בס"ד

זכרון יעקב

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Shmini 5785

BURNING HEART! – DO NOT EXTINGUISH!

RABBI YAAKOV ASHER SINCLAIR (Ohr.edu)

"Moshe said to Aharon, 'Come near to the Altar…" (9:7)

I remember some years ago, someone came up to Rabbi Noach Orloweck after he'd given a shiur and said, "Thanks Rabbi, that was really inspirational!" To which he replied, "Thanks. Rabbis need encouragement too!"

Thanks to Hashem, I have been empowered by Hashem to write for Ohrnet for more than thirty years and make Torah videos for more than five years now, and I want to thank everyone for all their feedback and their encouragement. Some weeks, the old creative juices seem to be running a little thin – like this week. But when someone leaves an encouraging word, or comes up to me and gives me a verbal pat on the back, it makes a big difference.

There's a gemara in Kiddushin that says: When farmers do the mitzvah of bringing their first-fruits to Jerusalem, all craftsmen and workers stand up and greet them, saying to them: Our brothers from such and such a place: Welcome! And this is done even though they would be taking time out of their day and lose money by doing it. The gemara says that the reason they are obliged to give this welcome is if they don't treat those who bring first fruits with such honor, maybe the farmers won't want to bring their fruits next year. And so, the Sages instituted a special decree, that those bringing first fruits should be treated with special honor.

This might seem difficult to understand. Since bringing the first fruits is a Torah mitzvah, why would the mere lack of a reception committee and a red carpet deter the farmers from fulfilling their Torah obligation?

The answer is that failing to encourage someone when you have the opportunity to do so, is like pouring water on the fire of enthusiasm, and might lead someone to neglect even a Torah mitzvah.

"Moshe said to Aharon, 'Come near to the Altar…" (9:7)

It says in the Torah,"A permanent fire should remain aflame on the Altar; it shall not be extinguished." The Gemara in Zevachim 91 says that anyone who extinguishes a single coal from the fire of the Altar has transgressed a negative Torah commandment. If the extinguishing of a single physical coal is such a serious matter, surely one should never extinguish even one hope or aspiration on the altar of the heart.

In the troubled times in which we live, let us reach out and encourage with words and love every aspiration and hope in the hearts of others.

JUST DO IT

RABBI YOSSY GOLDMAN (Chabad.org)

How do you develop confidence when you don't have it? How does one overcome fear, nerves and anxieties? Well, without going into major psychological dissertations (which I'm not qualified to do in the first place), let's see if we can find some insight in this week's Parshah.

Everything was set for the inauguration of the sacred service in the Sanctuary. The week-long preparations had been completed. Now it was Aaron's turn to approach the altar and begin the service. But Aaron was reluctant. He still felt a sense of shame for his part in the Golden Calf episode. So Moshe calls out to Aaron, "Approach the altar and perform the services." (9:7). Aaron did so and completed all the required tasks correctly. But what exactly did Moshe say to Aaron to assuage his fears? All he said was "Come and do your thing." He never actually dealt with his issues. How did he address his concerns, his feelings of inadequacy?

Perhaps, Moshe was saying: Come and do, and all your fears will be stilled. You lack confidence? Start performing the services and you will see that it fits you like a glove. You were born to be a High Priest and that's where you belong.

Moshe was telling Aaron that if he would begin performing his chosen role, the rest would follow. As they say in Yiddish, *Apetit kumt mit'n essen*. Even if you're not hungry, if you start eating, your appetite will follow. I suppose that's why the first course in a meal is called an "appetizer." (Trust Jews when it comes to food.)

Dr Moshe was dispensing sound psychological advice. The surest way of developing confidence is to begin doing that which you fear. Throwing kids in the deep end to teach them how to swim may not be everybody's cup of tea, but it usually works. Some of the finest public speakers were microphone-shy, even neurotic at first. When we lack self-assurance, confronting our fears and phobias can be the best therapy. We discover that it really wasn't all that bad after all and we actually manage better than we ever imagined. And from there our self-belief grows until we become quite relaxed about the whole thing.

I remember when I was a young rabbi just starting out in my career. One morning, the dreaded phone call came. A relatively young woman had passed away. I knew I had to go to the family to comfort them, but what would I actually tell them? Did I have answers for people who had just been bereaved of their loving wife and mother? Could I play G-d? I was pretty paralyzed for a while and fiddled with all sorts of matters of far less importance. I knew why. I was stalling. It was a case of simple procrastination because I couldn't face this most unpleasant task which I felt unqualified to deal with.

Eventually, I forced myself to go because I knew I had to. It was my job and they were waiting for me. And lo and behold! I was actually able to deal with the family and their questions. And I discovered then that they didn't really expect me to wave any magic wands or resurrect the dead or answer for G-d. They felt comforted by my presence and were grateful that I was there for them in their hour of need.

It was for me a very important lesson and a growth point in my rabbinical practice. Experience really is a fantastic teacher.

I would venture to add that it applies to each of us in our Jewish lives. So many people are reluctant to get involved. Too many are intimidated by Judaism and because they are not confident enough about synagogue protocol or their Hebrew literacy, they simply opt out—and lose out. I can attest to hundreds of Jews of every age and stage who have been in that very position and then began coming to Shul. It didn't take them long at all to feel part of the Shul family and they've never looked back. But this most spiritually gratifying part of their lives would never have been theirs if they didn't take that first brave step.

"Come and do" said Moshe to his humble and hesitant brother. Aaron came and did and the rest is history.

GOLDEN APPLES

RABBI LABEL LAM (Torah.org)

The sons of Aaron, Nadav and Avihu, each took his fire-pan, they put fire in the them and placed them. A fire came forth from before HASHEM an alien fire that He had not commanded them. A fire came forth from before HASHEM and consumed them, and they died before HASHEM. (10:1-2)

Rabbi Akiva opines that the phrase "lifnei Hashem" – "before HASHEM"

This document contains words of Torah and should be treated with respect. See Shulchan Aruch Orach Chaim 85:2

means they died within the Kodesh Hakedoshim. – Toras Kohanim

This is scary. One of the greatest days in human history was marred and scarred by this sudden tragedy. Many great scholars have played the role of forensic detectives to figure out what went so terribly wrong. Why exactly were they worthy of dying? If it is not explicitly spelled out then it must be by design purposely obscured. What are we underlings to conclude? Perhaps one thing is certain. Watch out! Be cautious in the realm of the HOLY. The holier an environment is, the higher the spiritual voltage.

The Mishnah states that the Kohain Gadol would sponsor a feast upon emerging safely (Yoma 7:4 [70a]). According to the Meiri, it would appear that the celebration was due to the Kohain Gadol's safe emergence from the Holy of Holies. It seems this was a very risky venture to enter such a profoundly spiritual environment. It's like an MRI machine. Hidden faults are exposed.

When America put a man on the moon, and I remember the day, it was cause for national celebration. Why the celebration? Did we all go to the moon? Of course not! When one man stood there, it was as if a part of each and every one of us had reached that rarified territory. There was a sense of collective pride and accomplishment.

So too when the Kohain Gadol on Yom Kippur, entered the Kodesh Kedoshim, that entirely sublime and holy realm, and he survived and exited alive, it was cause for national celebration. Did we all enter the Kodesh Kedoshim. No, of course not! When one man stood there it was as if a part of each and every one of us touched and was touched by that sacred place. It's beyond a sense of collective pride and accomplishment. He truly represents the highest of our individual and national ambitions.

Unfortunately, when one lunatic acts out in a destructive way, everyone is shocked and deeply introspective. Why? It was the doing of one crazy person. Why all the personal angst? We understand there is great empathy for the victims but it gets everyone nervous about themselves. When Achan took spoils from Yericho, the entire Nation of Israel was blamed for the deed of one person. The Baalei Mussar explain that if one person did it, then 100,000 were quietly talking about it, and a few million were actively thinking about it. One person acted out on what too many others dreamed and fantasized about.

What is the difference between a crazy person and everyone else? One word! Filters! Before anything is manifest in the world it goes through three general check points, thought, speech, and action. Not everything we think about is spoken aloud. There is a filter between thought and speech. Not everything we speak about is acted upon. Again, there is a filter between what we say and what we are ready to act upon. Even in the world of thought, there is the thought of thought, the speech of thought, and the action of thought. A thought can be easily extinguished while it is just a thought of a thought.

A person thinks approximately 60,000 thoughts in the course of a day. To enter the Kodesh Kedoshim and survive one would probably have to be thinking 60,000 holy thoughts out of 60,000. That is 60,000 golden apples every day and all day. How many of our 60,000 thoughts are holy in the course of a day?

The Chofetz Chaim told a story about a young girl in the marketplace who was selling apples from her cart when a group of thieves came and started taking all of her apples. She was wailing about her plight and when a nearby vendor asked her why she was crying. She told him that the thieves are stealing all of her apples. He told her, "Why don't you steal some apples too!" So many of our thoughts are hijacked and stolen by the thieves of the world around us, but we can steal back some holy thoughts, some golden apples as well. When we identify with the accomplishment of the Kohain Gadol, we are identifying with the possibility that a person can live such a holy existence and we are cherishing our golden apples.

PLAYING WITH FIRE

RABBI MORDECHAI KAMENETZKY (Torah.org)

It was the best of times. It was the worst of times. The Mishkan (tabernacle) was finally completed, and the celebration had begun. Ahron the High Priest and his children brought special offerings, and the joy of accomplishment permeated the camp of the Jewish Nation. Then tragedy stuck. Ahron's two sons, Nadav and Avihu, brought an offering that the Torah characterizes as "an alien fire that Hashem had not commanded. A fire went out from before Hashem and consumed them, and they died before Hashem." (10:1-3)

Varying Talmudic and Medrashic opinions argue as to what exact sin they committed. Some commentaries interpret the literal verse by explaining that Ahron's children rendered a Halachic (Biblical law) decision in front of their master, Moshe. Others say that they performed their service after drinking wine. Still others argue that their true punishment was deserved at Sinai. They refused to marry claiming that their lineage was so dignified that no maiden could ever meet their standard. Another interpretation is that they began to discuss their future leadership roles that they would secure after the two old men (Moshe and Ahron) passed on.

In all these varying opinions a major question must be addressed. If those were their actual sins, why then did the Torah use the terminology "a strange fire that Hashem had not commanded" to describe their transgression? Obviously those words are fit to describe each interpretation that is offered. How?

The Dubno Magid would often relate the following parable: After receiving his promotion to captain, a young sergeant was given his new uniform. He was strictly warned by his appointing general. "Officer, this uniform is your badge of honor. Wear it with pride, and never remove it in public! Remember, you represent the king's elite forces, and your life is now devoted to enhance the honor of his kingdom."

Not long after his commission some seamen in a public park chided the young officer. "We hear you have a large tattoo across your chest reading "I miss my Mom." The young officer was enraged at this humiliating claim and disputed it vehemently. He was tempted to strip to the waist but remembered the stern warning not to remove his coat. Suddenly one of the sailors declared, "we will contribute 500 golden pieces to the King's treasury if you don't have the tattoo — but only if you prove it now!"

In a patriotic move that the sergeant felt would surely bring pleasure to the commander-in-chief, he bared his chest, proved his point and collected the 500 gold coins. He ran to the general with the money and expected a commendation. Unfortunately, a shower of abuse greeted the neophyte officer. "You fool! I just lost a fortune because of your stupidity. I bet the Navy admiral 2,500 gold pieces that not one of my soldiers would ever remove their uniforms publicly! "

Perhaps there is a common thread among all the explanations of the sins of Nadav and Avihu. In all of the opinions, they had the best of intentions but their actions lacked protocol and guidance. Actions without protocol can have disastrous results. Nadav and Avihu were considered very holy and pious. But the small degree of over-confidence led to their acting without consort. It led to their demise. Perhaps they felt that they were in a position to render judgment without Moshe, or that a little wine may have enhanced their service. Maybe they felt that marriage was beneath them. In theory they may have been correct. But they made decisions without consultation, advice, or consent. They were looked forward to their own leadership — a leadership that never materialized. They had the desire to contribute their own fire, according to their own visions, but the Torah considered it alien.

The Mishkan was given to the Jews to atone for the sin of the Golden Calf. It was at the Golden Calf where the young nation rushed to judgment without true guidance. As soon as Hashem felt that the self-directed scenario was about to recur in the Mishkan, He made a powerful statement. It was as if the Mishkan had a nuclear charge. When dealing with high levels of radioactivity, one cannot forego the slightest established protocol. If you experiment with fire, especially an alien fire, unfortunately you get burnt.

PERFECT FAITH

RABBI YISSOCHER FRAND (Aish.com)

And Aharon was silent. (10:3)

Aharon's two older sons, Nadav and Avihu, were men of extraordinary stature, righteous leaders who were worthy of someday stepping in the shoes of Moshe and Aharon. And then, during the joyous dedication of the Mishkan, they made a small error, and a fire reached out from the Holy of Holies and snuffed out their lives.

We cannot even begin to imagine the shock to Aharon, a father who witnessed his two glorious sons perish right before his eyes. What went through his mind in that split second? His own loss, the loss suffered by the entire Jewish people, the loss suffered by the two deceased sons themselves. So much loss. Such a gaping void.

What was Aharon's reaction? The Torah tells us that "Aharon was silent." Silence. Complete acceptance. Unshakable faith. One of the most eloquent and powerful exhibitions of faith recorded in the Torah.

The Torah forbids excessive mourning over a deceased relative (Devarim 14:1). "Do not mutilate yourselves, and do not tear out your hair between your eyes over the dead." The Ramban writes that self-destructive mourning shows a lack of faith in Hashem. If we believe in the immortality of the soul and that all Hashem does is ultimately for the good, we do not mourn too much, even in the face of tragic
youthful death.

A few years ago, the Baltimore community suffered a tragic loss on Erev Pesach. Mr. and Mrs. Israel Weinstein's son and his wife were killed in an automobile accident while coming from Lakewood to Baltimore for Pesach.

I was not there to witness it personally, but I heard from others that Mr. Weinstein's faith and acceptance were incredible. It is hard to conceive how

a man who has just been told that his two beloved children had been torn away from him can walk into the Pesach Seder and make the Shehechianu blessing, thanking Hashem for sustaining life and bringing us to this joyous occasion. It is hard to conceive how such a man can walk into shul the next day and say "Gut Yom Tov" to everyone without a trace of his grief on his face so as not to disturb the festival spirit. It is hard to conceive how such a man, sitting in shul, can reach out and affectionately pat the cheek of a little child that happens to walk by. It could only be accomplished by a man whose heart is full of a rare and unshakable faith.

During the Shivah, the father of the boy whose cheek Mr. Weinstein had patted asked him, "How, in the moment of your most profound grief, could you still bend down to a child and pat him on the cheek?"

"At that exact moment," Mr. Weinstein responded, "when your little boy walked past me, with everything I was feeling in my heart, I realized how special each and every one of our children is. Sometimes we take our children for granted. Times like these clear our vision."

A person can only have such strength if he has a clear vision of the eternal light that shines at the end of every dark tunnel, if he has a strong and abiding faith in the Master of the Universe. Such a person, like Aharon before him, can be silent.

THE MITZVOT YOU DON'T ENJOY

AHARON LOSCHAK (Chabad.org)

Are there some parts of Judaism you prefer over others? Do certain rituals, practices or customs excite you, while others . . . not so much?

If your answer is yes, then here's a follow up question: What do you do about the unexciting parts? What happens when you don't have an emotionally satisfying explanation for why you must do this or can't do that?

There are different ways of approaching this, and if I had to guess, I would split them into two general camps: the "reject" vs. "accept" camps.

The former camp is disinterested, uninspired or just plain turned off—so they turn their backs on what they don't like and focus on the things they like. After all, Jewish practice is quite vast, so they'll make do with the fun stuff.

The latter camp shudders at the prospect of outright rejection, yet is still emotionally or intellectually unable to fully embrace the entire package. So it's a begrudging acceptance, a sort of inner push to "just do it anyway," regardless of whether or not they like it. While admirable, this approach is not ideal.

So what should you do about those parts of Judaism that you (so far) find uninteresting or uninspiring? Rejection and forced acceptance both sound fairly bleak, so what's the solution?

A third way, of course.

AN UNSEEMLY JOB

This third way is buried in an interesting detail in a story retold in our Parshah. After the Jews finally finished constructing the Tabernacle in the desert, the inauguration festival kicked off. It was a glorious day, a moment when G-d's holy presence rested on this edifice and the Jews returned to divine grace after the catastrophe of the Golden Calf.

Among all this tremendous joy, a tragedy occurred. Nadav and Avihu, sons of Aaron the High Priest, got carried away with the spiritual ecstasy of the moment and offered up an illegitimate incense offering to G-d, leading to their demise. So, during one of the most joyous moments of the newly minted Jewish nation, two corpses lay at the holy site.

Moshe had to act quickly—the corpses needed to be removed. So "Moshe summoned Mishael and Eltzaphan, the sons of Aaron's uncle Uzziel, and said to them, 'Draw near; carry your kinsmen from within the Sanctuary to the outside of the camp.' " (10:4)

Rashi explains, "As a person would say to his fellow [when someone had died at a wedding feast], 'Remove the deceased from before the bride so as not to disturb the joyous occasion.' "

WHY THE RELATIVES?

That the corpses needed to be removed seems reasonable enough. What doesn't seem so reasonable is the people chosen to carry out the task, Mishael and Eltzaphan—for two reasons:

First, as we read in the verse, they were the deceased's cousins, making them Levites. Why would Moshe ask Levites to carry out the task of removing the bodies? Coming in contact with dead bodies would render them impure and unable to reenter the Tabernacle—effectively slamming the door of ritual service on them for the next several days. Why would Moshe deny them that opportunity of being part of the inaugural team of Levites? Why couldn't he give the job to ordinary Israelites who, regardless, don't serve in the Temple?

What's more, they were first cousins of the deceased! Why would he choose such close kin for such a ghastly job?

THERE ARE MANY WAYS TO SERVE G-D

By specifically choosing Levites, and first cousins no less, Moshe was broadcasting an important message about what it means to "serve in the Tabernacle": It's not only the glamorous jobs of singing, praying or offering sacrifices. Rather, it's whatever needs to get done. Period. If that means removing corpses, well, then, that's just as much a form of "service" as swaying in a long robe and singing sublime hymns to the L-rd.

Mishael and Eltzaphan carried out the job without a word of dissent—amplifying this very message.

Just think about the conflicting emotions that must have been raging through their minds and hearts. Today was the day. Finally, the nation had been brought back into G-d's grace and the Divine Presence was manifest in this new, majestic structure. They were joyfully anticipating stepping into the role of divine servant on behalf of the entire people.

How marvelous it must have felt to be gifted with such a task!

And yet, here they were. Uncle Moshe had pulled them aside and rendered them undertakers, excluded from the festivities and relegated to tending to two corpses.

And the corpses of two dear first cousins, no less! While the entire nation sang and rejoiced, they were with their departed cousins.

How could anyone undergo such an experience without a wee bit of resentment and reluctance, not to mention grief?

Yet they did it nonetheless. Without any fuss.

How could they do it?

Because they understood that serving G-d has many formats. One moment you're singing in the Temple, the next moment you're removing a corpse to facilitate that singing. Doesn't matter. Whatever G-d throws at you, you do. If you like it, amazing. If not, well, then, you relish the opportunity to do something for G-d, not yourself.

DANCING AT THE WASTE BUCKET

There's a well-known chassidic tale of two holy brothers, Rabbi Elimelech of Lizhensk and Rabbi Zusha of Anipoli, who were thrown in jail one night on some trumped-up charge. When they noticed an overflowing trash pail in the corner of the room, they realized they would not be able to pray, for it is forbidden to do so in the presence of such filth.

Reb Elimelech was distraught. His brother Zusha turned to him and said, "Elimelech, why are you down? The same G-d who instructed us to pray, instructed us that we cannot do so in the presence of filth. Tonight, we are serving G-d by not praying!"

With that, the two brothers joined hands and burst into song and dance at their newfound opportunity for divine service.

They understood the same thing Mishael and Eltzaphan understood: G-d doesn't need you to serve Him in one particular way. There are many ways, and if we treasure the Being whom we serve, it doesn't matter what specific method is on the menu for today. You may very well never understand why today's connection to G-d is through tending to crying children and why tomorrow's calling is helping a random friend whose car broke down—but it really doesn't matter. The main thing is that in the larger scheme of things, you're doing your part in fulfilling G-d's master plan.

So if you're struggling to come to terms with various parts of Judaism, if you're trying to appreciate why it's so important to do certain things or why it's so wrong to do others, remember the noble acts of Mishael and Eltzaphan along with those two dancing rabbis at the waste bucket: everything is just another way to connect with G-d and do your part of the master plan.

And what can be more divine than carrying out G-d's master plan?

WHAT'S KOSHER ABOUT A PIG?

CHANA WEISBERG (Chabad.org)

Who isn't turned off by a hypocrite? Most of us try to keep away from people who act outwardly righteous, yet are immoral on the inside. Judaism admires the quality of being "of one mouth and one heart," someone who feels as they act.

But that doesn't mean you should always act or say how you feel!

Sure, we appreciate honesty, but don't be ruthlessly insulting just because you're in a lousy mood. Clearly, there are times when our insides are better left inside. Everyone around us doesn't need to suffer from our grouchy temperament.

We learn this concept in this week's parshah from the pig. Kosher land animals must chew their cuds and have split hoofs. The Torah lists four animals that have only one kosher symbol and are therefore not kosher. The camel, hyrax and hare chew their cud but don't have split hoofs, whereas only the pig has split hooves but does not chew its cud.

And the swine, though it divides the hoof and is cloven-footed, yet it does not chew the cud; it is unclean to you. (Lev. 11:7)

The Midrash compares the swine to an individual who acts more "kosher"

or righteous than he really is. "The swine, when reclining, puts forth its hooves, as if to say: 'See, I am kosher!'"
Such hypocritical, deceitful behavior is reprehensible to us. Perhaps that's why the pig has become the archetype of non-kosher animals.
Yet the Hebrew name for a pig is chazir, which literally means "to return." "Why is its name called chazir? Because in the future, G-d will return it to Israel." (Ritv"a, Kidushin 49b)
The pig's Hebrew name hints that it is unkosher for as long as it only has split hoofs. In the era of Moshiach, however, when its nature will be altered and it will chew its cud, it will become kosher (Ohr Chaim).
The animal's physical symbols represent spiritual characteristics. Regurgitating its cud reflects the quality where one's inner character is refined and introspective. Split hooves—the animal's limb of activity—reflect outward, practical good deeds. The pig has split hooves, its good deeds are many; however, its innards are not yet refined.
From all the non-kosher animals, the pig is unique in its "return" to kosher status in the time of Moshiach when the world will be cleansed of negativity. And thus, the pig has an important message for us.
While we strive to be "kosher" in both our inner character and our outward deeds, no one is perfect. Just because your insides aren't yet perfectly refined doesn't mean that your deeds should be equally imperfect. So if you're angry, refrain from lashing out. If you're feeling stingy, that doesn't mean you shouldn't open your purse.
In fact, try the opposite. Focus on doing good deeds and acting outwardly kindly. Eventually, your insides will follow.

THE SNAKE IN THE MIDDLE

RABBI RON JAWARY (Aish.com)
The Talmud teaches us that the middle letter in the Torah is in the Hebrew word "gachon" (11:42) "snake" that is found in this week's Torah portion. The snake symbolizes our negativity, cynicism, and indifference, all of those qualities which are the exact opposite of what we should be developing in ourselves.
This negativity, this snake, is surrounded on all sides by the Torah -- by optimism, purity, and G-dliness. We sometimes have a tendency to focus on the negative in our lives, but in order to embrace the G-dliness which surrounds us, we should strive to combat this negativity at every opportunity. In order to be intimate with the Divine, we should approach every day of our lives and every encounter with any person with the attitude that it's all an opportunity to see the beauty that life has to offer. We should view each day as an undeserved gift, and who doesn't love a freebie?
Isaiah says it all when he writes, "When you go out in joy, you'll arrive in peace." He is teaching us that the best antidote to help fight negativity is joy. By starting each day of our lives with joy, the negativity in our lives can be eliminated. We will realize just how petty so many of the things that bother us really are, and we'll find that there is room for everyone.
Then we will be granted peace and will come to realize what is really important in life. We will see how life was meant to be lived before the snake came into Adam and Eve's lives. We will see "that everything that G-d made is very good".

PRECISION

AVROHOM YAAKOV
After enumerating the laws of Kosher consumption of animals, birds, fish and insects, the Torah concludes, "… for distinguishing between the impure and the pure, between the living things that may be eaten and the living things that may not be eaten." (11:47)
Rashi observes based on the Sifra (12:7), "Is it necessary to say. that one should understand to distinguish between the donkey and the cow? Have they not already been closely defined as to their distinguishing characteristics? But the meaning is: that you should thoroughly understand to distinguish between what is unclean for you and what is clean for you (i. e. between what is forbidden and what is permitted to you) — between the case of an animal only half of whose wind-pipe has been cut through by the knife, and the case when the greater part has been cut through (in the former case the animal is forbidden, in the latter it is permitted as food)."
Birkas Asher suggests that Rashi is emphasising that it is not merely enough to have conceptual knowledge of whether the shechita was kosher, one needs practical skills and experience. Given the small margin of error, having the practical experience is critical.
R' Moshe Sternbuch adds that this concept is indicative of much of halacha. Many laws are dependent on a hairsbreadth.
Perhaps this is why Jews are as a rule, are detail oriented.
Much of Judaism is about precision – when does Shabbos start and finish to the minute, many laws of kashrus, the construction of the Temple was to exact measurements, the shape of tefillin, the size of tzitzis, how much Matza to eat at the seder and so forth – being meticulous is important.
And one needs to put those concepts into practice.
In order to handle a way of life that is governed by measurements, one needs to be oriented towards such details and be skilled in the implementation.

News & Views

THE 614TH COMMANDMENT: JUDAISM AFTER THE HOLOCAUST

RABBI DR. STU HALPERN, MBA (Aish.com 23-4-25)
While the Jewish tradition believes there to be 613 mitzvot, a remarkable suggestion was made by the German-born concentration camp escapee Emil Fackenheim, the eminent Jewish philosopher who passed away in 2003.
Fackenheim, at age 22, managed to flee Sachsenhausen and make his way to England. His older brother was tragically killed by the Nazis. Having been lucky enough to survive the horrors of the Holocaust, years later he argued in a provocative 1968 article in Commentary magazine for what became known as the 614th mitzvah. He wrote:
At Auschwitz, Jews came face to face with absolute evil. They were and still are singled out by it, but in the midst of it they hear an absolute commandment: Jews are forbidden to grant posthumous victories to Hitler. They are commanded to survive as Jews, lest the Jewish people perish… Finally, they are forbidden to despair of the God of Israel, lest Judaism perish… A Jew may not respond to Hitler's attempt to destroy Judaism by himself cooperating in its destruction. In ancient times, the unthinkable Jewish sin was idolatry. Today, it is to respond to Hitler by doing his work.
The case Fackenheim made is convincing on its surface. He believed it incumbent upon every Jew to keep his or her faith so as to not grant a victory to Hitler, who had so heartily sought the destruction of not only Jews but of Judaism.
Yet Rabbi Jonathan Sacks, in the chapter of his book Tradition in an Untraditional Age (1990) titled "The Holocaust in Jewish Theology," published a year before he became Chief Rabbi of England, took issue with Fackenheim's argument.
"Fackenheim is trying to rescue something positive from the Holocaust," he conceded at the start. "After all, Jews have gone on living and having children. Above all, they created the state of Israel, driven by the imperative never again to be vulnerable to another Holocaust."
But then he went on to offer his rebuttal.
Jewish survival has religious significance after the Holocaust only because it had significance before the Holocaust.
"The Holocaust did not make Jewish survival a mitzvah unless it was already a mitzvah," he argues. After all, while Jews were the Shoah's main victims, they weren't the only ones. Gypsies too were killed en masse, "but that did not make it a command to be a gypsy." Rather, "Jewish survival has religious significance after the Holocaust only because it had significance before the Holocaust."
Some Jews reacted to what they had experienced in the camps by remaining Jewish. Others abandoned their faith. The Holocaust, Rabbi Sacks wrote, was not the source of a providential imperative, but rather "proved that it was dangerous to be a Jew. But it also proved that it was dangerous to assimilate, and yet that has not stopped Jewish assimilation."
Fackenheim, Sacks believed, "erred in building a Jewish theology on the very foundations of the Holocaust. That way, madness lies. There is no way of building Jewish existence on a command to spite Hitler. That is giving too much to Hitler and too little to God."
After all, the Jewish faith existed for over 3,000 years before the Führer. And while of course the Holocaust was unique in its awful scope, it was not the first attempt to exterminate the Jewish people. The past couple of months alone we recalled in our calendrical commemorations two holidays that describe other such efforts, Purim and Passover. "The people [of] Israel did not survive Egypt to spite Pharaoh, nor did it survive Purim so as not to hand Haman a posthumous victory." Rather, the Jews survived to continue their covenantal commitment to God that had long predated our Egyptian and Persian adversaries, and has continued well-beyond the Nazis.
"We are Jews today despite the Holocaust, not because of the Holocaust," Rabbi Sacks concluded. "The Holocaust has not changed the meaning of Jewish life: and that is the miracle."
This Holocaust Remembrance Day, while we mourn the countless lives lost, many of us no doubt will strengthen our commitment to continued faith. But, taking a page from Rabbi Sacks, let us do so not because we are antithetical to those modern enemies who seek our annihilation, but because of our adhesion to a miraculous, millennia-long tradition that has always withstood both tyrants and time.

MOSSAD AGENTS WHO LED PAGER OP TO LIGHT INDEPENDENCE DAY TORCH

ISRAEL NATIONAL NEWS (Israelnn.com 22-4-25)

Minister Miri Regev informed three Mossad operatives, R., D., and N., who led the pager operation in Lebanon, that they had been selected to jointly light a torch at the main Independence Day ceremony on Mount Herzl next week.

R., 49, from central Israel, served as the operational commander in the Mossad's operations wing. She led all operational activities, which included deploying agents, establishing infrastructure and cover companies, alongside close coordination with the Mossad's technology, intelligence, and infrastructure wings.

D., a technology leader in the Mossad's technology operations wing, headed a team that faced complex technological challenges throughout the operation. The team developed innovative solutions designed to maintain the secrecy of the operation and ensure its execution with synchronization and precision.

N., an intelligence officer in the Mossad Intelligence Directorate, initiated and promoted dozens of intelligence activities against the Hezbollah terrorist organization. He was behind the intelligence response to the operation, from the moment it was conceived, through its planning, to its actual implementation.

Minister Regev noted, "The three Mossad members R., D., and N., together with their colleagues in the Mossad, are behind the seminal operation that will go down in history as operational activity throughout the world. Their complete surprise explosion of thousands of pagers throughout Lebanon, along with thousands of additional radios the following day, led to the breaking of the spirit of the terrorist organization Hezbollah."

Regev added that "the pager operation was a dramatic turning point in the northern sector and contributed to Israel's achievements against the axis of evil led by Iran. The choice of the men and women of the Mossad is how the people of Israel thank you and all the figures in the shadows who stand guard day and night."

GAZA DOCTORS ARE STILL LYING FOR HAMAS

ELDER OF ZIYON (ElderofZiyon.blogspot.com 22-4-25)

One of the most quoted doctors in Gaza is Dr. Ahmed Al-Farra, head of the pediatric department at Nasser Medical Complex in Khan Yunis.

This week he made a claim that is literally unbelievable.

The doctor claimed that 100% of blood donors in Gaza suffer from anemia "due to the starvation policy perpetrated by the occupation army against the people of the Gaza Strip."

Dr. Al-Farra said in a press statement, "All those who donate blood in Gaza are suffering from a blood shortage, but their sense of duty drives them to donate ."

This claim is, to put it lightly, ridiculous. In other conflict zones and areas where there really have been famines, the anemia rate in specific groups like children or pregnant women range from 20%-70%. There are no records of 100% anemia rates, and if there were, we would be hearing about hundreds of Gazans dying of malnutrition monthly. We aren't.

Not only that, but any hospital would reject any blood donors with anemia, so if what he is saying is true, Gaza hospitals are acting irresponsibly by endangering the health of the blood donors.

Some of the claims made by Gaza health officials have been equally absurd, like accusations of "germ warfare" by Israel or of the use of secret weapons that vaporize humans.

Yet these same officials are quoted often by Western media as if they are reliable.

ADL QUIETLY PURGED DATA ON EUROPEAN MUSLIM ANTISEMITISM

ANDREW BOSTOM & MORTON A. KLEIN (JNS.org 18-4-25)

Jonathan Greenblatt, CEO and national director of the Anti-Defamation League, boycotted the Jerusalem International Conference on Combating Antisemitism in late March to protest the event's inclusion of so-called "far-right European politicians." Israeli Diaspora Minister Amichai Chikli countered that the "right-wing" European party members he invited were "allies" in combating antisemitism.

A month earlier, Chikli explained the invitations, saying, "antisemitism is a growing problem in Europe due to Muslim immigration. The European right-wing parties have a point because they realize the problem and are presenting a solution. They understand the challenge of radical Islam, and they are willing to take the necessary steps."

The ADL has a 20-year record of determining "extreme antisemitism" in different places and among different groups, and for the last 10 years, it has released findings in its "Global 100: An Index of Antisemitism." Countries are ranked based on how many antisemitic stereotypes out of a total of 11 statements people there agree with. Those who agree that six or more statements are "probably true" are considered by the ADL report to be "harboring" antisemitic views.

Over the years, the report has included results from religious groups, including Christians and Muslims in Western Europe (such as in 2004, 2015 and 2019, and 2023). Yet that data, which shows Western European Muslims harboring significantly more antisemitic views than others in Western Europe, is now missing from the ADL's website.

After compiling the results of ADL survey reports from 2015 to 2023, we found a grossly disproportionate, two-to-four-fold excess prevalence of Jew-hatred among the Muslims in the United Kingdom, Belgium, France, Germany, Spain and Italy.

A reported instance where statistical adjustment to remove "confounding" or bias was performed on the ADL's Western European survey data yielded even more alarming results. Applying multivariable adjustment (controlling for country of residence, age, religion, income, gender, contact with Jews, etc.) to ADL's 2004 survey data, Yale University educators, in the peer-reviewed The Journal of Conflict Resolution, demonstrated that Western European Muslims had an 8-fold excess risk of harboring extreme antisemitism relative to Christians.

Moreover, when the ADL released the original raw April 2004 survey data, "Attitudes toward Jews, Israel and the Palestinian-Israeli conflict in 10 European countries," no indication whatsoever was made that the survey included a Muslim sample.

We recently discovered that the attempted concealment by ADL of its own disturbing findings on the attitudes of Western European Muslims on antisemitism is an ongoing matter of grave, urgent concern.

As confirmed by the ADL in email correspondence, the ADL has scrubbed from its "Global 100" public antisemitism survey results hub any Western European demographic data by religious affiliation, including Islam, for its 2015, 2019 and 2023 results.

The timing of this removal is disquieting because the data appears to have been made completely unavailable in March, on or about the time Greenblatt decided not to attend the antisemitism conference.

The ADL justified making the data inaccessible so abruptly because, as they said in their email, "religious affiliation has proven less generalizable" compared to other demographic variables, such as education and age." Yet this didn't seem to be a problem before. Another alleged reason for making the religious affiliation data unavailable, the organizaiton said, was that it was awaiting the completion of "internal research and peer-reviewed analysis."

These claims are disingenuous and ring hollow. First, there is copious independent data from Western European academic and governmental surveys that confirm ADL's findings of excessive antisemitism within the Muslim vs. non-Muslim populations of Western Europe.

Second, as already stated, almost 20 years ago, when the ADL allowed outside investigators access to their raw data for appropriate statistical analysis and peer-reviewed publication, the Western European religious affiliation data ADL had concealed indicated Muslims were 8-fold more antisemitic than Christians.

Lastly, even after the ADL's private correspondence acknowledging its religious affiliation purging, there is still no public explanation on the ADL Global 100 website providing examples of what the data revealed and "rationalizing" its removal.

ADL's pattern of blatant and arbitrary censoring of its own extreme antisemitism survey index scores on Western European Muslim antisemitism is disturbing and disorienting to those trying to assess Muslim antisemitism objectively and place it into perspective. We urge the group to desist from such censorious behavior and share data openly and transparently to facilitate effective strategies that combat the modern global scourge of disproportionate Muslim antisemitism.

HOW THE IDF RABBINATE PREPARED FOR PESACH

RABBI CHAIM GOLDBERG (JNS.org 18-4-25)

As part of its comprehensive preparations for the Passover holiday, the IDF Rabbinate worked to facilitate kosher-for-Passover equipment and seder-night supplies for all units in the Israel Defense Forces. These efforts extended not only to assembly and training areas in Israel but to combat-ready units in the Gaza Strip, Lebanon, Syria, and Judea and Samaria, all while maintaining readiness for combat escalation and extreme scenarios.

To enable all soldiers on operational missions, including positions and ambushes, vessels, aircraft, armored vehicles, etc., to celebrate and mark the seder night according to Jewish law, 7,000 individually pre-packaged "mitzvah meals" were distributed to soldiers in combat zones, containing

all the food items necessary to conduct a Passover seder. The packages contained a seder plate with all its components (handmade matzah, grape juice, roasted meat, bitter herbs, charoset and a karpas vegetable), as well as pamphlets containing halachah (Jewish law) guidelines for religious soldiers dealing with combat-related limitations.

In addition, the IDF Rabbinate trained hundreds of soldiers and volunteer leaders in a special workshop so they could conduct the seder in units and the field.

Col. Rabbi Chaim Weisberg, the head of the IDF Rabbinate Department, explained the motivation behind the preparations. "The IDF Rabbinate," he said, "working in close cooperation with logistics personnel at the General Staff Supply Center, did everything possible so that soldiers felt the spirit of the holiday and as much at home as possible on Passover. As part of this, attention and optimal responses were given to unique populations such as celiacs, vegans, vegetarians and those requiring stricter kosher certification."

Beyond the seder meals, the following items were distributed to soldiers stationed in the Syrian, Lebanese, Gaza, and Judea and Samaria sectors, as well as assembly areas: more than 83,000 Haggadahs; 200,000-plus pounds of matzah, including 17,000 pounds of handmade matzah; matzah with strict kosher certification (Eida Haredit) for Haredi soldiers; 390 tons of meat cuts, 420 tons of chicken and 64 tons of fish, all kosher-for-Passover; 710,000 kosher-for-Passover "rolls"; and thousands of seder plates, wine cups, kippahs and prayer books.

Additionally, dozens of morale-boosting materials were produced and distributed in the thousands, dealing with strengthening the fighting spirit, as well as halachic guidelines for holiday observance this year, with a special section regarding Passover eve falling on Shabbat.

Equally critical from a kosher standpoint, the IDF Rabbinate worked to "turn over" all IDF food facilities and make them kosher-for-Passover—from the Syrian Hermon down to the southernmost outpost in Eilat. Thousands of kitchens and other facilities were "koshered" in a highly complex operation by hundreds of rabbinical and professional staff, regular and reserve soldiers, at times requiring the use of blowtorches and industrial-sized vats of boiling water.

Col. (res.) Rabbi Chagai Velusky, Passover Project coordinator, said that "every year is challenging in its own right," but this year was particularly so because of all the uncertainty. Right up until Passover eve, he noted, "not everything was finalized due to security considerations. We knew everything would be fluid and volatile, yet alongside this, we needed to prepare."

He continued, saying that "all the kosher preparations were done without affecting operational activity, which is a very important principle that guides us in preparation for kosher certification and in the certification itself.

"An additional complication unique to this year was that the seder night fell on Saturday night. This meant the seder started at a relatively late hour, which challenged us to speed up the seder in certain locations that rotated out personnel during seder night for operational reasons. It also required us to provide special matzah for soldiers to use instead of challah for their Shabbat meals, but which needed to remain separate from the Pesach matzah, as it was already forbidden to serve leavened products in any of the meals on IDF bases before Shabbat."

Velusky added: "Not only that, but for the first time, we also prepared across the border in Syria, which was a challenge unto itself. The intense activity in the West Bank further complicated matters, as during the week of 'koshering' itself, additional battalion rotations were called up, and we had to provide kosher-for-Passover facilities for them as well."

TRUMP IS DOING WHAT WE BEGGED BIDEN TO DO

RONN TOROSSIAN (Israelnn.com 23-4-25)

Are they serious? The President of the United States is finally doing what the Jewish community *dreamed* the Biden administration would do —taking action. Actual, tangible, visible action to hold campus agitators and foreign funders accountable.

And instead of applauding this long-overdue shift, some in our community are wringing their hands, crying "authoritarianism" and "chilling speech"? What are we even talking about?

Let's be honest. For years, we asked for federal enforcement. We demanded investigations into the foreign nationals and organizations fomenting chaos and antisemitism on American college campuses. We pleaded for federal funding to be used as leverage against institutions that refuse to act.

This isn't new. It's not controversial. It's what we asked for.

And now, when President Trump actually takes those steps—detaining individuals involved in illegal activity and making clear that there are consequences—we recoil? Why? The answer is simple: **fear.**

We are a people shaped by centuries of persecution. Pogroms. Expulsions. Genocide. That trauma runs deep. And today, it manifests as something almost unrecognizable since the founding of the Jewish State:

Fear of fighting back.

Fear of being blamed.

Fear that standing up for ourselves will unleash even more hatred.

So instead, the community cowers. In the Diaspora, Jews manage to convince themselves that moderation and silence are the only acceptable Jewish responses.

Even worse, a small, radical segment of our community—loud, self-righteous, and more connected with liberalism than it is with our tradition believes it has the authority to speak on behalf of all of us. Spoiler alert: **they don't.**

They ignore, condescend to, or outright dismiss the voices of Jews who don't fit their mold. They ignore Orthodox Jews and Sephardim. From the many unsafe cities for Jews in America they speak of human rights as if in Israel our human rights are disconnected. They look at Jabotinsky Jews as if we are some strange, backward tribe, unworthy of consultation, certainly unqualified to be counted as part of the "real" Jewish community.

Eric Fingerhut, the Jewish Federations of North America CEO, last week sent a letter to Jewish federation CEOs across the US making clear that objecting to the Trump administration's plans to deport students for holding anti-Israel views and to defund and penalize universities is outside the Jewish consensus.

Mr. Eric Fingerhut was absolutely right to advise Federation CEOs not to sign onto a statement that was misleading, divisive, and out of touch with reality. That letter didn't reflect the consensus of the Jewish community—it reflects the politics of a few. And it certainly didn't reflect the needs of Jewish students and families who are living in fear on campuses and in cities worldwide.

Mr. Fingerhut showed the kind of moral clarity our community needs. Its rare that Jewish communal leaders make the right decision, but when they do it's time to say: good job!

DEBUNKING ANTISEMITISM: THE 109 COUNTRIES MYTH

YAAKOV BEST (Aish.com 20-4-25)

Over the past few years, a meme has been going around claiming Jews were kicked out of 109 countries. And since Jews have been expelled from so many countries, the thinking goes, they must have done something really bad to deserve it.

This is a complete fabrication based on distortions of history, rooted in baseless Jew-hatred. Let's break it down by touching on the biggest expulsions of the Jews: England, France, and Spain, as well as a few smaller ones.

Where did this "109 countries" meme come from? This antisemitic trope originated from a Holocaust-denying group in Australia, and has been turned into a meme on social media. Antisemitic accounts on social media will often use this trope as a way of reinforcing the stereotypes they push about Jews as being a bad influence on where they live.

History tells a completely different story if you look at the facts. First of all, the real number of big expulsions from an entire country is much smaller, closer to 12; not even close to 109. Antisemites use smaller-scale expulsions in the same countries to inflate the numbers. These expulsions were often driven by politics, economics and most of all - prejudice for being different. By claiming that Jews, the victims of the expulsions, deserved it, antisemites turn history on its head.

This slur is also a form of scapegoating, blaming a particular group for the problems of the past, as well as the present.

What really happened in history? Let's look at the facts of these expulsions to uncover the truth.

EXPELLED FROM ENGLAND

In 1290, about 2,000 Jews were expelled from England. In the times leading up to the expulsion, Jews were essentially property of the King of England. The King could tax Jews at will, such as when King Edward I also imposed a poll tax on the Jews to fund his war against Wales. Unlike Christian subjects, Jews were restricted from landownership and many trades. The King could take anything the Jews owned. So King Edward I expelled the Jews after years of taxing them into the ground.

Why? Money and prejudice. Due to the aforementioned ban on Jews entering trades, they were forced into moneylending. When nobles or knights couldn't pay back the Jewish lenders, the King exploited this situation by expelling the Jews and taking over the debts for himself. This wasn't about Jewish "crimes" - it was a royal cash grab wrapped in religious hate.

EXPULSION FROM FRANCE

Like England, Jews were greatly restricted in their economic and legal

rights. Their status was "servi camerae regis," or servants of the royal chamber. This placed all Jews directly under the King of France's direct authority, a power the King abused often for levying taxes whenever he saw fit.

In 1306, King Philip IV, or Philip the Fair expelled around 100,000 Jews. Why? After fighting wars against Flanders and England, France was broke and the King coveted the wealth of the Jews. He used piety as a pretext for his expulsion, claiming that lending on interest was a spiritual bane on the country. Again, like in England, Jews were forced into money lending since their participation in trades was very restricted. He confiscated their property, and canceled debts owed to them before. No evidence was involved in this decision, just scapegoating. These weren't punishments for "bad behavior" – they were power plays by people who saw Jews as easy targets.

EXPULSION FROM SPAIN

Spanish Grand Inquisitor Tomas de Torquemada had been lobbying the King and Queen for years to expel all of the Jews from Spain, arguing that their very presence was a threat to converts from Judaism to Christianity. The Spanish Monarchs rebuffed him until the Spanish capture of Granada, finishing reconquista of the Iberian Peninsula against the Muslims. This event greatly reduced the economic importance of the Jewish population. Only after their economic use was reduced did King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella issue the Alhambra Decree in 1492, forcing Jews to be expelled or forcibly converted.

Scholars estimate anywhere between 40,000-200,000 Jews were expelled. One Jew was given special permission to stay without converting: Don Isaac Abarbanel, a brilliant Jewish scholar as well as the Spanish Kingdom's Finance Minister. Abarbanel even helped fund the war in Granada. They weren't beyond breaking their own rules to serve their interests. Abarbanel refused, choosing to stay with his Jewish brethren, accompanying them out of Spain.

As with England and France, Spain gained incalculable capital from this expulsion through confiscation, forced asset sales, fines for leaving itself, and debt cancellations. The amount in modern currency could be anywhere between the millions and billions.

This pattern repeated itself over and over again. As a distinct minority, Jews were easy targets for abuse, extortion, and crimes against humanity. Jews were the subject of a pogrom in 1084 in Mainz, Germany, being blamed for fires that burned a big portion of the city. In 1421, the Jews of Vienna were subject to burning at the stake, expulsion and imprisonment on false charges of ritual murder and sacrilege. In 1442, Jews were expelled from Bavaria as a supposedly pious reaction to usury, yet confiscated Jewish wealth and cancelled debts, showing a clear earthly motive for the expulsion.

What ties these expulsions together? The false accusation of crimes, religious intolerance, economic greed, and political scapegoating. The medieval King and Queens of Europe, as well as mobs used Jews as punching bags and pawns to pretend to solve their own problems.

There you have it – the "109 countries" myth, debunked. It flips the script of reality, blaming the victims instead of the real culprits. History is complicated but one thing is clear: Antisemitic myths distort the past and fuel hate in the present. That's why we it's important to set the record straight.

FINDING OUR JEWISH PRIDE: THE STAR OF DAVID EFFECT

DANIEL ROSEN (Algemeiner.com 22-4-25)

In the aftermath of October 7, Jewish people around the world have experienced a deep recalibration — fear and shock has been replaced by anger, resilience, and pride. This has led to a reassessment of identity and a recognition of purpose. This awakening has taken on many forms, in the realm of advocacy campaigns, coordinated social media efforts, rallies and protests, letter-writing initiatives, WhatsApp group activism, and countless grassroots political movements.

Jewish visibility is increasing in other ways, too. One particularly striking yet underappreciated phenomenon is what I'd call the "Star of David Effect." This refers to the growing number of Jewish individuals — particularly younger Jews — who are visibly and deliberately wearing Magen David's or Chai necklaces in public. What in the past may have been a rare quiet personal expression of faith has now become a visible symbol of resistance and pride.

It has become a rather frequent occurrence within certain sectors of the Jewish community, where young people are outwardly displaying these necklaces and it speaks to a desire to fight back in their own way. This a proactive way to take a level of control back from the onslaught of incoming negativity that people have been exposed to. It's these people's way of saying, "yes I'm here, yes I'm Jewish, and what?"

This may seem like a small gesture, but in reality, it's a powerful statement. It is a reassuring demonstration by the younger generations of their pride in who they are. It reflects a generation beginning to see their Jewish identity not as incidental, but as essential. In an era where Jewish people have been forced to confront an ancient hatred in a modern context, the Star of David has transformed into both armor and resistance.

In recent discussions with Rabbi Jonathan Blake, the senior rabbi at Westchester Reform Temple in New York, he described how pre-Oct. 7, he had concerns about teaching the lessons of the Holocaust to younger generations. He expressed that the passage of time and the fading presence of survivors, coupled with the Shoah being too distant to be relatable to current generations, presented a challenge.

Rabbi Blake noted that October 7 has created a kind of unfortunate, but undeniable, educational opening. "For the first time in their lives," he told me, "these students understand what it feels like to be targeted simply for being Jewish. It's terrifying — but also awakening something in them."

The "Star of David Effect" is becoming a fashion statement that is a symbol of power. As the piece of jewelry sits around someone's neck, there is a certain strength it embodies and a type of coolness that it conjures up. Whether it's the young man wearing a Magen David in the university cafeteria or the woman with a Chai pendant on the subway, they are all part of something larger. They are, in their own way, demonstrating bravery and making a statement, and it is worth recognizing.

Every generation questions whether the next generation has what it takes to carry the torch of survival. Certainly, the young Jewish people of Israel have proven they have what it takes, and it is not wrong to assess that this generation of American Jewry are showing their resolve by donning there Magen Davids and their Chais. In doing so, they echo the power of generations before them — it would not be out of place to give these young people a pat on the back and let them know that their demonstration of pride is cool and deserves our respect.

THE POPE WHO DID NOT LOVE THE WEST (OR THE JEWS)

GIULIO MEOTTI (Israelnn.com 23-4-25)

The left loved Pope Francis when he denigrated capitalism, globalization, inequalities between rich and poor as well as Muslim migrants, and when he put theoretical Catholic violence and very real Islamic violence on the same level. The left loved the Pope when Francis willingly submitted to the dictates of political correctness and seemed to have adopted Chesterton's famous "crazy Christian virtues".

Now his admirers and faithful remember him as the Pope of the peripheries, of mercy, of inclusion, of openness to others, of the solitary mass in St. Peter's during the pandemic, of the "people" (his best moment was instead when he went to visit what remains of the Christians in Iraq). They mourn this Pope for his funny anecdotes and that mischievous look, as well as for his reputation for being "in step with the times."

For Bergoglio (before he became Pope Francis, he was known as Jorge Mario Bergoglio), Europe was the past. He did not understand it and did not want to understand it. He did not like Europe. And he said it every day for twelve very long years.

The Pope who did not go to Notre Dame for the reopening.

The Pope of "human brotherhood" with Imam Al Tayeeb, who called on Islam to unite against Israel, who legitimized terrorism on the basis of the Koran and called for the death of "apostates," meaning those who convert to Christianity.

The Pope who said on October 7 "they killed someone" and brought relations with the Jewish world to the lowest point in a strange convergence between Christian anti-Judaism and Muslim anti-Jewish hatred. While Benedict XVI took a stand in defense of Western culture and pledged to strengthen "collaboration with the sons and daughters of the Jewish people," his successor expressed distrust of the West and support for Israel's declared enemies.

The Pope who "punch-punched" the (dead) cartoonists after the Charlie Hebdo massacre ("it's normal, it's normal"). Why did Francis speak in a way that would make him identifiable as the guardian of the self-defense of the "dignity of religions" (only Islam is violent) rather than the guardian of the sacredness of life and the right to freedom of expression?

The Pope who, faced with the most significant episode of intolerance towards Christians that has occurred in Europe since the Second World War, the slaughter of Father Hamel in Normandy, said that Islamists are looking for "money" and that if one must speak of "Islamic violence" he also wants to speak of "Catholic violence".

The Pope who said that "there is an Arab invasion of Europe, a social fact, but how many invasions has Europe known in the course of its history and has always known how to overcome itself and move forward to finally find itself as if enlarged by the exchange between cultures".

The Pope who managed to explain that "the idea of conquest" is an integral part of Islam as a religion, but also of Christianity.
The Pope who met Greta, fueling a ridiculous and anti-Western environmentalism.
The Pope who said that "I don't feel like calling China anti-democratic".
The Pope who called the migratory upheaval "alarmist propaganda".
The Pope who, contrary to all the facts, said that "poverty fuels terrorism".
The Pope who compared migrants in Europe to Jesus and the Jews that Herod was hunting.
The Pope who attacked politicians who defend the Christian roots of Europe.
The Pope who said that Europe has a "multicultural" identity.
The Pope who called the West "a civilization of barbed wire and slavery".
The Pope who equated migrant centers to "concentration camps" and "lagers". And this was the most serious lie.
It does not matter that, once the comparison was cleared, even Erdogan approached the Jews under Nazism - or that, if Hitler exterminated 6 million Jews, in 2020 in Europe there were 87 million migrants (alive and well).
In his writings and speeches, Francis always presented only one truth. That of the gentile migrant denied entry to a rich and despicable Western country. He rejected the idea that these influxes of migrants could also be a source of problems for the receiving countries. He saw only the advantages of "diversity." But Islam has not yet produced civil societies, states, institutions, and a culture of rights that are equal to those of the West and as desirable to millions of people.
"John Paul II remains the Pope of freedom, who played a decisive role in the fall of the Soviet Union and the peaceful conclusion of the Cold War," writes Nicholas Baverez, a student of the philosopher Raymond Aron. "Benedict XVI was the Pope of reconciliation between faith and reason, which he sought to erect as a barrier against the return of religious fanaticism. Francis is the Pope of resentment toward Europe and the West."
I don't know if Michel Houellebecq is right when he writes that "the Church is engaged in suicide". But a certain cultural dhimmitude is the great blind side of the Bergoglian pontificate, whose aspiration for peace met with the will to power of his interlocutors. Satisfying all the requirements of the "South of the world", decolonial and destroyer of the "privileged whites", did not Bergoglio follow in the footsteps of the worst autocrats who manipulate this new mobilizing ideological figure, the "West"?
Benedict XVI discovered that the price of conviction is unpopularity. Francis discovered that the price of compromise is disorder.
History remembers the expression "better the turban than the tiara" by Gennadio Scolario, leader of the powerful Latinophobic and Turcophile Byzantine party, who preferred to hand the Byzantines over to the Turks and to the definitive yoke of dhimmitude rather than ally himself with Rome, rival of Constantinople.
I don't know if history will remember Francis as "better the turban than the West," but if Wojtyla went to Warsaw during communism and Ratzinger to Regensburg during the clash of civilizations, I struggle to find light in Bergoglio where he, in the West, saw only shadows.

Kosher & Halacha Korner

The following article may be at variance to local Kashrus Agencies. When in doubt, contact your local reputable Agency. In Australia, direct any questions to info@kosher.org.au or visit www.kosher.org.au

MASHKIM MEGULIM: WHAT IS IT?

RABBI DONIEL NEUSTADT (Torah.org)

In ancient times, poisonous snakes and reptiles were commonly found even in populated areas. In keeping with the Torah's strict exhortation to safeguard one's life[1], the Rabbis issued an edict forbidding drinking from any uncovered vessel which had been left unsupervised, for fear that a poisonous snake might have ejected venom into its contents while drinking from it[2].
This prohibition, known as mashkim megulim, "uncovered beverages," is recorded in the Talmud[3] and codified by the Rambam as halachah which we are to practice today. But the Shulchan Aruch, who starts by quoting the Rambam, concludes by ruling that this edict no longer applies[4]. Since poisonous snakes and reptiles are rarely found in populated areas nowadays, there is no longer any reason to forbid drinking an uncovered, unsupervised beverage. The basic halachah follows this opinion, and one is no longer required to concern himself with this prohibition[5].
There are, however, poskim who maintain that the original edict applies even in our days. Their opinion is based on the following arguments:
Although poisonous snakes and reptiles are no longer common in most places, they do exist in some remote areas. Since one can easily avoid drinking mashkim megulim, there is little justification to discount a Rabbinic edict which was enacted for our benefit and protection[6]. In addition, while it is true that we no longer fear being poisoned by a snake or other reptile, we are still concerned about the venom of other rodents which may be harmful, even if not fatal[7].
A Rabbinic prohibition cannot be repealed even when the stated rationale no longer applies. This is because the Rabbis did not necessarily divulge all of the reasons behind their pronouncements. Consequently, even if the given reason is no longer applicable, we are still bound by the prohibition[8].
As stated yesterday, the basic halachah does not follow this opinion, and uncovered drinks may be consumed. Nevertheless, there are many people who choose to observe these halachos strictly[9], and there are several sources who strongly recommend[10] avoiding mashkim megulim[11], especially in Eretz Yisrael[12]. The following rules, therefore, apply only to those who choose to keep the halachos associated with the Rabbinic prohibition of mashkim megulim:
Question: Which beverages[13] are included in this prohibition and which are not?
Discussion: The following beverages and liquids are included:

- Honey — bee's honey only. Date honey is not affected by this prohibition.
- Milk — boiled or raw.
- Water, soda, beer, tea, coffee — boiled or raw, processed or unprocessed, flavored or unflavored[14].
- Wine — uncooked only; yayin mevushal is permitted[15]. Uncooked grape juice is questionable[16].
- Fruit juices, vinegar and oil are excluded from this prohibition[17].

Question: Are mashkim megulim prohibited only if left uncovered overnight?
Discussion: No. A drink left uncovered and unsupervised even for a few moments, even during the daytime, is classified as mashkim megulim[18].
"Uncovered" means completely uncovered. If the beverage was loosely covered with a paper plate or napkin etc., that is sufficient[19]. If the beverage was left uncovered inside a closed refrigerator, it is permitted[20]. If the beverage was left on the stove in an uncovered pot which was boiling and emitting steam, it is permitted[21].
"Unsupervised" means that the beverage was left completely alone[22] for a few moments. If, however, there was a person who was fully awake — even a baby[23] — in the room[24], the prohibition of mashkim megulim does not apply[25]. This holds true even if the person in the room was not watching the beverage at all, and even if his eyes were closed the entire time and even if the room was dark[26].
Some poskim hold that yotzei venichnas supervision —i.e., a beverage left uncovered and unsupervised in a room where there is constant traffic — is considered sufficient supervision[27]. Others, however, hold that yotzei venichnas is not valid for mashkim megulim[28].
Even those who are generally lenient with mashkim megulim are careful not to use such wine for Kiddush[29] or for other ritual purposes which require wine, such as Havdalah and Birkas ha-mazon[30], since it is considered demeaning to use mashkim megulim for mitzvos. L'chatchilah, therefore, wine which was left uncovered and unsupervised for even a brief period — as little as twenty minutes[31] — should not be used for mitzvos. If, however, no other wine is available, one may use such wine as long as its taste and smell were not compromised in any way[32]. If the wine was left uncovered for five or six hours[33], and surely if it was left uncovered over night, we are concerned that its taste or smell was affected and it may not be used for Kiddush etc., even b'diavad[34].

1. Devarim 4:9, 4:15, as explained in Berachos 32b. See Beiur ha-Gra, C.M. 427:8.
2. Although this is a Rabbinic prohibition, some poskim maintain that once the Rabbis pointed out that mashkim megulim may be dangerous, drinking from them becomes forbidden min ha-Torah; see Levush, C.M. 427:11, Tevuos Shor 13:2 and Chasam Sofer, Avodah Zarah 30a.
3. Avodah Zarah 30a and Chullin 9b. The original source is the Mishnah (Terumos 8:4).
4. Y.D. 116:1, based on the view of Tosafos, Rashba and Tur.
5. Mishnah Berurah 160:23.
6. Pri Chadash and Pri To'ar, quoted by Birkei Yosef and Aruch ha-Shulchan, Y.D. 116:1.
7. Talmidei Rabbeinu Yonah, Avodah Zarah. See also Levush, Y.D. 116:1.
8. The Vilna Gaon (quoted in Ma'asei Rav 95 and in Pe'as ha-Shulchan 2:32).
9. Mashkim megulim, unlike non-kosher food, are not bateil b'shishim (Chochmas Adam 68:1; Aruch ha-Shulchan 116:10).
10. See Pischei Teshuvah, Y.D. 116:1, quoting Shelah ha-Kadosh, that while uncovered drinks are halachically permitted, it is advisable to refrain from drinking them.
11. In addition to the sources quoted above, see Kitzur Shulchan Aruch 33:5, who warns against drinking mashkim megulim. See also Orchos Rabbeinu, vol. 1, pgs. 206-209, quoting the Chazon Ish and the Steipler's strict adherence to all of the laws

of mashkim megulim, even to the extent of not using such water for washing the hands.

12. Birkei Yosef, Y.D. 116:3 and Pe'as ha-Shulchan 2:32. See Minchas Yitzchak 9:85.

13. The Talmudic prohibition also included juicy fruits, e.g., watermelons and grapes, which were cut or split open and left unsupervised; see Beitzah 7b and Rambam, Hilchos Rotzeiach 11:8. However, nowadays, even those who are stringent with mashkim megulim do not mention unsupervised fruits as being prohibited, unless there is clear evidence that the fruit was tampered with. When in question, consult a rav. See Kaf ha-Chayim, Y.D. 116:9.

14. Orchos Rabbeinu, vol. 1, pg. 206; Shemiras Nefesh 11:28, quoting Chazon Ish.

15. Rambam, Hilchos Rotzeiach 11:8. There is, however, a debate among contemporary poskim whether or not yayin mevushal on the market today is cooked in such a way as to qualify as "mevushal." See The Weekly Halachah Discussion, vol. 1, (Jerusalem: Feldheim Publishers, 1997) on Parashas Ki Sisa, for an elaboration on this issue.

16. Harav C. Kanievsky (Shemiras Nefesh, Responsa #59).

17. Rambam, Hilchos Rotzeiach 11:7.

18. Rambam, Hilchos Rotzeiach 11:11; Aruch ha-Shulchan, Y.D. 116:3. Chazon Ish is quoted as remarking that we do not know the exact time period which renders beverages as mashkim megulim. [In addition to the edict against mashkim megulim, there is an additional advisory against drinking beverages that were left uncovered and unsupervised overnight; see Maseches Derech Eretz 11 and Tzava'as R' Eliezer ha-Gadol 62, quoted by Harav C. Kanievsky in Shemiras Nefesh.]

19. Orchos Rabbeinu vol. 1, pg. 208, quoting Chazon Ish.

20. Kaf ha-Chayim 272:9; Harav C. Kanievsky, quoting Chazon Ish (Shemiras Nefesh 11:84); Shevet ha-Kehasi 1:112.

21. Rambam, Hilchos Rotzeiach 11:8.

22. A closed-circuit camera is not considered supervision concerning mashkim megulim; Harav C. Kanievsky (Shemiras Nefesh, Responsa #11).

23. Based on Midrash Rabbah, Noach 34:12.

24. Or even in a nearby room from where he can see into the room where the beverage is; Harav C. Kanievsky (Shemiras Nefesh, Responsa #17).

25. Perishah, Y.D. 116:12. Some poskim rely on this type of supervision for all drinks except for wine; Pri Chadash, Y.D. 116, based on the view of the Rif and the Rosh.

26. Harav C. Kanievsky (Shemiras Nefesh, Responsa #77).

27. Nefesh Adam #6, based on Yerushalmi, Terumos 8:4, quoted by the Meiri, Avodah Zarah 30a.

28. Pri Chadash, Y.D. 116:1 This is also the view of Chazon Ish and the Steipler as quoted in Orchos Rabbeinu. See Chelkas Binyamin 116, Tziyunim 26.

29. O.C. 272:1.

30. Birkei Yosef, O.C. 272:1; Beiur Halachah 272:1 (s.v. al); Aruch ha-Shulchan 272:5.

31. Divrei Malkiel 4:1.

32. Mishnah Berurah 272:3; Kaf ha-Chayim 272:7. See Az Nidberu 1:7.

33. Divrei Malkiel 4:1

34. Aruch ha-Shulchan 272:5. See Az Nidberu 1:7.

Candles (Melb) Friday 25/4/25 28 Nissan 5785 5.22p/6.19p