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# **WEEKLY BLAST**

## **AMALEK EXPOSED**

**DRASHA FROM THE  
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## 10 | *Amalek Exposed*

### *Erev Rav/Amalek*

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

*Chazal*<sup>1</sup> 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 lists<sup>2</sup> 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”.

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<sup>1</sup> In *Tikkunei HaZohar* 41b

<sup>2</sup> 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.

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 Talmud<sup>3</sup> 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 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

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<sup>3</sup> *Sukkah* 32a

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 dove<sup>4</sup>, 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 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*<sup>5</sup>. 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

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<sup>4</sup> *Berachos 57b*

<sup>5</sup> 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...

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.

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. Mixing<sup>6</sup> 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*

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<sup>6</sup> In Hebrew, mixing is called “*taaruvos*”

is the head of all of them<sup>7</sup>. 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.

### ***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.

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<sup>7</sup> *Gra: Yeshayahu 11:1*

### ***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*.<sup>8</sup> 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

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<sup>8</sup> 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.

the Jewish people, who are called “one” nation. When the nations are unified against *Klal Yisroel*, this is the evil kind of “oneness” that fights the holy “oneness” of the Jewish people.<sup>9</sup>

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

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<sup>9</sup> See *Tefillah #019 – Revealing Oneness*

“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*”<sup>10</sup> – “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.

### ***The Secret Meaning of the Korbon Pesach***

Amalek will be destroyed on the 14<sup>th</sup> 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 14<sup>th</sup> of Nissan was the day in which the firstborns of Egypt perished.

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<sup>10</sup> *Bamidbar* 21:20

The connection is that the 14<sup>th</sup> 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 15<sup>th</sup>, not on the 14<sup>th</sup>, just as the firstborns were slain by Hashem on the following night, which was the 15<sup>th</sup>. Why, then, will Amalek be slain on the 14<sup>th</sup>? The reason is as follows.

The 14<sup>th</sup> generation [after the giving of the Torah] is called the generation of Dovid, and the 15<sup>th</sup> generation is the generation of Shlomo who represents the perfected level of mankind. The 14<sup>th</sup> and the 15<sup>th</sup>, 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 14<sup>th</sup> [*Erev Pesach*]. Pesach is observed on the 15<sup>th</sup>. The Talmud states that although we begin the festival of Pesach on the 15<sup>th</sup> (which is the night after the 14<sup>th</sup>), the 14<sup>th</sup> is still considered to be like a festival, since we ate the *Korbon Pesach* on the 14<sup>th</sup>. In other words, the 14<sup>th</sup> and the 15<sup>th</sup> 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*”<sup>11</sup> (“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

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<sup>11</sup> *Shemos* 17:16

the 15<sup>th</sup>, the night after the 14<sup>th</sup>, and not on the 14<sup>th</sup>. 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 14<sup>th</sup> of Nissan with the 15<sup>th</sup> 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 14<sup>th</sup> of Nissan, or the 15<sup>th</sup> 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 is 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*”<sup>12</sup>, “Its end will be that it goes lost.”

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12 *Bamidbar* 21:20

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*”<sup>13</sup> – 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.

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<sup>13</sup> *Zohar In Parashas Achrei Mos*



The depth of holy *taaruvos* is described in the words<sup>14</sup>: “*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 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 Pharoah, and by the redemption from Egypt, Pharoah 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 Pharoah 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

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<sup>14</sup> *In the prayers said before Shacharis (after the morning blessings): “אתה הוא משנברא העולם ואתה הוא לעולם”*

laid. It became manifested in reality when Pharoah 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*.”<sup>15</sup> 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 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’bahar*” (“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

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<sup>15</sup> *Bamidbar* 21:20

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 “*Nefilim*”, 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.

### ***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*.