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# Yeshivat Ateret Yerushalayim

IN THE HEART OF THE OLD CITY OF JERUSALEM

## **Ha-Rav Shlomo Aviner on...**

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### Avraham Avinu and the Internet

[From the parashah sheet "Mayanei Ha-Yeshua #338 – Parashat Ki Tisa 5768]

If Avraham Avinu lived in our time, he would take a five kilo hammer and he would smash every computer with internet on the face of the earth. Everyone would immediately attack him. "You are crazy! You have destroyed the most beautiful instrument which has benefited humanity."

He would then respond: "Its gain is offset by its loss. I am in favor of technological advancement, but purity of one's soul is the most important thing. I am not impressed by the techno-barbarian which you have created with this instrument."

They would then say to him: "You don't believe in both the education of man and his pure soul? It is the personal choice of each person and his free choice, and he knows how to overcome his evil inclination."

He would certainly respond: "On the contrary, this is how a person is freed from the addiction of his inclination and returns to freedom. Please, the evil inclination is performing his job with loyalty and he does not need you to help him with the aid of 30,000 licentious websites – aside from all of the nonsense and 'lashon ha-ra' (evil speech). Please, do not raise a poisonous snake in your homes."

"If we understand you correctly," they would respond to him, "This is good advice and not a halachah of the Shulchan Aruch. It therefore remains for us to decide."

He would then pull a Shulchan Aruch out of his pocket and read: "Words of desire like the Book of Emanuel...they are also [forbidden] on account of enticing the evil inclination and one who writes them and copies them, and there is no need to say – one who printers them, causes the public to sin" (Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chaim 307:16). He would then turn to the parents: "You have not heard the parable about the father who buys his son a perfume shop on an immoral street, and the father finds him acting immorally, grabs him and is angry with him. People say to the father: What did you think?"

"Nonetheless," they would say stubbornly, "because of a few isolated instances, everyone should not lose out."

"If this is what you are saying," he would say with a pained look of his face, "you have no idea what is going on. You must know that many young people have fallen because of the internet as well as children, married men, righteous people and Torah scholars. And when one's spouse finds out about it, and it will be found out soon or later, she feels humiliated and betrayed. Many times she wants a divorce and much effort is needed to calm her and explain that it is not cheating, but 'only' impure, disgusting and vile things. The young who experience these vulgar websites also feel impure. He does not know how to escape the poisonous snake which is wrapped around him and is biting him. Even if he does manage to escape, these loathsome things and filth pursue him his entire life. He is mired in the mud, and wants to free himself from it. Woe to us..."

In the end, they will ask him: "What do you suggest?" He is surprised by the question and responds: "I suggest that there will not be any internet, but if you do not listen to me or there are factors which make it necessary, then there are two solutions: 1. Chardei (Ultra-Orthodox) Rabbis – who allow internet use for work – say that it is the same as the laws of "yichud" (the prohibition to be alone with the opposite sex – excluding relatives). A person may not use the internet alone, but only with others. Each person will have part of the password to enter. 2. An internet filter on the highest level.

Avraham Avinu finally smiles: "I do not desire evil for you or to oppress you, just the opposite, I want you to live free of all filth. You should have happy and pure lives."