

GALUS EFFECT

The exile of Egypt is compared to a fetus in its mother. When the Jewish people had to be in exile, not only were they forced to be nourished from the other nations, but they became embedded with them. That was the depth of the Egyptian exile, and that was why we so badly had to get out of there and be removed from our connection with Egypt to be made into our own nation, *Klal Yisrael*. In exile, when we are among the nations, we are like a fetus inside a 'non-Jewish mother' – the gentile nations of the world – whom we can easily feel attached to as a result of living with them.

If we praise and admire people who do not have the values of Torah, it connects our soul to a strange world that is distant from truth. It used to be that it was hard to see this problem, but now almost anyone can sense it (unless all of his spiritual senses have been totally deadened). The situation of the generation today has become, now more than ever, like the 'fetus in its mother's womb' – and the 'mother' can *chas v'shalom* be the worst influences of all the nations of the "Erev Rav." As the *Gra* wrote, this "Erev Rav" is the exile during the final generation, in *Eretz Yisrael*. The generation has slowly become ensnared into praising and admiring values that are not truthful to Hashem and His Torah.

Chazal also compare exile to Yaakov *Avinu's* fight with the angel. At first they fought as separate beings, and continued throughout the entire night, but right before dawn, the angel wrestled with him and attached itself to him. The lesson is that at the beginning of exile, we had to fight the secular influences, but they weren't so attached with us. Now we are closer to the coming of the 'dawn,' where the secular values become very attached to us.

It starts with admiring people who have money and power. Slowly, as a person continues to admire them for these things, he becomes deeply attached with the values, opinions, and thoughts of these people. He will be busy wondering, "What does that wealthy person think? What does this person in power think, what's his view? What does he say, what is his opinion?" His soul becomes connected, slowly, to a person whose thoughts are immersed in thoughts of sin, lust, honor, and other evil character traits. By always thinking about such people, a person doesn't realize that he's connecting his soul to people who have heretical thoughts, who never think about Hashem and who live against Hashem's will, and in turn, he might receive heretical thoughts from just feeling connected to such people. And certainly if a person actually listens to what such people have to say, he is even more negatively affected, by the connection that he has formed in his soul, towards that influential person.

Rebbi Meir had a teacher who became a heretic – Rebbi Elisha

ben Avuya, who became known as *Acher* - and Rabbi Meir still wished to hear his teacher's wisdom, so he would continue to learn by him. When Rebbi Meir was asked how he could learn from a heretic, he said that he is "eating the contents of the fruit, and throwing away the peel." Rabbi Meir was on a very high level so he was able to do this. But who in this generation can say that he is on the level to do this? If someone today claims that he knows how to sift out the good from the bad from the mixture of good and evil that he comes across, he is only fooling himself, because only rare individuals throughout the generations were able to do this.

When a person gets used to hearing the opinions and thoughts of a sinful person, his soul slowly becomes more and more connected to that person's values. *Chazal* use a term, *קשורה בו* ככלב "attached to it like a dog" - both in This World, and *chas v'shalom*, even in the Next World. When a person speaks of the praises of people who do not have Torah values even if he also speaks of Torah values, then his heart begins to acquire different values than pure Torah. He looks fine on an external level, but internally, there are negative changes taking place inside of him. It slowly begins to affect the way he talks, and eventually, his opinions and values in life change, and they are no longer in line with the Torah.

So we must understand that it's not just an issue of how we talk and think on a superficial level. It is an issue of where we feel deeply connected to. It is a question of if we are really connected to Hashem and to His Torah and to those who serve Him loyally. If one is connected to the outside world and doesn't feel a deep connection to the Torah's values, without a doubt he will feel connected to the world that is outside of Torah. This is not only about people who live outside the world of Torah – even those who live within the Torah world may not realize that they are slowly becoming connected to the world outside of Torah, and they are uprooting themselves from the Torah world and placing themselves into the world outside of Torah. If one realizes that this is happening, he should view himself as a person on a shaky boat that is being tossed around in middle of the ocean, where his boat is about to capsize, who has to yell for help and keep screaming for his life.

One must know that when he admires values that are outside of Torah, he will end up falling into the places that are outside of Torah, even if he didn't intend to take such a path. In this generation, there is no 'neutral' kind of existence. In previous generations, if a person didn't immerse himself in Torah, he was still able to live a holy life where he was protected from outside influences. But today, all of the influences have entered into the Torah world, making our world become totally and absolutely *hefker* (unbridled). If someone doesn't feel how this is so, his spiritual feelings must have become deadened. But someone who has even some minimal spiritual feeling can feel the apathetic attitude which has become so prevalent today.

Today he can feel that there is a “Lavan” trying to uproot everything. In today’s generation, it can take just a few moments for a Jew to be uprooted from all of the fundamentals of *Yiddishkeit*. In previous times, it would take a long time for a Jew to abandon *Yiddishkeit*. It was a slow and drawn-out process of negative influences. But today, a Jew can fall completely into the worst influences in just a few moments, due to the connections with the outside world [through smartphones and internet use] which are pouring into our once-sheltered society and uprooting everything that’s pure and holy from the Torah world.

It is only when a person holds firmly onto the truth that he can survive. One must realize that he is in a world which is entirely filled with connections to the “50th gate of impurity.” But **Hashem is still here. He is found openly by anyone who searches for Him to have a relationship with Him.** But a person has to search for Hashem, and if a person doesn’t do this in today’s generation, if a person doesn’t seek a connection with Hashem every single day of his life, he is found in a world of total *hefker* (carelessness). There is Torah and *mitzvos* in this world which will not be enough to save a person from this world of *hefker* because the world is getting more and more confused and contaminated. The only thing that will save a person today is to search every single day for a genuine connection with Hashem.

A person born in today’s generation has a status of *tinok shenishbob* (a captured child), and it doesn’t matter which community he was born into or which type of Jew he is. This does not make a difference anymore, because the danger is the same for each person today. Wherever we are the ‘50th Gate of Impurity’ surrounds us.

If we absorb the message here, we can realize that the things that many people admire today are not at all like how it was even 20 years ago. It used to be that people naturally admired the Torah’s values and the Torah lifestyle, but in the last couple of years, suddenly, people aren’t so clear anymore about this! *Baruch Hashem*, there are tens of thousands of *bnei Torah* today learning Torah. But who knows how many *bnei Torah* have left their Torah learning to go out to work, where they place themselves into a world that is *hefker*? (And they are not pursuing the same kind of job as Rabbi Yochanan HaSandlar and our sages who worked for a living). And that world of *hefker* doesn’t remain on the outside, it has crept into Torah society as well. In our times, a person is totally enveloped in a world of falsity (*alma d’sbikra*) which claims to have a ‘kosher’ symbol for everything, as if it’s all kosher. The sad truth is that it resembles the *chazir* (the pig), which claims that it is kosher when it sticks out its split hooves and says “I’m kosher.” One with even a little bit of feeling for *ruchniyus* can see the falsity, the *sheker* which lurks behind everything that surrounds us today which claims to be “kosher.”

Our surroundings can creep in to our sheltered world and can cover over the truth. The falsity of the world today is so dominant that it can cover over even the simplest truths which the Torah world grew up with. Today, anyone who has been born

into this generation has come into a place of awesome danger. It is difficult to say such a thing like this, but it is even harder to be silent when an opening of *Gehinnom* is right underneath us now. The world was never such a dangerous place to our souls as it is today. It always contained evil, but there was never a concept of instantly falling down, which is a unique phenomenon to today’s generation. It is so difficult for anyone growing up in our generation today to know what’s correct and what isn’t, what’s true and what’s false, what’s right and what’s wrong, where the misconceptions are, to know which people today are truthful and whom it is proper to follow and be guided by. Everything is all mixed up. It’s all “good and evil mixed with each other” in a way that can’t be sorted out.

If someone today really searches for truth, and he turns to Hashem to be saved, then “*He is close to all those who call out to Him in truth.*” Hashem is really very close. “*For the matter is very close to you.*” Although we are surrounded by terrible evil, at the same time, Hashem is still very close by - that is, for those who truly search for Him. If someone doesn’t seek each day to have a palpable relationship with Hashem, if he does not feel a deep connection to His Torah, to fulfilling Hashem’s will and His *mitzvos*, there is nothing protecting him from falling into the lowest depths.

Hashem reveals Himself to those who search for Him. In previous generations, it was very difficult to attain a deep closeness with Hashem, and one had to work very hard to attain this closeness. But in our generation, being close to Hashem is more easily within our reach. This is because it is written, *אני ה' השוכן בתוך טומאתם*, “*I, Hashem, dwell amongst them in the midst of their defilement.*”

If anyone wants a true life, no matter what his situation is, he should understand that our values today have become captured by outside influences, and that is why we find ourselves admiring values that are not truthful. One can be *zocheh* to be amongst those who truly search for Hashem. He can realize that as we come closer towards the end of this exile Hashem is still with us in our impure situation. We do not know exactly when the end will be, but we are definitely very deep into the end! We must not despair, for we can realize that it is Hashem Who has placed us here, and therefore, He certainly gave us the chance to come out of it and to remain connected with Him even as we live in this impure world.

A person can be *zocheh* today to become one of the individuals today who search for the truth, and not to become fazed and full of despair by the great *hester* (concealment) which we are found in. We can connect ourselves to Torah at all times, to be connected with Hashem every moment, to give our souls to Him. Let us remain unfazed from all the *hester* that surrounds us, and to understand instead that all the *hester* today is beginning to pave the way towards the destruction of all evil. Realizing this concept is the root of true closeness with Hashem. May we all be *zocheh* that the *tumah* which surrounds us today should be removed from the world, that all our hearts should become purified and be turned towards Hashem, so that we will reach the true complete *d’veykus*.

ON THE WAY TO THE GEULAH

QUESTION What is the source that evil ends up destroying itself (when it hits 'rock bottom')? **ANSWER** In a "generation which is entirely guilty" [*Sanhedrin 97b*], it is a generation where the existence of evil essentially means that there is *bedair*, or non-existence, a concept which the *Maharal* discusses at length. Therefore, since a "generation entirely guilty" (such as today's times) by its very concept means that it is not able to exist anymore, it will cease to exist by self-destructing. The root of this is in the concept of the *tzimtzum* [a fundamental concept in *Kaballah* which cannot be elaborated here].

QUESTION How will the Internet be destroyed? Will it self-destruct, or will the holiness of Mashiach destroy it? **ANSWER** Since the Internet is not "evil" in the simple sense, but it is rather a "mixture" of good and evil that can't be sorted out [like the concept of the *Eitz HaDaas Tov V'Ra* and the *Erev Rav*], it will only be destroyed through the "light of Mashiach."

QUESTION Is the legalization of marijuana another stage in the dominance of evil in our world today, another step within the *shaar HaNun d'tumah* which is in the world today, and is it a sign that our world is destroying itself (which will make way for the era of Mashiach)? **ANSWER** Yes, because [the use of drugs] is the evil, ruined side of "not knowing," for it brings a person to the removal of *daas* (logical reasoning).

QUESTION Since it is America that legalized marijuana, and America is identified as *malchus Edom* ("the dominion of Edom," or Western civilization, associated with Esav), does this signify the beginning of the end for *malchus Edom*, since they are starting to destroy themselves by legalizing these drugs? **ANSWER** Yes.

QUESTION We all came onto this world to have a part in achieving the *tikun olam* (world repair), but we only seem to be hurdling in the opposite direction of the *tikun olam*. We are not seeing any

acceleration towards *tikkun* (repair) but only towards *kilkul* (devastation)! And we know that we are so close to Mashiach, so how will that happen if we don't seem to be getting any closer to *tikkun* but only further away from it? It only seems that we are getting further from *tikkun* with increasing *kilkul* with no end in sight. **ANSWER** Refer to *sefer Daas Tevunos*, which explains why it has to be this way - that all evil breaks out in all of its intensity in the end of days.

QUESTION How can we live truthfully when people around us are doing the wrong thing? **ANSWER** You need to see a "clear world" in front of you, in which you can see clearly what's *emes* and what's *sheker*. Examine what the *emes* is, according to your understanding, and do so pleasantly and joyously. All the time, sharpen your understanding of the truth, but with a feeling of pleasantness and joy. It is better to look less at what's around you and not to analyze people. Hashem sees into the hearts of people and what they truly are, and we cannot discern the level of others with our own eyes. You need to search for the truth solely in your own personal life, so you should not be busy with trying to see if others are living truthfully or not. You should be happy with what you've reached so far and *daven* that all of *Klal Yisrael* should reach the *emes* as per Hashem's will.

QUESTION I can't stand people who are hypocrites and fakers. I can't tolerate people who present *sheker* (falsehood) as truth, and they look at truth as falsity. What is the right attitude to have about this (not that I'm perfect either)? **ANSWER** Sometimes you should take your mind off this as much as you can, and sometimes you should try to find at least one good point to focus on, even amidst all the falsity you are seeing.

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? **ANSWER** We need to love every single person without exception, because they are all Hashem's creations.

But at the same time, we also need to have a revulsion and a hatred of evil and wicked people, such as the *Erev Rav*. In the practical sense, you need to be able to love them and hate them at the same time, meaning that you should love any good you find in them but you should hate the evil that they do. 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. 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 any good that it's in them, but also hate the wickedness that's in them, just as Dovid *HaMelech* said about the *reshaim* who wage war against Hashem: "With utter hatred, I hate them."

QUESTION It is told of the *Ramchal* as well that together with his students they meditated on certain *yichudim* for a long amount of time in order to bring Mashiach, and on Musaf of Yom Kippur they heard a noise, and it was the S"M who was coming to prevent Mashiach, and the S"M warned them that if they bring Mashiach now, there will be souls who won't be by the *Geulah*. So the *Ramchal* pushed off all his efforts to bring Mashiach when he heard this, because he wanted everyone to be by the *Geulah*. Also, it is cited from the Chofetz Chaim that we should inform everyone that when Mashiach comes everyone will reach their *tikkun*, because Hashem made a promise that in the final *Geulah*, no Jew will be left behind. But if there were *neshamos* that didn't reach their *tikkun* in the times of the *Ramchal* and that is why the *Ramchal* and his students postponed the *Geulah*, what did they gain, if the situation today is much worse and there are far more *neshamos* who are doing much worse than previous generations and they aren't getting close to their *tikkun*? **ANSWER** The higher parts of the soul will be by the *Geu-*

lah, and of the higher parts of our soul it is said “All of Yisrael have a portion in the Next World.” Losing out on the Next World, and remaining outside of it forever, is essentially referring to the lower, less refined parts of the soul, that it is the lower parts of the soul which don’t get in. Also, additional parts of people’s souls have already been sifted since then [since the Ramchal’s generation] and now only the parts which haven’t yet been sifted out remain to be sifted. This is the final sorting process that we are amidst!

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 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, who are separating themselves from the true *tzibbur* that is *Klal Yisrael*, and instead joining with the side of the *Erev Rav*? **ANSWER** Yes [they are separating themselves from *Klal Yisrael* and joining with the *Erev Rav*, *chas v’shalom*]. But some are doing this [using internet and smartphones publicly without even being embarrassed] 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 In America, in the last few years the standards of living have shot up tremendously, in the pursuit of pleasure, extravagance, and money, where there is a mentality that they feel how it’s necessary to live in stunning, big houses, even living in non-Jewish developments just because they found

a nice house. Now there’s a new trend in America to vacation in Florida. At first this started amongst the wealthy, but now it has become a new standard by the working crowd that they need to be able to live a life of pleasure and comfort and with being able to vacation in Florida. The pursuit of luxury in America has skyrocketed in the last few years.... 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 If there are any Jews who don’t withstand the final test, which is to separate from the “50th level of *tumah*” that is the Internet – and because of this they are not *zocheh* to the *Geulah*, 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 their soul which chose to connect to the *Erev Rav* (which is from the “*Ruach*” point of their soul and below, because *Ruach* is the area of choosing) will also become retroactively part of the *Erev Rav* and be destroyed together with *Erev Rav*.

QUESTION 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 disap-

pear and become nothing when *Mashiach* comes? Will they just disappear when *Mashiach* comes? **ANSWER** Some of them will die in the events preceding *Mashiach* and others will disappear when *Mashiach* comes. [As explained in answer to #1, this only concerns the *Erev Rav* parts of their soul].

QUESTION In the future after the *Geulah* and in *Olam HaBa*, when the *Erev Rav* parts 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 I have *emunah* that *Mashiach* is coming, but it’s hard for me to digest something that’s so far from our logical comprehension, that suddenly *Mashiach* will come and there will be things that are mind-blowing and indescribable. How can I be at peace with this intellectually and draw this matter closer to mind, that something so awesome and great is going to happen in our world which is so closed off from the real spiritual reality (may it come quickly)? **ANSWER** Earth-shattering events have already taken place in our history, such as the event of the giving of the Torah, when the Yam Suf was split, and other such miraculous events.

QUESTION The concept of having a direct relationship with Hashem without anything else in between – will that will be the level that *Mashiach* will reveal and teach to *Klal Yisrael*? **ANSWER** Yes! Yes! *Mashiach* will teach the world how no one needs anyone, and how we only need *HaKadosh Baruch Hu*. It will be the revelation of negating all dependency on people [and to only be dependent on *HaKadosh Baruch Hu*].