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Erev Rav Talks

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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 11:1* 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 Today¹

The Beginning of the Redemption Has Arrived

In *Shemoneh Esrei* we ask Hashem, **וּקְבְּצֵנוּ נְדַחֵינוּ יחד מהרה מארבע כנפות הארץ, לארצינו**, - “*And gather our dispersed together, speedily, from the four corners of the earth, to our land.*”

Our exile includes two parts: we are subservient to the nations, and in addition, we were exiled from our land of *Eretz Yisrael*. Thus, we ask for two things – to be gathered back together again and to be allowed back into our land of *Eretz Yisrael* again.

Throughout the generations, there was always talk about the imminent redemption. Even the Sage Rabbi Akiva thought that *Moshiach* was coming. Many other hopes of a “*Moshiach*” appeared throughout our history, only to become a false hope.

However, part of the redemption has definitely begun to take place. Although *Moshiach* hasn’t come yet, many of the Jewish people have already returned to the land of Israel. We have not merited the full redemption yet, but there are still many Jews who have returned to Israel, who were previously dispersed among the other nations.

How should we view this? We will try to gain some clarity in this matter, but be aware that this is a very subtle and complicated matter that is very broad in its scope. This will give us greater understanding in what we ask for in this blessing of *Shemoneh Esrei*, that Hashem should gather our dispersed.

Our World: A Mixture of Good and Evil

In everything in the world, there is a mixture of good and evil. Thus, we must see the good – and evil – in everything. 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.²

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 good has evil in it.

¹ **Editor’s Note:** [Click here](#) » to listen to the original Hebrew classes for an in-depth discussion of the five types of “Erev Rav” (these shiurim are not able to be translated into English, due to their heavy and esoteric nature): Amalekim (Amalek), Refidim (“pursuers”), Giborim (“warriors”), Anakim (“giants”) and Nefilim (“fallen ones”). This document focuses on the effects of the “Erev Rav” on Eretz Yisrael today.

² *Sefer Ruach Chaim of Rav Chaim Volozhiner zt”l*

The fact that Jews have returned to their religious roots in Israel thus has in it good and evil as well. It is good that Jews have returned, but there is a part in it that is totally evil: the *Erev Rav*³ (“Mixed Multitude”) has returned with them. Just as we had a Greek exile, so is there is an exile headed by the *Erev Rav*.⁴

The Jews who have returned to their roots here are obviously a good thing. Is it a beginning of the redemption, or is it all work of the Satan? It was a big discussion amongst our greatest leaders. It is not a black-on-white discussion; it is not totally good thing, and it is not a totally bad thing. It definitely is a spark of the redemption, but with it has come something that is totally evil – the jurisdiction of the *Erev Rav* on us.

The *Erev Rav* are evil souls who are considered to be in “the fiftieth gate of impurity”, of whom it is written, “*They will not [be able to] repent.*”

And the heads of the *Erev Rav* are ruling us!

There is so much good and evil occurring at once that it is **incredible** how mixed it is! The fact that the *Erev Rav* is with us shows how deep our exile is – so although we have a spark of the redemption, much evil has come with it. It is a whole new depth to our exile we are in. It is not merely some evil lurking in the background; it is something that represents the depth of our entire current exile.

The depth of our exile is that even when the redemption begins to take root, a new evil has entered us, the likes of which has never been here until now throughout all our exiles.

What exactly is the depth of our current exile, which is called the exile of the *Erev Rav*? There was the Egyptian exile, the Babylonian exile, the Persian exile, and the Greek Exile. Now we are in the Roman Exile, and within that, the Arab Exile; 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 that they are very mixed with us. There was never an exile like this before! And it takes place in *Eretz Yisrael*. Yes, there is a spark of good contained here, because we are on the way to redemption. But this spark has been captured by *Erev Rav*, and therefore a new kind of exile has begun.

³ To give a brief background description on this vast subject, the “*Erev Rav*” (*Mixed Multitude*) were Egyptians who escaped with the Jewish nation from Egypt, who claimed to become members of the Jewish nation, while in reality they had no such intention. Moshe Rabbeinu accepted them into our nation in the hope that they would become earnest, but instead, these souls were constantly influencing the Jewish people to sin. They were the instigators of the Golden Calf, and they did not want to receive the Torah from Hashem. Throughout the generations, they have constantly been the “troublemakers” of the Jewish people, members within the Jewish people who look like Jews but do not possess Jewish souls.

⁴ See *Even Shelaimah: 11 (6-8)*, in which the Vilna Gaon writes of our final exile, the exile of the “*Erev Rav*”. The English translation of this is [available at the Bilvavi website](#).

The Final Test of Evil: The Alluring ‘Sweetness’ of Secular Influences

Erev Rav comes from the word *areivus* – which means “mixed.” They are mixed with us, and this causes major problems. It can also mean “sweetness”. Their terrible desires have mixed with us and make us connected with them, causing us to think that it is they who have “sweetness.” Their alluring sweetness can make us lose our sweetness for the Torah which is the power of their evil.

The Chazon Ish said that he is not afraid of the decrees that the *Erev Rav* will make on us. He was afraid, however, of the fact that observant Jews will mix with members of the *Erev Rav* and enjoy a “sweet” relationship with them and become influenced by them.

Mixing with the *Erev Rav* is not just another random problem occurring in the exile. It is the whole depth of the exile: when observant Jews mix with them enjoying a “sweet” relationship with them. This can be either because they introduce their various indulgent pleasures into the observant Jewish world, or because of the desire for money, which draws people into mixing with the *Erev Rav*.

Someone who doesn’t know what’s wrong with mixing with them has no idea what the depth of the exile is. If he mixes with *Erev Rav* and he sees nothing wrong with this, this itself shows the depth of the exile. [How can] a Jew mix with *Erev Rav* and not even realize what’s wrong with this?

It is **impossible** to mix with *Erev Rav* without being affected by them! Their mixture causes *areivus* – evil sweetness. It makes Torah observant Jews think that they have discovered “sweetness” in evil desires. That is the depth of the “*areivus*.” They are not just “mixed” with us – they make us believe that what they have is “sweet.”

We are so mixed with them that we don’t even realize how mixed we are with them and how much they 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.

The Vilna Gaon wrote⁵, as well as Rav Elchonon Wasserman⁶, that at the end of our exile, the *Erev Rav* will rule over us in *Eretz Yisrael*. Nowadays, *frum* Jews are so mixed with the *Erev Rav* and don’t even realize what’s wrong with it; people even think that Judaism advocates such a thing. That shows how our deep our exile has become.

Disconnect From Having Any Connection With ‘Erev Rav’

The Chofetz Chaim already wrote close to 100 years ago that the heads of the *Erev Rav* who control *Eretz Yisrael* will make decrees to uproot the Torah. We must realize that we are at that point in history which our Rabbis wrote about, in which the *Erev Rav* is attempting to uproot all holiness; if someone doesn’t realize this, then he is stumbling in the darkness.

⁵ <http://www.bilvavi.net/files/Vilna.Gaon.Erev.Rav.pdf>
6 in *Sefer Kovetz Maamarim*, and in the “Igras”

It's very clear what we have to do. We know that there were basically two views on how to view the Israeli government – the Satmar Rebbe *zt"l* held that we cannot bond with them at all, and that no holiness can be gained from the state. Other *Gedolim* held that we should bond with them. This second view always presented a tremendous danger to one's spiritual situation, because who knows what will happen to one who bonds with the secular!

But nowadays, it's not even a question: the influence of the *Erev Rav* has gotten so tantalizing to *frum* Jews, that according to all opinions, we cannot have any bond with them. The evil influence will be impossible to avoid if one bonds with them.

If anyone wants to merit eternal life, he must cut off himself from any contact with *Erev Rav*. It must pain us that *frum*, G-d fearing Jews are connecting themselves with members of *Erev Rav*, who rebel against Hashem with their decrees. Instead, we must connect 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 a *frum* Jew will find the way of life of the *Erev Rav* to be "sweet"...

So we ask Hashem to redeem us completely from exile. If, *chas v'shalom* we do not merit the redemption yet, we should at least merit to separate ourselves and designate ourselves to only be connected 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*.⁷ 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*. 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.

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.

⁷ 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*.” For the source on “exile of the *Erev Rav*”, refer to Gra (the Vilna Gaon) in sefer *Even Shelaimah* [available on the bilvavi.net website](http://www.bilvavi.net) ».

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 thing. 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 shenishbob*" (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 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 *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 members of “*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].⁸ There are very few true Jewish souls, in comparison to the many souls of the *Erev Rav*, who are the majority.

⁸ See the words of the Vilna Gaon in *sefer Even Shelaimah*, 11: 6-8 [translated on the www.bilvavi.net website](http://www.bilvavi.net).

(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 shows he stood at *Har Sinai* to accept the Torah [thus he is really Jewish]. 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 *hechsher*...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: A Question

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 וקרבונו, after asking Hashem to return us to the Torah, we ask Hashem, וקרבונו 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 וקרבונו 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...?

In Conclusion

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.”⁹ 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.

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

⁹ As we say in the *Hagaddah shel Pesach*.

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 exile¹⁰. Chazal list four exiles¹¹: 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 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.

¹⁰ 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*.

¹¹ *Beraishis Rabbah* 1:1

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]¹². 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 keep¹³. 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 Gaon¹⁴ discusses at length, as well as Reb Elchonon Wasserman zt"l¹⁵, that the final exile is called the exile of the "*Erev Rav*"¹⁶.

Erev Rav - Then

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

¹² According to many opinions, we are still within the Greek exile today. See the derasha of Chanukah #048 – Greek Exile Today.

¹³ 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.

¹⁴ See Even Shelaimah, chapter 11: 1-8

¹⁵ In sefer Kovetz Maamarim

¹⁶ "The Mixed Multitude." For more background on the Erev Rav, see Erev Rav_05_Amalek Exposed.

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 Amalek¹⁷.

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*.¹⁸

¹⁷ 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*”.

¹⁸ For further research, see *Tefillah* #109

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.”¹⁹ 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)!²⁰ 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!

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.”

¹⁹ *Hagaddah shel Pesach*

²⁰ 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, “*yaharog v'al yaavor*”, “be killed rather than transgress.”

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 absorb 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 Pharaoh, 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.”²¹

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 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

²¹ This is said of the “wicked son” in the *Hagaddah shel Pesach*.

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 eretz*. 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*²²

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.²³

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 state²⁴ 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.²⁵ 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

²² **Editor’s Note:** *This shiur has no bearing whatsoever on the righteous geirim/converts in Klal Yisrael, whose souls are all inherently part of the Jewish people. It is referring to a new type of ‘convert’ that has only begun to surface in the last couple of years in Israel.*

²³ *Shabbos 146a*

²⁴ *Tractate Yevamos, 109b*

²⁵ *For explanation of this concept, see the shiur of Tefillah #090 - The Purpose of Exile – Accepting Others.*

every exile, we are always surrounded by other nations. When we are in exile, we have the 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.²⁶

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.]

26 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]²⁷, 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 *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.

²⁷ <http://www.bilvavi.net/english/tefillah-085-erev-rav-today>

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 Sofer²⁸ 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.

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.²⁹ 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.

²⁹ 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 – 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 species³⁰, one of which is the *aravos*³¹. The *aravos* serve two purposes. They are part of the four species, and they are also used as “*hoshanos*”³² [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 Tov³³, 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.

³⁰ *Lulav* (palm branch), *esrog* (citron), *hadasim* (myrtle branches), and *aravos* (willow branches)

³¹ Willow branches; “*aravos*” is plural for “*aravah*”

³² On the seventh day of Sukkos, which is called *Hoshanah Rabbah*, we bang five *Aravos* on the ground after we recite *Halel* and *Hakafos*.

³³ 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 penalty³⁴. 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 Shavuot, 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. Shavuot 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*³⁵ 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 Gemara³⁶ 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, “*Ulmikeneihu, 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 “*miknehu*” (possessions), for in the future, they will become the possessions/servants of the Jewish people. The

³⁴ *Chagigah 13a*

³⁵ *One of the books of “Trei Asar” of the Prophets.*

³⁶ *Avodah Zarah 3a*

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*.³⁷ 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*³⁸, 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’amitah*, 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.

³⁷ 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.

³⁸ *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.*”³⁹ 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.

³⁹ *Tehillim 1*

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 Shavuos, 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, Shavuot, 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 The Seal of 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*⁴⁰.

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

⁴⁰ Refer to the shiur of ***Amalek In-Depth***

10 | *An In-Depth Understanding of Amalek and Erev Rav*⁴¹

Erev Rav/Amalek

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

*Chazal*⁴² 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 lists⁴³ 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’srohr*”, “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*”.

⁴¹ *This is a very very deep drasha but worth studying*

⁴² *In Tikkunei HaZohar 41b*

⁴³ *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 Erev Rav Is Compared To the Raven

The Talmud⁴⁴ 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 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 dove⁴⁵, 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*⁴⁶. 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].

⁴⁴ *Sukkah* 32a

⁴⁵ *Berachos* 57b

⁴⁶ *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...*

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. Mixing⁴⁷ 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 them⁴⁸. In other words, the *Erev Rav* **includes** all of them together, and in addition, it **mixes** them all together. This shows us that *Erev*

⁴⁷ In Hebrew, mixing is called "*taaruvos*"

⁴⁸ *Gra: Yeshayahu 11:1*

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.

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*.⁴⁹ Yaakov *Avinu* is the connecting point between

⁴⁹ **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.*

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 unified against *Klal Yisroel*, this is the evil kind of “oneness” that fights the holy “oneness” of the Jewish people.⁵⁰

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*”⁵¹ – “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.

⁵⁰ See *Tefillah #019 – Revealing Oneness*

⁵¹ *Bamidbar 21:20*

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 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*”⁵² (“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

52 *Shemos* 17:16

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 naftli*, 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*"⁵³, "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.

53 *Bamidbar* 21:20

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”⁵⁴ – 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 words⁵⁵: “*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].

⁵⁴ *Zohar In Parashas Achrei Mos*

⁵⁵ *In the prayers said before Shacharis (after the morning blessings): "אתה הוא משנברא העולם ואתה הוא לעולם"*

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 word 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.*”⁵⁶ 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 spiritual descent. Egypt is personified by the word “*reid*” – “Go down to

56 *Bamidbar* 21:20

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 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 The Sadness Caused By Amalek and 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.⁵⁷ 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,⁵⁸ 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 desires⁵⁹.

⁵⁷ *Pesachim 109a*

⁵⁸ *Rashi Shemos 17:16*

⁵⁹ *Shaarei Kedushah*.

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 doubts⁶⁰”, 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”, “*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.

⁶⁰ *Toras HaOlah.*

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, "עליץ לבי בקרבי", "*My heart rejoices in me*". The word עליץ\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 doubt⁶¹.” 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*.

⁶¹ *Toras HaOlah*

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 | 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.

Drosbos 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.

Drosbos 0103 - 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 013 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)⁶², 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.⁶³

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 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.

⁶² Refer to the pdf of "Erev Rav Talks".

⁶³ 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."

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.

Destructiveness vs. Angry Outbursts

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-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.

*Getting to Know Your Thoughts - The Detrimental Effects of Imagination*⁶⁴

Amalek, the Erev Rav and the Yetzer Hora – The Evil Power to Look Similar

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.

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

⁶⁴ From *Getting to Know Your Thoughts – 015 Detrimental Effects Of Imagination*

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 010 - What Our Matriarchs Revealed

Repairing Our Internal Evil - Through Revealing G-dliness

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

Awaiting a Smile from Others: A Need That Can Never Be Filled

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*, and if you give another Jew *he'aras panim*, you might be able to penetrate the obstacles covering his soul and perhaps he'll smile back at you; but it's not definite.

So the advice of “smiling at others so that others will smile back at you in return” is not an inner kind of solution. The yearning that our soul has for *he'aras panim* simply cannot be fulfilled by people on this world!

Tefillah 047 - Self Sacrifice In An Impure World

What We Inherited From the Holocaust

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*”.⁶⁵ 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 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.

⁶⁵ See *Tefillah #085 Erev Rav Today and Chanukah #048 -Greek Exile Today*

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.

Adapted from sefer Even Shelaimah (of the GRA), chapter 11 (6-8)

The Vilna Gaon's Words About the Erev Rav

*Footnotes are from the “biur” on the bottom of the sefer, they are likkutim**

6) 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*⁶⁶, “*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 Dovid⁶⁷ – 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. They [Erev Rav] are the undesirable parts left over from Yaakov; they represent the evil powers of *bittul Torah* (wasting 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 are arrogant because of their wealth; of them, it is stated⁶⁸ 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.⁶⁹

66 *Yirmiyahu, chap. 1.*

67 *Tikkunei Zohar HaChadash, 36a; the two Messiahs each represent the positive commandments and the negative commandments (ibid).*

68 *Sanhedrin 98a*

69 *Tikkunei HaZohar 34a*

8) There are five kinds of Erev Rav⁷⁰ that are in Yisrael: 1) Those who seek strife and slander on others; 2) Those who seek lusts, 3) Those who are “*tzevuim*” (lit. “colored ones”), fakers who are not the same on the inside as they are on the outside; 4) Those who chase after honor to make for themselves a name; 5) Those who run after money.

The worst type from all of them are those who seek strife; these are called “*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.

70 In Tikkunei HaZohar 41b, it is brought: “They [Erev Rav] are identified as “Nega Ra”, “Evil Affliction;” 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...

...”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.”