

# עדת אש קודש

## Adass Aish Kodesh



### Dangers In Our Hope

*Harav Y. Reuven Rubin Shlita*

As a Police chaplain for the Greater Manchester Police, I am asked to attend regular meetings whose purpose is to update us on current police matters. Today I had the honour to learn about the Special Anti-Terrorist Squad and all its various activities. I won't bore you with all the details (believe me it wasn't as exciting as it sounds) but one thing was glaringly clear. Technology, especially the internet, is the main breeding ground of terrorist activity in today's world.

Those presenting the update have been working for many years in their field, they were very clear, internet is making the world unsafe. I asked about sophisticated filters, or other ways of blocking the injurious aspects of today's technology. Their answer, was that there is really nothing that is fail safe. There are so many ways of delving into the swamp of the electronic highways, that total filtering is near to impossible.

Please allow me to share a recent published report that really should waken us all up, and put the dangers into focus.

'Social media content is too "ghastly" to be monitored by humans', the British inventor of the web has stated.

Sir Tim Berners-Lee said sifting through harmful and dangerous online content was an "awful job" that left people "changed" by the things they saw.

The 64-year-old – seen as the father of the modern internet – called for a "midcourse correction" by governments and tech firms to prevent it from "plunging towards things which could be really bad".

Last Sunday, Sir Tim gave this year's Richard Dimpleby Lecture to mark 30 years since he created the World Wide Web system that forms the basic architecture of the internet. Sir Tim described the proliferation of such content as "a really

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Harav Y. R. Rubin Shlita  
36 Bury Old Road  
Prestwich – Manchester  
M25 0FT



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big problem”, but said AI (Artificial Intelligence) is unable to remove it without human help.

Asked if social media giants should hire more people to remove harmful content, he said: “Then you have a human being who is paid probably not very much to sit all of their working life looking at things that are borderline really horrible and ghastly. It is not so much the pay, it is that it is an awful job to do. They end up being changed as it is more than a person can take to be constantly asked to make these decisions and to see this horrible stuff.”

Sir Tim called on governments and tech giants to sign up to a new “contract for the web” and to find ways to combat mass misinformation and data abuses.

Well, as the U.K. snap election rushes to a close, nary a word is mentioned concerning these dangers, instead all talk is about bringing faster internet into every home.

So, what can a Yied do in this frenetic atmosphere? We are in danger, from without and within. Filters can only go so far, and at their border lies chaos. So let us accept that we face unique challenges, something never before faced, and join together to seek strength.

Tzaddikim explain that when Hashem created the cycle of time, He charged each epoch of history, each year, and every single moment, with a unique purpose that cannot possibly be achieved at any other time. Each generation has its own challenges that must be overcome, in order to fulfil the ultimate purpose of creation.

The Noam Elimelech writes: “Every generation has its own special mitzvah which corresponds to the roots of that generation’s collective Neshoma. The soul of our generation is rooted in the mitzvah of tzitzis.”

Those were different times, their challenges totally different in nature.

The Chelkas Yehoshua taught:

‘The goals of our own generation are kedusha, character improvement, and emunah and Shabbos observance.

Surely, all mitzvos and all aspects of religious observance are important. However, our success or failure as a generation depends on the particular areas in which our souls are rooted.’

The Yetzer Horah realises all this and throws in our way strong adversaries that are designed to reap havoc in just these areas. Technology has changed our lives, much for the better. Everything we see and experience was different a mere two generations ago. As with so much that is positive, there are aspects that are darkly negative. Much of our technology and its handmaidens are tailored to distract us, to overwhelm our senses and draw us away from what it is to be a Yied. Our patience has all but shrunken to close to nothing, our young

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glory in images that are all empty and fleeting, and many feel as if they are living on autopilot. For too many, Davening has turned into a race for the door, and if we tarry for just a few minutes longer than acceptable, we are considered out of sync with the times.

Emotionally many of us are crushed and turn to the little mischievous time wasters in our pockets for distraction. This addiction often becomes an axe that destroys our sense of kedusha.

So what can we do?

We can daven, really daven, we can cry, yes, and beseech Hashem for help.

The Internet will not disappear on its own volition, nor will the horrendous damage it does if not held in check. These tools can be a positive force for our Avodas Hashem, yet they come with a spiritual health warning we dare not disparage. Filter we must, guide our young of course, yet more than everything we must have faith in ourselves as Hashem's children.

The Mevasser Tov writes: The specific aspect of emunah that must be addressed in our times is developing faith in our own worth, and the recognition of how important our deeds are in Heaven. Once again, the yetzer hara sets its snare on our path, by deluding us with false impressions of worthlessness; while the truth is that Hashem loves us all dearly, and cherishes our every mitzvah. Among our tasks as a generation is to realize how much Hashem loves us.'

Just as each chapter of history has its own special purpose, so too does each individual. Let us all be honest with ourselves and design a strategy for our times.

Bring kedusha into our daily lives, bring joy to our davening, and a more meaningful Shabbos filled with family togetherness. We are a holy nation, chosen by the Eibishter for greatness. Let us plead to Hashem for guidance in these difficult times. If we take heart, then we will be blessed with Siyato Dishmayo, and we will all be blessed to see the coming of the Moshiach in our days.

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