav Today and Chanukah #048 -Greek Exile Today

TEFILLAH 063 - MERCY TOWARDS CREATION

If you develop a deep love and compassion for others, you might become too attached with others who act improperly, and this will endanger your own spiritual level. A person has to make sure he is totally separate from this generation, and at the same time, he must feel love and compassion on all people of this generation. If a person doesn't make sure to keep himself away from this generation, he will foolishly connect with people who are totally wicked, such as souls of the *Erev Rav*, and then be negatively affected by them.

TEFILLAH 087 - LEAVING THE CONFUSION

When we are in exile, we are like a fetus in its mother's womb, dependent on the nations for our survival. Exile is not just in the other countries; it is in *Eretz Yisrael* as well. As long as the Jewish people depend on other nations for survival, that is exile. In *Eretz Yisrael*, the *Erev Rav* rules. When people get supported by the *Erev Rav*, their Torah learning is being nourished by *Erev Rav*, and this is part of the exile.

TEFILLAH 090 - PURPOSE OF OUR EXILE: ACCEPTING OTHERS

To our chagrin, most people are either one way or the other people. Either people are very rigid and they cannot accept how other *frum* Jews live and think differently than they do, and they simply hate other Jews who are different. Or, he goes in the opposite direction: he loves other Jews so much that he goes extreme with his *kiruv*, and he ends up connecting with all the evil he comes across. He confuses himself. There are even people involved in *kiruv* who wish to connect with souls who come from "*Erev Rav*".

TEFILLAH 095 - TESHUVAH FEELING THE INNER CONTRADICTION

You can realize what a contradiction we live in. A person can realize that he is trying to live an inner kind of life, in which Torah rules as the truth, while the world around him is not, and it is instead burning in the opposite direction of the truth. This generation in particular contradicts our inner world of spirituality, of truth, of doing Hashem's Will, of Torah - because we are living in a generation where the '*Erev Rav*' rules over us! Reflecting on this predicament we are in can cause us to have *yagon*. If a person yearns for holiness, for Torah, for a world which will be run according to the Torah, he can see how much this generation contradicts his aspirations, and this can bring a person to have true *yagon*.

TEFILLAH 0117 - THE BIG PICTURE & THE DETAILS

There will be a new world after the year 6000. Our souls have been around 2000 years before Creation, and each of us will live for 10,000 years [and after that we will integrate with Hashem]. *Moshiach* will not come until all souls will be used up – people keep coming back down as soul reincarnations, again and again, to continue their centuries-long *avodah*. Each soul is different in how much time we spend above and below - but we all live for 10,000 years. We are each given 10,000 years to complete our *avodah*. We all have gone through many experiences; we all stood at Har Sinai, and we have gone through many exiles and lifetimes, all the way until the current exile, which is the exile of Esav\Yishmael\Erev Rav.

TEFILLAH 0128 - BODY ON EARTH, MIND IN HEAVEN

The Sages state that in the future, Hashem will remove the sun from its sheath; its powerful light will judge the wicked and destroy them, and it will heal the righteous. That very light is beginning to shine now - thus, in our current generation, there is a tremendous mixture of light and darkness like there never was before.

This is referring to the mixture of the *Erev Rav* souls in our generation, which confuse people and bring great darkness upon a Jew's soul. There are Jewish souls being burned up every day, because the light of the future is beginning to shine in our generation, and it is the light that burns the wicked in the future; it is already starting now. But that very light, when accessed by *tzaddikim*, uplifts them and heals them.

TEFILLAH 0141 – SPEAKING AND SINGING FROM THE HEART

One has to hear songs that come from a pure source, not from a source that is superficial. A singer might have a sweet voice (in Hebrew, a “*kol areiv*”), but his soul can still be from the *Erev Rav*! When one hears songs, his soul deeply connects with the singer, and if the singer is a sinner, he connects to the sins of the singer! There are singers which do not have Jewish souls at all. Even if the singer has some feelings, that doesn't mean it's a feeling for holiness coming from the soul...

We cannot change the generation, and we can't expect everyone to change and only listen to songs and words that come from a pure place. But a person must know how to at least live correctly. When a person hears songs that are rooted in holiness, and the composer had holy intentions through composing the song – this is very hard to find, because usually a song is composed for the sake of honor or other reasons.

DERASHOS 0130 – CORE OF CORONAVIRUS

The 50th gate within the 50th level of impurity is otherwise known as the force of “*Erev Rav*”, the mixture on this world, which is also known as the evil kind of *daas*, the mixture of good and bad *daas* which was contained in the *Eitz HaDaas*, and it is a kind of *daas*, a kind of knowledge, which is illogical.

Anyone who is aware of what the situation in the world today has become in recent years can recognize this quite well. The world today is a terrible and disturbing mixture of the worst kinds of influences, everything intersecting at once. **The entire world, especially since the year 5760 and even more so in the recent years**, has become enveloped in a certain spiritual darkness that has come down onto the world. It is all the presence of *tumah*, an invisible but spiritually present force of defilement, which surrounds everything in Creation, bringing confusion with it to everything that it touches. It all affects us, in the depths of our souls. It supersedes anything else that came before it.

The confusion and mixed-up values created by all of the *tumah* has entered into the places of Torah, penetrating even into our innermost circles where people are the most careful to observe Torah and *mitzvos*. It has entered into our once-sheltered society in the sneakiest way possible, and it destroyed everything. It has destroyed the entire generation already [from a spiritual standpoint].

Without getting into all the details of it, this is all a general force known as the “50th gate of impurity” (*shaar HaNun d’tumah*). It’s all the media and all of the smart devices which have entered our environment and into our direct social circles, and into our homes. Some people have a “*hechsher*” on their use of social media, by placing filters on it to make it “kosher”, but any sensible person understands that although this was well-intentioned, all it has done is totally uproot Jewish *neshamos* from within.

Anything in the world of social media, all of the communicating, all of the messages and all of the videos and all of the terrible *peritzus* (obscenities) that people can view today through it, has reached an abysmally low point.

The recent epidemic has now forced people to stay in their homes, resembling the verse, “*Go my nation, come into your rooms, close the doors behind you, reflect for a moment, until the wrath passes*”¹¹², and all places of Torah (yeshivos and shuls) have been closed, forcing everyone to stay at home. And what happened now? There are places where *bochurim* in yeshiva can go to so that they can hear *shiurim* on the Internet being given by their *Rebbeim*, so that they shouldn’t miss any *shiurim*! It’s true! The generation today has become so spiritually deadened!!

¹¹² Yeshayahu 26:20

This is all the “50th gate” within the 50th gate of impurity itself, the lowest point to be on. The wonder is that things have been like this for a while yet Hashem didn’t send us any wake-up calls like this until now. **What Hashem is sending us now is all *rachamei Hashem***, it is all in Hashem’s great compassion for us that He has sent us this! The generation simply cannot continue the way it is. It is all filled with the influences of *tumah* coming in from all directions.

The Sages teach that at the time when the Beis HaMikdash was destroyed, every rooftop had an idol on it. Today it is the same idea: there is *tumah* everywhere. And now that people are being forced to stay in their homes, what is everyone remaining with? **People are remaining with nothing but their smart devices and their connection to social media, and that’s all they have in their life right now!** Naturally, people can’t be alone, they can’t feel so separated from the rest of the world, so they are spending all of their time now communicating through internet and media. **This is all the 50th gate of impurity.**

It is clear to anyone that the world will not return afterwards to the way it was before. There have been easier times and harder times that we have seen, but the world simply will not go back to the way it was, for now the “50th gate of impurity” has been released in full force onto our world today, and that changes everything. It is no longer hidden, it is obvious, that there has never been anything like this before.

The “coronavirus” is not the problem. Rather, it is just a physical manifestation, an outer appearance, of a deeper issue behind it. The real issue here is that the entire world has become infected by the widespread influence of the most depraved elements possible, which is called the “*Keser d’kelipah*”. The world today is a “generation entirely deserving of destruction”¹¹³ as the Sages said long ago regarding the final generations.

All that is left for a person now, for one who has become so infected by the impurity of the world today, is to be stuck his house where he can be connected to the “50th gate of impurity”, to the media, which he gets everything from - all of his news, all of his communication, and all his needs....

Even when people learn Torah from the internet, it is all coming from the most impure source possible, the “*Erev Rav*”, and it is all a Torah being nursed forth from the *Erev Rav*! The *Erev Rav* stood far away from Har Sinai at the time of the giving of the Torah, as the Ramban says. But in our generation, it is not that way. Today the *Erev Rav* is right within our hands.

People are secluded in their homes and still connected to the internet and to the media, connected to the deepest filth of the “50th gate of impurity” within the “50th gate of impurity” itself, on varying different levels, whether they know of this or not.

¹¹³ Talmud Bavli Sanhedrin 97a

WORDS ON THE "EREV RAV"

THE ZOHAR'S WORDS ABOUT THE EREV RAV

“There are five types among the Erev Rav ("mixed multitude"): The Nefilim, Gibborim, Anakim, Refaim, and Amalekites. (1) The **Amalekites** are those who are left from the time of the Flood, from those of whom it is written, "And He blotted out all living substance" - those who have been left from this class in this fourth exile of Israel **make themselves leaders by force**, and are scourges to Yisrael. Of them it is written, "For the earth was full of violence because of them". These are the Amalekites. (2) Of the **Nefilim** (lit. fallen ones) it is said, "And the sons of G-d saw the daughters of man that they were fair" (ibid.). These form the second category of the "Nefilim", as mentioned above, in this way when G-d thought of making man, He said: "Let us make man in our image, etc.", i.e. He intended to make him head over the celestial beings, who were to be his deputies, like Yoseph over the governors of Egypt. The angels thereupon began to malign him and say, "What is man that You should remember him, seeing that he will assuredly sin before You." Said G-d to them, "If you were on earth like him, you would sin worse." And so it was, for "when the sons of G-d saw the daughters of man", they fell in love with them, and G-d cast them down from heaven. These were Uzza and Azael. From them, the Erev Rav ("mixed multitude") derive their souls, and therefore they also are called nefilim, because **they fall into adultery with women**. For this, G-d casts them out from the future world, in which they have no portion, and gives them their reward in this world, as it is written, "He repays his enemies to their faces". (3) The **Gibborim** (lit. mighty ones) are those of whom it is written: "They are the mighty ones...men of name" (Beraishis 6: 4). They come from the side of those who said: "Come, let us build a city and make a name for ourselves" (Beraishis 11:4). **These men build synagogues and Yeshivos and place in them Torah Scrolls with rich ornaments, but they do it not for the sake of G-d, but only to make themselves a name, and as a result of this the powers of evil rule over Yisrael** (who are the "dust of the earth"), as it is written, "And the waters prevailed greatly upon the earth" (Beraishis 7:19). (4) The **Refaim** (lit. weak ones), **the fourth group of the "mixed multitude"**, are those who **if they see Yisrael (the Jewish people) in trouble, they will abandon them, even though they are in a position to help them, and, they also neglect the Torah and its students, in order to ingratiate themselves with the non-Jews**. Of them it is said, "They are Refaim (shades), they shall not arise" (Yeshayah 26: 14); When Redemption shall come to the Jewish people, "All their memory shall perish" (Ibid.). (5) The last group are the **Anakim** (lit. giants)...of whom it is written, "They shall be as necklaces (anakim) to your neck". Of them it is said, "the Refaim are likewise counted as Anakim", i.e. they are on a par with one another. All these tend to bring the world back to the state of "chaos and void" and they caused the destruction of the Beis HaMikdash. But just as "chaos and void" gave place to light, so too when Hashem reveals Himself, they will be wiped off the earth. But even so, the Redemption will not be complete until Amalek will be exterminated, for against Amalek the oath was taken that "G-d will have war against Amalek from generation to generation" (Shemos 17:16).

THE VILNA GAON'S WORDS ABOUT THE EREV RAV

Grain contains three parts which get thrown away: the chaff, the straw, and the rest of its remains, which are unfit for consumption. The nation of Yisrael, who is compared to grain – as is written in *Yirmiyahu*¹¹⁴: “*The beginning of her wheat*”, also contains three disposable parts to her grain: Yishmael, Esav, and the Erev Rav.

From Avraham came Yishmael, and from Yitzchok came Esav; but the two Messiahs will also come them [Avraham and Yitzchok] – one Messiah will come from Yosef, and the other Messiah will come from Dovid¹¹⁵ – and they will eliminate the ‘chaff’ and ‘straw’ from amidst Yisrael. They [Esav and Yishmael] will then be like the chaff that is blown away by the wind, as it is written, “*And it will be that the house of Esav will be like straw.*” However, the ‘grain’ [Yisrael] will not be totally purified until the “Erev Rav” has been sifted out from it. They [Erev Rav] represent the remaining unwanted material from the grain, and they cling strongly to the grain [Yisrael].

They [Erev Rav] are the undesirable parts left over from Yaakov; they represent the evil powers of *bittul Torah* (causing wasted time from learning Torah) and throwing off the yoke of Heaven.

They [Erev Rav] are very attached to Yisrael, and therefore Yisrael learns from their evil deeds. They are wealthy and they are also arrogant because of their wealth. Of them, it is stated¹¹⁶ that “Ben David [Messiah] will not come until the arrogant ones among Yisrael are destroyed.”

Just as the undesirable parts of the grain cannot be separated unless the grain is first grinded well, so is it impossible to separate the “Erev Rav” from Yisrael without first going through the difficulties of the exile.

7) As the generations go on, the spiritual level of the generations decrease, and the Erev Rav grows stronger. For this reason, the Sages throughout all the generations have to make decrees and new rules, in order to circumvent the breaches that the Erev Rav causes.¹¹⁷

8) There are five kinds of Erev Rav¹¹⁸ that are in Yisrael: 1) *Baalei machlokes* - Those who seek strife and slander on others; 2) *Baalei taavah* - Those who seek lusts. 3) *Tzevuim* (lit. “colored ones”), those who are not the same on the inside as they are on the outside.

¹¹⁴ *Yirmiyahu, chap. 1.*

¹¹⁵ *Tikkunei Zohar HaChadash, 36a; the two Messiahs each represent the positive commandments and the negative commandments (ibid).*

¹¹⁶ *Sanhedrin 98a*

¹¹⁷ *Tikkunei HaZohar 34a*

¹¹⁸ *Tikkunei HaZohar 41b describes the “five groups of Erev Rav” in slightly different terms: “They [Erev Rav] are identified as “Nega Ra”, “Evil Affliction”. The word Nega Ra stands for Nefilim, Giborim, Amalekim, Refaim, and Anakim. The Nefilim are those who seek lust...the Giborim are those who seek to gain an honorable name for themselves, even building synagogues and donating items for the Sefer Torah so that their name can be honored... Amalekim are those who are at the heads of the nation of Yisrael during the exile, and they steal from the poor Jews.... Refaim are those who slacken off from doing kindness and charity with those who learn Torah... Anakim are those who ridicule Torah scholars...*

4) *Baalei kavod* - Those who chase after honor to make for themselves a name. 5) *Baalei mammon* - Those who run after money.

The worst type from all of them are those who seek strife, and these are also called the “*Amalekim*.” Ben David [Messiah] will not come unless they are destroyed from the world. Arguments that are not for the sake of Heaven are caused by Erev Rav, who jump to give rulings on matters so they can gain the crown of glory.”

THE KAMARNA'S WORDS ABOUT THE EREV RAV

“The *kelipah* called *noga* [where the souls of the *Erev Rav* are rooted in] is full of desires, lust, and lies, and all of this is in order to rule and deceive others, and to become a Rav and a Rebbe. As it was said by...Rabbeinu Tzvi of Zhiditchov, who learned this from the holy Baal Shem Tov zt'l, that it would be easy [for those of the *Erev Rav*] to undergo all the troubles and mortifications in the world for one who has in his heart to be a Rav or Rebbe, and he is helped from Heaven, because “*in the way that one wishes to go, he is helped from above to go on that way.*” (sefer *Zohar Chai*, Bereshis 106a)

“They desire to become a Rabbi, in order to be proud of this [title], and they do not to do it for Hashem’s sake. They desire to rule over the *tzaddikim* with the full force of the ego, that everyone should be subservient to him and be under his rule. This person that wants to rule [over others] is an empty pit, full of serpents and scorpions, and the person who is led by him and acknowledges him is actually serving idols. (sefer *Zohar Chai*, Shemos 86).

THE WORDS OF THE CHOZEH OF LUBLIN ABOUT THE EREV RAV

“The simple folk of the Jewish people must *daven* for mercy to awaken their hearts to become connected to the true *tzaddik*, and not to become connected with the “**heads of the *Erev Rav*”, who make themselves look like a *tzaddik*, *chassid*, a saint, a holy person**, who sits and fasts with talis and tefilin and learns every day and who makes himself look like a person who doesn’t know how to enjoy anything worldly. May Hashem save us from these people, who may even be leaders of the generation.

“The truth is that Heaven hides all of this, so that people will have an equal choice of free will. **No one can recognize which leaders are false, and only Hashem knows what’s in their hearts.**

“But, G-d forbid should we have any doubts about our leaders, because in our eyes they should all be viewed as *tzaddikim*, the holiest of people, leaders of the generation who are Torah scholars. May Hashem raise them and

...“All of the brazen and wicked ones of the generation are reincarnations of the souls of the *Erev Rav*, descending from Kayin. All of the exiles, suffering, and destruction of the Temples are all because Moshe accepted the *Erev Rav* into the nation, thinking that they had converted earnestly....

“*Yishmael and Esav are the chaff [that must get separated from the grain], while the Erev Rav are like the “yeast in the sourdough” that remains. The chametz (remaining yeast) must be burned on Erev Pesach, six hours into the day, since they [the Erev Rav] made the Golden Calf at six hours into the day. They [the Erev Rav] are worse than all the idol-worshippers of Yisrael, because Yisrael is drawn after their influence, whenever they see that the Erev Rav is enjoying success. This is the reason for the lengthiness of the exile.*”

exalt them. We only mean that **we need to *daven* to our G-d in Heaven [to be saved from false leaders], with tears and supplications.**” (*Heichal Berachah*, parshas Ki Sisa).

THE SATMAR RAV'S WORDS ABOUT THE EREV RAV

“It is impossible to discern with our eyes those who are from *Amalek* who became purified [throughout the generations], who became turned into total *tzaddikim*, and those who remained *Amalekim*. They can both appear entirely holy to us.

“Even among those who are *marbitzei Torah b'rabim* (who teach Torah to the masses) there are those among them who are complete *tzaddikim*, and **there are also those among them who are *Amalekim***, who are “cursed as Haman”, yet it is not recognizable on their faces that they are from Amalek, because those who are cursed like Haman are able to make their faces look like someone who is blessed as Mordechai. Only with *siyata d'shmaya* and Heavenly mercy can we be saved from those who are from Amalek.

“Through drinking the wine [on Purim] and coming to the truth and abandoning all falsity, we can then see that we cannot tell with our human logic who is from those who are blessed like Mordechai and who are cursed like Haman. We cannot rely for sure on anyone who says that he is blessed like Mordechai, because even someone as cursed as Haman will say constantly that he wants Torah and to honor Heaven, and if we think about this well, any person will see that this is the truth, due to our many sins. **Only with heavenly assistance and great heavenly mercy can we be saved from them and from their followers.**

“Thus, on Purim we must reach the understanding that we really cannot tell the difference between those who are of “Blessed as Mordechai” and those who are “Cursed as Haman!” We can only ask of Hashem that He save us and that we be connected to the way of truth in the Torah.”

“...Klal Yisrael has suffered all troubles from those Torah scholars that come from Amalek, who walk hand in hand with *kofrim* (deniers of Hashem), may Hashem save us.” (sefer *Divrei Torah* (of the Satmar Rav zt”l), p536)

“Every single *neshamah*
wishes to grow higher
to improve. If someone has no wish
at all to improve, then he has to be
from the *Erev Rav*. ”