



Q&A

MEDIA

BILVAVI MISHKAN EVNEH

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INTERNET – THE ROOT OF CORONA AND ALL RECENT TRAGEDIES 3

HOW INTERNET IS EVIL & HOW TO LIVE WITHOUT IT 12

INTERNET – MODERN-DAY AMALEK 51

HOW INTERNET BLOCKS US FROM GEULAH & OLAM HABA 55

COMING OUT OF INTERNET ADDICTION 79

HELPING OTHERS GIVE UP INTERNET 81

THE REWARD IN STORE 94

SELECTIONS FROM THE RAV'S DERASHOS 97



Questions in all spheres of life in general
and the *nefesh* in particular
are welcome in the Q&A system
and will be transferred to the Rav, *Shlita*
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INTERNET – THE ROOT OF CORONA AND ALL RECENT TRAGEDIES

Internet – The Source of Corona

Q

The Rav has said that all of the *tumah* of the world has entered into the Torah world, into the world of yeshivos, in the last couple of years. What specific *tumah* is the Rav referring to?

A

The *tumah* of the media, which is the 50th level of *tumah*, called the *kelipas Sedom* [immoral, deviant lifestyles] and all that it's included in this.

Q

The Rav's view is that media/internet use is never kosher, because it is the *avi avos hatumah*, the “grandfather of impurity”. Can the Rav please explain how exactly we can see that? How do we see that the *tumah* of the Internet has a bad influence on all those who use it? And would the same apply even when using Internet for purposes of Torah, or for work purposes, without looking at inappropriate and not kosher material? I believe that clarification and explaining is needed in this matter. Much thanks to the Rav for illuminating our eyes through the intense darkness of our generation...

A

It is impossible to use Internet and avoid inappropriate, non-kosher material! The influence of the Internet is recognizable on its user, by causing people to cool off their feelings of *kedushah* [they become more callous and less sensitive to matters that should bother them as Torah observant

Jews]. For example, using Internet easily allows one to read up on unnecessary topics, and which contain incorrect *hashkafos*: values and viewpoints that are not aligned with Torah, whether these views concern *halachah* or fundamentals of Torah Jewry. It also cools off the sensitivity and holiness that one should have about guarding their eyes, through viewing indecent material. And it also includes too much of a connection to the world and to everything that's going on in the world (i.e. news and events, etc), whether it's news of events about Eretz Yisrael or outside Eretz Yisrael. And it enables one to read up and follow what's happening in the 'Jewish world' which is not a part of the "Torah world". And gradually, by viewing and reading up on all of this material, a person's soul becomes more opened - both in how he thinks and in how he feels - to the outside world, the "world at large".

That is all true on the external level. But there is also an inner level to Internet connection, and that is, that using the Internet attaches the depths of one's soul to the 50th level of *tumah*, on varying levels - with some it is less and with others it is a lot – and, unbeknownst to the person using the Internet, the person using it is nursing forth all of his vitality from this zone of the deepest level of *tumah* that is Internet, on a subconscious and unconscious level. And that is the inner destruction that happens to a person, from using Internet.

Q

According to the Rav's words that the coronavirus is an outcome of the *tumah* of the "50th gate of defilement" (*shaar HaNun d'tumah*) which is personified by Internet and media use, why did the virus harm people who don't have Internet/smartphones? Why did the virus affect even *tzaddikim* who have nothing to do with internet?

A

The external reason for this is because there is a rule that "Once the Destroyer [the Angel of Death] is given permission to destroy, it does not differentiate between good and evil."

However, there is also a more fundamental answer as to why this disease is killing even *tzaddikim*. The word "corona" is from the Hebrew word *kerinah*, "radiation". This is because the root of the corona disease is from the radiation [Wi-Fi] that comes from the antennae [of cellphone or Wi-Fi towers] that transport the virus all over the place. That is the inner root to this epidemic. This *kerinah*-radiation [Wi-Fi] is not only found by those who own internet-capability devices, because it is found in every obscure place in the central zones of cities. Even more so, its rays [Wi-Fi] can come through any wall of any house, entering into any home, even in a home that does not have any internet-capability devices.

That is why our generation is called a "generation entirely guilty" [*Talmud Bavli Sanhedrin 98a*]. It is because everyone is absorbed within this spiritually harmful radiation [Wi-Fi], including even

one those who don't use it [internet or Wi-Fi] at all. There is no natural way for us to separate from it at all. It is rather upon us to distance ourselves from it as much as we are able to.

We need to understand that our very existence as we live in this generation is infected by the harmful spiritual effects that this invisible radiation [Wi-Fi] has on us, because we are all living within the invisible field of this *tumah* that fills every space. Therefore, there is no one who can be saved from it totally, and therefore it is able to harm anyone, whether they are tzaddikim or whether they are not tzaddikim. That is why the souls of tzaddikim are broken and gasping from this *tumah*. Sometimes this radiation [of Wi-Fi] harms tzaddikim precisely because the tzaddikim are more sensitive from it [due to their heightened spiritual state]. For example, if a garment is a very white (pure) color, we can easily notice the slightest stain on it. And the same is true vice versa [the darker a garment is, the less we can see a stain on it].¹

... Just as when we left Egypt, we remained with the idol that was called *Baal Tzefon*, the root of all idols, so too are we remaining now with the very innermost level of *tumah*, the very core of the *shaar hanun d'tumah* (the 50th level of defilement), which is otherwise known as the media, the internet. Now people are secluded in their homes but their entire connection to the world is still being enabled through the media and the internet, which is the *shaar hanun d'tumah*, the internet. It is the most difficult *kelipah* which has not yet been shattered. The innermost gate of this *shaar hanun d'tumah*, the *keter d'keter* on the side of evil, is dominant now without any restraint.

Q

In *chutz l'aretz* many people were already *niftar*, *Rachmana Litzlan*, from the coronavirus. What should we do as a *zechus* for others?

A

HaKadosh Baruch Hu is awakening those who live in *chutz l'aretz* in particular, because of the gross pursuit of materialism there, and because of all the mingling with secular culture that's very prevalent there, which affects them both on an external level as well as on an internal level. And therefore, people need to separate as much as they can from the materialistic lifestyle and way of thinking of secular society in *chutz l'aretz*, and they need to build for themselves only a life of *kedushah*...

¹ Editor's Note: The analogy is that the tzaddikim are pure and therefore at times they can be more easily harmed by the "stain" caused by *tumah* in our world, whereas people who are not tzaddikim are, at times, not harmed by the "stain" of *tumah* in this world, since they already stained from their sins and therefore they are less affected by the stain caused by the *tumah* on this world].

In Eretz Yisrael as well, Hashem is calling out to the *frum* Torah communities, that it is time for them to cut themselves off from being involved with secular society in Israel, unlike the last couple of years where so many *frum* people have gone to learn in secular academies, workplaces that are inappropriate with a Jew's values, and with being involved in working for "kosher" media, which is highly inappropriate for a Jew. It is upon every person to see now that Hashem is demanding a change. The direction of the last couple of years, where Torah observant Jews have become more and more connected to the secular society and culture of the world, needs to be changed. We need to separate from all of it. Until now, people had the claim that they needed to do so for the purposes of earning a livelihood. What has Hashem done now? He has erased and destroyed the source of livelihood for most people now, so that people can reflect and recognize the falsity of this claim....

...Hashem is demanding a disconnection from everything. Each individual on a personal level needs to reflect now on what he had been connected with until now and what Hashem has taken away from him, and realize what Hashem wants from him, and what he needs to cut off from.

But the root of the *tumah* in the world still has not been severed yet, and unfortunately, it has only gotten stronger. It is the accursed media, that *avi avos hatumah* (the "grandfather of impurity"), and it is the source of all of the diseases on this world, and it is especially the root of the coronavirus. The media is at the inner root of this coronavirus epidemic.

Every person needs to disconnect from the media, because it is the final test which we have entered into in this current period, for it seems to people that all their needs are met by being connected to Internet. Instead of deciding to disconnect from it, though, people are only becoming further connected with it. "*Before becoming broken, there is pride.*" May Hashem illuminate His complete light and erase all evil, including this current epidemic, and may His light fill all the dimensions of Creation.

Q

What about a person who thinks a lot about *Ain Od Milvado*, but he also has Internet or a smartphone with Internet connection? Can a person still get healed from corona by thinking of *Ain Od Milvado* even if has any connection to internet, since he is still using the powerful spiritual illumination of "*Ain Od Milvado*" which, as it is known, can fix any damage? Can we say "There is no place empty from Hashem" and that "There is nothing else besides for Hashem, even in the emptiest void of the world", which would mean that even if a person remains connected with internet and media, the "50th gate of defilement", in the end of the day he is still accessing the light of Hashem, by thinking about *Ain Od Milvado*?

A

No [thinking *Ain Od Milvado* won't help a person who possesses any sort of internet connection], because he cannot completely connect to the reality of *Ain Od Milvado* when he is being blocked by a “barrier” [the fact that he has internet or a smartphone]. For him, thinking about *Ain Od Milvado* will just be superficial and external.

Q

Should we encourage the *Roshei Yeshivos* who were *moser nefesh* to open up their yeshivos as usual and without fear of the government, since enough time has passed to prove their move successful and that Torah learning has indeed protected the yeshivos from physical harm?

A

Each situation needs to be weighed separately, about what the parameters of the *halachah* are. After knowing what the *halachic* parameters are, one can then act with *chassidus* (piety) and consider all the factors and see what the appropriate should be, as the *Mesillas Yesharim* teaches with regards to *mishkal hachassidus*. The *halachic* authorities discuss when and where we apply the rule of “Torah protects and saves” from danger. If one does decide to act on the level of *chassidus*, it needs to come from the heart, and it should not be a purely intellectual decision alone. And, even when deciding to open a yeshiva, it must be done within the proper framework of *kedushah* (holiness) and it should not be done with comprises that make *tumah* (media and internet use) available to the yeshiva students, and if this condition is not met, it is clear that the yeshiva will not be protected by their Torah learning. Also, in most cases, the reopening of a *yeshiva* doesn't depend on the any view – it depends on the actual spiritual level of the students. Our entire focus when it comes to this pandemic should not be about the government or the health ministry – instead, our focus needs to be on HaKadosh Baruch and on doing His will, on what He wants from us.

Fighting Our War Against The Internet

Q

Are we supposed to be voting in the Israeli elections now?

A

“*Darkness covers the earth*”, and therefore it is impossible for me to get involved in all of the minute details of this world of falsity. I will say here a general perspective about the topic. Until the last couple of years, the main evils that we faced were on the “outside”: There were laws made about

drafting, laws about conversion, allowing work on Shabbos, issues with non-slaughtered animals, immodesty, and many other issues, *Rachmana Litzlan*. But in the last decade especially, the main evil we are facing is not on the outside, but on the inside – it has entered into the Torah observant world. It is the root of all impurity in the world, and it has penetrated into the Torah world through the use of media. Therefore, the direction of the wars we are fighting now have changed. Most of the wars that were being fought until now were against “outside” factors, more or less, and now that has all been overturned. Now, the wars are mainly against the evil that has entered into our inner circle. It is that evil which is destroying the entire world, and especially the Torah observant world. This is where we need to be spending most of our energy, at fighting the war that has penetrated into our inner circle of the Torah observant world. We need to gain a new perspective, of what the main wars were until now, and what the main wars now are.

Q

What did the Rav mean in a recent response that we need to gain a new perspective on what the “main war” is now which we need to be fighting?

A

In the past, we were mainly fighting outside influences that were coming into the Jewish people, which were either being forced on us, such as various laws of the government that were decrees against religious Jewry, and the issue of the “Erev Rav” (the Israeli government) mixing themselves in to the world of religious Jewry, who were trying to convince the religious world into certain things for their own self-gain, so that they [the government] would gain more money, prestige, and power – all as a means of influencing their views and lifestyle into the religious Torah world. The leaders of our generation have been fighting these influences for several decades already. But from about the year 5760 (2000) and onward, and especially in the last decade, basically all of the *tumah* (the terrible culture of our world today) has entered from the outside into our own inner circles. (This is a resemblance of how before the sin of Adam, evil only existed outside of man, and after the sin, the evil entered within man, as the *Nefesh HaChaim* explains). The *tumah* that entered the Torah world today is mainly through the media in all of its many different forms. And now, the evil of the 50th level *within* the 50th level of *tumah* has, *Rachmana Litzlan*, entered within our own inner circles, into the world of Torah observant Jewry, and even worse, it has entered into the Torah world itself [the *bnei Torah* and the most religious].

And from this point onward, the war that we face with those who throw away the Torah is no longer our main war that we need to fight today – though it certainly is raging strongly. Our main problems today are no longer with how to deal with neighbors or friends who aren’t being so stringent on keeping every last minute detail of *halachah*, who may be a harmful influence on our children, and the like. Rather, the large part of the war we need to be fighting today is within our

own homes. Couples are split between their values: One of the spouses is connected with media/internet or at least wants to be connected to it, or parents want media/internet in their lives and their children don't want it, and vice versa. Or, some of the children want to be connected with media/internet while the other siblings are holding strong not to. This is the realization of the verse, "*The enemies of a man are those in his household*".

In many cases, each person as an individual needs to develop his or her own inner world to live in, within his or her very own house, so as not to be influenced by the rest of the household. This is the secret of the "*Yechidah*" level of the soul, for the *Yechidah* level of the soul is found in one's house. And therefore, today the main war we are fighting today is found in our own homes.

The Tragedy In Meron 5681

Q

What was the implication of the tragedy in Meiron on Lag B'Omer, with regards to the *tikkun* that we need - what is it that we especially need to fix? Also, what is the connection between this tragedy and the Galus and the Geulah, both on a collective level as well as on a personal and inner level?

A

Everything in Creation has a *chitzoniyus* (outer level) and a *pnimiyus* (inner level) to it. It is the same when it comes to this matter as well.

...The *Keser* is the bridging point between the human beings and Hashem, and the *Keser* point connects together the created beings with Hashem, as it were. And now that the *ohr*, the revelations, in the End of Days are shining strongly – and it “shines” especially stronger on the *yahrtzeit* of Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai – there has been an ascent on this world in which there are souls who rose to the ideal level of the human being, called “*adam*”, which these 45 *neshamos* rose to the level of. They rose together with Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai, and they were *zocheh* to enter into the *mesivta d'Rashbi*, in the higher world. And it was a realization of *בקרובי אקדש*, “*With My close ones, I am sanctified*”, such as what took place at the inauguration of Mishkan [with the deaths of Nadav and Avihu]. And here as well, there has been a day of special ascent for the soul of Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai, an ascent to the level of *adam*, the ideal level of man. These 45 *neshamos* were very, very worthy of ascending together with Rabbi Shimon Bar Yochai, and they are praiseworthy, and praiseworthy is their portion.

That is all with regards to the *pnimiyus*, to the inner level of this event. But in the *chitzoniyus*, in the outer level to this event, there was the 50th level of *tumah*, which counters the 50th level of *kedushah* that takes a person above the normal level of the human being to a loftier level of existence. Whereas the highest levels of *kedushah* bring a person above the normal human level, the lowest levels of *tumah* are able to bring a person beneath the normal human level, below the level of the *adam*, and that is where the world has fallen into today. And, ***Rachmana Litzlan***, even in a ***makom kadosh***, a holy place such as Meiron, every single day there are impure devices of the 50th level of *tumah* that enter there, and even on the holy day of Lag B'Omer, in a place where *chassidus* is guarded so carefully, it is now mostly filled with these impure devices, which were used to take pictures of the tragedy, etc. So on one hand, the great exalted light of the 50th level of *kedushah* shines, but at the same time, its opposite, which is the 50th level of *tumah*, comes to counter it, *Rachmana Litzlan*. And now at the burial place of Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai, on one hand Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai ascends to his high place above [on Lag B'Omer, where every year Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai's soul becomes lifted again], but at the same time, on the world down below, the "heads of the *Erev Rav*" take control of this place, and this is an outcome of the 50th level of *tumah* that is rampant in our world today.

Q

There is now a big awakening in the world of feeling like "Mashiach is coming". How can we practically do *teshuvah* before the *Geulah*, amidst our day-to-day life? How can we make all the necessary preparations for Mashiach and to fix whatever is upon us to fix?

A

Separate as much as you can from the 50th level of *tumah* [the internet], and connect as much as you can to the 50th level of *kedushah*, which is called *peshitus* and *temimus*, through simple *emunah*, with a strong connection to HaKadosh Baruch Hu, and to become immersed in the depths of learning Torah, with a strong, intrinsic, deep and simple inner connection to yourself.

Q

What should we say to people who argue, "Our job now is not to separate from technology and smartphones, that's not the main message that Hashem is sending us now, and instead of fighting the Internet and the use of smartphones, we need to learn how to use it wisely and in the most kosher way possible, especially because we can't change the generation and it's already a part of most people's lives. Give up the fight against frum people using the Internet. It just makes people feel guilt and unnecessary shame when they hear such things, and speaking about this does nothing."

A

Our words [about how we need to keep far away from the Internet] can only help *yechidim*, individuals. It is not within our power to change the *tzibbur* (the general majority of the frum communities). It is Hashem Who is shaking up the *tzibbur* during these times, especially in Eretz Yisrael, and most recently with the tragedy that took place on Erev Shavuos. Hashem, in His compassion, wants the *tzibbur* to change their way of living.

Q

When people don't want to hear that they need to give up their Internet and smartphone in order to do Hashem's will in these times where we are right before Mashiach, and they have all kinds of counterarguments that this is not the main thing Hashem wants from us right now, does this come from a lack of willingness to accept *emes* (truth), or is it because they can't put their logic over their emotions and they are just following their emotions, or does it come from the "spark of Erev Rav" that can be present in the soul (or, even worse, can it mean that the person who refuses to hear anything about giving up Internet may have an actual "Erev Rav" soul, *chas v'shalom*)?

A

Our words about the severity of Internet use are based on the Gemara that says that if the generation isn't worthy of Mashiach because they are entirely guilty of sins, they need to be awakened to *teshuvah* so that the *Geulah* can come. That particular teaching of Chazal is the very depth of the *Galus* which we are found in right now. **How can we make any compromises to use the Internet, which is something that goes against the entire Torah and all the foundations of Yiddishkeit???** It is a cold and spiritually insensitive attitude, and that coldness is the root of all tragedies today, and the results of it are the actual tragedies that have been happening, one after the other, like labor pains that quickly follow each other as the birth draws nearer. **The labor pains are coming quicker now and they are more difficult and sharper in their pain – and that is what we are found in now.**

HOW INTERNET IS EVIL & HOW TO LIVE WITHOUT IT

Is The Internet Evil?

Q

Is Internet an example of something which can be used for either good or evil depending on what your intentions are in using it (*kelipat noga*), or is Internet always *tamei* (is it in the category of three impure *kelipot* which cannot ever be used)?

A

It is the actual “50th gate of defilement”, the *shaar HaNun d'tumah*, where every possible element is mixed together. It is to be understood as the “head” of the *Erev Rav* (the Mixed Multitude), which is from the word *taaruvos* (mixture).

Can Internet Ever Be Used In A Kosher Way?

Q

1) What I have understood from the Rav is that the root of staying away from the Internet and the media is because of the problem of becoming mixed with it, and that it is like mixing with the influences of the “*Erev Rav*.” A few things still aren’t clear to me though. I once heard that the root of the evil of the internet is because it is the destruction of having boundaries, which in turn destroys the person, because everything in Creation, including man, must have its boundaries in order to survive. If that is true, is that where the Rav is coming from as well? Or does the Rav have a different reason why we must keep away from Internet?

A

1) Internet is the concept of *echad* (oneness) in the side of evil. Evil begins with oneness (unity) and it ends with separation. The Creator is One, and the creations as well are given the power to become none. A person, in his inner essence, is one, and in his outer layer, he subdivides into many parts. This tool (the internet) has destroyed the outer structure of man, which includes the senses, of sight, hearing, etc. It has penetrated into the structure of man [when man uses Internet], where there is an illumination of the *kav* (the ‘straight line’), which connects together the entire Creation.

Q

2) It seems from the Rav’s words that a person shouldn’t even use the good parts of the Internet, because it’s like becoming attached to the *Erev Rav*. Why isn’t using the “good parts” of the Internet [i.e. Torah websites] considered liked sorting out the good from the *Erev Rav*?

A

Chazal teach that Moshe Rabbeinu attempted to sort out the *Erev Rav*, but he did not succeed. So it is not within our power to sort out the *Erev Rav* now. Anyone who tries to will only become mixed and connected with the forces of evil of *Erev Rav*, because the *Erev Rav* has the power to mix people into its evil and to fall into it.

Q

3) How can we internalize in our heart and in our emotions that the Internet is not a good thing? If we simply just trust our leaders that we need to keep away from even the good parts of the Internet, it’s very hard to squelch our desire to check out the good parts that are on the Internet. It would be like forcing ourselves to go against the yetzer hora, but it wouldn’t achieve internal harmony.

A

There are good parts found on the Internet, but the problem is that the Internet is good and evil mixed into each other, in a way that cannot be sorted out.

Q

4) As I have understood from the Rav, especially from the derasha about corona, the root of the desire for Internet and media touches upon the innermost root of all our desires. What exactly is the desire to use the Internet, and how do we transform this desire into holiness?

A

The answer to this question is the same as the answer to the first question: It is because there is a power of the *kav* which connects together all of Creation, which is above the design of man.

Q

5) It is difficult for me to ask this question, but it's Torah and I need to know it. According to the Rav that learning Torah from the Internet is "Torah of the Erev Rav", does that mean, *chas v'shalom*, that all of the Torah learned from the Bilvavi website also becomes "Torah of the Erev Rav"?

A

Yes!!! [All Torah learned through any Torah website becomes "Torah of the *Erev Rav*"]. Torah websites "purify the contaminated, and contaminate the pure", in general, and specifically those who use them. Therefore, it is not proper to use these websites at all.

The purpose of the establishment of the Bilvavi website was for the purpose of *kiruv*, and it was not *chas v'shalom* made to draw observant people further away. Therefore, every observant person without exception should separate [from Internet and even from Torah websites, including the Bilvavi website]. For those who are not observant, the website can draw them closer to Yiddishkeit, but at the same time it actually distances them, because the Internet is entirely a mixture of good and evil, whether for those who are being harmed by it or for those who are coming closer to Yiddishkeit because of it.

What About Torah Websites, E-mail & Video Shiurim?

Q

This question is in the category of "It is Torah, and I need to learn it." According to what the Rav said recently in the *derasha* it would seem that even e-mail should be problematic. The Rav seemed to say that there's no difference [between internet usage and e-mail], and if there is indeed room to differentiate between the two, then it should seem that there's a place to allow Torah websites! Also, how does it make sense that the internet is hopelessly *tamei* and that it cannot be used for anything good? Isn't everything ultimately up to our *bechirah* (choice) to use for either good or bad? (I am of course aware of all the terrible dangers that the Internet causes and I am personally familiar with that, not only because of the harmful content on it but also because it destroys our entire lifestyle, as the Rav described in the *derasha*.)

I will also mention that I heard there was a certain rebbi who had over 100 *talmidim* and he had to go to *chutz l'aretz* for a surgery, and he asked a certain Rav in Eretz Yisrael who is a very holy and angelic person, who has no connection at all to Internet, if he is allowed to give a live video shiur over the internet to his talmidim. This Rav answered that “It is for such a thing that the Internet was created.” However, it seems from the *derasha* of the Rav that the Rav does not agree with the above opinion at all. So I am seeking the Rav’s view on this matter.

A

- 1) All websites in general should never be used at all, without exception. Even for Torah!
- 2) These sites were never designed in the first place for *shomrei Torah u'mitzvos* (Torah observant Jews). Clearly, anyone with *yiras Hashem* (fear of G-d) in his heart should not get close to any Torah website, at all. He will not be losing out on any Torah or *avodas Hashem* if he doesn't visit these sites, because it is not possible to derive spiritual benefit from something that is *tamei*, especially something that is *avi avos tumah*, the “grandfather” of *tumah*. A person is becoming more *tamei* than *tahor* when he goes onto these sites. It is in the category of something that “Purifies the contaminated, and contaminates the pure.” It is to my great pain that many Rabbonim permit the use of internet, even when it is being done with a safeguard, because this has caused even the *shomrei Torah u'mitzvos* (those who are strictly observant of Torah and mitzvos) to use it, and especially in *chutz l'aretz* there is a very carefree attitude towards internet use. But it is all contrary to Hashem’s will, and therefore I do not agree to it. It is simple and clear. E-mail is only for the purpose of sending mail to another person, and therefore, *b'dieved*, a person may use it.
- 3) This tool [internet] is not intrinsically *tamei* at its core, because at its inner core, it is the power of *echad*, oneness, the power to unify everything together [and it is just that it is being used for evil purposes]. The outer, external use of the power of *echad/oneness*” has fallen into the hands of the *Sitra Achra* (the Other Side) via this tool [Internet].

As for the video *shiurim*, as long a person does not view it on the Internet, he can use it sensibly, since the level of the generation today has a need for such things.

The Evil of The Internet

Q

- 1) Is the Internet the “*Olam HaTohu*” (the spiritual netherworld) on this world?

A

Yes.

Q

2) Can it be said that Torah websites, especially Torah websites which contain articles about *pnimiyus haTorah*, are bringing the light of *Elokus* (G-dliness), the *ohr EinSof* (G-d's infinite light), into the lowest and darkest realm, the *tumah* of the Internet? Can we say that such websites are bringing closer the purpose of Creation, which is to reveal *Elokus*, precisely in the lowest realm, where there is darkness and *tumah*? Is a Torah website like a “place of refuge above Gehinnom” (as it was said of the sons of Korach), where one can be saved from the *Gehinnom* of the Internet?

A

No. Although *Elokus* (G-dliness) can be revealed even in the lowliest places, this does not make Internet is not a “place of refuge within Gehinnom”, because the Internet is an obscene zone which is open to every possible harmful influence [with no way to sift out the good parts from the bad parts].

What's So Bad About The Internet?

Q

Is Internet and all the different kinds of technology today something that's intrinsically evil, or not? On one hand it has everything bad possible on it, but on the other hand if we could minus all of the dangers of Internet use, the Internet is very helpful for people in their *avodas Hashem* as well as taking care of daily conveniences. For example, the Otzar HaChochmah library program doesn't need to run through Internet and it only requires a computer, and a person doesn't feel the difference between using the Internet version of Otzar HaChochmah with the non-Internet version. Also, even if a person doesn't use the Internet, he still benefits from it in his *avodas Hashem*, by default. For example, sefarim that are printed today are all making use of the Internet to get them printed and distributed. If the Internet is intrinsically evil, then how could anything good come out of it? No one finds anything wrong with these kinds of “benefits” from the Internet. And a lot of the money that gets donated to Torah institutions is through Internet. I am asking all

of this because it would be easier for me to keep away from the Internet (even using permissible websites or for mitzvah-related purposes) if I would better understand why the Internet is evil. I want to understand the root of why we need to distance ourselves so much from the Internet, i.e. if distancing ourselves from Internet is a “fence” enacted by Rabbonim to prevent us from accessing evil, or if there’s some other reason not to use it, or if it’s something more intrinsic. A great *Yasher Koach* to the Rav and for all of the other responses which has helped me and others in our *avodas Hashem*.

A

In our times, where we are very near the End of Days, the power of “oneness” is revealed. On the side of holiness, it is the spiritual light of “Hashem is One and His name is One”, and we hope it will soon be revealed completely. Corresponding to this power is an equal force in the side of impurity, which is intensifying, and it is the power of “media”, which connects the entire world and everything in it, together. It connects holiness and impurity together, leaving nothing out. It is the most dramatic example yet of the force of “*Erev Rav*”, the mixture of every kind of influence in the world, and there is no bigger “*kelipah*” (impure shell) of “*Erev Rav*” than this. And therefore, we need to distance ourselves from it as far as possible.

Help In Disconnecting From Internet & Media

Q

I have seen the Rav’s words about the period which we are in now and I am very shaken. I work for a media outlet. There are many frum people who work here. The atmosphere here is Torah-dig and we have *minyanim* here, and that is why I loved my job. Ever since I heard the Rav’s drasha about disconnecting from the media, I feel torn. I know that my job entails for me to be fully immersed in the media. I very much want to quit my job, but I am the sole supporter of my family. I have tried for many years to increase my bitachon so I can leave my job one day, but I don’t think my wife will be able to handle that. Can the Rav guide me on what I should practically do about this? Also, with regards to Internet, unfortunately I have gotten used to running everything in my life through the Internet. My entire communication with the world is through Internet. I use it for my job, my banks, for business, and even for learning Torah and also for communicating with family. Especially now, people are having family get-togethers through the Internet [i.e. Skype]. I also use it to listen to *shiurim*. I think this is all a constructive use of the Internet, but now I am starting to doubt this, because it seems from the Rav’s *derasha* that there is no constructive way to

use the Internet. Can the Rav guide me practically on how I can disconnect from Internet when everyone else around me is connected to it?

A

The truth is clear, and there are no doubts about it. This is a process which you need to go through, within yourself, so that you can reach the true decision about that which you already know. This is not a “*psak*” (ruling) for you - it needs to come from your own *bechirah*, your free will, to choose to do the will of Hashem.

During the time it takes for you until you reach that point, at least minimize your use of Internet, [gradually] detaching from it step after step.

Your connection to this place [the internet] is blocking your G-dly soul. As long as you are connected to it, there is no way for me to cause the light of Hashem to shine within you, because it [the internet] is creating a thick barrier that darkens your *neshamah*.

Laptops & E-Mail Use

Q

May a computer be brought into the house if it is disconnected from Internet capability? Or is there reason to suspect that someone in the house will bring in something inappropriate and view it on the computer, or because a person will start to view permissible things and fall into the habit of viewing inappropriate material?

A

Yes, certainly a computer contains the dangers you mentioned.

E-Mail Usage

Q

The Rav said that e-mail is permitted *b'dieved*. What does this include? Which necessities are included in this? Is this referring only to using it for *mitzvah*-related needs or even for neutral uses?

A

The following is the **order of preference** that one should use when trying to communicate either if one needs it for Torah learning, or for necessities, or for office-related matters:

(1) Fax.

(2) [If you can't fax], use e-mail outside of the house, in a place with a set-up where the e-mail service only allows text and nothing but mail which is kosher.

(3) [If the above is not possible], then you can get use get filtered e-mail in the home, with a set-up where the e-mail service only allows text and nothing but mail which is kosher.

And if you are able to do so, remove any media viewing capability from the computer [i.e. DVDs or videos], in spite of the fact that your computer is still able to receive pictures.

Q

Currently I don't have a computer in my house but my daughters want me to have a computer in the house, without internet, for e-mail purposes only. Is there a problem with this?

A

There is a problem with e-mail because a person can still receive inappropriate material in his e-mails, a very commonplace occurrence nowadays, due to social media and other factors. Just having a laptop in the house poses a danger of having films and videos in the home, which opens up a person further into the world out there. Therefore, this needs to be thought about very carefully, and each case is different. How much of a need is there to have it in the house? And what are the particular needs and the particular level that the family is on? These areas are some of the factors which need to be thought about very well, before bringing a computer [even without internet] into the home.

Q

Is it a problem to use a laptop in the *beis midrash* to type *divrei Torah* on it? Is it a lack of *kedushas beis hakneses*? Also, just seeing a laptop can cause others to have a desire for technology, especially children.

A

There are things which are desirable (*ratzuy*) to do and things which are commonly done (*matzuy*). Unfortunately, a computer in a *beis midrash* is commonplace. In a *beis midrash* or shul

where it is common for people to use a laptop, an individual may be lenient with himself to use a laptop there to type *divrei Torah* if he gains in his *ruchniyus* from it [i.e. he uses it for learning or from typing *divrei Torah*]. However, this only concerns an individual who wishes to do so, but if this question were to be asked by a community [and hence if this would be a question about how the community in general should act regarding this], then the answer would be different.

Why Parnassah Is Not A Heter For Internet Use

Q

The Rav has said that the Internet is the “50th level of *tumah*.” What should a person do if he needs the Internet for work purposes? Especially now that most of work is being done from home and it requires Internet. Is the Rav saying that people need to disconnect from the Internet even if they need it for work now? And if they do need to, what can they do about this?

A

This tool [the internet] has destroyed the generation. It has burned up many *neshamos* of *Klal Yisrael* which have all gone lost because of it. You should run from it as you would from a fire, and even more.

Q

From a response of the Rav it seemed that the Rav is of the view that internet may not be used for *parnassah* purposes, even if it's filtered. Is that really the Rav's view? Is there a difference between the office and the home? Is there a difference between men and women when it comes to this?

A

As a general ruling, really all media and internet should have become forbidden to the entire *Klal Yisrael*, and the fact that it was not made forbidden is what destroyed the generation. Because having the internet “for *parnassah* purposes” is a not a *heter* (a permission) to uproot the generation from the foundation, from the very root. And now it is not possible for us to fix this damage.

All internet use should have been made forbidden even for women in the workplace, because the spiritual state of the generation should never be handed over to any individual to do as he or she thinks. Each time the internet is used, one becomes more exposed to the world. This is besides the issue of the very connection to internet, which is the filthiest level of *tumah* (defilement), the “grandfather” of *tumah*.

Even more so, the addiction to the Internet is in the category of the “50th gate of defilement”, because internet addiction becomes attached to the person in the same way that heresy does [and when a person becomes heretical, the heresy is so attached to him that it does not separate from him except through death].

That is the entire concept behind the internet, which is the 50th gate of *tumah* (defilement), a kind of negative attachment that goes beyond logic and reasoning. Besides for the terrible content that is found on the internet, which is from the “50th gate of *tumah*”, one’s very connection to the Internet, and one’s addiction to Internet, ensures that a person will become connected and attached to the “50th gate of *tumah*.” There was never such an addiction like this throughout all of history. For this addiction is a form of negative attachment that comes from the innermost level of the 50th gate of *tumah* [the most depraved, immoral level possible].

If we start discussing the details of this subject [what’s okay with media use and what’s not okay with it], we are trying to make a *cheshbon* (calculation) against something that goes beyond the grasp of all our calculations [we simply cannot deal with issue from a logical viewpoint]. Therefore, as a general ruling, we need to become disconnected from all of it [from all internet and media use].

But, *Rachmana Litzlan* (may G-d have compassion), the whole of *Klal Yisrael* has already fallen. And therefore, every individual must run away from it [from internet and media use] “as if he would run from a fire”, to quote the *Mesillas Yescharim*, and he should run from it even further than he would from a fire.

Our eyes can see, and we can become heartbroken, that people are now working through the internet, and it is basically impossible for a person to be completely saved from this test. The generation today is [as the Gemara predicted regarding the generation preceding Mashiach’s arrival, if they are not meritorious enough], a “generation entirely guilty” [*Talmud Bavli Sanhedrin 98a*], because the entire generation is attached to this tool [the internet].

We see that even when a person tries to run away from using the internet, he feels that he is forced to use the internet for *parnassah* reasons, so of course he ends up finding a *heter* from a *rav* to use it. And that is how the entire generation has become destroyed.

Internet At Work

Q

What is the most kosher way to have Internet at the workplace? What if the employers only have e-mail and if they need to use Internet they can go into a designated room to use it (which anyone can walk into)? What is considered to be the *mehadrin* level (the kosher use) and the *mehadrin min hamehadrin* level (the most kosher use) when it comes to how to safeguard Internet use?

A

To say that it's *mutar* (permitted), I am not able to say. Since the Internet is always dangerous for a person, it is certainly better for a person to do even more than what you describe. The entire concept of *mehadrin* and *mehadrin min hamehadrin* can never be applied to this device, the Internet, because it is never kosher!

What About "Kosher Waze"?

Q

I understand that there are serious problems with all of the different kinds of smartphones and i-phones that exist. I have also seen the Rav's words that all of these devices are the revelation of the "50th Gate of Impurity" in the world. My question is that I travel a lot by car, and I need to use "Waze" to help me. There is a kind of Waze device that cannot get any apps, which only has Waze on it. But it does use cellphone connection and it can work through a Sim card. It works in the same way that a smartphone does, but it only has a Waze app. If you send it to a different device it won't work without internet connection. Today there are also new cars that have a built-in internet connection to enable Waze. Can this Waze-only device be used when driving?

A

In order to answer this question, I would need to know very clearly how it works. There are Waze-only devices which are able to receive advertisements [and that would be a problem to use].

If we consider this on a deeper level, really any device that works through internet connection is not proper to use. But because we are so limited in our power to due to the exile we are in, if there is no internet capability to this device other than what you mentioned, then **it is not an issue for most people to use such a device.** However, it will be an issue for those who are more spiritually sensitive, who want to completely sever themselves disconnection from anything that works through internet connection. *From the Rav's sefer תשע"ח - תשע"ט שאל ליבי שו"ת תשע"ח

What About Filtered Internet?

Q

If a person has filtered Internet and he can't see anything bad on it, why is it a problem to view Torah websites? And how is viewing Torah websites any different from the Bilvavi website which people learn Torah from? And what about people who get *chizuk* from Torah websites? And people who need Internet for work? And is it okay to have a computer without Internet? And what about Hidabroot which was made to strengthen people?

A

There is no filter today for the internet which can completely filter out all *tumah*. None of the filters are perfect – enough said. The internet itself is *avi avos hatumah*, the root of all impurity.

A computer itself contains a danger, but it is not intrinsically *tamei*. The Bilvavi website is not meant to be used by Torah observant people. People who are already observant of Torah should not make any use of the site at all. Those who established the site only did so for the purpose of *kiruv rechokim*. Using internet for work purposes is the root that led to the spiritual destruction of this generation. It is a *heter* which has caused untold harm. Anyone who is Torah observant should not go onto any website, Torah websites included.

Q

What would be wrong with internet if it's filtered? Also, everything ultimately contains a mix of good and bad. For example even when a person learns Torah it can be bad for him, because the Gemara says that Torah learning can be like deadly poison to a person when he learns with the wrong intentions.... so why should Internet be different from this?

A

Because the Internet is the “50th level of *tumah*”, the lowest level possible, which is a mix of good and bad that can’t be sorted out by any human being. The only way it will be sorted out is through the powerful spiritual light of the Mashiach. Therefore, anyone who tries to sort it out will only become attached with the “50th level of *tumah*.”

Q

It seems that the Rav is totally against using any media or internet capable devices, smartphones, etc. Is the Rav’s view mainly coming from *pnimiyus haTorah* (the inner dimension of Torah) or is a person also obligated even from a perspective of *nigleh* (the revealed dimension of Torah) to keep away from the Internet and be *moser nefesh* not to use it? For example, if a person is not deep and spiritual, or if he is a very superficial kind of person, or if his soul is rooted in *nigleh* and not in *pnimiyus haTorah*, or if his spiritual level is *asiyah d’asiyah* (he is very action-oriented and he is not drawn after the spiritual), does such a person also need to be *moser nefesh* to an extreme and stay away as far as possible from any internet use? And when Rabbonim and Poskim permit filtered internet use for *parnassah* purposes and other necessities, is this because the Rabbonim and Poskim are coming from the *nigleh* aspect of Torah?

A

Even from the perspective of “*nigleh*” (revealed dimension) in Torah, it is not possible to give a *heter* (permission) to use internet, because it is a *heter* which enables spiritual destruction to come to the generation, and it has brought so many people *Rachmana Litzlan* into the abysses of spiritual defilement - and this is “*nigleh*” (revealed in front of us) to the eyes of everyone. Internet use has also brought down almost any individual who has used it, because it is actual *tumah* (defilement) itself, and therefore it is not possible to use a *heter* called *ika darka achrina*, “An alternate path is available” [i.e. using filtered internet] for it.

However, it is basically impossible to go the furthest extreme to separate totally from Internet use. (I have been very careful with my wording when I state this.)

Q

I teach physical exercises to *frum* women and now it’s possible for me to do it through a private line on the internet which will only be for the women. Can I continue to do this or am I not allowed to use internet at all for this?

A

In no circumstance should a person use internet for this.

Can Internet Be Used For Torah Websites?

Q

The Rav once said in the name of Rav Shteinman zt”l that the secular world [In Israel] is in the category of children who died, while the Chareidi world today is in the category of *tinokos shenishbu*, “captive children.” If that is the case, what’s wrong with Torah websites that contain insights about *pnimiyus haTorah*, which is able to help people who seek Hashem and grow beyond their current level and come closer to the Creator, which will save them from the dangers of the internet?

A

Getting close to the internet certainly makes a person spiritually colder, and it connects him with the influences of the *Erev Rav*. There is no way to permit having a downslide in one’s spirituality for the purpose of possible spiritual growth that may result from it. It is certain that a person will have a downslide from the internet, while it is uncertain that a person will have any spiritual growth from it.

What’s Wrong With Using Internet For Daily Conveniences & For Downloading Torah Shiurim?

Q

The Rav has said that it is not the will of Hashem for people to use internet or smartphones at all. I want to understand more about the parameters of this and how far it goes.

1) Is it only a problem for a person who has an emotional connection to internet because of constantly using it and because of social media websites, etc.? Or is it not allowed to be used even for practical uses or for convenience? For example, can internet be used find an address or telephone number, or for banking, finding out my credit card info, comparing prices and trying to get a good deal on something, or sending and receiving email, or finding out *zmanim* of the day or using it for checks dates on the yearly calendar? Can a smartphone be used for navigating locations,

for taking nearby pictures, for daily calendar and planning, to use as an alarm clock, or for downloaded MP3 *shiurim*, etc.?

2) Also, the Rav has said that people shouldn't visit Torah websites. Does this include even visiting a site for a few seconds to download *shiurim*, which I can listen to later without internet connection?

A

There are two parts to this. Firstly, there is the very connection to internet itself, which is a connection to the worst level of *tumah* (depravity) in the world. Therefore, even if one used the internet to “nurse” Torah from it, it was made possible via the worst level of *tumah*. Secondly, there is also the kind of material that a person is accessing on the internet. Generally, there is no site that is totally clean, whether it's obvious or subtle.

It does not even make sense at all to tell any individual person what sites he should decide not to go to on the internet, and what sites he should decide not to go to on the internet. The fact that each person is being told [from a *Rav* or from *Rabbonim*] that he can use it according to his needs, can be compared to placing deadly poison in front of a person and constantly convincing him that he should consume it.

Even for *parnassah*, a person should not use the internet. Because this reason of using the internet for *parnassah* purposes has abused the use of internet, more and more, and it is something that has destroyed the entire generation. And that is why a person should stop using it altogether.

Can I Use Shiurim That I Downloaded From The Internet?

Q

And what about *shiurim* which were already downloaded, do I need to delete them now or can I continue to listen to them?

A

Whatever *shiurim* you already downloaded, may be used.

How Will I Get Torah Without Using Internet?

Q

I have Internet, but I don't have Facebook, Twitter or Link-Ad. I don't like social media. I only use Signal and Whatsapp for getting in touch with friends on the other side of the world. I can't hear that well so I can't communicate by phone, so my whole way of communicating with others is through e-mail and messaging them. My husband uses Facebook only for shiurim, and sometimes also to keep up with family and friends in Israel. I only use Internet for Torah sites, such as the Bilvavi, Aish HaTorah, Bresslov, Chabad sites.

Without Internet I won't be able to access any Torah sites. I wouldn't be able to get any e-mails so I wouldn't be able to get the weekly Bilvavi e-mail. Can I just have Internet for only Torah sites? And also for some basic secular sites which keep me well-informed on health, cooking, etc.?

A

It would be very important for you to allow a connection only for the e-mailing service, and that is how you should receive all the information and Torah material you need.

It seems to you that you are losing out on so much by not having Internet, but you should know that deep down, in an inner dimension which you can't see, you are receiving great spiritual light by keeping away from Internet: the light of Hashem, the light which all *neshamos* desire to become connected with.

Can I Use Internet Just For Shiurim And Face-Timing Family And Friends?

Q

Can my family remain with Internet connection if we're just using it to listen to *shiurim* through it, and to converse with our family and friends whom we aren't able to see?

A

The proper way for anyone who seeks Hashem is to separate from Internet use totally. It's possible to hear *shiurim* through other venues that are more kosher, and the same goes for conversing with family [and friends].

Can Zoom Be Used For Dating?

Q

With all the social distancing rules due to coronavirus, social mingling is not allowed, so how can we go about *shidduchim* (dating to get married)? A famous english magazine in the *frum* world recently encouraged the use of Zoom for dating. Am I supposed to put my dating prospects on hold during this time? What should I do?

A

The entire way of dating in the *frum* world today has always been debated about by the *Gedolim* of the previous generation. The Chazon Ish in his time gave certain dating guidelines for boys in yeshiva, and that was what they did. As the days went on, the environment of the world became more permissive, especially in *chutz l'aretz*, and people starting making certain breaches that our previous *Gedolim* would have never fathomed.

During this current period where there are social distancing rules, dating should be done at a distance, but not through Zoom. “From the wound itself, comes the remedy” – all dating should be at a distance of *daled amos* [about 7-8 feet] between the boy and girl.

Can I Use Zoom To Complete School Studies?

Q

Can I use “Zoom” to take all my classes which I need in order to complete all my studies? If I don't take my classes now and I will have double the amount of classes to take next year. Also if I don't complete the courses now then I will forget everything I learned this year and I will have to study it all over again in the coming year....

A

You should think about the purpose of your life and think about where you want to get to on This World and in the Next World. After you have thought about this well, look for a new environment for yourself which will be more conducive to your *ruchniyus* (spiritual development), which will help you reach your true aspirations in life. This question that you have now is not just another question in your life which pertains to your situation at hand. It is a question about your entire life and about where you need to place yourself, and it is about how you need to place

yourself in an atmosphere that will be good for you. That is where the answer to your question lays in.

Computer Games

Q

Is it okay for me to use any computer games that I downloaded from the Internet? My computer can't get on to the Internet. I erased all Internet pages that I downloaded, and I had an app store that I was able to download anything from, but my mother had the chip disabled from my computer so that it can't get any internet connection. If I take it to a technician then my computer won't be able to connect to internet at all, even if it would have internet on it. There is no more internet in our house. I just want to do the right thing....

A

It is proper to keep your distance as far as possible from these games. However, do it sensibly and smartly, according to what you can handle,

How Should I Get Rid of My Smartphone?

Q

Is it permissible to sell my smartphone [since it can enable internet use for the buyer] or is there a different way which I need to get rid of them?

A

Don't sell these devices – destroy them.

Can I Use Internet Just For Banking?

Q

I read and listened to the Rav's words about corona and how it's all being caused by the misuse of media and internet. We are ready to give up our internet, but we have a few questions.

We have extra loans in our bank in...and the only way to be on top of it is through the internet. Is this a legitimate concern?

A

Don't worry [about your banking and credit card matters]. If you really need to work this out, there are places you can go to where you can have it all arranged for you, without you having to bring internet into your house.

What If My Older Son Is Acting Up Because We Are Getting Rid Of Internet?

Q

Also, we have an older son who is having a very emotional and aggressive reaction to our decision not to have internet anymore. How do we deal with this?

A

With *tefillah* (prayer), and with tears.

Can We Use Internet To Keep Up With Relatives?

Q

All of our family's relatives live outside of Israel, and they are not Jewish. Our family converted to Judaism after we got married. Is now a time to sever our relationship with them (since our only relationship with them is through sending pictures and videos of our children through the internet)? Or is it instead a time to stay connected to them via telephone? It would be very emotional to phone them because every conversation ends with crying, since they wish to see us again with all the grandchildren. But if I have to contact them only through telephone, I am prepared to do that.

A

Keep up with them through telephoning them.

Is All Our Torah Learning From The Internet Considered Disqualified?

Q

If all Torah learning done through the internet is coming from the “*Erev Rav*”, where does that place us? My husband has been listening to thousands of *shiurim* through the internet. Does all of that become worthless? If it is, then how do we deal emotionally and spiritually with such a loss?? We even converted to Judaism because of all the articles and shiurim that are on these Torah websites. Does it all become invalidated, because the internet is called the “*Erev Rav*”?

A

It came about through the “*Erev Rav*”, and therefore it has a mix of good and bad in it. Learning Torah from the internet should be understood as something which “purifies the contaminated, and contaminates the pure.” Now that you have received the “purity” which comes from this mixture of good and bad, you are *chas v’shalom* susceptible to the influence of using the internet further and falling into its *tumah* (defilement). From now and onward, you should separate yourself from the internet totally.

What If The Internet Is The Only Connection I Have To Learning Torah?

Q

I understand that a person living in a holy place [such as Eretz Yisrael] is able to give up his internet connection and be fine without it, but what about a person who lives in a country amongst *goyim* and he is already so influenced by them? For such a person, even a remote connection to Torah [such as through viewing Torah sites on the internet] can be very helpful to him. Can the Rav please tell me clearly what I should do, since I live in *chutz l’aretz*?

A

It would be proper for you to move to Eretz Yisrael, even if you would be giving up a lot to come here - although this will seem at first to be almost impossible for you, due to factors of your *parnassah* (livelihood), *shalom bayis* (marital peace), your family, etc. If you are so connected, in how you lead your life and in how you feel, to the ways of the *goyim* who are immersed in the depravity of the “50th level of *tumah*”, then for you, the internet is something which purifies you [through viewing Torah websites] but at the same time it also contaminates you with its *tumah*. Therefore, your specific case] you may remain with just the Torah websites alone, on a temporary basis. This is an exceptional ruling being given to you under your current circumstances, until you are able to separate from the internet totally.

Davening With A Minyan Via Media

Q

What does the Rav think about *minyanim* (quorums of people praying together) which are being organized during this period [coronavirus] where people can listen to a *minyan* via telephone conferences or via other ways of communication?

A

During a time where everyone has to be totally quarantined, if you can *daven* with a *minyan* on a rooftop or porch, that is what is recommended for you to, at least every so often. It also depends on each individual situation, according to the person and according to how much he can handle. The same goes for telephone conferences. But when it comes to other ways of communication, such as the radio and etc. – one should not have anything to do with this at all. This is because the radio programmers use the internet to broadcast their programs, and this pulls people into logging on to internet websites. This happens either by advertising that their programs are fine according to certain *Rabbonim*, or because they directly advertise to their listeners that they should log onto their website, etc. Because of this, people further from Torah observance may come closer to Torah observance because of these programs, but in the process, those who are already observant of Torah and mitzvos become distanced from Torah because of it. This is because the programmers advertise directly to those who are Torah observant and those who are *bnei Torah*. Therefore, keep away from anything that connects you to them, and consider it as if you are trying to avoid falling into a deadly trap – and keep away even more than that.

Managing Without Internet

Q

Now that I've read how the Rav is so against the internet, my husband and I decided to get rid of the internet from our house, *Baruch Hashem*. But along with this, we want to know what we should actually do now, to work out some technical things that we needed to use the internet for. For example, I was using it to file my papers for the government, and there is no other way for me to do it [other than through the internet].

A

When you need something and there is no other way for you to get it without internet, or if there are pressing circumstances, you can go to places that offer a service for people to use internet, such as the places that have opened in the last couple of years. But even then, you should know that I am not giving my consent on any of these places, because many times people use them even when they don't have such a necessity.

Q

Also, it is very difficult for me to shop for clothing in a store. I don't feel at ease when I buy from the store. I would usually buy clothes from two or three internet sites and I felt more at ease with my purchases.

A

The same as the above.

Q

Can I just keep a few sites open for practical uses, and I will block all other sites?

A

Since you have "another way" to do it, you cannot use internet for this. You should know that every time you separate yourself from using the internet, you are producing a great light in your soul, and it is a great loss for you if you run away from such an attainment.

Q

Or should I normally block all internet and then open any necessary sites when I need them, and then block them after I'm done using them?

A

This is like making for yourself a small breach that enables you to access the biggest *tumah* that the world has seen since the beginning of history. Any little breach that exposes you to the *tumah* of the world today contains a danger that the breach will widen further and expose you to all of the influences in the world today. It is impossible to guide any person on when and how or what he is allowed to use the internet for, because this is a *heter* (permission) that that has destroyed the generation.

Q

Is there no way to use internet properly, and should I not use it at all?

A

The same as above.

Without Internet, How Can I Continue Reading & Listening To The Rav's Derashos?

Q

Also, how can I continue reading and listening to the Rav's *derashos* and *shiurim*, which is a light in our lives? If I can't view the Bilvavi website, how can I get a hold of material from the Rav? (Thank you very much, for all of the light which the Rav has brought into our lives.)

A

There is no way to 'get around' doing what Hashem wants. Since this [the internet] is a tool which reveals the root of all *tumah*, one's very ability of connectivity to the internet is enough to bring a person down totally.

You can get the *shiurim* from Kol HaLashon, by hearing them on the phone. You can receive PDF's and written articles of the *derashos* through e-mail. [Request to be added to the email list at subscribe@bilvavi.net.]

The Bilvavi website is not meant to be used for those who are already Torah observant.

Can I Use Internet Just Once To Download All Bilvavi Shiurim?

Q

1) Can I go on to the Bilvavi website just for one time, so that I can download all (or most) of the audio shiurim to my computer, if my computer has internet connection? And if I download material from the site does it all become *tumah* (impurity) since it is coming from the internet, which the Rav calls *avi avos hatumah*, the “grandfather of impurity”? Which would mean that I can't use them, since they came to me through an impure source? Do downloaded shiurim become “purified” for use once I disable internet connection from my computer?

2) Also, I want to know: What's the main problem with the Internet? Is it all of the obscenities and indecency (*peritzus*) found on the Internet, or is it because the Internet contains *kefirah* (heresy and denial of G-d) or because it contains a lot of secular material? Or is it because of the mixture of holiness and secular material together? What exactly makes the Internet into the “*shaar HaNun d'tumah*”, the worst level of spiritual impurity?

A

1) There are alternative ways for you to receive the *shiurim*².

2) The *tumah* of the Internet is that it is a mixture of all *tumah* together, without exception, and at the root of it all is the *kefirah* (denial of G-d) on the Internet, even with all the good that's found on it.

² Editor's Note: In another response, the Rav permits receiving audio shiurim via e-mail, or by dialing Kol HaLashon. And in a different response, the Rav gave a ruling that b'dieved any shiurim downloaded from the Internet may be used.

What About Doing Kiruv Through The Internet?

Q

The internet is obviously a powerful force which must have been stolen by the *Sitra Achra* (Other Side) for its own malicious purposes. But perhaps we could teach people how to use it correctly and thereby spread Torah and knowledge of Hashem to the rest of the world. Certainly I don't mean that *Bnei Torah* should own devices that have internet connectivity, *chas v'shalom*. They have other ways to get *shiurim*, such as through *Kol HaLashon*. But what about people who are far from Torah? We can't just tell people who aren't observant that the internet is something they must stay away from totally. The internet is their only possibility of receiving guidance before the Redemption. The very channel which the *Sitra Achra* has brought down so many souls just may be precisely the channel which we can use to bring the light of Torah throughout the world. Certainly the non-observant would need to be taught on how to cut off from social media sites and from unfiltered internet, and to remain only with Torah websites.

The Torah which needs to be imparted to the non-observant is not *sugyos* of Gemara, which each of them can learn in his own place. I am speaking specifically about the Rav's guidance that explains how to serve Hashem, such as how to do *hisbodedus* and the like, which are things that cannot be taught anywhere else [except by way of the Bilvavi site]. I am familiar with the Bilvavi website, and I feel that it is not enough [for the non-observant to come closer to Judaism]. There are other possibilities of how it can all be opened further into practical guidance, that is, if the Rav agrees that there is place for such a thing.

A

This tool [the internet] is the active revelation of the "50th gate of *tumah*." It is the power of the *Erev Rav*, which has everything mixed into it. It "contaminates the pure, and purifies the contaminated." Therefore, one needs to make a total wall and separation so that there should not even be the smallest breach, so that he won't come to contaminate that which is pure. And that is by totally abstaining from the internet.

There is certainly a place to say that the internet purifies the contaminated [i.e. *kiruv*, by drawing close those who are not observant], but usually it immediately contaminates anyone who is pure, when they become involved with it. This happens either because people get a *heter* from Rabbonim to use the internet, or because they rationalize for themselves a *heter* that they are allowed to use it, or because they are involved with *kiruv* and therefore they feel that anything they do is fine as long as they are purifying those who were distant from Torah and mitzvos (like the burning of the red heifer, which purifies the contaminated, and, in the process, contaminates the pure).

Therefore, it is proper that you not involve yourself with the internet at all. The internet should only be handled by people who are not Jewish, under the guidance and direction of G-d fearing Jews.

Why Can't Internet Be Used For Kiruv Just Like Radio Is?

Q

I am strengthening myself a lot in the area of keeping away from internet and media, in light of the recent *derashos* of the Rav about the evils of media. I want to ask the Rav more about this topic. I am fully clear about the dangers of media (though I am not yet on the level yet of totally giving it up), but the following is “Torah, and I need to learn it.” I have 4 questions.

Chabad chassidim have a *heter* to use the media and other internet-capable devices because they asked the Rebbe about having a Torah show on the radio, and if they are allowed to use the radio [for *kiruv* purposes] since the radio is full of non-Jewish values and heretical discussions. The Rebbe told them that “Everything that Hashem made in His world was created to reveal G-dliness and spirituality in the world. Therefore, not only is it permitted to use the radio for a holy purpose, it is a *mitzvah* to do so.” Wouldn't that also apply to the internet? What does the Rav have to say about this?

A

There's no comparison between the internet and the radio. The internet is *avi avos hatumah*, it is the “grandfather of impurity”, it is the impurity of the “*Erev Rav*” on this world, which is mixed with the deepest levels of filth of the 50th gate of *tumah* (impurity). So the internet and radio cannot be compared at all. Any *heter* given to use the radio [for *kiruv* purposes] would not create any *heter* at all to use the internet.

Q

I have also come across a *heter* that comes from the Litvishe world. In the past, I was involved with *kiruv rechokim* and the Rabbonim would always say that the *heter* to be involved with *kiruv rechokim* (i.e. entering into non-observant homes, which puts a person in danger of seeing inappropriate sights or downright indecency) resembles a *halachah* in the laws of salting meat: “Since he is busy with exhuming, he won't come to swallow.” My question is, along these lines, can we say that a person who is involved with *kiruv* has a *heter* to use the media?

A

In many instances, doing *kiruv* actually caused many people to have a downfall in their *ruchniyus*. Others simply became cooled off, and very few remained with their *kedushah* (holiness). And some people who did *kiruv* actually became further from their own *Yiddishkeit*, more than the amount of people that they draw closer. This is because, sometimes, the person doing *kiruv* is not that engaged in his work. Rav Pincus zt”l said about himself that he cannot give a *kiruv* lecture more than once a week, because he feels that it ‘cools’ off his *Yiddishkeit* [from being exposed to the non-observant world]. What should everyone else say? Therefore, the entire “*Teshuvah Movement*” needs to be seriously examined in each individual case of *kiruv* that is being done.

Q

I also have a deeper question. What’s the difference between viewing videos from social media, with “permitted” media such as listening on the telephone to shiurim, such as *Kol HaLashon*? Either way, a person is “connecting” to media, and the only difference is that when viewing a video, a person is connecting to the media via the sense of sight, whereas “permitted” media [i.e. dialing *Kol HaLashon*] is via the sense of hearing. But why should “seeing” media be problematic, whereas “hearing” media isn’t?

A

In this generation, everyone is anyhow connected to the media, due to the radiation of satellite connection [i.e. Wi-Fi] which can reach anywhere. Therefore, listening to something that is connected to the media [i.e. listening to *shiurim* on *Kol HaLashon*] doesn’t do that much damage to one’s soul, because listening is a sense that allows one to keep himself at a distance, as in the term, “hearing from afar.” In contrast, the sense of sight is the root of all connection to evil. Ruination came to the world through the sense of sight. The eyes are called the tools of sin. When a person is merely hearing something sinful, it feels far away from him. But when he sees it, the sense of sight makes a person feel as if he is actually there, in the act.

Q

I saw a teaching of Rabbi Nachman of Breslev (in “The Story of the Seven Butlers”, brought in *sefer Sippurei Maasiyos*) the following teaching, as explained according to the commentary of “*Lev Basar*.” We find oftentimes in our generation that when we feel far from Hashem, we feel great yearnings for Hashem, but after we do *teshuvah* and we stop sinning (i.e. giving up media and internet connection), our hearts feel dried up and we don’t feel as much yearning for Hashem as we used to. Therefore, shouldn’t we instead hold onto our media devices so that we can continue to feel how far we are from Hashem and how much we yearn for Hashem?

A

Chas v'shalom, and *chas v'shalom* [one should not be connected to media just so that he can feel far from Hashem and have more yearnings for Him. That is the advice of the *yetzer hora*].

The proper way of experiencing yearnings is that a person goes through a cycle of connecting to one's inward good, then losing one's connection to it, which causes one to have yearnings. One also needs to develop a holy mind filled with Torah thoughts and a Torah way of thinking. One progresses in a cycle, between the mind and the heart, between the cold (intellectual engagement, i.e. thoughts of Torah) and the heat (the emotions of the heart, spiritual feelings), which produces yearnings. When a person connects to his intellectual abilities, his spiritual feelings become cooled and then his yearnings return to him.

Why Is It Fine To Download From Kol HaLashon?

Q

Regarding the use of media, which the Rav doesn't approve of, what about using *Kol HaLashon's* service? I think that all Bnei Torah use *Kol HaLashon* to download *shiurim* onto MP3. This downloading service is found in yeshivos and in *kolelim* and it works through the internet. Is there also a problem with this?

A

It would have been better if we would have nothing to do with media at all. However, we are in a bitter exile that is filled with a terrible amount of *tumah* (defilement), which can reach any area, due to satellite connection which transports the ability of media connectivity into any home. Listening to a service that is connected to media [i.e. *Kol HaLashon*] is in the category of "listening from afar," and one is allowed to use such a service.

Does Listening To Torah Shiurim With Internet Cause A Person To Become Further From Hashem?

Q

Also, usually a person can feel low about himself after committing a sin. How can it be, though, that a person can do something permissible, such as listening to a Torah lecture, and afterwards he feels further from Hashem and he feels *tamei*? Getting more specific with my question, how can a person know before listening to a *derasha* from the Rav that it's not the will of Hashem to listen to it if he got it from the internet, and that all media use causes a person to become further from Hashem, even when he is using it for Torah learning?

A

It causes a person to become colder [more apathetic and insensitive to his *ruchniyus*], causing a person to become mixed into the culture of the internet, which causes a person's *ruchniyus* to become totally cooled off.

Q

Also, if a person learns Torah through media and internet, does this distance him from Hashem in the same way that committing a sin distances him from Hashem? Or is it a different kind of a distance, and it's not as much as a distance like sinning is?

A

It is not simply that it causes a person to become distanced from Hashem. It causes a person to become "mixed" with the mixture of good and bad that is the internet. Slowly, from becoming mixed with the culture of the internet, a person becomes colder towards *ruchniyus*.

Can I Use Internet If I Will Incur A Substantial Monetary Loss Without It?

Q

The Rav has said that a person should not even use internet if it's filtered and even to hear Torah lectures. I have difficulties with one of my children. My child has problems of focusing and listening, he's hyperactive, and it is very hard for him to sit and learn. I tried helping him with all kinds of ways but to no avail...until recently, when someone told me about a brain-development program which he used and saw a lot of success with, in improving his focus and memory. It is a

well-known tool in the educational field, and it bears results. I bought it, and it cost me thousands of shekel. I can't just get rid of it now. The problem is that it requires internet connection, in order to activate. Can I use the Internet for this, using the best internet filter possible? Or do I need to take the monetary loss and also remain without a solution for my child's learning?

A

Financial loss shouldn't even be a factor here. What is thousands of shekel worth when compared to preserving the purity of the *neshamah*?

In a circumstance where you need to take care of medical needs and there is no other possibility than using internet, you may go to a place outside the house where you can take care of it. You should make sure to use it only for the exact purpose of what you need it for, and don't consider this a *heter* at all to use the internet [for anything else other than this that thing that you need to take care of].

The Recent Increased Internet Use For Working From Home

Q

Recently there were guidelines for internet use by Rabbonim for people who need to work from home now because they can't go to work, due to the coronavirus. What is the Rav's view on this?

A

The main motivation of the *Sitra Achra* (Other Side) during this epidemic is to succeed in producing this *heter*. It will slowly, *chas v'shalom* and *chas v'shalom*, draw the *bonei Torah* into this *tumah*. And even here in Eretz Yisrael, there are already some Torah institutions which are making Internet connection available to their students, making it possible for every *bochur*, even in elementary school, to purchase a cellphone. After that, it will be very hard for them to disconnect from it.

May Hashem send a spirit of purity, from the light of Mashiach, to be shined upon the sages our generation, that they should become willing to uproot this problem from the root, and that they shouldn't even permit it for *parnassah* needs.

Keep My Business Or Give Up Internet?

Q

I read the english translations of the Rav's words about media use and I understand from the Rav, if I have understood correctly from the english translation, that internet may not even be used for *parnassah* (livelihood). I earn a livelihood from others who use the internet to access my program that I teach, and I also need to use a website to communicate with my customers. According to the Rav am I supposed to close down my business [since it requires internet]?

A

If you want to find a true, genuinely spiritual life, which is pure and aligned with the will of the Creator of the world, it is upon you to re-think for yourself a new direction, a purer direction for you to take, which will end up being for your own benefit – it will be for the benefit of your *neshamah* (Divine soul) and for all of your eternity.

Do I Need To Erase All The Torah Saved On My Blog?

Q

I gave up blogging but I still kept a blog that has a lot of Torah that is saved onto it. Do I need to erase it?

A

No.

Do I Need To Stop My Kiruv Website and Tzedakah Website?

Q

I run a *kiruv* website and also a website for people to give *tzedakah* donations. Do I need to close these websites?

A

The *kiruv* website can be run through a non-Jew, and it should say on the website that this website is not meant to be used by G-d fearing observant Jews, as it is only meant to be used by those who are currently not observant of Judaism.

The *tzedakah* website should be closed.

Can I Keep A Site That Earns Me Profit?

Q

I own a site for business-related purposes, of advertising sales, which I am able to profit from. I'm thinking of erasing it so that I shouldn't form an emotional connection to the site. Is this a good idea or should I "run from it like a fire" [as the Rav often says about distancing ourselves from internet use]?

A

Run from it like a fire.

Can I Send Out Links For People To Download Shiurim?

Q

I use "Drop-Box" for "Cloud" storage of a large amount of PDFs that I have, then I create links and then send out the links so that everyone can be able to download *shiurim*. Is this fine?

A

You should have a non-Jew do it for you - and that is if only if you're doing this for *kiruv* purposes.

Can I Go Online To View Who's On My Conference Call?

Q

I use a service called “Free Conference Calls” to learn Torah classes with other women. I need to go online in order to see who is logged in to the call. Am I allowed to do this while I’m on the conference call? Recently I closed off access to that internet page so that I don’t see who’s on the call or who’s off the call, but now I have no idea who’s on the call or not.

A

Separate yourself from it as much as you can.

Can I Use Madmimi To Send Mass E-Mail?

Q

I use “Madmimi” to Torah informative email over 2000 women. I go online just to open the email connection. Is this fine? (I use this service in order to inform everyone of links to certain websites, through electronic e-mail).

A

Same answer as before [separate from it as much as you can].

What About Going On To Paypal?

Q

1) I receive donations through Paypal. In order to get the money I need to go online to Paypal – is this fine? 2) I also use Paypal to make personal payments – is that okay?

A

1) Have a non-Jew do it for you. 2) Separate from it as much as you can, and have a non-Jew do it for you.

Is Shopping On Amazon Okay?

Q

I order online from Amazon, but from what I understand from the Rav's responses about media use, the Rav does not approve of this at all. Is it actually *assur* (prohibited) to shop online from Amazon, or is it just not recommended?

A

Assur (prohibited).

What About Donating Tzedakah Online?

Q

How should we view the recent trend of the advertisements that say “Donate Now” by going online and clicking on certain links to donate to *mosdos* and *yeshivos*? These ads are telling the *tzibbur*, the *bnei Torah* included, to quickly get hold of a smartphone or go online, in order to donate *tzedakah*, and in order to accomplish their goal, the ads say that they need to raise a million dollars (or more) within 24 hours, etc. At first this trend started with *chessed* organizations and now *yeshivos* also use these online campaigning ads to get everyone to donate. Since the Internet is compared to the *Eitz HaDaas Tov V’Ra*, a place of good and evil mixed together, can we say that all of the online *tzedakah* donations is the “good” that comes out of the Internet? Or is it all the *kelipah* (the side of evil) and it’s all *tumah*? On one hand, perhaps we can argue that the ads are only targeting people who are online anyhow, who might as well use their Internet use for a *mitzvah* and donate *tzedakah*. On the other hand, it sends the wrong message, because it makes it seem as if it’s fine to use Internet to donate *tzedakah*, and not only that, but that it’s a huge *mitzvah* to go online to donate for a worthy cause...What should be the proper attitude towards all of this? Are all of these online donations *treif* money, because they came about through the *tumah* of the Internet?

A

This new trend makes it seem as if Internet and internet-capable devices are considered kosher for such uses, giving the impression that we are heeding to the Torah *chas v’shalom* by going online for any *mitzvah* causes. It is a profound *churban* (devastation)! It is the way by which the Internet is

quickly and rapidly entering more and more into the Torah world, and this is how we can see the Torah world being destroyed before our eyes. Our eyes can cry and our heart can be full of pain, at the destruction that this has done to the Torah world. Any money earned online for these *tzedakah* causes is empty from *ruchniyus*, it has no light of Hashem in it. It is like a body without a soul - a corpse. This is how the general state of the generation looks today. We can all be now like Yirmiyahu HaNavi who saw the *churban* happening in front of his eyes. The *churban* today that is being caused by all of this seemingly “kosher” internet use is very, very profound. It is an increased use of Internet that is targeting the “Torah world”, and on this we can apply the verse, “Torah, Torah, don a sackcloth.” This entire trend is the final state of *shiflus* (lowliness) before Mashiach comes, because it is all-inclusive of every kind of *tumah*.

Can My Children Use Torah Websites For Inspiration?

Q

Today my girls aren't able to attend Torah classes in their schools, and they need to learn and inspire themselves when they are alone at home. Reading alone doesn't do much for them. Can they listen to Torah lectures on Hidabroot and other such sites, so that they can get Torah inspiration? Is this permitted since it's like using the internet for *kiruv*, which “purifies the contaminated” [as the Rav said regarding using the internet for *kiruv* purposes]?

A

In no circumstance should you allow internet “only for Torah sites”, because you cannot cause any illumination to come upon the soul through something that is the primary root of all *tumah*.

How Should I View My Rabbis If They Have A Smartphone?

Q

How am I supposed to view my Rav, Posek and Rosh Yeshiva who all make use of these devices somehow? I want to be *dan l'kaf zechus* them and not think negatively of them, but how can I do that if I know that the Rav strongly does not approve of what they do? Especially because I'm aware

that the Rav has said that there's a much more carefree attitude about media use in America and that people here are quicker to find and use *heterim* in this area. Are my Rabbonim disqualified as role models for me because they feel a need to use "kosher" smartphones or using media or freely texting other people, something which I know the Rav doesn't approve of?

A

The spirit of impurity (*tumah*) in America has created a different attitude in people already for many years now. It is very accepted in America for people to study for a degree, to incorporate college into *yeshivos* so that yeshiva students can get college degrees. And there are many other breaches in modesty there, as well as the gross pursuit of luxury and comfort. This carefree attitude in America has continued and increased into becoming a general attitude of "finding a *heter*" and now it has only become stronger. There are those who explained that the level of the generation today [in America] looks the same as what the generation looked like in Germany, right before the Holocaust. Enough said.

Disconnecting From Internet – To What Extent?

Q

Is disconnecting from media and Internet supposed to be a total disconnection? Or can a person still use Internet for ordering basic necessities, downloading *shiurim*, and sending pictures of the kids to the grandparents, but along with a sense of inner revulsion and disgust towards the Internet? If one disconnects from internet for once or twice a week, is that enough to go free from the "50th gate", or is a person still within the "50th Gate of Impurity" of the Internet as long as he doesn't have an absolute disconnection from it?

A

It is not possible to totally disconnect from Internet use, because the entire world is entrenched in this *tumah*, which comes through the walls of every house, and which envelopes everyone within it. Therefore, one's *avodah* is to distance himself from Internet as much as possible.

Why Can't Zoom Be Used For Torah Learning?

Q

If someone has filtered Internet which he uses only for work purposes, can he also use it for Zoom for Torah learning? If a person won't use Zoom and he won't learn Torah, why isn't that bittul Torah? If people won't use Zoom today then they won't learn Torah!!

A

The Torah was given amidst a state of trembling, awe and fear of G-d. But if one's Torah learning is being nursed from the "Erev Rav", that is exactly the opposite of the Torah as it was given at Sinai. Sometimes, "ceasing from Torah study will upkeep the Torah." **There is no *mitzvah* to learn Torah using Zoom.** Compare it to a person who can only learn Torah by walking into a place of idol worship.

Are There Some People Who Need Internet In Their Lives?

Q

The Rav has spoken a lot recently about the *tumah* of the Internet and that even if a person learns Torah from it, he will still become far from the Creator by using Internet. Is this always true? I am a *baal teshuvah* and most of my time spent on the Internet is to listen to Torah *shiurim*. I can understand that *tzaddikim* and people who were always frum shouldn't go on to the Internet, and it's easy to see how Internet damages those who were never exposed to it beforehand. But what about for someone who, at his current stage of life, feels a need to use Internet for Torah learning purposes? How can the Internet still be considered evil in such a situation? And it's only because of the Internet that I found the Rav and other *Rabbonim* that I gain from! I understand well that everyone needs to learn how to limit their Internet use and not be so involved with social media, but aren't there certain people who need the Internet, at least for some time in their life, in order to learn Torah and become stronger in their Yiddishkeit? Doesn't the Rav agree that there is something good that comes out of modern technology...?

A

The Internet is something which purifies the impure and which contaminates the pure. Therefore, for *kiruv* purposes, it has a place. But the one using the internet for purposes of being *mekarev* (drawing close) others to Torah is running the high risk of being ruined by the Internet, and for that reason, a kiruv website should be run by *goyim* [under his auspices], because the *mekarev* himself often becomes further from his own *Yiddishkeit*, even further from *Yiddishkeit* than those non-observant whom he was trying to draw closer...

Kosher Smartphones

Q

Is there any *heter* to own a filtered smartphone?

A

The *Mesillas Yescharim* already wrote that anything which if there is anything which even remotely distances a person from Hashem, one should run from it as if he would run from a fire.

Are There Kosher Alternatives For Online Shopping?

Q

In the hope of helping people avoid online shopping, I had an idea. I can compile an email list of businesses. A person can email whatever items he wants to order, providing his telephone number and email address. All the businesses will receive the emails and if any of them has the items they can email back the customer and arrange the sale. Also, there is now a service which hires a goy to search for any items a person needs to find, and they charge a fee for this. A person would go on to a filtered site where he can't see any images and click on the items that he wants to order. Are these viable solutions for kosher internet use?

A

It needs to be thought about carefully, if using such a service will cause a person to increase online shopping or not. Using such a service might fix some issues with internet use, but at the

same time it may bring more issues with internet use. I am not an expert in all the practical aspects of this and therefore it is hard to answer this if I am not aware of all the details of how it works.

Asking Others To Order Online For Me

Q

I don't use Internet at all but my siblings all have Internet. Can I ask them to order online for me? I asked my local rabbi if this is a question of *Lifnei Iver* (placing a stumbling block before the blind) because I'm causing them to go on the internet, and my rabbi answered me that it's not *Lifnei Iver* because they're on the Internet anyhow and I'm not making them go on to it. But I want to know what the Rav says about this.

A

It's not possible to cover all the details of every situation, but generally, as a rule, you should try to keep your distance from this as much as possible. This isn't a problem of *Lifnei Iver*, though, because nobody is "blind" to the dangers of the Internet, so it's not as if you're making others stumble blindly (through not everyone understands the seriousness of the time period we are in). Also, you are not giving him advice to sin, you are just asking him for a favor, so that is not *Lifnei Iver*. However, it does bear somewhat of a resemblance to *Lifnei Iver* because you are indirectly causing him to stumble. It depends on what your sibling does afterwards on the Internet after he orders for you.

Q

Just like the Rav said that there's a *heter* for people unaffiliated with Judaism to use Internet to go on Torah websites, can a group also use Zoom for Torah and their *ruchniyus* needs, since they get so much *chizuk* from it and they feel that they, too, are in the category of *kiruv rechokim*? Don't we all need some *kiruv*? Would the Rav hold that even in such a case they should separate from using Zoom...?

A

It is impossible to permit this. Because it is clear that through using Zoom, other people are drawn into it using it as well. It can only be used for those who are anyhow connected with Internet

– and that is the reason behind the *heter* [to use for Internet for Torah purposes], of using it for *kiruv* purposes. The reason for the *heter* [to use Internet for Torah purposes] is not because it's permitted for *kiruv* - but only because they are connected to Internet anyhow.

INTERNET – MODERN-DAY AMALEK

Internet - Modern-Day Amalek

Q

The Rav said that from 5760 and onward, the power of “Amalek” began to dominate the world. How exactly do we see this? Is it referring to the dominance of the media?

A

Yes.

Internet – The War of Gog & Magog

Q

Is the *nisayon* with media use and Internet all the “war of Gog and Magog”?

A

Yes!

Q

What lays behind the evil forces of the *kelipos* of “Gog” as well as “Magog”?

A

Rav Tzadok HaKohen of Lublin (in *sefer Machsheves Charotz: 9*) explains that “Gog” is from the word *gag*, “roof”, and also the concept of *gaavah*, conceitedness. He writes: “When the word Gog is spelled with the letter vov, it implies self-sufficiency, to be entirely conceited at the root.” (See also *Pri Tzaddik to Parshas Shemini: 9*). On a similar note, the Zohar (II:57, II:75) says that Hashem’s exaltedness and pride (*ga’on*) will reign supreme after the arrival of Gog and Magog. And Rav Tzadok further writes in *sefer Pri Tzaddik (Beraishis:12)* that the evil of denying G-d is represented by Gog and Magog, which is the collected evil of all 70 gentile nations, for the *gematria* (equivalent) of *Gog* and *Magog* totals 70 (*sefer Pri Tzaddik, Va’eira 2*, and based on *Midrash Tanchuma, parshas Korach, 12*).

Q

Does “Gog” represent the evil forces that conceal Hashem’s Presence, and does “Magog” represent the clashes within our own souls?

A

Gog fights against Mashiach ben Yosef. As a hint, Gog has the letter *gimmel* twice in his name, which equals 3 and 3, for a total of 6, and Yosef is represented by the number 6, for Yosef is the sixth level [of the 10 *Sefiros*]. Rav Tzadok writes (in *Pri Tzaddik, Naso 15*) that Gog and Magog will fight against Mashiach ben Yosef. This is because Gog and Magog represent *gaavah* (conceitedness), which is also the root of homose*ual behavior [as written about by Rebbi Nachman of Bresslov]. Refer also to *Talmud Bavli Succah 52a* about the war of Gog and Magog against Mashiach ben Yosef.

Magog fights against Mashiach ben Dovid. The *sefer Pri Tzaddik (Rosh HaShanah, 11)* says, “The main evil of Gog and Magog is to counter the holiness of Mashiach ben Dovid. See also *Pri Tzaddik parshas Netzavim, 11*. This is the evil of heresy, denying G-d. As the *sefer Shem M’Shmuel* (in *Chol HaMoed Succos*) states, “The concept of Gog and Magog is all about rebelling against G-d.” If we analyze it more closely, this is actually the evil of Magog, because the *sefer Shem M’Shmuel* states elsewhere that Magog is all about “throwing away the yoke of Heaven.”

Q

In a different response the Rav explained that the “war of Gog and Magog” is taking place today on an internal level, within the clashes and contradictions of each of our souls, which is manifest on an outer level today in all of the wars taking place today. But recently in a response the Rav

explained that our war that we must fight against Internet and media use is the very war of Gog and Magog itself. Are these two different definitions of the “war of Gog and Magog” today, or do they correspond to each other?

A

All of the inner contradictions in the soul [which cause people to clash with each other] are rooted in the trait of *gaavah* (conceitedness). At the root of all contradictions and clashes is *gaavah*, conceitedness. This [the concept of Gog/*gaavah*/conceit] is the evil that fights against Mashiach ben Yosef.

The media [internet use] is the evil that fights against Mashiach ben Dovid. The internet and the media is one collective force which counters the Individual One of the world, and it represents the evil of denying G-d. The *Megaleh Amukos* (*parshas Noach*) says that the war of Gog and Magog against Mashiach ben Dovid is all-inclusive of all 4 kings [who fought against Avraham] and all 4 exiles.

Q

Do we fight against this “Gog and Magog” through having *mesirus nefesh*, and is our *mesirus nefesh* to stay away from Internet essentially the very “light of Mashiach” that will obliterate Gog and Magog?

A

Yes! Very good.

Q

The Rav had said on the onset of the coronavirus outbreak that we are in the intensity of the war of Gog and Magog. Is there a connection between “Google” and “Gog”, since the word “Google” has the word “Gog” in its name (גוגל, גוג-ל)? Google started as a search engine for the Internet, and today it controls all of the searches on the Internet, every page, and it is the engine that runs all smartphones...

A

Yes!

Internet – The Spiritual Holocaust

Q

The Rav had said that the *heter* (leniency) of using Internet for *parnassah* purposes was the *heter* that destroyed this generation. Did the *heter* to use Internet come from the Gedolim or did it just come from Rabbonim who allowed it individually for their congregants? If the *heter* to use internet for *parnassah* indeed came from *Gedolim*, how can it be called a *heter* that destroyed the generation - how's it possible that destruction to the generation can come about through the Gedolim *chas v'shalom*?

A

That is how Hashem is running the world, in order to destroy it [refer to Talmud Bavli Sanhedrin 97b: *The world will last for 6000 years and then be destroyed*]. The spiritual destruction of the generation already took place!

HOW INTERNET BLOCKS US FROM GEULAH & OLAM HABA

Can A Soul Become Destroyed Through The Internet?

Q

The Rav said recently in a response that “Many souls have already been burnt because of the Internet, *Rachmana Litzlan.*” Does this mean that these souls have become truly lost and that they cannot be repaired? Why should it be different than when Nadav and Avihu’s souls became “burnt” after they sinned, who certainly didn’t lost their share in the World To Come and who certainly didn’t cease to exist? Is there really such a concept that a person’s soul can become lost or “burnt up”? How does a soul become burnt up and destroyed?! And what about the “*Yechidah*” level of the soul which is indestructible? And doesn’t Rebbi Nachman of Bresslov teach that “There is no such as despair in the world”, which means that a person can always get a *tikkun* for his soul? I’ll also ask this question on a simple level: Are those who fell into the *tumah* and pitfalls already “burnt up” and it’s too late for them? Isn’t a person always able to do *teshuvah*....?

A

[There are two ways for a soul to become “burnt up” – in the side of devastation, and in the side of repair.] About the side of devastation, we find that the Gemara (*Talmud Bavli Rosh HaShanah 17a*) says that in the future, the wicked [those who remained wicked and didn’t do *teshuvah*] will become “ash” under the foot of the *tzaddikim*. They become spread apart like individual pieces of ash. This is a fallen, ruined state of “individuality”.

In contrast to this the “repaired” level of being “burnt”, is what the Gemara describes as “death by the kiss of Hashem”, also known as *hiskalelus*, becoming integrated with Hashem, which Nadav and Avihu merited in their deaths.

As long as a person is alive, he can do *teshuvah*, and transform his ruined state of being “ash” [die to his sins], into a repaired state of “ash”, as implied by the verse, “*And I am dust and ash.*”

Will A Person With Filtered Internet Get Into Olam HaBa?

Q

If a person just uses filtered Internet, will this, too prevent him from getting into *Olam HaBa* (the Next World)?

A

That will be the case if one feels “emotionally connected” to the Internet - and if he doesn’t break this connection by the moment before the *Geulah* arrives.

Making It To The Geulah And Olam HaBa

Q

The Rav said that if a person doesn’t disconnect emotionally from Internet and media connection by the moment before the *Geulah* arrives, even if it’s just filtered Internet, the person will not get into *Olam HaBa*. It seems then that most of *Klal Yisrael* won’t get into *Olam HaBa*! How could the Rav say something so harsh like this? Also, there are 24 Heavenly courts that rule what will happen to the world, and only 1 of them is the final decision. So why is the Rav saying something that is such *middas hadin* (the viewpoint of judgment)? Why not have a view of *rachamim* (compassion) towards *Klal Yisrael*, just as many *tzaddikim* in each generation are always making *tikkunim* (soul-rectifications) for all of *Klal Yisrael* and arousing *rachamim* for each soul in *Klal Yisrael*?

A

When a person remains connected to Internet and media devices, he contradicts [and blocks] Mashiach’s light. If a person has any *zechus* (merit) of his own, or if he has the *zechus* of a *tzaddik* to help him, he will merit to disconnect from his emotional connection to the Internet before Mashiach comes. But when a person remains with his connection to Internet and he doesn’t want to part from it, he cannot receive the light of Mashiach, because the *tumah* of the Internet cannot go together with Mashiach’s light, for they are in contradiction with each other [the greatest *tumah* versus the greatest *kedushah*]. As for the 24 Heavenly courts, they each judge according to a particular combination of letters of Hashem’s name of *adonoy*, which is from the word *din*

(judgment), but Mashiach's light is above these 24 Heavenly courts, and when one maintains any connection to the Internet he is not able to receive any of Mashiach's light.

Q

Why is the Rav saying that our main *avodah* now is to separate from the Internet and connection to media? Why isn't our main *avodah* instead to *daven* that all of *Klal Yisrael* should be *zocheh* to the *Geulah*?

A

There is what we need to do, and there is also what to daven for. At first we need to do our responsibility to Hashem, and only after that can we *daven*. Otherwise, we are like a person immersing in a mikveh while holding a *sheretz* (remaining impure). After a person cuts off all of his connection to anything to do with Internet, he may *daven* for the rest of *Klal Yisrael*. But a person cannot remain connected to the *tumah* of the Internet and at the same time *daven*.

Q

Why should we be concerned about the Rav's words that people who don't give up their Internet connection before Mashiach comes won't get into *Olam HaBa*?? Aren't there *tzaddikim* in every generation who do *hamtakas dinim*, who sweeten all of the judgments on people and who atone for the sins of the generation?

A

Hamtakas dinim (sweetened judgment) gives a person the *zechus* to disconnect from the internet. But if a person doesn't disconnect from the Internet, he isn't able to receive a *hamtakas dinim*.

Q

Why can't we enable the entire generation (even those who remain connected to Internet by the time Mashiach comes) to be worthy of the *Geulah* by davening to Hashem that every single Jew has a *nekuda tova* (good point in him) as Rebbi Nachman taught, which changes around all judgments on the person because Hashem sees the person as an entirely different person when we remind Hashem of someone else's *nekudah tovah*?

A

Reminding Hashem of another person's *nekudah tovah* is in the category of a "spark" of holiness that can help another person, but the *Geulah* is not a spark, it is a complete spiritual light. Although

a small spark of holiness is very powerful and it can burn up an entire pile of evil, the *Geulah* is a complete “light”, not a spark (which is only partial light), and therefore in order to be *zocheh* to *Geulah*, a person needs to be worthy of its light - having a spark of holiness is not enough for a person to make it to the *Geulah*.

Q

Besides for disconnecting from the 50th level of *tumah* - which the Rav defines as the use of internet and media - are there any other criteria that a person needs, in order to be *zocheh* to the *Geulah*?

A

There is a verse, “*Seek righteousness, seek humility, and perhaps you will be saved, on the day of the wrath of Hashem.*” We need to disconnect from the very root of all evil [the use of media and internet], and we also need to “await the salvation of Hashem”, and to connect ourselves to the concept of the light of the Redemption. That is the main way to prepare for the Redemption - besides for keeping the *mitzvos*, which is always needed, throughout all of the duration of *Galus*.

Q

It seems from the Rav’s words that the final *avodah* of *Klal Yisrael* at the end of *Galus* is to separate from anything to do with Internet and media use. Does this correspond to Mashiach ben Yosef (showing *mesirus nefesh*) or Mashiach ben Dovid (humility and self-nullification), or Moshe (who represents both Mashiachs together), or Eliyahu (who represents the teshuvah that needs to be done before the *Geulah*)?

A

That is a very beautiful question. The use of media (internet) is the all-inclusive evil, and therefore in order to fight it and separate ourselves from it, we need to use every aspect of holiness in our arsenal, to counter the all-inclusive evil of the use of media. However, on a subtle level, the *avodah* to separate from media use corresponds to Mashiach ben Dovid, who is called the very *havayah* (existence) of all created beings, and who is the bridge between all created beings and the Creator.

Q

3) Let me get this straight. What exactly is the *tumah* of the Internet? Is it the *tumah* of the *Erev Rav*, which is the evil *taaroves*, a hopeless mixture of good and evil that can't be sorted? Or is it the concept of *echad d'kelipah*, the evil oneness that connects together all *tumah*?

A

Echad (d'kelipah, evil oneness).

Q

Will Internet be destroyed already before Mashiach comes, or will Mashiach destroy it? Or will Hashem destroy it? If Mashiach will destroy it, will it be Mashiach ben Yosef or Mashiach ben Dovid?

A

It will be destroyed through the "light" of Mashiach – through both of them [both Mashiachs] together.

Q

What is the source of the Rav's words that if a person does not disconnect emotionally from Internet use before the *Geulah* then he will not be *zoche* to *Olam HaBa*? Why would he be included in the category of those who don't have a portion in *Olam HaBa*?

A

Because he is connected to *Shaar HaNun D'Tumah* (the 50th level of impurity), so he is not able have the *Shaar HaNun D'Kedushah* (the 50th level of holiness).

Q

How can it be that there will be Jews who won't make it to *Geulah* or *Olam HaBa*? Don't we know that in the Final Redemption every Jew will be there, unlike the first Redemption where most died out in the plague of darkness? And even if people are trapped in the 50th level of *tumah*, won't Mashiach (or Eliyahu) take them out of it? Of course everyone needs to do *teshuvah* before the *Geulah* (as the Chofetz Chaim and others said) but in the end of the day every Jew will make it to the *Geulah*, so how can the Rav say that if a person doesn't disconnect from Internet before the *Geulah* then he won't be by the *Geulah*? Is it because the Internet connection makes him fall into

the Erev Rav, essentially making him un-Jewish and separating himself forever from the Jewish people?

A

The higher aspect of a Jew's soul [the *Yechidah*] never becomes damaged, and it will certainly remain forever. We were referring only to the lower aspects of the Jew's soul [which won't be present by the *Geulah* or *Olam HaBa*, if a person doesn't disconnect himself emotionally from Internet by the time the *Geulah* arrives].

Q

If a person is not *zoche* to the *Geulah* (Redemption) *chas v'shalom*, does that also mean that he can't get into *Olam HaBa* (the Next World)? Is one's status of *Geulah* and *Olam HaBa* dependent on each other?

A

Not necessarily. There are the 7th, 8th, 9th and 10th millennia, and in each of them there is a new judgment upon all the creations.

Q

Does every Jew get into *Olam HaBa* in the end, after everything is over? If a Jew needs to go through *tikkunim* (repair) through being the suffering in *Gehinnom* (Hell), will he always get into *Olam HaBa* (World To Come) in the end? Or are there some Jews who don't get into *Olam HaBa* even after suffering in *Gehinnom*? Are there Jews who suffer endlessly in *Gehinnom*? And if there is, how are we to understand such a thing, why would Hashem allow a person to suffer endlessly?

A

Yes, there is an eventual end to the suffering. And afterwards, there is an awesome bliss that follows!

Q

Does that also include people who are connected with Internet, the 50th level of *tumah*? Do they also get into *Olam HaBa* eventually?

A

Even those who don't have a share in *Olam HaBa* can eventually get into *Olam HaBa* at the end of either the 7th, 8th, 9th or 10th centuries, and this depends on how much damage they brought upon their souls.

Emotional Connection To Zoom Shiurim

Q

1) According to the words of the Rav that if a person is still emotionally connected to the Internet and he doesn't give it up by the moment before the *Geulah*, he will not be *zoche* to *Olam HaBa*, *chas v'shalom* – does this apply also to those who learn Torah on Zoom and they feel an emotional connection to Zoom and to internet for all that it does for them, since most of their Torah learning is being done through Zoom?

A

No.

Q

2) And what about those who gave up all internet including Zoom, but they miss all the *shiurim* and Torah learning they were getting through Zoom and through all of their favorite Torah websites – will that emotional connection that they still feel to the Internet prevent them from the *Geulah* and from *Olam HaBa* (even though they gave up all of their Internet use already)?

A

Same answer as before. So there is no difference between these two scenarios, either way it's not considered having a connection to internet.³

Q

The Rav was asked if filtered Internet will prevent a person from *Olam HaBa*, and the Rav answered that if one doesn't disconnect emotionally from Internet by the moment before the *Geulah*, one loses out on *Olam HaBa* forever. Recently the Rav clarified that if only feels emotionally connected to Zoom and Torah websites, because of the Torah that one learned from there, this is not considered "emotional connection to the Internet". But the question is, what is the difference? If emotional connection to Internet holds a person back from *Olam HaBa*, what difference does it make if a person feels connected to Internet itself or if he only feels that connection to Zoom and Torah websites? Did the Rav mean that a person can participate in Torah classes on Zoom, as long as he is not emotionally connected to Zoom or to Internet, and the entire connection that he feels is only towards the Torah learning that he received from Zoom and Torah sites?

A

One has to disconnect from it [all uses of internet] totally, but if a person is only connected to the words of the Torah that he learned from it, this will not hold him back from *Olam HaBa*.

Q

The Rav doesn't allow any use of Zoom or Torah websites, because it's all *tumah* (impurity). So if a person feels a certain fondness about Zoom or Torah websites, because he learned Torah from these places, why is that not called a connection to the *tumah* of the Internet?

A

3 Editor's Note: The Rav seems to be saying that emotional connection to Internet prevents a person from Olam HaBa only if the person is using internet for purposes other than Torah, but if a person feels emotional connection to Internet because of all the Torah learning he gets from it (i.e. shiurim on Zoom etc) this is not considered a love for the Internet per se (but rather to the love of the Torah that he gets from it) and therefore it won't prevent him from Olam HaBa. However, according to the Rav, certainly if a person feels emotional connection to the Internet itself and anything that's on it (other than the Torah material that's on it), this is a factor that can prevent him chas v'shalom from getting Olam HaBa, because his soul cannot be connected to both the greatest holiness (Mashiach and Olam HaBa etc) and the tumah of the Internet (the worst depravity) at the same time, just as fire and water cannot co-exist.

It doesn't seem to me that a person feels emotionally connected to the "Zoom" service itself [when he is using it for Torah classes]. The connection that one feels here is to the Torah that he learned from it, not to the Internet. However, this does not permit using it for Torah - in no circumstance is it permitted *l'chatchilah* to use Torah websites or Zoom for Torah classes.

Q

Why does being connected to Internet cause a person to lose *Olam HaBa*? What is the source for this?

A

Because it connects a person to the 50th level of *tumah* [which doesn't allow a person to get into *Olam HaBa*].

Q

Many people do not understand the severity of Internet use, and certainly in our generation which is on a low *madreigah* of *ruchniyus*. Hashem doesn't make things too hard for us, and there's so much good in every Jew even in today's generation – any Torah-observant Jew who learns even a little bit of Torah is probably considered a *tzaddik* in Heaven, and especially because our generation has so many challenges. And I've heard *tzaddikim* say that our current generation is entirely *tzaddikim* in Hashem's eyes – especially any Jew today who keeps all of the Torah. So why would being connected to the Internet make a Jew lose out on his *Olam HaBa*? Especially if it has a filter. Although filters aren't the ideal situation, it's still a lot better than unfiltered Internet. If a person puts a filter on his Internet, isn't that showing Hashem that he cares about his *neshamah* a little bit and he fear Hashem a little bit? Why won't that little bit of *yiras shomayim* be enough for him to get into *Olam HaBa*??

A

Olam HaBa (the Next World) is entirely the spiritual radiance of *Elokus* (G-d consciousness). This technology [internet] totally contradicts and blocks that G-dly radiance.

Q

After death, do we remain emotionally connected to our natural desires that we had on this world? For example if a person dies and he still feels an emotional connection to Internet, does that desire remain with him even in death, or does that connection become erased after death, leaving him with only his true and holy desires of wanting to do Hashem's will?

A

Yes! Yes! Slowly, the soul despairs [from its worldly desires], because [after death] it sees and understands that it can no longer return to there anymore.

Q

My husband has Internet in the house – will that prevent me from *Olam HaBa*?

A

No.

Q

How can I motivate my husband and children to give up their Internet? I am worried for all of my family, relatives and friends, that they should all get into *Olam HaBa*! But they don't understand the severity and repercussions of Internet use. How can I save them for all of eternity?

A

Explain to them pleasantly and gracefully about it, from the depth of your heart, and in addition, daven to Hashem for them, with tears.

How Today's Gedolim Are Dealing With The Internet

Q

1) I've seen the Rav's words on the severity of Internet use, and while people sense that there is truth in these words, they feel that in the end of the day the Gedolim allow Internet use under certain conditions, so the question is: Why are the Gedolim silent about Internet use, and why aren't the Gedolim as severe as the Rav is?

A

Already close to a decade ago, Rav Elyashiv zt"l organized here in Eretz Yisrael a group of Rabbonim to rule on technology matters and to establish clear-cut rules about it. I met several of

those Rabbonim, and they said to me that they never personally examined these devices and what the different types of filters are, and they rely on the experts in technology for information on it, based on their understanding of how computers work, and accordingly, the Rabbonim decide what to do, based on the information they are receiving from the technology experts. These Rabbonim themselves expressed their pain over the fact that this is what's running the process, and they were very worried about what will result from all of this. There were also several Rabbonim, such as the *Bedatz Beis Din* in Bnei Brak who ruled that those who already own internet-capable devices must get the best filter possible. But gradually as time went on, the opposite happened. Those who previously had a kosher phone began to purchase filtered smartphones, etc.

One faction of Rabbonim were in great doubt about what to do about it, because it was a severe issue of transgressing Torah prohibitions versus financial loss for so many people, and to prohibit all internet use would certainly take away livelihood from the families of *Bnei Torah*, and all of religious Jewry in general. So they ruled that it is permissible to have such devices only for the purposes of *parnassah* (livelihood), and the ruling was publicized in signs all over the country. But slowly, those signs were taken down, and then newly 'edited' signs began appearing, in which they only advertised the kosher certification of the Rabbonim for internet use, without specifying the condition of *parnassah* uses only. Another faction of Rabbonim felt that the *tzibbur* will not listen at all to the conditions, and ever since then they have been treading a thin rope on what to permit and what they should ignore.

Q

2) It seems that the Gedolim do permit Internet under certain conditions, so why should we be more stringent than the Gedolim's view on this matter?

A

More than 20 years ago, I heard from Rav Yechiel Yaakovson who heard from the tzaddik Rav Yoel Kluft zt"l that the day will come when Rabonim will permit certain things and every person will have to examine well his soul to see if the heter (leniency) is really appropriate. It's astounding! He certainly meant internet.

Q

3) The Rav said that the Gedolim are leading the generation according to the level of the generation, and that is why the Gedolim are silent about certain matters or are lenient in certain matters. According to the Rav's words, this is leading the generation in destruction. How can it be that the Gedolim are leading this generation into destruction chas v'shalom?

A

This is all *hanhagas hayichud* (Hashem's way of oneness and higher mode of conduct) as the Ramchal discusses in *Daas Tevunos*, and it is a mode of conduct of Hashem that is very hidden and concealed.

Q

4) According to the Rav's words that those who remain connected to the 50th level of *tumah* via having internet, how can it be that most of the generation won't make it to the *Geulah* or *Olam HaBa*, *chas v'shalom*? Hashem is our merciful Father, surely He will save all His children and make sure that all of them make it to the *Geulah* and *Olam HaBa*!!

A

Because we are in the final sorting process. The sefer *Chesed L'Avraham* says that if *chas v'shalom* we are not *zocheh* to the *Geulah* to come before its time, there will only be 7000 Jews who will be alive at the *Geulah*. The sefer *HaDor HaAcharon* brings together all the words of Chazal about this.

Q

5) I am so heartbroken over the fact that so many Jews might not make it to the *Geulah* or lose *Olam HaBa*, *chas v'shalom*. I am especially worried for my family and grandchildren. I am crying for them and I am so distressed over this...What can I do to calm myself down?

A

On one hand, take your mind off from thinking about this, and on the other hand, connect yourself to *emunah* that since it is Hashem Who is doing everything, He knows better than we do, and that is the best *emunah peshutah* you can have.

Q

6) Should we try to make known to the *Gedolim* in *chutz l'aretz* about the Rav's words concerning all of this (the connection between Internet, *Geulah* and *Olam HaBa*) so that we can scream about this and make a big deal about it, and save the generation? How can I just sit by and watch the generation go to destruction???

A

It would be proper to do that. But you should only do according to whatever you can handle emotionally. Do not overdo yourself when it comes to this. This because when one is too involved in dealing with evil and in how much we need to separate from it, that can actually cause a person to fall, from being involved so much with the evil and contending with it.

Birur HaNefashos: Final Sorting Process

Q

1) Now that we are in the time of the “final sorting process” [*birur hanefashos*], does that mean that we are in the midst of a process that is showing who is really from *Klal Yisrael* and who is really from the *Erev Rav*?

A

Yes.

Q

2) Besides for Internet, is there anything else that is the 50th level of *tumah*?

A

The root of the 50th level of *tumah*, is this device (internet).

Q

3) Those who remain *chas v'shalom* connected to the 50th level of *tumah* [through internet use] and to the *Erev Rav* – does that mean that it is revealed “retroactively” that they were never part of the Jewish people in the first place? Or does it mean that they are really Jewish *neshamos* who have “fallen” into the side of the *Erev Rav*?

A

If they will remain intrinsically connected [to the 50th level of *tumah*, the internet], it becomes revealed “retroactively” that they were never part of the Jewish people.

Q

4) If there are Jews who don't withstand the final test (the internet) and they fall into the 50th level of *tumah* which makes them "fall into the side of the *Erev Rav*" (*chas v'shalom*) and they can't get into *Olam HaBa*, since they are really Jews and it's just that they have fallen in with the *Erev Rav*, will they still get into *Olam HaBa* at a later time, such as after the 7th or 8th century, etc.?

A

If they have merely "fallen" into the side of the *Erev Rav* [meaning that they didn't become intrinsically and emotionally connected to the Internet], then it is very possible that they can get eventually get into *Olam HaBa*.

Q

5) How can it be that a Jewish *neshamah* can become the *Erev Rav*? It is because the final test reveals "retroactively" who is really part of the Jewish people and who really isn't..?

A

Same as answer to #3.

Q

6) The Rav quoted sefer *HaDor HaAcharon* which says that even Gedolim leading the generation can be from the *Erev Rav* (scary) – does that mean that they can actually have an "Erev Rav" soul, or does it mean that they just have a "spark" of Erev Rav in their soul, a "part" in them that's Erev Rav (pure evil) but not that their entire soul is *Erev Rav*...?

A

It can be either [In some cases it can be a mere 'spark' of *Erev Rav* in their soul, and in other cases it can be that they can have an actual *Erev Rav* soul].

Q

If even Gedolim can mislead the generation in the final days, how can we not become broken and depressed about this? How can we get *chizuk* during the confusion and disorientation of the final days?

A

In order to get clarity and words of encouragement, it is recommended to learn the sefer *HaDor HaAcharon*, which gathers together all the words of our Sages and *tzaddikim* about the tests and

difficulties that will be in the final generation, and how even those who are sometimes called the *tzaddikim* will fall in the final days, *chas v'shalom*.

Q

7) What does it mean that Internet use connects a person to the 50th level of *tumah*? If a person sticks a smartphone in my face to show me a video or a picture (I am not talking about something *assur* to look at, but something kosher), does that mean that I am becoming connected to 50th level of *tumah* just for looking at someone else's phone for a few moments?

A

It depends on if a person forms an emotional, inner connection to Internet or not (if he feels connected to it in his very soul, or not).

Q

8) Often I am surrounded by siblings or friends who want to show me something on their smartphone, and they will quickly stick their smartphone in front of my face to show me something on it, before I can say anything. Am I supposed to protest at others when they do this? Or am I supposed to explain to them very gently that I don't look at smartphones? Or should I just run away from the person without explaining anything (so that I can run away from the *nisayon*)?

A

Try to keep your distance as much as you are able to [from the person who has the smartphone], but do it in a sensible way.

Q

9) Am I allowed to borrow a smartphone phone for *bentching*?

A

“This is not called one making a *berachah* (blessing), but one who is performing an act of disgust” [it is in category of a *mitzvah* that comes through an *aveirah*, which is disqualified by Hashem].

Q&A – Internet & The Final Level of Tumah

Q

Before I begin my questions I want to ask forgiveness from the Rav if *chas v'shalom* these questions sound disrespectful to the Rav *shlit"a*. Certainly my intention here is to understand better the Rav's view and I submit myself totally to the pure truth which the Rav is coming to reveal to us, out of his love for *Klal Yisrael*, to awaken *Klal Yisrael* to truth and to *teshuvah*, so that we can all be from those who are redeemed in the *Geulah* and to merit eternity.

1) The Rav has often said that our generation today is a “generation that is entirely guilty” [in quote of the *Gemara Sanhedrin 97b*] which will mean that we will be spurred on to do *teshuvah* though a harsh ruler like Haman. What is the source of the Rav's words that our generation today is indeed in that category of being “entirely guilty?”

A

Because the 50th level of *tumah* [through the use of media\internet] that has infiltrated *Klal Yisrael* today places the level of the generation today to be on the level of being entirely guilty. The *Gemara* [Sanhedrin 97b] says that if the final generation is found entirely guilty, they will only get the Redemption through being aroused to *teshuvah* through a ruler that's as harsh as Haman. Haman's main goal was to hang Mordechai [to get rid of the *tzaddik* and holiness of our generation] by preparing for him a gallows that was 50 *amos* high [a hint to the 50th level of *tumah* that will be in the final generation found entirely guilty who get “a king as harsh as Haman” [hinting to the 50th level of impurity].

However, the *Leshem* explains that even when the generation is entirely guilty for their sins, this does not mean that they are totally wicked, *chas v'shalom*, for that is an impossibility. Rather, it just means that they are found guilty for all of their many sins [and therefore they need difficulties in order to arouse them to do *teshuvah*], as the *Gemara* says in *Rosh HaShanah 16b* [regarding being written and signed for a good year, which depends on having more *mitzvos* or more *aveiros*].

The *Malbim* (*Beraishis 6:2*) disagrees, saying that a generation found entirely guilty implies as it simply sounds, and that this is why the generation of Noach was not found to be entirely guilty, due to the presence of the *tzaddik* Noach. He also explains there why Mashiach will come precisely in a generation found to be entirely guilty. See also the *Maharal* (*Netzach Yisrael: 39*) who says that if the final generation is found to be entirely guilty, it means that they are attached to a state of non-existence and loss. Absence comes before existence [*heb-dair* comes before *havayah*], and therefore in a generation entirely guilty (where they are attached to an empty void of non-existence), that is when Mashiach (or *havayah*\existence) comes. Understand this very well: The 50th gate of *tumah* is the absolute state of non-existence (*ayin* in the side of ruination), and think very well about what

this concept means. A similar concept is explained by Rebbi Pinchos Koritzer [*Imrei Pinchos* 1:121, 3:129]. And when evil (the absence of true existence/*havayah*) hits its lowest point, the evil destroys itself (see *Arvei Nachal, parshas Toldos*).

Q

The Torah world may have become influenced in recent years by the *tumah* of the Internet, but as far as I know, most *bnei Torah* don't have anything to do with Internet. We know that the *bnei Torah* are the "heart" of the generation, they are the "*neshamah*" of the generation that holds up the world, so why would the Internet lifestyle of all others make the entire generation of *Klal Yisrael* guilty and deserving of harsh decrees before Mashiach comes? The fact that most *bnei Torah* don't have Internet should be enough to make the generation worthy of Mashiach, so why should the Internet lifestyle of the working people or non-yeshiva crowd else ruin it for *Klal Yisrael*?

A

The generation can be found to be entirely guilty as long as most of the generation is found guilty, because "most is like the entirety", and also because the *Maharal* (*Netzach Yisrael*, 39) explains that a generation entirely guilty is when there is *heb-dair*, a dominant absence of G-dliness and emptiness that pervades the generation.

Q

2) How is that different from when Yeshayahu HaNavi said "Amidst a nation of impure lips, I dwell in", where Hashem punished Yeshayahu HaNavi for speaking negative about the Jewish people? Why are we allowed to talk about the Jewish people like this that they are found in the worst levels of *tumah*, impurity?

A

The answer to this is connected with the previous answer. When the 50th level of impurity descends onto the world, that is what places the generation on the level of being found entirely guilty, and it is not mean as it simply sounds, for there is a rule that there is no complete *tzaddik* found on the land. To say that our generation today is found in *tumah* is not speaking against *Klal Yisrael* – rather, it is speaking against *tumah* that has come down onto our world.

Furthermore, your question can be answered when you look into the following sources. Rashi (*Yevamos 49b*) says that Yeshayahu HaNavi was punished for speaking negatively of *Klal Yisrael* on his own accord, where Hashem did not send him to rebuke the nation. This shows us that if

Yeshayahu HaNavi would have said his words out of rebuke to the nation and to get them to improve their ways, Hashem wouldn't have been angry with him for speaking harshly about them. Furthermore, the *Maharal* explains that even though the prophets spoke harshly to the people, they never spoke to Hashem anything negative about the people. When Yeshayahu HaNavi said "In the midst of a nation if impure lips I dwell in", he was telling this to Hashem, though, and therefore he was punished. (Refer to *Ksav Sofer: Orach Chaim 57, Arvei Nachal parshas Haazinu, Pri Tzaddik parshas Pekudei, and Tzidkas HaTzaddik 116.*)

Q

3) Why is the Internet the "final sorting process" which is proving what each Jew's *bechirah* truly is and if he is choosing to remain with good or evil? Doesn't every Jew's soul have an inner will to be connected to good and to Hashem's will, and to not want to do evil *chas v'shalom*? After all, all evil in us is only an outer garment upon our soul, as the Rav explains so well in the book *Getting To Know Your Self*. So even if a Jew doesn't want to give up his Internet by the moment before the Geulah, why does that show what he truly wants? How is it different than any other person who is having a hard time overcoming his *yetzer hora*? He may be trapped by his *yetzer hora*, but that's not what he really wants! Not only that, but he's just doing it to fulfill his *taavos* (physical lusts) so at worst he is a person who sins because he isn't controlling his lusts and he is falling in to his *yetzer hora*, but he doesn't want to rebel against Hashem! So why is our test with the Internet showing who is really Jewish and who is really Erev Rav? If someone doesn't withstand the final test, he certainly lacks *yiras shomayim*, he's not afraid of Hashem and he's falling for his *yetzer hora*, but why do his wrong choices mean that he is choosing to rebel against Hashem? Why is our test with the Internet the final sorting process that's showing what our true will is, and why is it a reflection of what we want to be connected to for the rest of eternity?

A

It is because this device (Internet) contains the 50th level of *tumah*, which goes to the very root of one's *bechirah* (free will) of what he really and truly wants to be connected with. All other situations of *bechirah* are only branches of one's *bechirah* [whereas this particular test, having Internet connection or not, is going to the very root of one's *bechirah*].

Q

4) Why does the Rav speak about the depth of evil found in our generation and the 50th level of *tumah* and the Internet, etc. when the Rav recently explained in a response that one should not speak about evil because speaking about evil gives power to the *kelipos*, to the impure forces?

A

One reason is because where there is a necessity to, one must speak about it, just like Yeshayahu HaNavi would have been allowed to speak harshly about the Jewish people had it been a necessity. There is also a subtler answer. Evil nurses its vitality from fallen sparks of holiness that are contained in the evil. When we speak about the evil, we are giving vitality *chas v'shalom* to the evil. However, the 50th level of *tumah* is a mixture of everything in Creation, and it includes even holiness in it. The internet has in it all of the *Divrei Torah* found in the world, and that is where it nurses its vitality from – it is not getting its vitality from the outside world [but from the holiness that's in it – the words of Torah found on the Internet!]

Q

5) Since Internet is the very depth of evil, is it better not to speak about it and not to inform others the words of the Rav about it?

A

Same answer as before.

Q

6) People ask: If the Gedolim aren't speaking like this then why is the Rav speaking like this? For example, if the Gedolim aren't speaking about how we are in the "final sorting process", then why is the Rav emphasizing it? Why don't the Gedolim speak so severely about the Internet the way the Rav does?

I understand very well that the Rav is speaking from a very truthful place in the soul and that this truth really screams out before us. And I know that the Rav's words are standing up for Hashem's will, from a heart that burns for truth, which is not just being idealistic but to be followed in the *halachic* sense as well. But those who don't know the Rav, and those who aren't familiar with the style of the Rav, are perplexed how the Rav can talk this way when the Gedolim don't speak like this. Sometimes people get really upset at the Rav's words and they are against it and they feel that the Rav doesn't have permission to talk this way. And sometimes they simply have questions on what the Rav says. But the question is: What do we need to convey to people so that we can stand up for the pure truth, so that we can convey the truth to others, whether it's pleasant or unpleasant for others to hear?

A

Every *neshamah* has its unique portion (or part), and each *neshamah* must fulfill its unique portion. This is my portion.

Q

7) The Rav said that the way to overcome the evil and *tumah* of the internet is by revealing the power of *echad d'kedushah*, holy oneness. Since this is a broad concept and it can mean several things, can the Rav please summarize the ways in which we can practically use this power, *echad d'kedushah*?

A

1) One way is through *peshitus* (simplicity) and *temimus* (earnestness). By clinging loyally to doing Hashem's will, we reveal a pure, non-logical power that can counter the devious, conniving plans of the Other Side that is seeking to ensnare us with its evil wisdom. 2) Another way is through holy "complexity" (*harkavah*), which is by integrating together all the different ways of holiness, when it comes to Torah and *avodah*. By developing all-inclusive holiness, we counter the all-inclusive evil. 3) Another way is through having *emunah peshutah*, simple and unquestioning faith, in the concept of *Ain Od Milvado*, the reality that there is nothing besides Hashem. This is the holy "oneness" which counters the evil "oneness" on the side of devastation. There is also a deeper level: the utterly simple and literal level of *Ain Od Milvado* [see *Nefesh HaChaim shaar III* which discusses these two levels of *Ain Od Milvado*]

Q

8) The Rav often the term "media" to describe the Internet. Does this have any connection to the concept of the exile of Media-Persia?

A

Yes.⁴

4 Editor's Note: The Rav briefly answered this question in the affirmative, confirming that the use of media/internet is connected with the exile of Media-Persia, the third exile, which took place during the Purim story. There are actually several connections we can find between internet and the exile of Media-Persia, especially based on previous q&a with the Rav. The redemption of Purim took place during the exile of Media-Persia, and that is where we sunk into the 50th level of tumah by partaking of the feast of Achashveirosh. The tumah of the Internet is the innermost level, the 50th level, within that 50th level of tumah. So the Internet is really an extension of "partaking of the feast of Achashveirosh" and enjoying it, which is the thing that brought down most of the Jewish people except for a few tzaddikim who didn't want to enjoy it. And the Internet is something that is easily rationalized as something convenient and good that everyone feels they must have, which is eerily similar to the rationalization that the generation made when going to the party of Achashveirosh. Even if they went out of fear of Achashveirosh and because they wanted to be on his good side, they should have feared Hashem enough to stand up for the truth and not join the party. It was a tremendous nisayon, a great test from Hashem, but they should have chosen to avoid

Q

What is the connection between media and Internet with the Persian-Median exile, which was called Galus *Madai*, which literally means “the exile of Media”? Was it because it was in Persia where the Jewish people sinned by enjoying the party of Achashveirosh, choosing pleasure and comfort over following the will of Hashem, and so too we can compare the Internet lifestyle to enjoying the party of Achashveirosh, of choosing a life of comfort and pleasure versus a life of doing *ratzon Hashem*?

A

That is all true, it is part of the matter. The word “Media” is from the word *medidah*, to measure, and the opposite of being measured is when something is unmeasured and it has unlimited use. That was the concept of the Median exile, which was connected with Amalek, through Haman. Haman tried to break all measures by building a gallows 50 *amos* high, hinting to Haman’s desire to release the 50th level of impurity and thereby destroy everything.

Smartphones & Torah Life Cannot Co-Exist

Q

Is it better to live in a neighborhood with people on all different levels of Yiddishkeit, or should I strive to live in the most Chareidi neighborhood possible?

A

There is no necessity to try to live in a more Chareidi (religious, G-d fearing) neighborhood, and this is because the entire concept of being Chareidi is basically non-existent today. This is because

“enjoying the party of that that wicked one”. And we find ourselves in a very similar situation today, where it seems to us that Internet is something we need to have, and there are all kinds of rationalizations to have this device that totally brings down our ruchniyus, for it is truly the tumah that it is. Will we stand up for Hashem, for the truth, and say “No” to the Internet, just as Hashem expected us to say “No” to going to Achashveirosh’s party? Will we be from the tzaddikim who choose to fear Hashem and not join this party, no matter how much pressure from society we feel, and no matter how much we desire, to have the Internet? Another connection between internet and the Median-Persian exile is that the entire situation in the final days will resemble the situation of the Purim story, where the Jewish people will be in a dire situation from harsh rulers and evil forces resembling Achashverosh and Haman, on an inner level, and they will have to do teshuvah to arrive at their Redemption.

anyone who owns a smartphone is not Chareidi (G-d fearing) at all. To our pain, there are many people today in every Chareidi neighborhood who own smartphones, and therefore there is no more “Chareidi” neighborhood today.

So you would need to find a community where the standards of *Yiddishkeit* are higher, if you have a need to find yourself in a community.

Q

Since the Internet is the most evil thing to ever enter into our Creation, it should follow the rule that evil eventually self-destructs when it hits its lowest point. However, the Rav explained that the lights of Mashiach (through Mashiach ben Yosef and Mashiach ben Dovid) will destroy the Internet. So – what is the secret of how the Internet will be destroyed? Will it self-destruct one day, or will the lights of Mashiach destroy it?

A

Since the Internet is not “evil” in the simple sense, but a “mixture” of good and evil that can’t be sorted out, it will only be destroyed through the light of Mashiach.

Q

How do we use the “light of Mashiach” (*ohro shel Mashiach*) to fight against the Internet?

A

Through using the holy power of *echad* (oneness)⁵ to fight against that unholy mixture (*taaruvos*), the Internet, that evil zone which is unifying all information together into one place, which is the concept of the *echad*/oneness on the side of evil.

⁵ From ***Tefillah_019_Revealing Oneness***: “In the heart within us – and only in the heart, because the heart is where truth resides – is where *echad/oneness* can be revealed. The heart can reveal a unity amongst the entire creation – between all levels of creation which include all human beings, animals, plants, and rocks. Practically speaking, when it comes to our actions, we must separate very far from the evil of this world, but at the same time, deep in our soul, we must desire that there be oneness in Creation. Our soul can connect it all together. Our body, though, must be separated from evil, because it is not capable of revealing oneness within Creation. Therefore, our soul can desire unity in the world, but we must distance our physical body from coming into contact with any of the evil on this world. Oneness means to look at every Creation as being a creation of Hashem, thus, there is no such thing as a bad person. Hashem wants every person to exist, so we must see each person as someone whom Hashem loves. This is the oneness which our heart can realize. However, when it comes to how we actually associate ourselves with the world, we must distance ourselves from all the evil on this world. It is just that deep down in our heart, we should desire that all of Creation be united, that G-dliness be revealed in everything. When we say the words “Keil Elyon” in Shemoneh Esrei, on a

Q

The Rav said that if a person still has Internet and he doesn't want to give it up, and he remains inwardly/emotionally connected to the Internet, he has a part of "Erev Rav" in his soul, and in terms of how we should view such a person, we need to hate only this "Erev Rav" part of the person which remains evil, but we must love the rest of the person. However, the Rav also said that if a person remains emotionally connected to the Internet and he doesn't give it up by the moment before the *Geulah*, he falls into the Erev Rav's side, meaning that it becomes revealed how retroactively he never had a Jewish soul in the first place – he not only had an Erev Rav "spark" in his soul, but he was an actual Erev Rav soul, who is not part of the Jewish people. It's frightening to even think about! So anyone who has internet-capable devices and has no interest in giving it up, might end up being from the Erev Rav! How then can we love another Jew at all if he has Internet, since he is possibly from the Erev Rav?

A

If at the very last moment before the *Geulah* there are any Jews who do not want to give up their Internet use, *chas v'shalom*, it is then that they have proven who they really are, by choosing with their own *bechirah* (free will) at that very moment, that their will is to be eternally connected with evil, *chas v'shalom*. [So as long as the Redemption isn't here yet, you are still obligated to love every Jew and you cannot assume that he might be from the *Erev Rav*].

deeper level it is referring to this power of unity with the world that is unique to a Jew's soul, for a non-Jew does not have this deep power. (Even when we see a fly, we should not dismiss it as some worthless creature, but as a creation of Hashem. That is the idea of echad). The depth of the avodah of this final generation, as the Gemara says, is "Break the barrel, but save the wine." On one hand, when it comes to how we act, we must separate from most of the people of the world right now, who mostly act evil. But deep down we must still desire echad. "Echad" means that you want everyone in Creation to become united together. Although you must distance yourself from people for the time being, deep down you should wish that all of us would be united. What's the advice we have to survive this generation? People make asifos (gatherings) for chizuk (inspiration), but this isn't enough. It is commendable of course, and it is wonderful that G-d fearing people are gathering together to discuss what to do. But it doesn't help. They will get rewarded of course, but it doesn't help!! What, then, can help us? It is when we realize that the test of this generation is that we need the power of echad to counter the united forces of evil that have joined together; the holy kind "echad" can win against the evil kind of "echad". As we mentioned, we must be very cautious in how we use "echad". We must physically separate from the evil people of this world, but deep in our heart we should want that everyone become united together and realize the purpose of Creation, which is to reveal the oneness of Hashem. May we merit help from Hashem to realize that just as much as there is a tremendous of evil going on in the world today, so is there an equal amount of good and holiness as well which we can use, to fight it, and that we should merit to withstand the difficulties and see Moshiach really soon. Amen.

Q

Is there a connection between Erev Rav and Er, who both share the same acronym (the Hebrew letters *ayin* and *reish*)? Is there connection between the Erev Rav and the evil acts which were committed by Er and Onan [when they were careless to guard their personal holiness and therefore they were “evil” in the eyes of Hashem as the Torah says]? And if there is a connection, is it because Internet is the very impurity of the Erev Rav which brings a person into the worst levels of filth, to the 50th level of impurity which is also equated with Sodom, the lowest levels of immorality, which usually brings a person into committing the same sins that were committed by Er and Onan [wasting human seed]?

A

The place in a man’s body that is called *Bris Kodesh* can either be “alive” and active, or it becomes “dead” and inactive. When it is alive and awake, it can possibly commit the evil act of wasting seed: it is “awake” and ready to do evil [just as Er did]. When this part of the body softens, where it is “dead”, it resembles being asleep. Er’s struggle was that his male organ was constantly “awake” to commit the evil act of wasting seed, as if he never slept on this desire. That is what lies behind the impurity of the *Erev Rav*. This is because everything in Creation cycles back and forth between being asleep and being awake, but the *Erev Rav* is the concept of a mixture that takes the “awake” aspect in each thing and mixes it together, resulting in a “mixture” that is constantly awake. This is apparent, *Rachmana Litzlan*, in this device (the Internet) which allows a person to see all of the evil in the world mixed together in one place, on a constant basis, without interruption.

COMING OUT OF INTERNET ADDICTION

Teshuvah For Internet Addiction

Q

Concerning an *avreich* who doesn't have Internet, but who fell in a few times looking at inappropriate sites, which at first this began with a curiosity and later turned into a lust of viewing material on the Internet that is forbidden according to *halachah* to look at – what does the Rav advise for this situation? Usually he feels the temptation to use the Internet inappropriately whenever he is feeling empty inside, and he finds it very difficult to overcome those feelings. Would it be a good idea for him to make an oath that he will not use the Internet at all? Or should he at least make this oath for a month, and after that he will see if he has had any progress? He is aware that this is bad and he truly feels regret, and he wants to fix the problem, but he keeps going through a vicious cycle of trying many times to stop and eventually falling in. It would be appreciated if the Rav can suggest anything about this.

A

1) He should resolve that if he falls in again, *chas v'shalom*, he will impose a fine upon himself, either by adding on extra hours of time onto his learning, or by giving more money to *tzedakah*, etc.

2) He should occupy himself with anything that will keep him away from the possibility of being tempted.

3) He should yell to Hashem, from the depths of his heart, for help.

4) He should be willing to die rather than have another fall.

5) If he finds himself amidst the temptation, he should try to “appease” his evil inclination with something else that's permissible, which will steer the lust in a permissible direction. For example, he can try noshing on food that he enjoys, etc. However, he should not wait until the temptation is

burning. Rather, as soon as he begins to feel empty, he should quickly try to remove his feelings of emptiness, or at least minimize it.

6) If he finds himself at the height of temptation and he feels that he is about to fall in to the sin, *chas v'shalom*, he should pause a bit and not immediately go to the forbidden site. Even as he in the midst of falling into the sin *chas v'shalom*, he should at least hold himself back from completely satisfying his curiosity, and keep pausing a bit. Right before he is finished he should again make sure not to completely satisfy all of his curiosity. In this way, he at least gains that the evil inclination doesn't have total control of him.

7) When he finds himself amidst the peak of temptation, if possible, he should go immerse in a cold mikveh. If this is not possible, he should at least take a cold shower.

8) He should find a close friend or a Rav whom he can confide in, after he has a fall. His embarrassment [at having to confide in someone whom he respects] might aid him in holding himself back from sin.

9) He should reflect on the fact that Hashem is with him at all times, standing beside him, and that He sees everything that he is doing.

10) He should awaken himself to think about all of the suffering that takes place in the world, and he should imagine this suffering in front of him and be afraid that if he falls into the sin, *chas v'shalom*, that he may face any of this suffering as a consequence of sinning.

HELPING OTHERS GIVE UP INTERNET

Explaining To A Non-Spiritual Person Why Internet & Media Connection Is So Bad

Q

How can we warn family members about the spiritual war [against the Internet and media connection] which we are fighting?

A

To “warn” others [in *Lashon HaKodesh*] is to be “*mazhir*” others, which is from the word *zohar* (to shine). As much as you are able to, try to “shine” what you know on them, according to their capabilities of how much they can listen and accept. The one listening to your words will choose if he will accept them or not.

However, there are souls who are more open to accepting the truth, and there are other souls who are less open to accepting the truth. For those who are less open to accepting the truth, the main thing to do for them is to *daven* for them, and to cry to Hashem that they be saved.

My Wife Has An I-Phone

Q

My wife has an I-Phone and it's totally unfiltered. She needs it for work. She has the option of having a more kosher phone and she would be able to work from it - but she doesn't want to. I tried several times to explain to her, gently, of the importance of not possessing such a phone, for the sake of her purity and for the purity of our home. I explained to her how important this is to me. Yet she is not prepared to give it up. I have to mention that I know for sure that she's not looking at bad things on it. She's not interested in looking at that stuff. She is very consistent about

sticking to her boundaries. She's not the type to look at inappropriate sites. The children doesn't know about her I-Phone because she is very careful never to turn on her phone when she's home and they're around. Still, I am very disturbed by this [the fact that she doesn't want to get rid of her I-Phone]. What should I do? I am frightened because all of the signs I see in which the Rabbonim have stated how severe of an issue it is to own one of these phones, and that this includes even a person who doesn't own one but whose wife owns one. What am I supposed to do?? I'm *davening* hard about this situation, but in the meantime, I am not seeing her making even the slightest change.

A

Cry to Hashem about this, from the deepest place in yourself. Cry about her situation, but don't only cry for your wife. Cry for the many other people in the world who are in her situation, *Hashem Yeracheim* (may G-d have compassion on all of them).

It is not suggested that you pressure her about this. It won't help. If putting pressure on her would help her, then that would be thing for you to do. She needs to come to a point in which she feels that it's endangering you, in the actual sense! Don't pressure her to get her to realize this. Tell it to her from clarity and pure motivations, and tell it to her from the most truthful and innermost place in yourself.

My Wife Likes To Watch Movies On The Internet

Q

Ever since the corona lockdown, my wife has started to watch films on the Internet. She isn't seeing anything inappropriate on these films, but can the Rav guide me on how I should judge the situation? She said that if she would understand the problem with what she is doing, then she will stop.

A

Try to discuss together with her all of the factors that are involved with viewing these films and what kind of effect it is having on her soul. Make sure to split up these conversations over a course of time, and each time you discuss it with her, discuss the different factors that are involved with viewing these films, and slowly over time you should cover with her all of the different factors that are involved.

Teenage Daughter With A Smartphone

Q

I want to thank the Rav for all of the guidance through these dark and confusing times in our world today. Through the Rav's *shiurim* and Q&A, the Rav has given us much light during the darkness, bestowing *kedushah*, *shefa* and *simchah* on us.

We have a 17-year old daughter who possesses a smartphone with media capabilities on it. What should we do when she wants to show us something on her phone? Unfortunately the stuff she's getting on her phone is coming from social media and it's not something we want to view, and it pains us. How should we react when she wants us to view something on her phone with her? Especially since the Rav has said that a person needs to stay as far away as possible from media connection.

A

This will depend on the emotional situation of our daughter. If she's at the level of accepting the truth, certainly it would be appropriate for you to refrain yourselves from viewing her phone with her. But if this will cause her to feel a strain in her relationship with you or if she will suffer a lot emotionally from it, you need to think about it very carefully: On one hand you need to make sure that you are not ruining your relationship with her and you need to preserve the family tone between you and her, but at the same time you need to make sure that you are not receiving a very bad influence from her phone and that it isn't causing you to have a *yeridah* (descent) in your *ruchniyus* (spiritual level). In any situation, a lot of wisdom about life is needed, along with *davening* to Hashem for help in how to actually proceed.

How To View Others Who Use Smartphones

Q

If I see someone who owns a smartphone am I supposed to be *dan l'kaf zechus* that he doesn't look at bad things on it, or that he has a good reason why he has it? Or should I not be judging the person at all?

A

You don't have to 'judge' him at all. Why do you need to 'judge' him...?

Q

How should we view a person who has a smartphone with internet, does it mean he has doesn't have *yiras shomayim*, he's not being loyal to Hashem? Or that he's simply making a bad choice? Or that he's a *rachmanus* for owning a smartphone because of all the damage and repercussions that this will have on him?

A

Become less interested in what others do, and instead be focused on developing your own inner world. But when you do take notice of others who are in this situation, yes, you should feel pity for them.

Helping Others Give Up Internet

Q

Are we supposed to be making a big deal about getting others to stay away from the Internet? Are we supposed to be waging a war against it, or is this just making everyone look bad for using it and it's arousing accusations in Heaven against the generation *chas v'shalom*? Is separating from the Internet only something that individuals in our generations can do, the individuals of this generation who are choosing to dedicate their lives to doing what Hashem wants – or is it the *avodah* of everyone today? Do we need to keep being loud about how bad the Internet is and to keep publishing the Rav's words on how it is the 50th level of *tumah*, etc.?

A

Separating from internet is equally applicable to everyone. At the same time, people also need to become connected with the highest level of holiness (*shaar HaNun d'kedushah*). Always explain to others both sides of the coin – don't only explain how they need to separate themselves from this evil, explain to them also the good in store for them when they separate from it. *Zeh l'umas zeh*, for everything evil Hashem created, there is an equally strong amount of holiness and good that exists.

Q

Normally a person is not supposed to act above his or her *madreigah*, but when it comes to Internet is a person supposed to act above their current *madreigah* and give it up? Or should a person only act only according to their current *madreigah* of what they can or can't handle?

A

To tell a person that they must actually have *mesirus nefesh* - that is the truth.

Q

How can we save all of our fellow Jewish brethren from the *tumah* of the 50th level of the Internet, which most people have sunken into and they don't want to come out of it, and they simply don't understand what it's doing to their *neshamos* and how this is the thing that's preventing them from *Geulah* and *Olam HaBa*....?

A

By revealing inner *mesirus nefesh*, the *shaar HaNun d'kedushah* (50th level of holiness) becomes illuminated upon the world.

Q

Is it possible that those who *Baruch Hashem* came out of the *tumah* of Internet use were all meant to go through this as part of their various "journeys" that people go through in their life, in order to recognize this evil for what it is, so that they can help others come out of it, and in that way we can turn all of this darkness into light?

A

It can very well be.

Q

How can I get others to see that they shouldn't be using social media or Zoom, especially when everyone feels like they need it to feel good about themselves. We know that when people give up their media use they will be *zoche* to the *Geulah*, but it seems as if people are so spiritually asleep that they aren't interested in being *zoche* to the *Geulah*, because no one is willing to give up their media use. How can I get others to see the truth, and how should I respond to people who blame me that I'm making them feel guilty and ashamed for their use of media?

A

Communicate with them in a way that is pleasant, graceful, and humble.

Q

According to the Rav's view that a person is still connected with the *tumah* of the Internet when watching Torah shiurim on Zoom, is there a difference if the Zoom is projected onto a mirror or not? Is it less harmful to one's *neshamah* if the Zoom is only be viewed on a projection? Can it least be used as a first step for one who wants to stop using Zoom but he finds it too difficult to do so (since it may help a person gradually separate from Internet use of Zoom)?

A

That is a small piece of advice that can be helpful, but only if it will cause the person to consciously feel that he is achieving some gradual separation from Internet/Zoom when he does this. If that is the case, then it would be appropriate for a person to make use of this technique.

Q

When I speak to others of how important it is to separate from the Internet, they find it too difficult to give it up and they feel like it's just negative talk, and they don't have the energy to give up their Internet use. What can I do to help them internalize how bad Internet use is and how much they really need to separate from it?

A

Speak to others about making gradual changes, and speak to them according to their current level.

Q

What is the message that I need to give to others when I speak to them about how they need to give up their Internet use?

A

Your goal should be to get others to feel how Hashem is in front of them and that our lives are meant for doing His will, and that each person on his or her own level can do it, and in the way that's appropriate for them. There is no one way which works for everyone. Each person needs to search for the way [to do it] in the manner that is most appropriate for them personally.

Q

As the Rav has been saying, and as many Jews can feel, we are in the final days and right before Mashiach's arrival. What is the way that we can do *zikuy harabim*, benefitting many others, in order to save the generation?

A

Explain to many others that we in this generation are found in the 50th level of *tumah*, and at the same time, we also have a powerful amount of holiness we can access, in order to counter all of the *tumah*, and that is by accessing the 50th level of *kedushah*, which is shining stronger in our world with the closer we get to end. Explain to others what the concept of the 50th level of *tumah* is, and how to separate from it, and also do them the benefit of explaining to them what the 50th level of *kedushah* is – and how to connect to it. Because this is the *avodah* of the generation!

Q

So many Jews have fallen in, *Rachmana Litzlan*, into the *tumah* of the internet. But as much as I want to feel the pain of this situation, I am numb to it and I don't really feel the pain - even though I try to cry when I *daven* and say *Tehillim* and *Tikkun Chatzos*, as a *zechus* for *Klal Yisrael*. How can I really get myself to feel the painful situation that we are in?

A

Purify the heart more and more. Turn the heart of stone into a heart of soft flesh, a heart that can feel. In order to do this, a person needs to uproot his worst personal *middah* (working on his greatest weakness). Additionally, a person also needs to gain the *temimus*, the simple earnestness, of a pure child - who can easily cry [because when we are in a purer and innocent childlike state, we can cry easier, just as children cry easily because they are so pure and clean from sin so their hearts can feel emotions more sharply].

What Do You Tell A Rov Who Has A Smartphone?

Q

What should a person do if his Rov or Rosh Yeshivah has a smartphone? Is there any place to give *mussar* to one's *Rebbi* by somehow getting the *Rebbi* to see how he doesn't realize how he is falling right in to the *yetzer hora's* trap? Is there a way to give *mussar* to him in a way that is soft and respectful? Or should one strongly protest?

A

Enter into a conversation with him in a way that shows that you are trying to clarify something with him, and make it clear to him that you coming as a student coming before his *Rebbi* to discuss an issue. Present to him all of your information, and ask him: "What is the Rav's view on this matter?" In this way you can present to him all that you know about this topic, in a way that is respectful and careful with his honor.

Q

Is owning a smartphone, even if the internet on it is disabled and it can't get anything, still considered to be a connection to the 50th level of *tumah*, from the mere fact that one has broken his boundaries by owning a smartphone and coming closer to the *yetzer hora*? Or is it only internet-capable smartphones which connect a person to the 50th level of *tumah*? What are the parameters of how a smartphone connects a person to the 50th level of *tumah*?

A

If a smartphone cannot connect to Internet at all, although it is still a very big breach of boundaries to own it and it brings one closer to the *yetzer hora*, if it can't connect to any internet then it is not called being *connected* to the 50th level of *tumah*.

Q

What about cellphones which aren't smartphones ('dumb phones'), but which are able to send and receive texts (and certainly the question applies to phones that can receive images) which still allows a person to be heavily connected with the world? Is that called being connected to media, the 50th level of *tumah*?

A

It [just texting] is a connection to the 49th level within the 50th, but it is not a connection to the 50th within the 50th level of *tumah* [as opposed to phones with internet connection, which connects a person to the 50th within the 50th of *tumah*].

Q

How should we view the organizations in Klal Yisrael which have a filtering service that filter people's phones? On one hand we can say that it saved so many people from having unfiltered internet on their phones, and Klal Yisrael can't survive spiritually without these filtering organizations that enable kosher internet use, but on the other hand there is room to say that it enables those who would have never purchased a smartphone to own one and then have internet on it that's filtered....

A

It saved a few people, but at the same time it is a big stumbling block for the *tzibbur* (for most people) and it did more damage than the amount of people it saved.

Do Baalei Teshuvah Also Need To Disconnect Totally From Internet And Media?

Q

Does the Rav think that *baalei teshuvah* (those who have returned to Judaism) also need to disconnect from all connection to media and internet, if they have family members or friends who are not observant? Is that what is required of us during this time?

A

Yes!!! There are two general ways to disconnect.

One way is to do it step-by-step. Every day, take more and more steps to slowly disconnect yourself from the internet. In that way, you can go about disconnecting from the internet in a methodical, sensible way.

Another way is to quickly give it all up, all of it at once. (The first way, gradual disconnection, is called *hadragah*, “going in steps.” The second way, quickly giving it all up, is called *dilug*, “jumping.”) You need to examine and see which of the above approaches will work best in your personal situation.

Growing Up In A Home With TV & Unfiltered Internet

Q

I have a simple question, but it's very fundamental. It might not even be a question at all, but it's bothering me lately. We know that there's a rule that every single person has *bechirah* (free will), without exception. If we wouldn't have *bechirah*, then there would be no concept of punishment or doing *teshuvah* for our sins. We are all obligated to do teshuvah, so we obviously have *bechirah*. It is just that each person has his “point of free will”, as Rav Dessler explained, and each person has areas “below” his free will and areas that are “above” his free will. But every person without exception has *bechirah*. However, something is troubling me. Our generation grows up surrounded by *tumah* (defilement – the filth and obscenities of the outside world) from all directions, and not only has it been this way in the last couple of years, it has been like this for a long time already, especially since Internet started entering into *frum* homes. I don't know what Eretz Yisrael was like, but here in America, I remember that internet was in people's houses already in 1996. But even before that, the *peritzus* (indecent images, billboards, advertisements and inappropriately dressed people) here has always been a problem. The “50th Gate of Defilement” has already been enveloping us for many years already, especially in America. So, I ask: Where is our *bechirah*?? As we lament in the *Selichos*, “What should the son do and not sin?” So many kids have gone off the *derech*, *Rachmana Litzlan*, and it's simple that the parents and yeshivos cannot always be blamed, because they're growing up in a generation surrounded with so much *tumah*. The miracle is that people are *frum* today, and especially the fact that there are families of *bnei Torah*, even though we are surrounded with such an indecent culture, all the *tumah* of the world within everyone's fingertips, even within the reach of small children, *Rachmana Litzlan*. So does this generation really have *bechirah*?? Or is it that Hashem will just minimize punishing the generation, since we grow up surrounded by the worst levels of *tumah*?

Also, it's very common today that *yeshiva bochurim* and *bnei Torah* have grown up in homes where the parents were not on the level of bringing in an appropriate Torah atmosphere into the home, and because of that, many *bnei Torah* in America grow up with TV and unfiltered Internet in the home, and already from their childhood they have seen the worst things possible. Does such a person really have *bechirah*? Does he at least have less *bechirah*, since he has been exposed at such a

young age to indecency, which certainly left its mark on his mind and hampered his spiritual development? Especially because a child's mind is so impressionable. Children have been growing up in an atmosphere of the *shaar HaNun d'tumah*, the worst level of *tumah*, so how can they have *bechirah* to choose between right and wrong and not go after all these indecent images and material? Can anyone really be guilty today for having lewd thoughts and all of the terrible results that come from it, when his entire beginning was already damaged from the start, before he even became a *bar daas* (capable of mature understanding), which certainly impacted his *daas* (mature understanding) and his *bechirah*??

A

Every person, even in this generation, has *bechirah* (the ability to choose). But certainly the “point of free will” that each person has in this generation is different than the free will which the previous generations had. The main *bechirah* (choice) in this generation which is needed is to use the spiritual light of *mesirus nefesh* (self-sacrifice, giving up one's will, dedicating one's life to Hashem), which is able to uproot even the powerful *tumah* in today's times.

Why Is It So Hard To Give Up Internet?

Q

1) What lays at the depth of our struggle with the Internet (with not wanting to give it up from our lives)? Is it because it makes our lives so convenient and makes our lives so much easier (i.e. we can learn Torah easily from it, we can download shiurim and Torah lecture videos for free, and we can find a Torah lecture on any topic through Internet, plus it makes shopping and ordering so much easier)? Is it because we get Internet use makes us get our main pleasure in life from Internet, and therefore people don't want to give it up because it is so convenient and they get so much pleasure from it? If that's true, does that mean that the *Geulah* will reveal to everyone the truth, that using Internet was not *ratzon Hashem* at all?

A

The main *nisayon* (test) we face with the Internet is that it is the power of oneness (*echad*) on the side of evil, where everything and anything has been gathered into one single place. That is the depth of the evil oneness (*echad d'kilkul*), which counters the oneness on the side of holiness, *echad d'kedushah*. The fact that Internet makes life convenient and easy is only a branching aspect, and it is not at the root of this desire. And the same goes for all of the pleasure and increased enjoyment

that people get out of it: That is not the root of why people don't want to give up their Internet, it is just the branch out of a deeper reason [which is *echad d'kilkul*, the oneness on the side of evil, which is the desire to be in a zone where everything is collected together].

Q

2) Is Internet the very same power as the *ohr haganuz* (the hidden light stored away for the future) being used for evil, and if we separate from Internet, can we feel confident that we will be *zocheh* to the *Geulah* to that very same pleasure that we are giving up, which will be the pleasure of the *ohr haganuz* on the side of holiness?

A

Yes!

Q

3) Are all the reasons why people don't want to give up their Internet use the very same reasons that people really need to separate from it?

A

If we look deeply into this matter, the reason why people find it difficult to separate from Internet is because it has an attractive pull (the *meshichah*) of the evil "oneness" that Internet is, a pull that is beyond logical, the power of oneness that is on the side of the *kelipah* (the evil forces), which collects everything and anything under it. All other reasons why people find it difficult to give up, are all branching reasons. The pull that people feel towards it is something that goes beyond reason and logic, because it is a powerful, intrinsic force that pulls people towards it.

Q

4) Through separating from Internet, which is called the evil *ohr haganuz*, will a person be *zocheh* to experience the pleasure of the true and holy *ohr haganuz*, in which our perspective and comprehension will expand endlessly "from one end of the world to the other"?

A

Yes!

Q

5) Since now is the time to utilize our free will, do we need to already connect to the expanded view that will come from the *ohr haganuz*, by connecting to the holy “oneness” (*echad*) of Hashem?

A

Yes! And that is why there is an inner theme running throughout all our *shiurim* (the *Bilvavi shiurim*) which shows how we can uncover the *echad d'kedushah* in any detail or concept.

Q

6) Is the difficulty with giving up Internet use like the slaughtering of the sheep in Egypt, which was so difficult for the Egyptians because they would worship the sheep [and now their gods were being slaughtered in front of the eyes]?

A

Yes! And it is even more than that, because the Internet is the root of all *tumah*.

THE REWARD IN STORE

What Is The Reward For People Who Never Owned Internet Or A Smartphone?

Q

There is probably a huge reward that can't be described or imagined, for those who completely cut themselves off from internet and smartphones and from any connection to media. As Chazal say, "In the place where the penitents stand in, the righteous cannot stand in", and Chazal also teach that "The reward is given according to the amount of pain." So what about those who, *Baruch Hashem*, don't have internet or smartphones? For example, the families of the true *Bnei Torah*. How can we be *zoche* to the same great reward that awaits those who have given up their connection to internet and media outlets? Is it by being willing to do it and reflecting on how "How praiseworthy and how good is our portion, and how pleasant is our lot?"

A

The reward awaiting a person is the *ohr haganuz*, "hidden light" which Hashem stored away for the future, and it can be reached either by separating oneself from the "50th gate of *tumah*" [i.e. by giving up internet] or by being willing to sacrifice for Hashem and for His Torah, by not having internet [i.e. the true *bnei Torah* and all those who willingly choose not to have internet or smartphones].

What's The Reward In Store For People Who Give Up Internet/Smartphones, Either Totally Or Partially?

Q

1) I have heard, and I know personally, of those who used to have a smartphone and gave it up, either because they heard the powerful inspiration given by the *asifos* (gatherings) in America about the dangers of technology, or because they were inspired from others who gave up their smartphones, or because they decided on their own to give it up when they realized how much it was bringing them down. Can we say that such people already left the “50th gate of *tumah*” of the media, and especially if they no longer have anything to do with media and internet?

2) And what about people who gave up their smartphones but they still have internet in their house? Although they are still connected to the *tumah* through the internet in their house, still, haven't they left all the *tumah* that they were connected to because of their smartphones, now that they gave up their smartphones? And the same can be asked vice versa: Those who removed internet from their homes, but they still have a smartphone, and they put a filter on their smartphone (and there are some who won't bring their smartphone into their house and they will leave it in their car), can we say that on some level they have exited the 50th gate of *tumah*?

A

There are two levels of “exiting” [from the “50th gate of *tumah*”]. There is a total exit, and an impartial exit, where one is ‘hemming and hawing’ about it, saying “Yes, no... the answer is weak in his hands” [he is not sure of his answer]. There is a certain percentage of “Yes” in the person's decision [how much he is willing to give it up] and there is also a certain percentage of “No” in his decision [his refusal to give it up], and to the extent that a person remains attached to his previous state, that is how much a person wants, or doesn't want, to have an exit [from the *tumah* of the internet].

I Gave Up My Internet – Can I Have The Rav's Blessing?

Q

I just wanted to thank the Rav. We have simply gotten rid of our internet, and we are doing everything now through regular kosher phones. I very much want a *beracha* (blessing) from the Rav,

A

You have my blessing, from the depth of the heart !!!

Q

I just wanted to let the Rav know that today, I tossed my smartphone into the water.

A

Ashrecha! Ashrecha! Ashrecha! (You are to be praised!!!)

SELECTIONS FROM THE RAV'S DERASHOS

Following Media Conceals Our Holy Neshamah

The *neshamah* (Divine soul), which resides in the brain, is not revealed in most people. People think all day about many various thoughts that go through their minds, and this actually conceals the *neshamah*, even if they are permissible thoughts. The problem is that people don't realize what their thinking process is supposed to be like. Our thoughts are supposed to be constantly filled with thoughts of Torah, not constant thoughts about worldly matters.

When people receive their thoughts from outer sources, they never learn how to develop their own thoughts.

A person might be someone who learns a lot of Torah, and maybe he even learns Torah "*lishmah*" (for the sake of learning alone), but he also reads the newspapers, and he reads all the opinions of all these people who are writing the articles, and he thinks that these writers must be smarter people, that these are people who know more about what's going on in the world - while in reality, these writers are attached to worldly matters, gleaning all their opinions from an impure source.

We aren't even speaking about reading forbidden material; even permissible material is a problem. When a person reads so many newspapers or magazine articles, he absorbs thousands of pages of the opinions of this person and that person; a *mabul* (flood) of information enters his head. It's a real *mabul*! All this information comes and confuses a person and ruins his mind.

A person thinks into, let's say, what the army general is thinking. He thinks into what this secular person thinks and into what that secular person thinks (by the way, these people are people who are committing the three cardinal sins, and the reader is thinking into what's going on in their minds...!). If people read and read all these articles, can they ever hope that the Torah they learn will ever enter them?! How will their *neshamah* ever reveal its light with all this knowledge flooding into the person's mind, where the *neshamah* resides?

The flood of information entering people's heads today is in enormous amounts. We are asking Hashem to "*Return our judges as they were at first*" because the judges of old were able to take the words of Torah and see reality through the lens of the Torah. But when people read so much of what's going on in worldly matters, how will he ever see through the lens of the Torah, when their minds have been affected so much by all the opinions of so many people? Even if someone reads articles written by *frum* people, it still affects him negatively, because all the words are being drawn from an original secular source.

Even if a person is always learning Torah, he won't see reality through the perspective of the Torah if he's always reading newspaper articles, because the holiness of his mind has been tainted by all that he's reading. There is much Torah today, but there isn't much holy thought going on.

What we must do is cut ourselves off from any connection to the media. Sadly, only a few people today are really cut off from worldly matters and can see the truth about reality in the Torah. The Jewish judge (*shofet*) in the past was able to see reality through the perspective of the Torah. There are very few like that today, and that is why we daven that Hashem return us our judges.

There is a lot of confusion going on today – so many different opinions going on all at once. People read all this and become very confused. Even to read *chareidi* newspapers, on a regular basis, is very detrimental. It doesn't let you learn Torah or *daven* properly.

For anyone who wants to read an internal kind of life – a life of holiness and purity – know that there are two worlds going on in front of you. There is the outside world (*reshus harabim*), and there is the inside world (*reshus hayachid*). In today's times, there is almost no more *reshus hayachid*, because the outside world has almost totally infiltrated the inside, sheltered world we used to live in. That is one great problem of our times: that there is almost no place today that is totally clean from the outside influence.

A second great problem of our times is that what was on our inside, private world has entered the outside! In other words, people have "gone out" to the outside world and they have left their inner world. People "go out" to the world, and they think that they have to learn how the outside, secular world thinks...

People "go out" to the world for a very good reason; either it is too hard for one to sit and learn, or because he has to go to work to support his family. Everyone has their reasons. But the problem is that people have "gone out" to the outside world and they have learned how "the world" thinks, which is the terrible situation of this exile. There are even people (in the most extreme situations) who go to learn secular law, just to see how they think. People are learning about matters in the outside world that are rooted in the opposite of Torah, the opposite of the holiness of the Jewish soul.

If a Jew wants to gain the true perspective on things in life, he has to have a pure mind. He has to cut off from all secular media, and from those who are connected to them and their thinking.

השיבה שופטינו כבראשונה - "Return our judges as they were at first..."

May we merit to disconnect from all the impurity of the world, and instead merit the light of the holy Torah.

[from the original Hebrew *derasha* of Tefillah_093_ "Media Influence"]

Spiritual Destruction Caused By Internet

We all remember how it used to be that when a person wanted to hear a *shiur*, a Torah lecture, he had a tape recorder or a CD player. The world has advanced a lot since then, but look what the world has come to today. How the world got there, is irrelevant at this point.

Let us look at what it is now. The use of the media today was first used by Torah observant Jews for the purposes of *kiruv*. They started...all kinds of websites, for the purposes of drawing our brethren closer. But any sensible person understands that this was not *kiruv rechokim* (drawing close those who are distant). Rather, it was *richuk kerovim* (distancing those who were already close) – it distanced those who were already close to *Yiddishkeit*.

The following is just an example, but it is far more encompassing. Even in the most Chareidi places, they have a website, and they advertise their websites in the Chareidi papers. It doesn't matter what, it doesn't matter who – it is the same reality.... They are not advertising this to wealthy donors from outside Eretz Yisrael – they are advertising this in the most Chareidi newspapers.

Now, if one doesn't have any sensibility, he will say that this only relevant for those who have it for *parnassah* (livelihood) needs, and they got a special *heter* (Rabbinic permission) for it, and...to say such a thing either stems from smallness of the mind, or from cold indifference of the heart.

It is clear and simple. The path that this is leading towards is very understandable, for anyone who has eyes to see. In essence, the filthiest word that there is in the world – the Internet – is sitting in the midst of most Chareidi homes. It is clear. True, there is a small group of *avreichim* who have some *daas* and they are not found in this. But it still does not make sense that every week, there are advertisements in the papers which almost all of them are reading, again and again and again. Everything is falling apart!

Does anyone think that the signatures which are being signed contain a proper signature? Any Rav in Klal Yisrael who examines the situation can say it clearly, that perhaps it's better than the

what takes place in the outside world, but everything, all of these “*hechsherim*” (kosher certifications) are the absolute *churban* (destruction) of Klal Yisrael, an absolute *churban*!!

There is no way for the world of Torah to remain, if reality continues in this way. There is no way. If they do remain, it would be a miracle. The *tzibbur* community can remain like this? It cannot happen, because these things are all *tum'ah* (defiled). Understandably there are degrees of *tum'ah* for each person, each according to his own level. But when it penetrates into our own camps – it started from *kiruv rechokim* purposes and then it began to extend further than that, and it has penetrated more and more inward, to the point that *avreichim* are signing that they will only have “closed” [filtered] Internet. This is a “closed” *Gehinnom*! Simple!

If anyone thinks that these words are an exaggeration, he must know that all of these things have brought everyone, the entire generation, into the lowest depths of the *Sh'eol* (the abysses of defilement).

We need to understand that the generation is comprised of two parts. The part which we are traversing now is exactly the path that was traversed before the Holocaust. It is exactly that path. Understandably, there are differences, but the path is the same path. The end of this generation will be either one of two extremes. Either, *chas v'shalom*, there will be a return to what happened then – or, HaKadosh Baruch Hu will have compassion on everyone and take us out of the *tum'ah*, in His compassion, and skip over the attribute of judgment. But if not, it will be the same end [as the generation of the Holocaust]. It will be the same end!

There is no other way for the reality to continue in this generation. Chazal said that in the times of the *Beis HaMikdash*, there was not a roof which didn't contain an idol on it. Every home had one. We must understand that this is exactly what is happening today. It cannot be that there can be a “*hechsher*” on this, it cannot be! Anyone who already recognized this before understands that such a thing is insensible. It is like trying to make idol worship kosher.

Again, the intentions of those who want to make things “kosher” today are doing so with the intention of minimizing the filth of today. But what has it caused? It has caused that those who would have used these things anyway have become limited in what they could do, but slowly, it caused even those who were sheltered have been influenced. It is advertised in the weekly papers, week after week, everything with a kosher “*me'ushar*” symbol, and only for the purposes of *parnassah*, and only for those who need it. Each person has three *Rabbonim* who permitted it from him, and the like. It is impossible to have a *Klal Yisrael* when everything is built on *heterim* and *heterim*. It is all a destruction!

...The Jewish nation needs *parnassah*, everyone needs *parnassah*. So people need to go to work and there will be *parnassah*. It is clear to any sensible person – if someone doesn't see it, he is totally blind – that it's true, there aren't enough jobs available, and more business opportunities need to be

opened up – which draws people into the outside world. Slowly a person is drawn outside, in the world out there.

...The point which we need to understand is that people are living their lives in a way that mimics the non-religious. People find several Rabbonim who can give them “*heterim*” for all kinds of things, and when they find a *heter*, they want to take it further.

If someone thinks that what we are saying here is an exaggeration, or from a negative perspective, he simply doesn’t understand where he is found.

...This is the modern-day destruction of the *Beis HaMikdash*. There was never as much destruction as in today’s generation. The entire Torah world has been destroyed in our times, and it is the depth of the power of evil which HaKadosh Baruch Hu has brought down into the world. No one is to be blamed for it, it is just the depth of the power of evil which Hashem has brought down into the world. Understandably, each sect will find it comfortable to blame the issues on a different sect, and place different groups on different sides, but where are we found, practically speaking? We are found in a place where all of the proper boundaries between Jew and gentile, between the Torah world and the outside world, have been toppled. They have become completely trampled upon, almost totally!

[from the original Hebrew *derasha*, “Bein HaMitzarim_029_Spiritual Destruction”]

The Media Today Is The 50th Gate Of Defilement

The world today is a terrible and disturbing mixture of the worst kinds of influences, everything intersecting at once. The entire world, especially since the year 5760 and even more so in the recent years, has become enveloped in a certain spiritual darkness that has come down onto the world. It is all the presence of *tumah*, an invisible but spiritually present force of defilement, which surrounds everything in Creation, bringing confusion with it to everything that it touches. It all affects us, in the depths of our souls. It supersedes anything else that came before it.

The confusion and mixed-up values created by all of the *tumah* has entered into the places of Torah, penetrating even into our innermost circles where people are the most careful to observe Torah and mitzvos. It has entered into our once-sheltered society in the sneakiest way possible, and it destroyed everything. It has destroyed the entire generation already [from a spiritual standpoint].

Without getting into all the details of it, this is all a general force known as the “50th gate of impurity” (*shaar HaNun d’tumah*). It’s all the media and all of the smart devices which have entered our environment and into our direct social circles, and into our homes. Some people have a “*hechsher*” on their use of social media, by placing filters on it to make it “kosher”, but any sensible

person understands that although this was well-intentioned, all it has done is totally uproot Jewish neshamos from within. Anything in the world of social media, all of the communicating, all of the messages and all of the videos and all of the terrible *peritzus* (obscenities) that people can view today through it, has reached an abysmally low point.

The recent epidemic has now forced people to stay in their homes, resembling the verse, “*Go my nation, come into your rooms, close the doors behind you, reflect for a moment, until the wrath passes*”, and all places of Torah (yeshivos and shuls) have been closed, forcing everyone to stay at home. And what happened now? There are places where *bochurim* in yeshiva can go to so that they can hear *shiurim* on the Internet being given by their *Rebbeim*, so that they shouldn’t miss any *shiurim*....! It’s true! The generation today has become so spiritually deadened!!

This is all the “50th gate” within the 50th gate of impurity itself, the lowest point to be on. The wonder is that things have been like this for a while yet Hashem didn’t send us any wake-up calls like this until now. What Hashem is sending us now [this coronavirus] is all *rachamei Hashem*, it is all in Hashem’s great compassion for us that He has sent us this! Because the generation simply cannot continue the way it is. It is all filled with the influences of *tumah* coming in from all directions.

The Sages teach that at the time when the Beis *HaMikdash* was destroyed, every rooftop had an idol on it. Today it is the same idea: there is *tumah* everywhere. And now that people are being forced to stay in their homes, what is everyone remaining with? People are remaining with nothing but their smart devices and their connection to social media, and that’s all they have in their life right now! Naturally, people can’t be alone, they can’t feel so separated from the rest of the world, so they are spending all of their time now communicating through internet and media. This is all the “50th gate of impurity.”

It is clear to anyone that the world will not return afterwards to the way it was before. There have been easier times and harder times that we have seen, but the world simply will not go back to the way it was, for now the “50th gate of impurity” has been released in full force onto our world today, and that changes everything. It is no longer hidden, it is obvious, that there has never been anything like this before.

The “coronavirus” is not the problem. Rather, it is just a physical manifestation, an outer appearance, of a deeper issue behind it. The real issue here is that the entire world has become infected by the widespread influence of the most depraved elements possible, which is called the “*Keser d’kelipah*, the highest point in the side of devastation. The world today is a “generation entirely deserving of destruction” as the Sages said long ago regarding the final generations.

All that is left for a person now, for one who has become so infected by the impurity of the world today, is to be stuck his house where he can be connected to the “50th gate of impurity”, to the

media, which he gets everything from - all of his news, all of his communication, and all his needs....

Even when people learn Torah from the internet, it is all coming from the most impure source possible, the “Erev Rav”, and it is all a Torah being nursed forth from the Erev Rav! The Erev Rav stood far away from Har Sinai at the time of the giving of the Torah, as the Ramban says. But in our generation, it is not that way. Today the Erev Rav is right within our hands.

People are secluded in their homes and still connected to the internet and to the media, connected to the deepest filth of the “50th gate of impurity” within the “50th gate of impurity” itself, on varying different levels, whether they know of this or not.

[from the original Hebrew *derasha* “Core of Coronavirus”]

Empowering Yourself To Survive Evil Today

How Yaakov Avinu Prepared To Live With Bad Influences

“*And Yaakov went out of Beer Sheva and he went to Charan...*” Rashi states that on that night he slept, but until then, Yaakov did not sleep for the 14 years that he learned by Shem and Ever.

The 14 years which he served Lavan for paralleled the years he spent in *yeshivah*. Not only did he study in the *yeshivah* of Shem and Ever, he totally immersed himself in his Torah study there by feigning sleep for 14 years. Why did he need to do this? When Yaakov left the holy atmosphere that he had enjoyed in the home of Yitzchak and Rivkah, now that he was no longer in a good environment he would need to develop the spiritual power to survive the bad influences of Lavan. He was leaving his home to go to a place of evil, the house of Lavan, who was immersed in sorcery and *tumah* (the forces of impurity). In order to survive it, he would have to prepare for it by learning Torah.

What about the fact that he was coming from such a holy home, the home of his parents Yitzchok and Rivkah? Why wasn't that enough to protect him? That alone wasn't going to be enough to protect him from the evil influences of Lavan. In order to survive Lavan, he had to learn Torah for 14 years. He needed to become the *ish tam yoishev ohalim* (“*a wholesome man who sits in the tents*”) and only through that could he go out into the world and contend with the evil influences of the world.

The *Ohr HaChaim* said that in Egypt, the Jewish people were in the 49th level of impurity, and had we remained there for even one more moment, it would have been the 50th level, which is

impossible to exit from - and that in the final exile, we will sink to the “50th level of impurity”, and it will be naturally impossible to come out of it. The only way to exit it will be through the power of Torah. Only the Torah can take a person out of the worst levels of impurity. In Egypt we didn’t have the Torah, so we had to get out before it was too late. But in the exile, at least we have the Torah, and it is the Torah that can take us out of the worst levels of impurity which we found ourselves in.

When Yaakov left his home to go to Lavan, he needed a strong kind of holiness that would be able to counter the evil he was entering, and that was why he went to go learn Torah for 14 years beforehand. He gave himself the tools to fight with. If one learns Torah for a long amount of time like that, he can go out into the world and survive its bad influences. If he doesn’t have his Torah learning to protect him, he doesn’t have a chance.

We are now deep in the 50th level of impurity, the *shaar HaNun d’tumah*. But we also have a power which can counter all the evil we have seen. However, it is still our choice if we will connect to that power or not.

How can we face the evil of the outside? How can we really deal with it and overcome it? I am not referring to the outside world, to the streets. I am referring to the outside influences that have entered the private domains of our homes. “*There is no home which does have a corpse in it.*”

But Hashem saw that we will go through all this. He saw that we will be surrounded with impurity, and that even those who try to keep the Torah will be influenced. He gave us a power to deal with all the impurity. We have free choice to use it. What is that power of free choice that we have?

Firstly, it should pain a person how the world looks today! When you walk in the street, your heart can be broken inside about the situation of *Klal Yisrael* today, and our own personal situations as well. One of the Sages said [about the coming of *Moshiach*], “*Let him come, but I don’t want to be there when he comes.*” The Sages didn’t think they could survive our times, because they know that their spiritual sensitivity wouldn’t be able to take it. Only us, who are not so sensitive to spirituality, can survive these times, because it doesn’t bother us that much anyway.

A person today says “*Baruch Hashem*, there is a lot of Torah learning going on, there are many people sitting and learning. There aren’t as many *yeshivos* and *gemachim* as there are today!” True. But this won’t be enough to help us counter all the evil we are facing.

There is a verse, “*Go my nation, go into your room, close your doors behind you....until the wrath passes.*” Hashem placed us in this situation in which the world is so impure - but He gave us a plan to, in how to come out of it....

The Chofetz Chaim already said 100 years ago that the world can’t survive anymore if *Moshiach* doesn’t come in his time. It is now 100 years after he said that. There is a lot of Torah today, but

how much truth is there? How much heart is there? How much escape from falsity is there? How enslaved are people to the outside world? What is the level of connection that people have with Hashem, a true bond with the Torah? There are a few exceptional individuals who possess special souls, but it still pales in comparison to the general situation of most people.

These words are simple and clear. There are no novel ideas here at all.

The true kind of life can be gained by anyone in any place, as long as he chooses so; whether it is man, woman, or child. It is not too far from us; as the verse says, “*the matter is very close to you*”. But we must make it into our desire.

This week of *Parshas Vayeitzei* (5771) will soon disappear, and never come back again. Some people will say that the words here are too harsh, and others will say that it’s talking negatively about the Jewish people, and others will say that the words here are true. But what will happen after you hear all this? What will change? Everything just goes back to usual routine. Only *Moshiach* will be able to change the situation of the masses. But each person, individually, can make a choice.

Every moment, each individual person has the choice to decide if he will truly connect himself to Hashem and to His Torah, and to understand that This World is really *Gehinnom* (hell) – no exaggeration here. That’s the reality now. This is because, in the Next World, even in *Gehinnom*, there is no *tumah*, no bad influences of evil that harm our *neshamos*. On this world though, which is very impure right now and full of the worst levels of *tumah*, it’s a much worse *Gehinnom* than the *Gehinnom* upstairs.

There are so many *baalei teshuvah* today, who have left behind their entire past and upbringing, so that they could change over completely. They made a huge overhaul in their life, they have left their life behind completely so that they can live a life of truth. What about us? Are we, the *bnei Torah*, also capable of leaving all bad influences behind us? Can we make such changes too?

We need to return to the way the Chofetz Chaim lived, to the way the Ben Ish Chai lived, to the same life of purity and holiness which they lived with, and not to stay with the false kind of life this world lives. It includes abandoning the new styles of dressing today, the so-called acceptable conduct of today, the whole slang and language of today’s times, the various *taavos* (desires) that are so rampant in today’s times – and we need to return, to what we *really* should want, to the desires that our Avos, our forefathers and all of the *tzaddikim* throughout the generations, always wanted.

Some will say to all of this, “If you’re right about all this, then why aren’t the *Gedolim* speaking about this? Why are our *Gedolim* letting things continue the way they are?”

Someone once asked Rav Elyashiv *zt”l* why he doesn’t give *mussar* to the generation. Rav Elyashiv said, “If I would tell people what I really want to say to them, do you think there is even one person who will listen to me?”

There are generally two kinds of people today. Some people feel that we should only focus on the positive: “Our generation is wonderful, even better than the previous generations. Everything is great. Sure, we need to improve on some things, but overall, everything is great. This is the way to look at everything today, and that’s the way it should be.” Others, though, are aware of the truthful situation of our generation today, they are well aware of all the problems and issues of today, but they feel, “There is nothing we can do to change the situation. After all, we don’t live in the desert anymore. We live as civilized people, amongst civilization, and we have families to take care of. We need to get real and be practical. I cannot be the Avraham *Avinu* of this generation and be different than everybody else. What should I do already about it?!”

That is a very good justification. It’s a good defense. But the real issue that we need to wonder about is: Do we have really any kind of inner world inside of us which can counter the outside world we are in?

Yaakov learned by Shem and Ever before he went to Lavan. In order to prepare for Lavan’s trickery, he had to learn Torah. He had a good excuse for not having to learn – his parents told him to go there to find a marriage partner. He knew that he had to go there, because his life was in danger from Esav. But he was still going to the home of Lavan, who was full of impurity. He knew that in order to survive it, he will have to learn Torah for 14 years. In other words, he developed his inner spiritual world to fortify himself, so that he could face Lavan’s evil. He went to the *beis midrash* and truly learned Torah there, immersing himself there. He didn’t just go to a big *beis midrash* and learn Torah there over the phone. He went there to truly learn Torah, barely sleeping for 14 years, so that he could gain the spiritual strength to fortify himself. Of course, it was still hard for him after that and he had plenty of challenges to follow. But he developed the power to at least have a chance to withstand Lavan, and he did.

It seems that the outside world can provide us with some *chiyus*, with life-giving vitality. After all, we see that many people fool themselves into thinking that the outside world does have what to offer us. Indeed, if a person does have real and deep *chiyus* today, and he is connected in mind and heart to the Torah he learns, and he is connected to the *mitzvos* he does, he is connected in mind and heart to Hashem. Such a person has a chance of fighting the evil of today’s times. But if a person is not getting enough *chiyus* from Torah, *mitzvos*, and from the One who gave us the Torah, then he doesn’t stand a chance of being able to win over the evil in today’s times. He won’t have the tools to succeed in overcoming the evil of today.

The intention here is not *chas v’shalom* to cause you to despair or to become depressed. Rather, it is meant to help you become aware of how to fight the war against evil. When you go out to war, you need to know how to prepare, and to recognize how the [spiritual] war keeps changing. The [spiritual] war today has changed in the last couple of years. Today, the only way to survive the

outside influences which have crept into our homes, is by developing our own inner world within us.

This is not meant to be inspiration, which just comes and goes. It is referring to the very inner depth of what our life is all about, to be connected to what the truth is and to live it.

I will tell you this: I have a very hard time talking about this, and for two reasons.

(1) The first reason is because the inner essence of every Jew (besides for souls of the *Erev Rav*, who are not part of the Jewish people) is, that we all have a holy and pure *neshamah*, and it is just that the “garments” covering our *neshamah* are not always proper. It’s like a person who has a child who goes astray, and he has to separate him from his other children - it is painful, even though *he knows he has to do it*.

(2) Even more so, the very fact that there is such a level of evil like this in this world is already a difficulty to deal with and so hard to even talk about. It’s much easier [for me] to just sit comfortably and blissfully in a *beis midrash* and learn Torah pleasantly, reveling in the sweet joy of Torah *chiddushim* - than to have to talk about the outside world, which is full of such terrible evil and so unpleasant to talk about.

I don’t know at all if the words spoken here will be of any use to you. But perhaps if it will help even one person change and realize the truth - *not because I am saying it*, but because the person himself has *hopefully come to that conclusion on his own, and he will truly decide to give himself over to Hashem and to His Torah* - through that, perhaps that person will be able to survive the world today.

I am sure that at least two or three people, or more, will say about this that the words here are too extreme and that they are far from how to understand our current situation. But if there is anyone here who doesn’t have a heart of stone and his eyes can see a bit clearly of what’s taking place today, and he’s not enslaved to his desires, then he sees the truth, as it is.

If I slighted anyone’s honor here with the words I said here, I ask forgiveness of you. If the words here helped anyone here, then that will be my entire reward from this.

[from *Derashos_060_Empowering Yourself To Survive Evil.5771*]



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