

BILVAVI

CLARITY ON THE EVIL MEDIA

Adapted from the hebrew shiur
of the author of Bilvavi Mishkan Evneh
The Rav's classes appear on
"Kol haLashon" Torah Bank Service
USA 718.521.5231 #2>4>12

Every Generation Has Good (Light) & Bad (Darkness) In It

“Hashem fashions light, and creates evil”. HaKadosh Baruch Hu created His world with a root of good and a root of evil.

Of every day of Creation, besides for the second day, Hashem declared, “And it was good”. When creating woman, Hashem said “It is not good for man to be alone”, and there Hashem said that there is something which is not good. Later, the Torah mentions the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, in which there was not only something that was not good but something which contained within it evil. This was a mixture of good and evil, but later the Torah says that Hashem saw that mankind was being destructive and that He needed to destroy the world, for *“the heart of man is evil from his youth”*. Here in the Torah we see for the first time the concept where there is something entirely evil.

So altogether, there are four levels – good, not good, mixture of good and evil, and evil.

Evil has levels to it, in how much potential it has. Every generation had an equal amount of good and evil in it, a counterbalance in order to allow for man to have free will. In any generation, a Jew always had the *avodah* to clarify what the good was and what the evil was in that particular generation. Chazal taught that “There is no generation which is not more cursed than the one before it”, but *Raboseinu* taught that it is not merely a descent in the spiritual level of the generations (*yeridas hadoros*), rather there is a new kind of evil that comes in each generation.

One always has to be clear of what the good is, what the evil is, and how to go about it. Besides for the sins which the Torah enumerates, the Sages would enact decrees throughout the generations, in order to protect the observance of the Torah. In each generation there was a certain new evil that would arrive, and the Sages would have to make new decrees essentially in order to counter the particular evil of that generation. In the later generations, we no longer had such decrees made for us by the Sages as we had in the past, but the fact still remains that there is still a new evil that comes to each generation.

The Last Period Of This 6000 Year Era – The Preparation For The All-Encompassing

There is always a rule of “the whole, followed by a part, and then a whole”. For example, at first the entire Creation was contained, in potential form, in the first day of Creation. The beginning state of Creation was a “whole”. Then, Hashem made the parts – each of the following six days with all of their details. This was the “part” that followed the whole. When it came Shabbos, Hashem ceased from working, so to speak, all of Creation returned to its original form when there was nothing being made - this was the “whole” that followed the parts. In each generation as well, there is always a whole, then a part, and then a whole.

In the 6,000 year era we are amidst, the beginning is a whole, the middle is all the parts in between, and at the period of the end, there is a return to the whole. The middle part, which we are in, has all the parts to it. At the beginning of Creation was Adam who contained every soul. In each generation, more parts – more souls – came forth. In the end of days, we go back to the whole again, in the final generation we are at the end which reveals the whole again. At the beginning, everything was a whole that was entirely good. At the end there is also a whole, but not a whole which is entirely good like at the beginning of Creation, but a whole in which we see the creation of evil – a whole which is entirely evil.

Certainly, the end of days in which we see the revelation of “entirely evil” is all a preparation for the inner revelation that is coming, which will be a world that is entirely good. In the end of days, at first there is a whole that is “entirely evil”. In the hidden dimension, all is entirely good, but this reality is hidden and we don’t see it. The concept of something that is “entirely evil” is all a preparation for the world that will be entirely good, the revelation of Mashiach, which is when Hashem will remove all impurity and all sin, revealing the “world that is entirely good”.

But the point that has to come before that - the world of “entirely evil”, which is in the end of days – and it is not merely another evil, but an entirely novel kind of evil in Creation.

The Final Generation Contains A Novel, All-Inclusive Evil

In all generations until now, there would be a certain kind of evil, such as the desire for idol worship and incest, but in the end of days, there is the root, or the whole and entirety, of

evil. Evil in its entirety, all at once, is an entirely new kind of evil that has never been in the world before until this generation.

All the advice that worked for previous generations in order to be saved from evil will have to be combined together, in order to **reveal the inner advice** that will save us, from the root of evil that has become revealed in our generation.

Chazal taught that Mashiach comes only in a generation that is “entirely” worthy [of the Redemption] or “entirely” guilty.¹ In other words, Mashiach comes only when there is a whole, where there is a situation of “entirety” [or all-inclusiveness]. If the generation would be mostly good or mostly evil, there is no whole, and it is instead a division with a majority and a minority to it. But in the last generation, there is either entirely good, or entirely bad. It is a situation of “entirety” – it is where there is either entirely good, or where there is entirely evil. But in either case, the final generation is always a situation of “entirety”. When we aren’t *zocheh* (meritorious), the final generation is a situation of “being entirely guilty”. In the generation of the Flood, the world deserved punishment and Hashem destroyed the world [except for Noach and his family]. But in the final generation where everyone is guilty, there are not merely many people committing sins, rather there is a whole of evil that is present in the generation, placing the generation into one that is “entirely” guilty.

Of the final generation which is called “entirely guilty”, *Raboseinu* taught that all evil forces will be unleashed on the world², revealing a new creation in which there is an “entirety of evil”.

The nature of committing an *aveirah* (sin) is that it drags a person into committing another sin and another (*aveirah goreres aveirah*), and while *mitzvos* also have that effect of pulling a person after doing another *mitzvah*, doing *aveiros* also have that power of causing people to be dragged into doing more and more of it. Evil can make people feel connected to it the more that they immerse themselves in it. This is a novelty. Though normally there is a rule that “Evil (the Other Side) starts with unity and ends with separation” – all evil is really from the “world of separation” and therefore logically it should make us feel separate from it - there is a novelty in our generation in which evil has the power to make people feel very

¹ Talmud Bavli Sanhedrin 97a

² Explained at length in *sefer Daas Tevunos (Ramchal)*

connected to it. In the final generation, people are not only doing many *aveiros*, but they are able to feel connected with the evil and *aveiros* that they do.

There was never a sin until now that existed which contained all evil in it. Every sin was only a partial kind of evil. In the final generation, the generation is found in an evil that combines all sins together into one place. It is *all sins connected together into one zone, revealing a whole new intensity to evil*. This is not merely a partial manifestation of evil, but an all-inclusive evil. This never happened in any generations of the past. In the past there were generations with less evil or more evil in it, but never was there a situation in which all evil existed at once. Only in the final generation, when it is a situation of “entirely guilty”, can there be such an existence of an entirety of evil, one that is all-inclusive, with every evil present at once in one single zone.

The Evil Essence Behind The Internet-Devices

Everything has an outer layer and inner layer to it. The outer layer of evil today is the modern devices [of internet], which contain in them all evil, and all at once. But that is only regarding the device itself – we need to really understand the essence that is behind this device.

The *sefarim hakodeshim* revealed a concept of “soul impregnation” (*ibbur*), which is that whenever one commits a sin, a soul of a wicked person becomes latched onto him and has a negative influence on him, and likewise if one does a *mitzvah*, a soul of a *tzaddik* becomes impregnated within him and has a good effect on him. In the final generation which is “entirely guilty”, all wicked souls of the past are present in our generation, since every wicked soul of history has been reincarnated into this generation. Thus, when one connects to the evil of today - or even if he connects to just a part of it - he is really connecting himself with all the wicked souls at once, which will latch themselves onto his soul and continue to be of negative influence on him.

On the side of holiness there is a rule that “Holding onto a part of it is like grasping all of it”,³ like holding the handle of a vessel which is really like holding the entire vessel even

³ *Baal Shem Tov*

though he's only holding one part. In our generation, a person holding onto only a part of the evil in our generation today is really holding onto all of it. By connecting to even one part of the evil, the person is connecting himself with all of the evil – and then who knows where he will end up, and what his end will be...?

Filtered Evil

When we understand that this is the reality, we can understand the following.

If we have a sink that has insects in the tap water, we can put a filter on it, so that the insects get filtered out and we only get the water. So too with internet and all internet-devices, simple reasoning says that “if there is no other path to get around” [to avoid the internet and these devices], then naturally and logically we understand that it's better if we use filtered internet to get around all the problems. That sounds reasonable, but if we look at this from a more inner perspective, we can notice the following.

If the problem with internet devices were merely that a person could see one particular kind of evil, or that he could see different partial kinds of evil, then we can make a differentiation between a device that's impure (not good to use) and a device that's fine to use. But the problem is that the final generation contains a new kind of evil that's entirely evil, not just partial evil. And therefore, holding onto even a part of that evil is like holding onto all of the evil.

Using a filtered internet device - in which a person is holding onto only a part of the evil - is really like holding onto all of it.

When this particular understanding is absent, then we can get together every Vaad Rabbonim and come up with all kinds of ways on how the evil can be limited - and *Baruch Hashem* they did manage to limit and restrain it - but when we understand what's really taking place here, we will realize that it's an approach that's going to end in destruction, because such an approach is already doomed to fail from the start. Because there is not merely a problem here of committing an *aveirah* that's dragging a person into committing another *aveirah* and then another, which would only be one sin at a time. Rather, it is

connecting a person to all of the evil in the world at once, being connected to every single *aveirah* at every single moment.

Being found amidst all of the evil is also called the concept of the “50 gates of evil”. The 49 gates of evil are all different, partial kinds of evil, but the 50th gate of evil is an all-inclusive evil, it holds all the “50 gates of evil” within it. Holding onto even a *part* of it is like holding onto *all* of it! It combines every part of evil within it. Therefore, having even a part of it is like holding onto all of it - holding onto a bit of the 50th gate of evil is really being connected to all of it.

Thus, all the advice and ways today of dealing with this evil are only dealing with the parts of this evil - with particular aspects of its evil - by avoiding the various parts of evil that are coming from it. But all of that advice won't be able to deal with the evil itself, with the entirety of the evil itself, which all these parts of evil are coming from.

The Final Evil – A “Permitted” Evil That's “Necessary” For Living

Throughout history, there has always been good and evil. There was always *mitzvos* which people disregarded and took lightly, and there were also sins which people ignored. When people would sin repeatedly, they would deem it permissible and sin more: “Once a person repeats the sin, it is deemed permissible to him.”⁴ But in the final generation, where there is an evil that is entirely evil, *the evil makes you think that it's needed in order to be able to live.*

It doesn't merely present itself as “possible” for you to use or “permitted” for you now that you've given in to it so many times – rather, it totally convinces you that it's *absolutely necessary* for you to live with. It starts out being needed for some things in life, and then it gets turned into a normal part of life that's needed constantly. So much so that even a Torah observant person - each person at his own level - can have access to this evil and yet he has a *hechsher* (kosher certification) on it!

⁴ Talmud Bavli Yoma 88a

The way to understand this is, that it can be nothing other than what Chazal described as the “50th gate of impurity”.⁵ The 50th and final gate of evil contains all evil in it, and it acts like the hog, which sticks out its split hooves and says, “I am kosher.” It contains every kind of forbidden thing, yet even the forbidden can become permitted if it becomes nullified, as in the *halachos* of meat and milk, but the all-inclusive evil of today has within it every kind of evil and makes it all seem permissible, as if we have a *heter* (permission according to *halachah*) to use the evil.

Certainly there was never any intention to permit it forever, but the 50th evil of impurity’s evil is (1) all-inclusive evil, (2) it is deemed permissible, and (3) it presents itself as kosher and pure - to the degree that it convinces everyone that it’s needed for living, and even entering into the Torah world. The fact that the most impure thing conceivable, which includes in it every evil and which is deemed permissible and necessary, a device that holds within it the 50th gate of impurity – is the very depth of the challenge that the final generation faces. And that is why it is a challenge which surrounds us from all sides, from in front of us and behind us – as the *sefarim hakedoshim* describe of the dangers that come to us from the “50th gate of impurity”.

Seeing What’s Taking Place

When we never think or try to have some understanding of the nature of the evil that is here today, easily a person can fall into sinning with it, like the *Mesilas Yesharim* says, that one who doesn’t contemplate the dangers of a sin is like a blind man near the river who can fall in at any second. Even if we are not blind and we do see the problem, we still need to be careful, and at least we can see what the problem is and we will know that we need to be careful.

In the final generation though, almost everyone is like the blind person walking near the river, because he simply doesn’t see the danger next to him. He doesn’t understand that there is a new evil here.

⁵ The nature of the “50th Gate of Impurity” is described in *sefer Zohar Chai (Kamarna Rebbe) Beraishis 1:72, Chasam Sofer (Toras Moshe) Devarim 32:3, Ohr HaChaim Shemos 3:8*

When it comes to all sins, there is a *yetzer hora* to be *moreh heter*, to deem it permissible.⁶ But this is not merely a *moreh heter*, it is rather an evil that convinces you that you need to always use it and make it into a normal part of your life. The *heter*, the fact that people easily view it as permissible, has become turned into a part of this *kelipah* (lit. “shell”, or impure force) that exists.

Chazal said that one should “stay away a distance of 99 gates” from anything forbidden. But this is something entirely evil, and the *only way to deal with it is to completely disconnect from it*.

That is all with regards to how we should view this matter, of how things really should be. But the reality we see in front of us, the way people actually go about it, as we can plainly see, is entirely different. Every day, it is becoming turned more and more into an acceptable, normal part of life.

Rationalized Evil

Let’s think about the different categories of people and how they act about it:

- (1) There are those who don’t recognize at all the problem of using it.
- (2) There are those who do recognize the danger of these devices so they limit the dangers for themselves [i.e. filtering it or limiting their use].
- (3) Others recognize the danger but they reason it’s fine to use it for *parnassah*.

It’s clear and simple though that earning livelihood – the obligation to make *hishtadlus* (effort) is a curse that was placed on mankind. Does any sensible person think that Hashem requires a person to make *hishtadlus* to earn his *parnassah* by owning the most impure thing that ever existed?! Something that’s entirely evil and destructive can be a *hishtadlus* for *parnassah*?

Of course, we don’t deny the challenge that if a person doesn’t have the device, he’s giving up a good chunk of his possibility to earn livelihood. But the fact that people can even

⁶ See Talmud Bavli Bava Metzia 3b

think that it's *hishtadlus* to own this device - the most destructive thing that ever existed since the start of Creation - is astounding. The Rabbonim couldn't forbid it for *parnassah* because the *tzibbur* wouldn't be able to handle such a decree, but the truth is that forbidding it even for *parnassah* cannot be called a decree" on the *tzibbur*", it's rather such a *destructive reality which necessitates us to stay away from it entirely*.

How Can We Stay Away From Internet-Devices?

The clearer we are about the nature of the evil, it will be easier to separate from it, to have nothing to do with it.

We should first understand that this is the challenge of the final generation. It's not merely about staying away from internet devices, it's rather about separating ourselves from the all-inclusive evil from all the nations of the world in it, which just so happens to be revealed by way of this device.

An Evil That's Fooling Even Prominent People To Own Smartphones

We shouldn't be too surprised then, when, *Rachmana Litzlan*, there are Roshei Yeshivah and Dayanim who have this device, with a *hechsher* on it, and because they feel it's necessary for them to have it. Those working for Kashrus organizations are even required to have this device in order for the *kashrus* to be run professionally and up-to-date. Today every average Rosh Yeshivah who has to leave Eretz Yisrael to go collecting here in America has this device, or else he can't make connections with those whom he needs money from. All the money going to support the bochurim in his yeshiva is then coming from an impure source, because "Anything that comes from the impure, is impure."⁷

In Conclusion - First Recognize The Evil

So far we have explained, firstly, the clear perspective of how to view the root of the evil that is revealed through this device.

⁷ Talmud Bavli Bechoros 6b

Most people in the generation today are like a *tinok shenishbah*, “captured children” who don’t know any better, because they don’t recognize the evil. But anyone who learns Torah in-depth today must become very clear about the war that is taking place in our generation.

The *avodah*, and the way to be saved from it, is already the second step, but the first and elementary step is *to simply recognize what this evil in all intensity is*, to become very, very clear about this - what the evil in the final generation is, which is what we need to deal with.

Q&A

QUESTION 1: What about those who aren’t connected to *pnimiyus*, how can all this be explained to them? What about working people who feel like they need to have it? **RAV’S ANSWER:** There is no one single answer to this question because certainly all those who have it are not the same level. There are those who have it for work, and prominent people who have it for certain reasons which they decided are valid reasons to have it - I don’t know if Heaven will accept their excuses or not, I don’t know at all – but, it’s hard to hold them guilty for this, since there’s a total *moreh heter* (powerful rationalization which one rules for himself) which people come up with to have it. Certainly if a person would feel a burning desire for *kedushah* and for staying away from the evil, then he wouldn’t have it, but there is still a big place to be *dan l’kaf zechus* others who have it [since they don’t recognize the problem]. When it comes to viewing others who have it, we can be *dan l’kaf zechus* them, but of course when it comes to ourselves then it’s different.

QUESTION 2: Do we have to talk to each person according to his soul-root, meaning we should only rebuke others who are more *pnimi*? **RAV’S ANSWER:** Even a person with a high level soul doesn’t necessarily recognize this evil, because it’s not obvious to everyone that it’s evil. Any person today may simply view it as a new device that’s simply a test of the generation, a challenge to deal with, but he doesn’t have the understanding that it’s really representing the very level of the generation which is being revealed through this device.

QUESTION 3: Maybe it depends on one’s soul-level, like if one is born with a higher level soul and he is naturally more *pnimi* so he understands naturally that we shouldn’t have it but if he was born with a lower-level soul and he isn’t that spiritual, then he thinks that it’s part of life. **RAV’S ANSWER:** Certainly there are those with a higher level soul and they naturally separate from it, but even one with a higher-level soul, if he is born into a family where there is an environment of laxity in Torah and *yiras shomayim* (fear of Heaven) then he won’t recognize the issue, and even if he does, he would have to be very, very strong-minded in order to separate himself from it, since he is surrounded all day with internet-devices in his house. And especially if he is growing up in a shul where the Rav there has a smartphone. He will have great difficulty even absorbing what’s going on here, and it’s very difficult for him to attain any clarity about this.

QUESTION 4: Everything the Rav said here is true about this device in particular or is true about every *aveirah*? **RAV’S ANSWER:** In the final generation, the novelty of the evil that exists is that the evil makes

one pulled after every single *aveirah*, and that has never been the case in any other generation. There were always *aveiros* which pull one after committing another *aveirah* and another, but in this generation there's a device that pulls one after every single *aveirah* all at once, because this is a generation where the concept of "all-inclusiveness" is dominant.

QUESTION 5: What about using a computer if there is no way to connect to Internet on it? **RAV'S ANSWER:** Creation is not built in a way where everything is either "yes" or "no". Rather, everything has become a mix of good and bad because of eating from the *Eitz HaDaas Tov V'Ra* which was a mixture of good and bad. This device [a computer] is therefore no different than any other mixture of good and evil on our world, since everything on the world is affected by the *Eitz HaDaas*. If we wouldn't be allowed to use anything that's a mixture of good and evil, then we wouldn't be allowed to use anything on the world, and that's not possible. Therefore, it is something that has to be thought about carefully before using it. If something on it isn't totally forbidden to use, then one has to weigh it out if he should use it not. And that changes with each person, since each person is on a different level, so there is no one answer to this question. There are certainly great Torah scholars using computers and it helped them a lot, and a tremendous amount of Torah has come to our generation because of computers, but there are also others who were completely ruined by computers. So it needs to be thought about by each person, because there's certainly a danger in it. Certainly there's reason to say not to use it and that it contains a risk, because it can cause a person to get dragged after all kinds of not-good things when he uses a computer. A person has to weigh the gains versus the risk and dangers he may have from it, because we know that even very great people fell low from using it. We cannot say it is forbidden or permitted to use, rather that each person has to think about it carefully if he should use a computer or not, to weigh it out very carefully what the gains and dangers from it are, and if the dangers outweigh the gains from it or not, and vice versa.

QUESTION 6: If a person is using this device [smartphone] to do mitzvos with it and for holy purposes, is he also holding onto all the *kedushah* in the world? **RAV'S ANSWER:** It is a mixture of good and evil, so he is holding onto all of the good, and all of the evil, at once.

QUESTION 7: Even if he is a pure person who strives for *kedushah* (holiness)? **RAV'S ANSWER:** Today, in the final generation, every person, even the purest person, is born into a state of impurity that surrounds us. Even if he has holiness too, he is still holding onto a tremendous impurity when he uses this device. This doesn't mean that a person can't be connected to holiness and purity at all today *chas v'shalom*. Of course a person can be connected strongly to holiness today, but there's also a strong evil today that people are easily pulled towards.

QUESTION 8: What about e-mail? **RAV'S ANSWER:** I am not a person who can get into all the details of what to do practically, and the difference between what it's like in Eretz Yisrael versus America, of all the changing updates on the matter, and it's not in my interest to get involved with this, because I don't have all the knowledge of these details and I don't want to. I have already said many times that a Rav who knows everything that goes on in our world today cannot be a true Rav.

QUESTION 9: But every single place is running on internet connection, either directly or through a second or third party. **RAV'S ANSWER:** Certainly, yes, and that is why this is a profound exile, because we can't totally separate. The matter is so complex, from every direction.

The simple advice would be to set up a place where only *goyim* will use it when a person needs something from it, and even this service should only be used when a person has no other choice, because it is said in the name of Rav Chaim Kanievsky said that it's forbidden even for a gentile to use. If one doesn't have a choice, then he can use a *goy* for it.

QUESTION 10: Is there an equal counterbalance now between the good and the evil, or will the equally powerful holiness to this evil only come after Mashiach's arrival? **RAV'S ANSWER:** That is a very good question. Certainly there is always an equal counterbalance between good and evil. There is an equally powerful amount of good that is here in our world, and it is not in some faraway place from us, it is here right with us. It is just that the evil in our world is concealing it. The good is not simply found somewhere else in some faraway place, it's found here - it's just covered over. For example when we cover the challos on Shabbos by Kiddush, the challos are not elsewhere, they are here on the table and they are just covered. The good is here, it is just covered. If one is *moser nefesh* though, his soul becomes purified from this and he can easily access the good that's here.

QUESTION 11: Does the impurity affect every person equally? Are there those who are more affected when they are growing up around these devices? **RAV'S ANSWER:** It is clear that every person is influenced by it on a different level. We can see how two people growing up in the same home are affected by it on different levels. Everyone gets negatively affected by it, but it affects each person differently, according to the degree of his personal spiritual level.

QUESTION 12: So if a person is more *pnimi* can he decide to separate from it completely and be completely unaffected by it? **RAV'S ANSWER:** Generally, yes, but if a person tries to separate too much then he's acting above his level and the results will be detrimental. Something on it that's entirely forbidden is out of the question, and one must separate from it. But if it is merely about separating from something that can possibly be impure and possibly be a danger to him, and he wants to separate to avoid those possible issues, then he will do this sensibly, that is, to separate from it calmly, in a way that doesn't disorient him and not to go to an extreme about separating from the possible dangers. It's very a subtle matter, and it is different with each person.

QUESTION 13: Can any good or *tikkun* be said about these devices because there are so many *shiurim* available through it? **RAV'S ANSWER:** If a person does a *mitzvah* with something and he also does an *aveirah* with it, does that give a *tikkun* to what he did since he also did *mitzvos* with it? Torah that comes from an *aveirah* cannot last. All of the *tzedakah* coming from using these devices is coming from an impure source and it will not have good results. Every average yeshivah gets donations from internet devices, where did they find a sanction to do this, since it is all started from someone doing an *aveirah*? Though "An *aveirah* doesn't extinguish a *mitzvah*", the Torah doesn't either extinguish the *aveirah* involved. Nothing good can come from an *aveirah*.

QUESTION 14: But the Ramchal explains how even *ra* (evil) can become turned into *tov* (good) if something good ends up coming from the evil, that rectifies the evil. **RAV'S ANSWER** The Ramchal's words about evil being turned into good does not apply to the "50th gate of impurity", which is like heresy that becomes attached to the person long after he has committed the sin, continuing to influence him. The

50th gate of impurity is an evil that can't be corrected, and it cannot be touched without becoming negatively influenced by it.

QUESTION 15: What about all the inspiration that comes from the Torah *shiurim* available through these devices? Is it all fake and not real inspiration? **RAV'S ANSWER:** This is a very good question. We can't say that there was no inspiration at all that came from it. Rather, it was a mixture of good and evil. The good that came from it was also mixed with evil. The good that was in it caused people to be inspired and change for the better. But, let me ask you – do those good changes last?

QUESTION 16: There are people who say that all of these Torah *shiurim* from internet/smartphones changed their lives completely. **RAV'S ANSWER:** There are many people too who say that learning the secular wisdom of the nations also changed their lives.

QUESTION 17: So the Rav is saying that all of the Torah that comes from it is fake *ruchniyus*? **RAV'S ANSWER:** It's *dovor v'hipucho*, it contains two opposite elements that are taking place at once. On one hand, it is like a *parah adumah* (red heifer) which “purifies the impure, and contaminates the pure”. But at the same time it is also like the hog, which sticks out its kosher-looking hooves and says “I am kosher.” Part of the mistake that people are making with it is that it presents itself as offering us *ruchniyus*, and that is exactly part of its falsity. If it would only offer us impurity (indecent) and no one would be inspired from any of the Torah that comes from it, then everyone would clearly see it as evil and it would be obvious that we need to separate from it. But since people say that they do grow from it, that is part of the challenge with it, and it's being like the hog that presents itself as kosher.

I knew many people who were involved with Internet for Torah purposes and in the end of the day, the only place of *heter* for Internet use is for *kiruv richokim*, meaning those who aren't Torah observant or for those who fell so low who are using it anyway, there is a place to say that the internet can be used for them for Torah purposes. But at a later point people reasoned to me, “Today everyone is like a *tinok shenishbah*, and we need to be *mechazek* (strengthen) everyone with Torah...” So they want to turn this *heter* of using Internet for *kiruv rechokim* all into a *heter* for everyone to use Internet for Torah purposes.

I want to ask you a simple question: Using Internet for Torah purposes – would you say that it's mostly bad with a little good involved in it, or that it's mostly good with a little bad in it? It is clearly something that is mostly bad and with only a little good that came out of it. Most people using Internet for Torah purposes – did they really use the Internet for bad or for good because of this? They certainly used it for bad purposes along the way. Most people who used Internet to hear Torah *shiurim* on it – what happened with them? They used it for Torah purposes and eventually they found themselves on all kinds of other places on the Internet from this. It's insensible to allow it for Torah purposes.

We can't say of course that there's no good sparks of holiness in it all, and certainly there are people who got *chizuk* from using Internet for Torah purposes, and there was certainly a very few amount of people in the world who came closer to *kedushah* by using Internet for Torah purposes, but we for ourselves just cannot rely on that minority of cases in order to allow it for ourselves. It's like a medication which has a 99% chance of killing us and a 1% chance of saving our lives – according to *halachah*, are we allowed to use such a medication...?

QUESTION 18: If there is a Torah *shiur* that I can hear either through internet or through telephone, is the fact that it's live-streaming on the Internet a sign that I shouldn't be listening to such a Torah *shiur* even when it's heard through a telephone? **RAV'S ANSWER:** It means that the Torah *shiur* is being clothed in something impure and it's coming to us by way of that evil and therefore the one listening to will be affected by that impurity to some level. The more direct the connection to the Internet is, the more one listening to it is affected by the evil of the Internet. The second-hand and third-hand parties getting from the Internet connection are not as affected by those who are online listening to it, but everyone is affected by it on some level if it's coming from the Internet. If a person has the option to hear it on telephone it's definitely preferable to hear it on the phone. (On a very subtle level, even telephones today involve internet connection and therefore it's not even clear anymore if a telephone today is merely a just a telephone anymore. That's part of the problem. But it's far less impactful on us because the Internet connection that's involved is only very subtle). Anything that comes to us through internet will have impurity mixed in with it and that impurity will affect us. How much impurity? There are levels to how much impurity it can be.

QUESTION 19: Is that the 'reason' (*sibah*) not to use it, or is that merely the sign (*siman*) not to use it? **RAV'S ANSWER** It is the reason, not merely a sign, that we can't use it - because anything that comes to us through Internet is contaminated by the Internet and has an impure effect on us. Without even a doubt. When I say impurity (*tumah*) I don't mean that the lesser level of *tumah* which requires a person to immerse in the *mikveh* and also wait until sundown in order to be purified. This *tumah* is rather an *avi avos hatumah*, a grandfather of impurity, which requires *Parah Adumah* (red heifer) in order to be purified, and anyone who has become contaminated from it will need to wait for Mashiach who will come purify all of us with the 10 special *Parei Adumah* that will be in the future.

QUESTION 20: What can we tell someone who uses it either way, but right now he doesn't own such an internet-device, but he plans on soon buying one to have it only for business purposes? **RAV'S ANSWER:** Tell him that he won't make even a dollar from it, there's no real profit that comes from it. If one has real *emunah peshutah*, he believes in Hashem and that livelihood comes from Hashem, then he knows that he can't gain anything from going against Hashem's will. Of course, it seems to everyone that there is financial gain to be had through using these devices, and that's exactly part of the challenge and the mistake that the world is being fooled with, and this is all so that people can have the *bechirah* (free will) of choosing how they will act about it. Does the person seriously think that he will financially gain from it...?

QUESTION 21: What about if he won't buy the smartphone, he will just borrow it from someone else and use it for business every day. **RAV'S ANSWER:** There is no one who uses it who won't be negatively affected by it. His *ruchniyus* definitely won't be the same anymore after this. It's obviously a lot worse if he goes to the store and buys one. This is something which the *Mesilas Yesharim* discussed in the chapter about *mishkal ha-chassidus*, when we have to weigh the pros and cons of something when it's not clear to us. We can't have a clear answer to every single question in life, it requires us to weigh out the pros and cons of something. For example in Eretz Yisrael there are offices where you can't come down there in person and you have to use Internet in order to speak with them. These are cases where there's no clear-cut answer for everyone and each person has to think about it well, considering the pros and cons of it, so that we can know how to act practically in day-to-day living.

QUESTION 22: Is this device the very source of all *tumah* in the world, or is it merely just another means that enables one to access all *tumah* in the world just like any other thing that enables one to get closer to doing *aveiros*. **RAV'S ANSWER:** It is not the source of the *tumah* in the world, it is rather the container (*kli*) that enables one to connect to the root of all *tumah* (impurity), and that root is the "50th gate of impurity".

QUESTION 23: So the Internet is the root of all the *tumah*? **RAV'S ANSWER:** A media-device is the "container" that holds the root of the evil, which is the "50th gate of impurity" within it, but the root of all the evil is the 50th gate of impurity, which stands on its own.

QUESTION 23: If a person has to go somewhere where he will have to use it then what should he do, does he need to first think about it before he goes to such places? **RAV'S ANSWER:** We are all surrounded by it everywhere, it is impossible to never make use of it as long as we live in civilization, and this is the reality that we live in today, and the only real solution to get out of it is to have a *goy* use it for us when we need to make use of it. Unless a person goes to the outskirts of another country where he can live without it, but that's not realistic because what will he do when he gets bitten by a wild dog there? If one lives in civilization he can't completely separate and never use it at all, and if he tries to live this way then he will ruin his shidduchim and won't be able to start a family. A person has to live in society and be sensible about how much he will separate from using it. There's no way to live in society and totally separate from it, and the only way to never use it is to go live in the desert.

QUESTION 24: Does everyone have to use it at some point? **RAV'S ANSWER:** Everyone who lives in society will have to use it at some point, that is the reality, I am not saying anything new here.

QUESTION 25: But we don't see today that the 50th gate of *tumah* is active everywhere. **RAV'S ANSWER:** Certainly, but this device is the main container that holds the root of the evil - the 50th gate of impurity. We can see manifestations and parts of the 50th gate of impurity being revealed in our world today, but one single zone which connects one to all of the evil is only found in internet-devices.

QUESTION 26: Since this is the final generation, we are in the final sorting process which is showing how much each Jew is loyal to Hashem, and this is the final test which is establishing one's level for all of his eternity -**RAV'S ANSWER:** Yes but one's eternity is not being established by simply separating from these devices, it is by becoming connected to the "50th gate of holiness". If one only separates from these devices and he doesn't keep the *mitzvos* and doesn't learn any Torah, then it's just a nice spiritual quality [to stay away from internet-devices] but it won't be enough. One has to be "separated from the entire world, and designated only to me" (designated for Hashem.) So it involves two opposite aspects of being passive and proactive – to passively separate from the evil, and to proactively connect oneself to holiness.

QUESTION 27: Is it possible to explain that in the final generation which is either entirely worthy or entirely guilty, a person in this generation is able to take the middle road between these two sides? **RAV'S ANSWER:** Within the generation itself, each individual's true level is becoming clarified individually. It is possible to explain it as you said, but the reality that we are in now is different and therefore it won't help for a person to take the middle road between the two extremes.

QUESTION 28: Should a person let his spouse and family members know that if they need to use internet, they should use a third-party service for this? **RAV'S ANSWER:** Technically yes, but a person also has to work with the level that his family [spouse] is on. It is certainly the right and sensible thing to do, but the question is if it's practical or not to actually do this, if one's family members aren't always on the level of doing this. If it was only those who don't keep the Torah who are careless about Internet use, then it would be obvious to everyone what the right thing to do is, and though it would still be tragic for the non-observant that they are doing the wrong thing, at least the Torah-observant are doing the right thing. But it's the important people who have it. A child in the house sees it, he sees that the Rav in the shul has it, how does he deal with the confusing reality he is seeing? Each person is fighting his own battle and every person is raising a family and telling them we can't have it, and then he sees it everywhere, how can he deal with this? I once had to bring my son for something in a prominent yeshiva in Eretz Yisrael and they told me I need to download something from the yeshiva's website. (It seems that the *tzibbur* here isn't that fazed by this.) But this is a prominent yeshiva in Eretz Yisrael, one of the greatest yeshivos, telling me that I need to use their website regularly. How can we tell our families to stay away totally from using internet and then they see us using it when we need to? What are they supposed to think? Everyone has free will of course, but can anyone raise a family like this where the children have to deal with such a confusing reality that they grow up seeing? And to be extreme with the family is not either recommended because most people who take an extreme approach when raising the family are not successful. This is a very sensitive matter. We can certainly explain to our family what the approach has to be and we can tell them about where truth is and where falsity is -

QUESTION 29: There are organizations in Eretz Yisrael where people can use a *goy* for all their internet needs. **RAV'S ANSWER:** Can anyone raise a successful Jewish home like this? I'm not an expert, but I'm assuming that there is one here and one there that could. If we look at all the cases in which people took an extreme approach in their homes, how many of them succeeded? Some of the children make compromises, and other children go in the opposite direction in order to rebel against the extreme approach they are being raised with. Do we need to tell them what the true clear *hashkafah* is? Clearly, yes. Do we need to enforce it all the time when we are dealing with the family? It is not clear that this helps. The problem is coming from a whole different direction - that there are prominent Torah organizations and yeshivos using it. Can a 15 year old bochur or 17 year old girl have the strength to go against every person who says it's fine to use, to go against every Rav who signs that it's fine to use, especially when even some of the *Chashuvim* (dignified people) are not only permitting it to be used but they themselves own it and use it...?

QUESTION 30: Are those people who have it really *Chashuvim* (prominent people)? Are they real *tzaddikim*? **RAV'S ANSWER:** Of course they can be *Chashuvim*, they can be *tzaddikim*. I'm not getting into what they are called, that's not for me to say. I'm talking about the *nisayon*, the challenge that it's presenting us, of how everyone is seeing this and how hard it is to deal with this reality that we see when we are being raised that we must stay away from it and yet very dignified people have it and use it, when you tell your children it's forbidden they can pull out a whole list of very prominent Rabbonim who say it's okay and who use it themselves. It's a very complicated situation, and that's why it's so difficult and that's the depth of the *nisayon*.

QUESTION 31: But if we go extreme with this when raising our family, how can we teach them to stay away from it when the whole generation is taking a different direction than what we are telling them?

RAV'S ANSWER: Exactly, that's the point here. Giving over clarity to them about this matter is our duty to them, but actually knowing how to deal with it practically with our family requires a true *Talmid Chochom* to navigate it.

QUESTION 32: How do we deal with this contradiction? **RAV'S ANSWER:** We have to understand that it's a very complex situation we are dealing with, there's a lot of *hester* (concealment) and that's exactly the problem. We are in a situation where it is basically impossible for us to bring up the family in the right way. **QUESTION 33:** So how is our generation different from every other generation before it, where there was a lot of confusion about a new issue that came, and they only got clarity much later.

RAV'S ANSWER: Certainly every generation had its test, and there was idol worship everywhere in the times of King Menasheh. Each generation grappled with a certain aspect of evil that challenged them, and our generation too has a challenge, so in that way our generation is similar to what all other generations went through. But the difference between our generation and all other generations before us is that there is not just one aspect of evil that's threatening part of our Yiddishkeit, it's rather every single aspect evil all together which is challenging the entirety of our Yiddishkeit all at once. **QUESTION 34:** How should we look at those who have it, especially the Chashuvim who have it?

RAV'S ANSWER You don't have to look at anyone. "Do not judge a person until you reach his place." Who put you on the Heavenly Court to decide who's guilty? Why judge people? You are not sitting on the Heavenly Court. You aren't a boy in *shidduchim* checking out the level of a girl to get married to her. Why should it be of interest to you? **QUESTION 35:** So the attitude has to be "Don't judge your friend until you are in his place"?

RAV'S ANSWER No, don't judge at all! It should have no interest to you. The only issue to deal with when it comes to this is that when you are raising your family, it's hard to explain about it to them that it's forbidden and that we need to separate from it, when they see that even prominent people have it too, and that's the only difficulty you need to be dealing with when it comes to this point. But do not busy yourself with the actual people who have it, that's none of your business, don't get involved with anything that's not your place to get involved in, just focus on raising your family in the right way.

QUESTION 36: But when we internalize these words about Internet-devices are then we get a disgust for this device, so naturally we look down on anyone who has it and it's hard to respect any *Chashuvim* who have these devices. **RAV'S ANSWER:** There are two choices you have for this. Either you can tell yourself that they are not really *Chashuvim* since they have it, or, you can be so clear about the matter and in this way you aren't influenced by them. We can't go around belittling everyone in our minds. If it would only be 2 Rabbonim in a city of idol worshippers who have it, then it would be easy to dismiss them and say they're not really dignified people. But since it's everywhere, so we can't belittle everyone who has it.

QUESTION 37: On one hand we have to be clear about this, on the other hand I have to be normal, so how do we balance this?**RAV'S ANSWER:** I didn't say here that you shouldn't be normal. It's very clear - towards our family we have to act sensibly about it, to teach them how to be in a place where even though

these devices are everywhere that doesn't mean we have to go along with the flow of everyone around us. We can teach our family to protect themselves from it and withstand the challenges and to keep strongly to what they are taught. As for oneself, what difference should it make to me if the rest of society is going down in this area and I am remaining from the 2% that's still normal? We don't have to go yelling about it in the streets, though there are those who do deal with it in this way. For ourselves, it should be enough for us to just have to have clarity about it. We don't have to be not normal about it, yet we are able to maintain our resolve about it at the same time.

QUESTION 38: But can a person maintain his resolve about it when he knows that at some point he is going to have to use it? **RAV'S ANSWER:** One should always place himself in the most ideal situation possible where there's the least chance of having to use it.

QUESTION 39: So is that the person's obligation? **RAV'S ANSWER:** The main and fundamental obligation that we have is to be clear about it, and as for how to act practically about it, one just has to place himself in a situation where it's the least possible for him to have to come on to using it, and to use common sense in how realistically far he can go with this.

QUESTION 40: There is a *psak* given by Rav Vosner with guidelines about it, shouldn't we at least let our family know about it? **RAV'S ANSWER:** Firstly, when Rav Vosner gave the *psak*, there were those who disagreed with it. But what difference should the *psak* make for us right now, when we see what's going on today and what the results were? Did the *kedushah* of people get better from it or not? It's very clear what happened. We can see that all those who used it, did their *yiras shomayim* get better or did it weaken afterwards? Did it make them grow closer to Hashem or grow further from Hashem? The *tzibbur* had to be dealt with then, but what difference should that make to us individually now who are wondering how to take it from here? What are the 'two sides of the matter' here?

QUESTION 41: But shouldn't we at least tell the family about the *psak* of Rav Vosner, so they should know about it. **RAV'S ANSWER:** Why do that, when we have an upright path to go in right now? Why hold them back from having clarity on the matter?

QUESTION 42: If a person comes to the Rav and asks what to do when it comes to this matter, what would the Rav answer? **RAV'S ANSWER:** The answer is very clear, open up a *Mesillas Yescharim*, he says in the beginning of the sefer that anything which distances you from Hashem you should run from it no less than how you're running away from a fire, and anything which brings you closer to Hashem you should run towards it. It's very clear to us that those who used these devices, in almost all cases, didn't become closer to Hashem through it and they only went down because of it.

QUESTION 43: But how do we guide our family about it? **RAV'S ANSWER:** Our duty is to give over the clarity about it to our family, and whatever our family will choose to do is their choice. We anyway can't force them to do anything. All we can do is give them clarity about it.

QUESTION 44: If one is in a situation where he has no choice but to use it and there's no way for him to completely separate from it – which is the whole basis of the *heter* to use it – how far should he go about this? **RAV'S ANSWER:** When it comes to using it in a way that's completely forbidden for him to use it,

he must separate totally. But how far does he need to go? For that he can turn to the guidelines given by Rav Vosner who established how far one needs to go with this. But it's also clear that if Rav Vosner would be here today, he would oppose his own *psak*, by seeing what's going on today. He had to deal with the *tzibbur* so he gave the *heter*. I don't know if Rav Vosner would say the same guidelines that he said, if he would be here today and he would see what's going on today, because the situation today is far worse than it was when he originally gave his *psak*. I don't know what Rav Vosner knew or what he didn't know, but this anyway doesn't make a difference now to us, because the reality in front of us has shown us what has happened, it is clear to us how using the *psak* only caused people to become further from Hashem.

QUESTION 45: Can we say that if one has the clarity on this matter and he has to use internet for something, will that clarity make it that he's not really "holding onto the all the *tumah* at once" even as he uses it, or is he still holding to all of the *tumah* in the world even when he has the clarity about this matter and even when he needs to use it? **RAV'S ANSWER:** If he has clarity about the matter and he uses it then only for a few seconds for what he needs and where he needs to use it, then yes [this is not called holding onto all of the *tumah*], but if he just uses it openly in public and he is also "clear" about this topic, then his actions are contradicting his thoughts.

QUESTION 46: When one is using it when he has to, is that called "touching it yet not touching it [he's merely touching the *tumah* but he's not holding onto it]? **RAV'S ANSWER:** When he has to use it when he needs to, he is merely touching it and not holding onto all the *tumah*, but it's certainly having some negative effect on him even when he's merely touching it [using it for those few seconds that he needs that needs to].

May Hashem save us, with His help.