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 (In memory of Moshe Yehuda ben Avrohom Yaakov, Mala Mindel bas Meir, Moshe Tzvi ben Yitzchok Aharon, Gittel bas Sinai,
 Nechemia ben Menachem Mendel, Yaakov ben Menachem Mendel)

Haazinu 5784

WHAT THE ATHENIAN SAGES DIDN'T UNDERSTAND

RABBI AHARON LOSCHAK (Chabad.org)

They weren't pretty and they weren't for genteel company, and historians now debate how appropriate they were at the time. But the fact of the matter remains that the wartime speeches of General George Patton have contributed to making him one of the most motivational and inspiring military leaders in US history.

In the throes of the darkest days of WWII, he regularly rallied his troops with tough talk that could make one's hair stand on end. And boy oh boy, did his words hit home and inspire his soldiers.

His best-known speech occurred on June 5, 1944, just before D-Day. It was so effective that author Terry Brighton called it "The greatest motivational speech of the war and perhaps of all time, exceeding (in its morale-boosting effect if not as literature) the words Shakespeare gave King Henry V at Agincourt." (*Brighton, Terry (2009), Patton, Montgomery, Rommel: Masters of War*, Crown Publishing Group, p. 260.)

Patton believed in his men and he inspired them accordingly. Indeed, under Patton, the Third Army landed in Normandy and went on to play an integral role in the last months of the War. The rapid offensive he called for brought the Third Army wide acclaim.

TWO FORMS OF SPEECH

Parshat Haazinu is a sort of swansong, a stirring poem recited by Moshe on his final day on this earth. The opening words are:

"Listen, O heavens, and I will speak! And let the earth hear the words of my mouth!" (32:1)

Moshe tells the heavens that he will "speak" to them. As for the earth, she will hear "the words" of his mouth. In the original Hebrew, these words are "dibur" for the former, and "amirah" for the latter.

Generally speaking, dibur is a harsher form of speech (see Bereshis 42:30), more "straight-talk," whereas amirah is softer, more diplomatic (see Rashi, Shmot 19:3). Accordingly, Moshe spoke more harshly and truthfully to the heavens, reserving the softer, kinder talk for the earth.

Why?

RABBI YEHOSHUA BEN CHANANYA AND THE ATHENIAN SAGES

To get to the bottom of this, we're going to take a detour and explore a puzzling Talmudic story (Talmud, Bechorot 8b).

Rabbi Yehoshua ben Chananya was one of the preeminent sages who lived in Israel under Roman rule shortly after the destruction of the Second Temple. On a mission to Rome to speak to the authorities, he challenged the scholars of Athens in front of the emperor, claiming, "We are wiser than they." The Talmud proceeds to tell of an elaborate string of events that eventually saw the rabbi cunningly sneak his way into the Athenian academy and stand face to face with the elders of Greece.

A lively discussion ensued, and one the Athenian scholars asked Rabbi Yehoshua ben Chananya a riddle:

In the case of a certain man who goes and asks to marry a woman and her family does not give her to him, why would he see fit to go to a family that is greater than the first?

Rabbi Yehoshua took a peg and stuck it into the lower part of the wall, but it did not go in. He then stuck it into the upper portion of the wall, and it went

in.

Rabbi Yehoshua said to them, "So it is with the one seeking a wife. Perhaps he will find the girl destined for him."5

What is the meaning of this puzzling story?

How to Speak to People

It's plain that the entire debate was metaphorical. One suggested interpretation is that they were debating what to do when you see a person doing something they shouldn't be doing. Should you say something? And if so, what's the optimal way to go about it?

Intuitively, most people first try a gentle, soft-spoken approach—going over to the offending party and trying to get them to come round with kind, encouraging words.

But that doesn't always work. What then?

The Athenian sages said, "If you try once with gentle efforts and it doesn't work, there's no use trying again. Why even bother with another family if the first one refuses? It won't work. Forget it."

But Rabbi Yehoshua taught them a deep truth about the soul: a person can always be better. You can speak to the person's higher self, the part being covered up by their current behavior.

When the usual soft talk isn't working, there's another option: a sincere and spiritually attuned person who is able to truly sense the other person's soul can speak forcefully and directly to it. That talk may not be so "nice." It might sound harsh. But it's worth it, because the recipient has a truer, more pristine part that is able to hear such words.

The Athenian scholars didn't believe in a soul, so they were incredulous: If the peg doesn't fit in the bottom brick, certainly it won't fit higher up on the wall! But Rabbi Yehoshua ben Chananya knew the truth. He knew that even in instances when the peg doesn't fit on the lower rung of the ladder, you can reach for the top rung and straight-talk the person back to their pure self.

So he took the peg, reached higher, and lo and behold, it fit!

Heaven vs. Earth

This explains our verse: When talking with someone on the conventional "earthly" level, gentle and kind "amirah" is the way to go. But if that doesn't work, don't give up. Dig within yourself and find your inner purity that is able to sense their pure soul and reach out on that level. This is a very different type of talk. It may be rhetoric that appeals forcefully to something out of reach, but the soul can hear it.

There will always be people in your life who meander from the straight and narrow. It could be your child, a good friend, or a former student. How wonderful it would be if a short, kind, and encouraging word was all it took to set them straight.

But it doesn't always work that way. Sometimes people you love do some crazy stuff, and it's difficult to come up with words that will appeal to them. It is at such times that you must dig within yourself (yes, yourself—not them!) to find their soul. When you're able to see that pure and shining soul, you'll come up with words of "dibur," a truer and less varnished discourse that can pierce through the muck and hit home.

All it takes is belief. Belief that they possess a radiant soul. So go ahead and talk to it.

This essay is based on Ohev Yisrael (Apta), Devarim 32:1.

WHY SING SAD SONGS?

RABBI MENACHEM FELDMAN (Chabad.org)

“Listen heavens and I shall speak, and let the earth hear the words of my mouth.” (32:1)

This is the opening verse of the song of Haazinu, the song that Moshe recited to his people on the day of his passing.

The song is poetic, powerful and poignant.

After a few introductory verses, there is a description of G-d’s kindness to the Jewish people:

“He found them in a desert land, and in a desolate, howling wasteland. He encompassed them and bestowed understanding upon them; He protected them as the pupil of His eye. As an eagle awakens its nest, hovering over its fledglings, it spreads its wings, taking them and carrying them on its pinions.” (32:10-11)

The song continues with the prediction that the Jews would eventually turn away from G-d:

Yeshurun [Israel] became fat and kicked.... You forgot G-d who made you. You began to serve idols that are new; your fathers never imagined them.... I will hide my face from them I will see what will be their end for they are a generation of changes; they are not [recognizable] as My children whom I have reared. (32:15-20)

What follows is a story as sad as Jewish history:

“I will link evils upon them. I will use up My arrows on them. They will sprout hair from famine, attacked by demons, excised by Meriri. I will incite the teeth of livestock upon them, with the venom of creatures that slither in the dust. From outside, the sword will bereave, and terror from within; young men and maidens, suckling babes with venerable elders.” (32:23-25)

The song closes on a positive note, predicting that ultimately, *“The nations will cause His [G-d’s] nation to rejoice, for He will avenge the blood of His servants ... and He will atone His land, His nation.” (32:43)*

This song was sung quite often in the Holy Temple. Every day, while the priests would offer the daily offerings, the Levites would accompany the service with music and songs of praise from King David’s book of Psalms. All of the songs sung were joyous and were meant to imbue the service with a spirit of joy, in fulfillment of the commandment to “serve the Lord with joy.” (Tehilim 100:2)

Surprisingly, the song that the Levites sang every Shabbat, as the priests offered the Musaf offering, the additional offering for the Shabbat, was non-other than the Song of Haazinu. They would sing one section per week, completing the song every six weeks.

Why this song? Isn’t this the wrong message for the occasion? Granted, the sections sung on week one, two and six, are indeed inspiring, but what about the weeks in between, the portions of the song that foretell the tragedies that would befall our people? How could a person feel uplifted while the Levites were singing, *“I [G-d] said I will cause them to be forgotten, their remembrance will be destroyed from mankind”?! (32:26)*

The answer is, in the weeks that the Levites sang the bitter parts of the song, they were teaching us how to overcome the tragic stanzas of our lives. The Levites were teaching us to be patient as we allow the song to unfold.

We should not expect to wake up each and every day of our lives and hear a joyous song playing in our ears. There will be days when we hear no song, when all we can hear is lamentation. Yet, the message of the Levites is that each stanza is part of a larger song, which can be heard in full only if we come back next week for more. Ultimately, we will persist, and we will find the joy. We will then realize that the difficult part of the road is just that, a road to a deeper and more meaningful joy.

When everything is going well it is difficult to feel complete joy. Part of us is always worried that the blessings in our life will not last. We can’t be fully happy with our successes, because deep down we fear that we may lose them. We can’t fully celebrate our relationships, because deep down we are worried that they may end. The young couple, whose love is pure, is not fully happy because they are not sure whether their love is deep enough to survive a major conflict, whether it is strong enough to overcome pain and resentment. Only when the relationship survives deep challenges can the joy be complete. For only then do we know that the bond is unbreakable.

The Torah portion of Haazinu is always read in the month of the holidays, in the month that contains both the days of awe, Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, as well as the days of joy, Sukkot and Simchat Torah. In the beginning of the month we face the pain created by our weakness. We think about the sins of the past year, we think about the pain of separation

caused by sin, the pain of separation from G-d and from people we sinned against. In the days of awe, we overcome the pain, we return, we reconnect. And then we realize that our relationship with G-d is deeper and stronger than we imagined. We realize that our bond with G-d is unbreakable. That no matter how much pain we caused, no matter how far we tried to run, He has been waiting for us—waiting for us to return, waiting to accept us, waiting to embrace us.

We discover that the intense joy of Sukkot and Simchat Torah is possible only after we experience the days of awe. We discover that all parts of the journey are integral to the intense joy. We discover that they are all part of the same song.

No matter what life brings us, we remember that we are in the middle of a song. If we keep singing, keep playing the notes, we will discover the music. We will discover that there was music all along.⁹

Based on *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 24, Haazinu.

IT’S MY PARTY!

RABBI YAAKOV ASHER (Ohr.edu)

"The Rock perfect is His work righteous and fair is He." (32:4)

Last year was a difficult year for the Jewish People. May it be His will that the one that has just commenced will be easier for us! The following might help to put the events of the past year in their true perspective.

Once there was a rich man whose son fell ill with a bizarre and unknown malady. Try as they might, none of the doctors could fathom the boys deepening sickness. In desperation, the rich man sent for a world-famous professor to check his son. The professor arrived and immediately set to work. He diagnosed a rare dietary sensitivity that precluded the son from ever eating meat. Such was the sensitivity of the son to meat, that to consume even a small amount could jeopardize his life. (No, this is not an advertisement for vegetarianism, its a mashal, a parable. If you hadn’t guessed)

Slowly the boys condition improved, and eventually he was cured. Accompanied by profuse thanks and a large check the professor returned to his ivory tower. Not long after, the rich man went abroad on business. Before he left, however, he gave strict instructions to his household that his son was to be given no meat whatsoever.

A week passed, then two. One day, the son was passing the dining room. A delectable smell of roast beef wafted up from the table and played around his nostrils. The warning of the professor started to evaporate in the aroma of the roast beef, and, unable to resist, he peeked around the door. Seeing that no one was there, he made his way furtively to the table, wrapped up a large slice of juicy beef in a napkin, placed it pocket and whistling nonchalantly, he sidled from the room. Once outside, he devoured the beef with relish.

Needless to say, before you could say, "I told you so," he was prostrate on his bed in a total relapse. The rich man was summoned from abroad and he returned to find his son hovering between life and death. He begged the professor to try and save his son. On the spot, he promised him that never again would he venture abroad on business, that he himself would be the constant guardian of his sons health. Under these terms, the professor agreed to return once more and do what he could for the boy.

With enormous care and diligence on the part of the professor, the boy slowly returned to health.

The father decided to make a large meal to celebrate his sons recovery. He invited all of his family and friends and rented a suite at the finest hotel. On the night of the meal, his son arrived at the party beaming from ear to ear. All the guests were seated at the tables in deep communion with their main course. The father arose, and as his son was making his way to his place, the father told him to leave the hall immediately. The clink of china and cut glass gave way to an embarrassed hush. In spite of the sons requests to be allowed to stay, the father was adamant and the son left the hall. Slowly, the conversation resumed. And of course, the topic was the bizarre behavior of this cruel father.

Only the father knew the reason for his actions.

Similarly the Master of the World "runs" His creation. Sometimes He expels the most righteous people first from this earthly dining room. However, it is always for their own good. And if we, the guests, fail to understand His conduct, we must know with total clarity that it is always for their good.

For "righteous and fair is He".

CONSIDER THE CHANGES

RABBI YISSOCHER FRAND (Aish.com)

Remember the days of old, consider the years of each generation. (32:7)

History is an integral part of Jewish life. The Torah tells us, “Remember the days of old, consider the years (shenos) of each generation; ask your father and he will tell you, your grandfather and he will say it to you.” A Jew must always remember the Exodus, the Giving of the Torah at Mount Sinai, the forty years in the desert and all the other seminal events of our history that form the foundation of our faith and our observances. A Jew must see Hashem’s hand in the events of the past and their consequences. As a secular philosopher once said, “Those who cannot remember the past are doomed to repeat it.”

This we all know and understand. But what is the significance of the repetitive language of the verse? How does “remember the days of old” differ from “consider the years of each generation”?

The Menachem Tzion resolves this question homiletically. The word for “years” used here, *shenos*, can also be translated as “the changes.” Consider the changes of each generation. Understand that the lessons of the past must be applied to the present with wisdom and discernment. Times change, people change, circumstances change. Not everything that worked in the past will work today, and not everything that failed in the past would fail today. The Torah can never be changed but it has enough built-in flexibility to allow it to adapt perfectly to all times and places. We have to think and consider hard before we make the application.

THE DIVINE PROTECTORATE

With broad strokes Moshe present the sweep of history, “Remember the days of old, consider the years of each generation; ask your father and he will tell you, your grandfather and he will say it to you. When the Supreme One gave nations their portion, when He separated the children of man, He set the borders of peoples according to the number of the people of Israel.”

FILLING THE SPIRITUAL VOID

AVROHOM YAAKOV

In his chastisement or prediction for the future of the Jewish people, Moshe observes that “They sacrificed to demons, which have no power, deities they did not know, new things that only recently came, which your forefathers did not fear.” (32:17)

Rashi comments on the words ‘new things that only recently came’ based on the Midrash (Sifri 318:14) that these deities were so recent, that even the heathen nations were not familiar with them. Indeed, if a heathen saw them, he would say, “This is a Jewish idol!” These deities were so out there that the only adherents were Jews.

Similarly, the Malbim suggests that this reflects the flightiness of the Jewish people to believe in religions that even the non-Jews would not accept.

Chasam Sofer has a different take on this and views this through the lens of intergenerational observance of Judaism.

While many people understand that each generation becomes weaker in their commitment to Torah and mitzvos, and that the fear of any parent is that their children will not be as observant as they, the phenomenon that the parents are seriously frum and well versed in Yiddishkeit while their children are the complete opposite is something new that previous generations did not experience and would be crazy talk if it wasn’t happening.

THE NEXT GENERATION is always looking for something new, something that they can take ownership of. Explaining that they are links in the great chain of Jews stretching back to Avrohom, Yitzchak and Yaakov doesn’t cut it. They want to be the ones at the start.

They abandon the faith and observances of those that went before them.

And yet, they still thirst for something to satisfy their spirit.

That is why Jews are involved in anything that they perceive is a higher cause – almost any religion, crazy causes and even to the point of creating their own philosophies – to try to fill that hole in their spiritual needs. They hope that mouthing slogans like ‘tikkun olam’ or ‘the environment needs our help’ will fill that void.

Anything except the religion that they abandoned.

While not all realise it, many eventually understand that their spiritual hunger can only be sated by returning to the religion that is their birthright.

IF THEY WERE WISE

RABBI AVRAHAM TWERSKI (Aish.com)

“Were they wise they would comprehend this, they would discern it from their end” (32:29)

No one wants to contemplate their end. Most people act as if they were going to live forever. It has been quipped that we live as if we will never die,

and we die as if we never lived. This is a denial of reality, and one cannot possibly have an optimum adjustment to life if one denies reality.

We may verbalize an awareness of our mortality, but our actions betray our feelings. How different our behavior would be if we had an emotional grasp of our mortality.

Both as a rabbi and as a physician, I have attended people in the last days of life when their denial had broken down and they felt that their lives were coming to an end. Many have said, “If I had to do it over again, I would have spent more time with my children. I wish I had gotten to know them better.” No one has ever said, “My one regret is that I did not spend more time at the office.”

Why is it that this wisdom often comes when one can no longer put it to use?

But that is the irony of life: Our wisdom comes too late.

In my rehabilitation center, adolescents are admitted for treatment of alcoholism and drug addiction. When an adult patient sees a youngster being admitted, he may say, “I wish I had been that lucky, to have been treated for my addiction when I was 15. Here I am at 49, having gone through two unsuccessful marriages and having no contact with my children from either marriage. Everything I could have had in life was lost as a result of my drinking. I have no family, no home, no job.”

I suggest to this man, “Why don’t you speak with this youngster and tell him how fortunate he is to have an opportunity to overcome his addiction?”

A bit later this patient says, “I tried to talk to the kid, but he won’t listen. He’s here because the judge ordered him here. He’s going to go back out and get high. But I wasn’t any different than that kid. I didn’t listen to people who told me that alcohol was going to destroy me.”

If only we were wise! Moshe says that if we were wise, we would contemplate our end when we were young. We would then live so that we would not have anything to regret when we near our end.

HERE AND NOW

RABBI SHAUL ROSENBLATT (Aish.com)

In this week’s portion, G-d tells Moshe to ascend Mount Nevo where he is to die "in the middle of the day." The Sages explain that the Jewish people had decided they were not letting Moshe go without a fight. He had taken them out of Egypt, split the sea, given them the Torah and provided manna for 40 years. Who wants a terrific leader like that to move on?

That explains why G-d took Moshe "in the middle of the day" - to show the Jewish people that no one could stop Him from taking Moshe back.

Now here’s a paradox: During Moshe’s lifetime, the Jewish people complained about his leadership over and over again. And yet, when push came to shove, they were desperate for him to stay.

Human beings, and most especially we Jews, love to hang on to the past. We are always challenged to enjoy the now because the past, once it’s gone, always seems so much rosier. Appreciating the now is our greatest challenge. The truth is, though, that the now is all that we have. Our life is lived only in the now. The past exists only in our memory; the future only in our imagination. All that we have is every precious, but fleeting, moment through which we experience our lives. And nostalgia can so easily make the "now" seem so miserable.

The truth is that after Moshe was gone, the Jewish people did fine. New and different leaders came along who led each generation with their own unique set of capabilities. The Jewish people grew, developed and thrived - all without Moshe to lead them. In retrospect, keeping Moshe alive was not the solution for them. The solution was to come to terms with the incredible possibilities that remained even when he was not there.

Tradition and respect for the past is a key part of Jewish life, and crucial for moving forward in our national mission of repairing the world. But when we are overly concerned about holding onto what is in the past, that can cloud our perception of the new possibilities that exist in the here and now.

Life is what we make of the moments we are given. And every moment is of equal potential. The past and future are no better than today. In the grandest of all equalities, all moments are created completely equal in their potential for us to realize the rich and varied - infinite, in fact - possibilities that G-d constantly places before us.

G-d is not in the past, nor is He in the future; He is outside of time. He exists only in the timeless 'now' that every moment provides. G-d is right here, right now. Why would we want to live anywhere else?

A KINDER AND MORE TRUTHFUL NATION

RABBI ARON TENDLER (Torah.org)

When the Bais Hamikdash stood in Yerushalayim, 70 Korbanos were offered over the course of Succos. Those 70 offerings were brought on behalf of the 70 non-Jewish nations.

Succos follows Yom Kippur and celebrates what we hope will be our renewed relationship with G-d. Why do we offer Korbanos for the rest of the world on Succos if Succos celebrates our renewed relationship with G-d? What do the other nations have to do with the renewal of our relationship with G-d?

Having a relationship with G-d means willingly embracing our responsibility as G-d's "kingdom of priests and holy nation." As G-d's "kingdom of priests and holy nation" we must teach the non-Jewish world who G-d is and what their responsibilities are in relation to Him. That is why we were chosen from all the other nations. Chosen to be different, chosen to be noticed, chosen to be more aware, chosen to be more familiar, and chosen to represent Him to the rest of humanity. Renewing our relationship with G-d means rededicating ourselves to the reason why He chose us to be His "kingdom of priests and holy nation. As such, it is also our responsibility to represent the 70 nations to G-d; therefore, in the aftermath of Yom Kippur we bring offerings on their behalf. That is what our special relationship with G-d is all about.

The focus of Yom Kippur is recognizing G-d as the one and only G-d and accepting that His expectations for us obligate us to act accordingly. Accomplishing His expectations for us demands two steps. First we must renew our individual relationship with G-d by working through the inconsistencies of our personal performances as members of His chosen people. Secondly, we must collectively acknowledge and accept our national mission.

At the end of Yom Kippur we proclaim G-d as G-d. Seven times we declare G-d as the One and Only. Such a public declaration should only come after intense introspection and preparation. In fact, the month of Ellul and the Ten Days of Repentance (totaling 40 days and nights) were intended to be devoted to that intense introspection and preparation. The closer we come to Yom Kippur the greater the intensity and the focus should be. The days of Selichos, Rosh Hashanah, Tzom Gedaliah (fast of Gedaliah), and the final days leading up to Yom Kippur raise the pressure even more. Thrown into the intense preparatory mix is this week's Shabbos of Shuva.

Shabbos Shuva takes its name from the opening line of the Haftorah, "Shuva Yisroel, Ad Hashem Elokecha – Return O' Israel to Hashem yo logical to assume that the final Shabbos preceding Yom Kippur is opportune for furthering the intensity of our preparation for Yom Kippur. Where can we find the message of these special days emphasized in the Haftorah of Shuva? Where is the individual and national message of accepting to be G-d's "kingdom of priests and holy nation?"

The Haftorah is assembled from three different places in the Tanach. The first part is from Hoshea 14:2-10. The second part is from Yoel 2:11-27. The third part is from Micha 7:18-20. Such a conglomeration of verses to create a Haftorah is unusual. For the most part, the Haftorah's are one or more chapters from a single book of Tanach (prophets) rather than being culled from three different books. Therefore, the assembly of the Shuva Haftorah must have been exceedingly deliberate.

For now let's start from the end. The last part of the Haftorah is three verses from the prophet Micha. Micha proclaims the uniqueness of G-d in His capacity to forgive sin and exchange His anger and disappointment for compassion and mercy. The final verse of the Haftorah then seems to shift in a different direction. "Grant truth to Yakov, kindness to Avraham, as You swore."

In many regards, truth and kindness are mutually exclusive. If we truly deserve punishment because we have sinned then we do not deserve G-d's kindness. In fact, we should pray that G-d simply be kind to us, grant us forgiveness, but forgo the truth stage. Why did Micha pray that we first be granted truth and then kindness?

We are told that each of the forefathers manifested and excelled in a different quality. Avraham excelled in Chesed kindness. Yitzchak e Gevurah? strength and courage. Yakov excelled in Emes truth, why did it leave out the quality of Yitzchak in the final verse of the Shuva Haftorah? He asked G-d to grant truth to Yakov and kindness to Avraham. What happened to granting strength and courage to Yitzchak?

Finally, why mention the forefathers at all? Seemingly, forgiveness should be the consequence of our Teshuvah (repentance). Either we did Teshuvah or we did not. Either we deserve to be forgiven or we do not. As it is, the chance to even do Teshuvah is an unparalleled gift of G-d's loving kindness

and compassion. It would be the height of chutzpah for us to expect forgiveness from G-d without individual and collective effort? What difference should it make that G-d "swore to the forefathers – either we repented or we did not? Besides, which promise did G-d make to the forefathers that Micha is referring to?

I would like to suggest that Shabbos Shuva, more so than any of the other preparatory days of Yom Kippur, is focused on the national mission to be G-d's "kingdom of priests and holy nation." Our mission was gifted to us because we are the children and heirs of Avraham, Yitzchak, and Yakov. Starting with Avraham and Sarah, G-d promised that their children would be a blessing to the rest of the nations. Their children would continue doing the work that they had personally assumed on their own. Just as Avraham and Sarah volunteered their entire lives to introduce others to G-d; therefore, their children would carry on their work and do the same.

Yitzchak and Rivkah were less obvious in their interaction with the non-Jewish world and are described as more reclusive. Nevertheless, their entire lives were devoted to preparing Eretz Yisroel (the land of Israel) to aid their children in carrying on the work of Avraham and Sarah. (That is why Yitzchak was the only one of the Avos who could not leave Eretz Yisroel. His personal mission was linked to the land itself.)

Yakov and his four wives were far more exposed and integrated into the non-Jewish world. Surviving Lavan and Eisav was just the beginning. They then had to survive the negative and perverted influences of Canaan and Egypt and raise their children to be deserving of national chosenness.

When Micha referenced G-d's promise to the forefathers as a reason for divine forgiveness, he was referring to the Jewish national mission of being G-d's "kingdom of priests and holy nation." True, G-d should not forgive us unless we are deserving of His forgiveness, or unless we are minimally willing to acknowledge G-d and begin the process of meeting His expectations. However, G-d promised Avraham and Sarah that their children would carry on their chosen work, and G-d always keeps His promises. Therefore, Micha reminds us that legally we should not be granted the chance to do Teshuvah. What we deserve we should receive, whether punishment or reward. However, because we are the children of Avraham and Sarah G-d allows an exception and gives us the chance to do Teshuvah. Micha is not suggesting forgiveness for naught. Micha is explaining the reason why we are able to do Teshuvah.

This also explains the sequence of first truth and then kindness. Micha never intended for G-d to forgive us unconditionally. To do so would be the worst example of leadership and parenting possible. G-d's forgiveness is predicated on our changing, or at least attempting to change. To do so we must know and accept our failings and inconsistencies. That is why Rosh Hashanah precedes Yom Kippur. First we have to know what we did wrong before we can sincerely beseech G-d for forgiveness. The Day of Judgment gives us our report card. Yom Kippur is when we promise to do better. First grant truth to Yakov and then extend kindness to Avraham.

However, preparing for Teshuvah and Yom Kippur is far more than our need to repent and be forgiven. Ultimately, Teshuvah and Yom Kippur are about being G-d's "kingdom of priests and holy nation." To accomplish our mission we must have a relationship with the other 70 nations. We must have common dialogue and mutual respect tempered by healthy distrust. There must be interaction and there must be protection.

In politics and diplomacy first impressions are everything. If the non-Jewish world perceives us as aggressive and determined at all cost they will quickly conclude that we would do anything and everything to accomplish our goal. They will be distrustful of our teachings and our motives and we will be accused of being deceitful and dishonest. We won't even have the chance to prove them wrong. We will not be given the chance to show our kindness and compassion. Instead, the 70 nations will conclude that we should be removed from the body of humanity because we cannot be trusted.

Yakov, the chosen among the chosen, excelled at truthfulness. Yakov understood and accepted that the mission of the Jew is predicated on the other nations perceiving us as being honest and truthful. Then and only then will they begin to trust us and what we have to teach and offer. That is why the Navi (prophet) starts with Yakov's truthfulness and then praises Avraham's kindness. However, the non-Jews should not see us as mighty and courageous. In fact, for the most of Jewish history we were not known for our strength and courage. We might be strong and courageous but it is quite irrelevant. As a nation we depend on G-d, "The Watchman of Israel neither sleeps not slumbers." Regardless of our might and determination, "They come upon us with warriors and chariots while we come against you

with the name of G-d!" In relation to G-d we must be strong and courageous. In relation to ourselves we must be strong and courageous. However in relation to the 70 nations we must be truthful and kind. That is why Micha did not reference the strength and courage of Yitzchak. His strength and courage had nothing to do with the rest of the world. It was solely for the sake of the Jews and Eretz Yisroel.

Micha was not describing all the characteristics of the Jewish people. Micha was describing how the non-Jewish world must perceive us if we are to be successful in teaching them about G-d. First they must be certain of our integrity. Secondly, they must appreciate and trust that our reasons for wanting to teach them are not for personal gain or reward. We do so because we are the children of Avraham and Sarah and our nature is to be kind. Therefore, trust us that what we teach is more for your benefit than ours.

May it be Hashem's will that the coming Yom Kippur grant us awareness and forgiveness and a renewed commitment to G-d to be truthful and kind as we do the work of being G-d's "kingdom of priests and holy nation."

News, Views & Opinion

TERROR VICTIMS' FAMILIES SUE TO STOP US RELEASING BILLIONS TO IRAN

JEWISH NEWS SYNDICATE (JNS.org 13-9-23)

As the Biden administration, as part of a prisoner swap with Tehran, prepares to unfreeze \$6 billion in Iranian funds held in overseas banks, legal efforts have begun to challenge a decision decried for its potential to fuel further terrorism.

Shurat HaDin—Israel Law Center filed the lawsuit against the State Department and the Treasury Department on behalf of 24 plaintiffs to whom Iran owes \$400 million in judgments for sponsoring terrorist attacks. The suit asserts that the deal to transfer money to Iran disrupts the plaintiffs' efforts to enforce their claims, potentially permanently.

"If ransom money is being transferred to Iran to secure the release of certain victims of the Iranian regime being held hostage there, that money should not be taken away from other victims of Iran's atrocities," said New York attorney Robert J. Tolchin, who filed the suit along with Shurat HaDin president Nitsana Darshan-Leitner.

"Leave this money for the victims, which is what Congress intended when it enacted legislation to allow terror victims to enforce their judgments against blocked assets of state sponsors of terrorism," Tolchin said.

ANOTHER POLL SHOWS THAT PALESTINIANS PREFER TERROR TO ANYTHING ELSE - AND MEDIA IGNORE IT, AGAIN

ELDER OF ZIYON (ElderofZiyon.blogspot.com 15-9-23)

The latest PCPSR poll shows, once again, that most Palestinians are pro-terror.

Which is the least-reported story of every year.

When asked about the best way to establish an independent Palestinian state, a majority of 53% said "armed struggle" (terror), 20% said negotiations; and 24% said non-violent resistance.

The percentage that support terror increased since last year from 41% to 53%.

And how about all those pundits who insist that Palestinians overwhelmingly prefer a two state solution? They're still wrong. The number of Palestinians who oppose the idea of a two-state solution is more than double the number who support it.

Where is the media? The poll was released on Wednesday, and no one reported on it - because it is not the story the media wants its consumers to know.

IDF HONORS US 'OLEH' CHABAD CHASSID AS TOP COMBAT SOLDIER

JEWISH NEWS SYNDICATE (JNS.org 12-9-23)

Every year ahead of Rosh Hashanah, the Israel Defense Forces recognizes its best.

On Monday, Staff Sgt. Yossi Bluming and a handful of his comrades were recognized as Outstanding Soldiers who continuously excel in the Israel Defense Forces' 6,000-strong Paratroopers Brigade. The award honors soldiers who not only apply maximum effort to their duties but also build positive relationships throughout the IDF and the communities they serve.

Bluming, who made aliyah from the U.S. three years ago, commands a unit of 18 combat soldiers. His unit has been assigned challenging tasks along

the northern border and throughout Judea and Samaria.

The award ceremony, led by Lt. Col. Ami Biton, commander of the Paratroopers Brigade, included a 50-year commemoration and retrospective of the Yom Kippur War of 1973. Biton spoke about the brigade's heroic efforts in the past and about how this year's recipients regularly go above and beyond expectations.

Bluming said that he was humbled to receive the honor. Reflecting on his service as a Chassidic soldier, he noted, "In the IDF, I have not had to sacrifice any part of my religious identity for my professional identity. My colleagues respect that."

A member of the Chabad-Lubavitch movement, he said that "the Rebbe [Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson] encouraged us to shine the light of Judaism through the life we live, wherever we live."

He added a note of encouragement to other Chassidic teens considering service in the IDF, saying "it is my honor to serve and protect the people of Israel and it has certainly been worth the investment for me. I believe other haredi young men who choose this path can have a similar experience."

Bluming is the son of Rabbi Menachem Mendel and Sarah Bluming, leaders of the Chabad Congregation of Potomac in Maryland. Yossi met his wife, Batya, in Israel, and they reside in a small community near Modi'in.

DO YOU THINK CNN DOESN'T KNOW WHY THERE ARE NO JEWS IN EGYPT?

MICHAEL BERENHAUS (AmericanThinker.com 9-9-23)

In CNN's "One of the world's oldest synagogues reopens in Egypt" (9/6/23), the article gives background information on the synagogue, stating that it was "home to the most significant single trove of Jewish manuscripts."

In addition, the article states that "Egypt's Jewish population exceeded 80,000 people in 1948, but only about a dozen Jews remain in the country today." But the article doesn't answer the next logical question: why are so few Jews left? If CNN is going to report the staggering reduction, why not report why that occurred? Similar stories of an emptying of indigenous Jews exist for virtually every northern African country, and similarly, major new sources omit the reason. There were tens of thousands of Jews throughout each northern African country. And then they were gone!

They didn't just magically disappear; they were ethnically cleansed! The millennia-long world hatred of Jews occurred in northern Africa, as it did everywhere else — but the media fail to report it.

In Egypt, according to The Henry M. Jackson School of International Studies, "The American Jewish Committee (AJC) released a factsheet in March 1957 on 'The Plight of Jews in Egypt.'"

According to the report, on November 15, 1956, immediately after Egypt's Sinai War with Israel, the United Kingdom, and France, the Egyptian Ministry of the Interior required all Jews, regardless of citizenship, to report to the Ministry. At the Ministry offices, Jews were told to leave Egypt within a few days or face the risk of being placed in a concentration camp. The report indicates that expulsion orders were sent to Jews of every status. Upon exit, the report says, "all Jews were required to sign a supposedly 'voluntary' form renouncing all claims, property, and citizenship in Egypt. In other words, Jews were systematically forced to migrate.

CNN and other news sources would serve their readers best if they gave a full picture of the tragic occurrence of Jewish refugees of not just Egypt, but all of North Africa. An astounding 850,000 Jewish refugees from the region were ethnically cleansed.

WHEN DEMONIZATION BECAME RESPECTABLE

CHASKEL BENNETT (Mishpacha.com 12-9-23)

IN 5783, Klal Yisrael found itself under repeated assault by the New York Times. Whereas in the past, anti-Semitic tropes and bigotry were relegated to the darkest corners of society, this year saw demonization of Orthodox Jews unapologetically showcased on the front page of the world's most prestigious newspaper.

When the Times attacked the yeshivah system, gone was any of the normal cultural sensitivity that it routinely extends to minority communities. But instead of apologizing for its egregious discrimination, the Times systematically weaponized its coverage to heap embarrassment on Orthodox institutions and individuals.

This incessant bullying by the 800-pound media gorilla was foisted upon our community in the form of 17 articles in the "paper of record." In tandem, the reporters responsible embarked on an unprecedented speaking tour to promote their misleading and activist-driven hit pieces, with nary a word of protest even from our elected "friends." As the saying goes, with friends

like these....

Further demonstrating the lengths to which these journalists went, emails recently disclosed by the Breitbart news site point to apparent collusion between Times reporters and state education officials to produce these articles. This was apparently done with the intent to impinge on the independence of yeshivos while capturing a Pulitzer Prize for Team Sulzberger’s anti-Orthodox crusade. Thanks in great part to the herculean efforts of the Agudah’s groundbreaking “KnowUs” multi-media push-back campaign, their malpractice was exposed, and they were denied American journalism’s ultimate prize.

But severe damage to our reputation was done nonetheless, and the sound of crickets from the establishment, aside from a few heroic journalists, and even fewer elected officials, was nearly impossible to overcome. Significantly, this reign of editorial terror coincided with a historic rise in anti-Semitic incidents, according to the annual ADL Hate Crimes report. The correlation between the two — which, as they say, does not prove causation — is hard to miss.

So, on the cusp of a new year, we need a change in strategy from our previous reliance on fair-weather political connections. Along with faith in the Almighty, our community needs to make a serious, sustained commitment to fighting back against the new bigotry stemming from media conglomerates and well-funded adversaries.

The “KnowUs” initiative, dedicated solely to proactively setting the record straight about religious Jews, is one of the first of its kind from within the community’s organizational structure, but it cannot be the last. Leadership from every kehillah should prioritize robust investment, both in money and in manpower, and make a lasting commitment to support coordinated, professional shtadlanus to counter the full-scale attacks on our way of life.

This isn’t exclusive to chassidishe or yeshivishe communities. The shameful coverage by the media during Covid, as well as targeted government enforced “red zones,” taught us that an attack on one should be viewed as an attack on all. Our detractors seem particularly effective at dividing us, and unfortunately, oftentimes, we seem to let them, for short-term political expediency or a fleeting photo op.

Truth be told, the decline of traditional family values, alarming anti-Semitism, and the rise of the militant progressive agenda require unprecedented communal unity, as complicated as that vision might be. Because while the parochial needs of individual communities may be critically important, the very autonomy and survival of our collective chinuch system and the ability to live life as Torah Jews in a rapidly decaying moral environment should trump any individual self-interest.

If 5783 taught us anything, it is that we are alone and can only count on each other. Frankly speaking, the current atmosphere demands capable and committed klal askanim from every community to step forward and lead with clarity and conviction.

JEWES ON THE MOON

ADINA HERSHBERG (Aish.com)

Between 1969 and 1972, 12 men walked on the moon. Although there are no Jewish footprints on the moon’s surface as of yet, more than ten Jews have lunar craters named after them.

Lunar craters are caused by meteorites and asteroids colliding with the lunar surface. There are 5,185 lunar craters that are more than 12 miles (20 km) in diameter, approximately one million craters larger than half a mile (1 km) in diameter and more than half a billion that are larger than 11 yards (10 meters).

In 1651, Giovanni Battista Riccioli, an Italian Jesuit professor of astronomy and philosophy, prepared a comprehensive work on astronomy with a complete map of the moon. Riccioli named the lunar craters after the outstanding astronomers of the Middle Ages; four of them were named after rabbis. Since 1919, the assignment of the craters’ names is regulated by the International Astronomical Union.

Here are six craters and the Jews for whom they are named.

RABBI LEVI

Crater Levi is named after 14th century French-born Rabbi Levi ben Gershom (also known as the Ralbag and Gersonides), known for his important contributions in Jewish philosophy, mathematics, navigation and astronomy. He invented the Jacob’s Staff, also known as the cross-staff, an instrument used to measure the angular distance between two heavenly objects. This tool was used by sailing ships to navigate by the stars.

He lived in a time when terrible tragedies befell the once great Jewish communities of France. At that time, the cruel King Phillip the 4th was busy

waging war on his neighbors. As a result, his treasury became empty and he decreed that all Jews be expelled from France and their possessions be given to him. Rabbi Levi escaped most of the trouble because he lived in a small city in southern France which belonged to the Pope. Rabbi Levi devoted his entire life to spreading the light of knowledge among fellow Jews and to the promotion of science and tolerance in the world at large.

He showed his extraordinary capabilities at an early age. He mastered the Talmud, and by the age of 30 he was an accomplished physician. He wrote commentaries on the Torah, the Prophets, and Writings. He also wrote a commentary on the Mishna. He wrote many poems, especially dirges, in which he bewailed the terrible persecution suffered by his brethren in France. He died in 1344 at the age of 56.

ABENEZRA

The crater Abenezra is named after the Sephardic sage, poet, biblical commentator and astrologer Spanish-born Rabbi Abraham Ibn Ezra (1092-1167). His adventurous life began in Tudela, Spain. He spent the first half of his life in various cities in the Arabic part of Spain. He was always in financial straits. The generosity of his admirers made his life somewhat easier. They appreciated the elegance and stylishness of his poetry and other writings. He wrote books on various subjects, including philosophy, calendar mathematics, medicine, chess and astronomy. His religious poems, prayers and writings are permeated with warmth and deep feeling, and his boundless faith and trust in G-d.

The second half of his life he traveled from country to country, studying people and countries, cultures and languages. He even visited the Holy Land where he learned Kabbalah from sages in Safed and Tiberias.

ZAGUT

The 52-mile (84 km) in diameter moon crater Zagut is named after Rabbi Abraham Zacuto (his Hebrew name was Zechut). Rabbi Zacuto was born in Spain in 1452. He was a mathematician, historian, doctor, navigator, rabbi, and astronomer. When he was 20, he started working on Almanach, which calculates geographical coordinates. He improved the astrolabe, an instrument invented by the ancient Greeks in 225 B.C.E. which was used to make planetary measurements, typically of the altitudes of celestial bodies and in navigation for calculating latitude.

Without his personal guidance, knowledge, and inventions, Christopher Columbus and Vasco da Gama may have failed in their quests. Rabbi Zacuto knew that such contributions to science by a Jew, and particularly a rabbi, created a favorable impression upon his non-Jewish peers.

After being expelled from Spain, he moved to Portugal. After the expulsion from Portugal he moved to Tunis where he wrote the majority of his Book of Lineage which recorded the first 1,500 years of Jewish history. Apparently, he wrote this encyclopedic work with only one tractate of Talmud and hardly any other reference books except for those few that the expelled Jews brought with them.

CORI

Jewish Nobel Prize winner, Gerty Theresa Cori (maiden name Radnitz) was born in Prague on August 15, 1896, to an upper-middle-class sophisticated family. She attended medical school in Prague where she met Carl Cori. His family felt that her being Jewish would stifle Carl Cori’s advancement. She converted to Catholicism so that they could be married in a church. Gerty was unsuccessful in assuaging their fears.

Their eventual decision to leave Europe was fueled primarily by rampant antisemitism. Carl Cori was offered a position in the US and Gerty followed half a year later.

In 1947 she became the first American woman—the third woman ever – to win the Nobel Prize. Planetary study was not what made her a scientific star. She and Carl received it together in recognition for their life’s work on carbohydrate metabolism, which expanded understanding of how muscles make and store energy and the role of enzymes, with implications for the treatment of diabetes, among other diseases. In her honor, both the moon and Venus have a Cori Crater named after her.

SYLVESTER

James Joseph Sylvester was born in 1814 and was the first observant Jew to hold a professorship in Britain. He excelled in math at Cambridge, attaining second place in his year, but was refused a degree or a prize because he was Jewish.

In 1838 he became professor of natural philosophy at University College London and published 15 papers on fluid dynamics and algebraic equations. After spending some time in America, he returned to England where he became an actuary and math tutor. Florence Nightingale was one of his

students.

In 1855 he became professor at the Royal Military Academy at Woolwich and was the second president of the London Mathematical Society. He retired at the age of 55, in 1870, due to army rules, and in 1877 he went to Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore. He founded the American Journal of Mathematics, the first American mathematical journal. In 1883, he became professor of Geometry at Oxford, finally retiring in 1892, at the age of 78. He died in 1897. A 36-mile (58 km) crater located near the north pole of the Moon was named after him.

RESNIK

Pilot, software engineer, electrical engineer and NASA astronaut Judith Resnik (1949-1986) grew up in a religious Jewish home in Akron, Ohio. At first she planned to become a concert pianist, but turned down Juilliard School of Music in order to study mathematics.

In 1978, at the age of 29, Dr. Resnik became a NASA astronaut. She was the fourth woman, the second American woman, and the first Jewish woman of any nationality to fly in space. She logged 145 hours in orbit.

She was briefly married to engineer Michael Oldak. They divorced in 1975, but remained in touch. In August 1984 Dr. Resnik invited her former husband to Cape Canaveral, Florida to watch her blast off and become the second American woman to orbit the earth.

Dr. Resnik's first flight took place in 1984 aboard the Discovery space shuttle. It was also the maiden voyage for the spacecraft. On January 26, 1986, she participated in the ill-fated space shuttle Challenger. It broke up 73 seconds into launch killing all seven crew members. The spacecraft disintegrated 46,000 feet (14 km) above the Atlantic Ocean, off the coast of Cape Canaveral. The Resnik crater was named in her memory.

ONLY LASTING PALESTINIAN CONTRIBUTION TO WORLD CULTURE: NEED FOR AIRPORT SECURITY

DAVE SWIDLER (PreOccupiedTerritory.com 12-9-23)

Travelers around the world continued to marvel today at the sole lasting significant phenomena produced by the movement to deny Jews sovereignty in their ancestral homeland: the drudgery of airport screening measures, invasive rifling through bags, emptying of pockets, Barring of liquids from carry-on bags, annoying swipes with security wands, and other exasperating, expensive, and time-consuming experiences developed to counter the tactics of the movement's pioneers.

The Palestinian national movement, which came into being as a response to Zionism, in an effort to undo the unacceptable existence of Jews not under Islamic domination, has employed numerous stratagems to further its aims. These have included shooting at Jews, stabbing Jews, bombing Jews, boycotting Jews, inciting violence against Jews, slandering Jews, and in general fomenting mistreatment of Jews. None of those measures, however, are unique to the Islamic world. The one that does stand out as uniquely Palestinian in the popular consciousness will forever remain the hijacking of aircraft as a tool for blackmail.

Palestinians and their allies were not the first to hijack airplanes. Their chief exploits as remembered nevertheless do not include any characteristic constructive or beautiful contributions to mankind, in contrast to what humans have come to expect of any other culture, certainly one as ancient and indigenous as Palestinians claim to be to the Levant. Still, while hijacking was not a Palestinian invention, Palestinians hijacked the phenomenon and made it their own. The spate of Palestinian and pro-Palestinian hijackings of international airliners in the 1960's and 70's may have failed to achieve the stated goals of each operation, but they did inspire 9/11, the shoe bomber, and of course the underwear bomber, possibly the most suitable metaphor for the entire Palestinian nationalist movement's leadership decisions, all the more because he was not Palestinian in origin, like the Palestinian flag, or indeed Palestinian nationalism itself.

Despite the non-Palestinian origins of airplane hijacking, the phenomenon has attained immortality as the sine qua non of Palestinian "resistance" operations – representing not only the only significant lasting Palestinian contribution to world culture, but the only successful instance of Palestinians asserting dominance over something and have it become theirs in the mind of the rest of humanity.

General public sentiment toward the Palestinian cause has not followed the path of other reactions to cultural contributions, which in general produce at least some positive feelings toward the society and people that made the contribution. Oddly, even the societies that profess support in public for Palestinian aspirations, in private or on other occasions express

exasperation, even hate, for the group that enjoys far more per capita international assistance than any other recipients, yet has failed for more than a century to oust the weak, dhimmi Jew.

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

SECURITY CAMERAS ON SHABBOS

RABBI YAIR HOFFMAN (5tjt.com)

Recently, a Facebook post humorously contrasted “security cameras” from the 1960s to contemporary security cameras. There is another contrast, however, that can be made as well. The contemporary security cameras (pictured) also have a number of halachic hurdles to overcome. The 1960s “security cameras” (pictured in accompanying meme) do not, at least in terms of hilchos Shabbos.

In many locations, security cameras are essential. What follows is a discussion of the possible underlying issues involved. Of course, each person should consult with his or her rav or posek as to the exact guidelines of whether it is permitted to install such a device and whether it is permitted to walk past one.

THE TWO MAIN ISSUES

There are essentially two main issues when one decides to install a security camera that will be functioning over Shabbos, and when one walks by a security camera on Shabbos.

- Causing extra electricity to be used by the people walking before the camera.
- Kesivah—writing

Many good security cameras, for example the Wyze Cam Pan, Ring Spotlight Cam, and Google Nest Cam IQ, come with a motion-detection feature which causes extra electricity to be used when one walks by. If you are unsure if your model does this, you can use the Kill a Watt gadget to determine this. Long ago, a friend of mine conducted experiments recording different colors and reported that the brightness of the subject also caused variations in the amount of electricity that was used. Some camera systems also record sound and that causes an increase in electric activity as well.

There are three opinions as to how electricity is viewed in halachah:

- Group A poskim hold that electricity involves a biblical prohibition of one sort or another.
- Group B poskim hold that electricity involves only a rabbinic prohibition of molid.
- Group C poskim hold that electricity involves a prohibition of uvdah d'chol.

It is important to know the different levels of prohibition involved in order to determine what exactly may be permitted for what particular reason. For example, the security cameras placed in the Old City within a certain perimeter around the Kosel were permitted by Rav Elyashiv, zt'l, because of the very high threat level involved.

Another concept that we must be aware of is the notion of grama, an indirect cause.

1. Direct action—generally a biblical prohibition.
2. Grama—generally a rabbinic violation.
3. Semi-grama—also known as not considered a grama and thus fully permitted.

Grama means a “causation force” rather than a “direct force.” The laws of grama on Shabbos are derived from the Talmudic passages of grama in damages and in murder. Not that “causation force” is permitted, necessarily; at times it is forbidden by rabbinic decree. The Shulchan Aruch and Rema (O.C. 334:22) rule that a grama is forbidden on Shabbos except in cases of loss or great need.

GROUP A POSKIM

The first posek to hold that electricity involves a Torah prohibition is the author of the Mishpetei Uziel, Ben Tzion Meir Chai Uziel, zt'l (1880–1953). He writes (Mishpetei Uziel Volume I in the Hashmatos, siman 2) that the use of electricity involves the Torah prohibition of makeh b'patish. Contrary to what we all learned in elementary school, according to the Rambam, this melachah is violated at any stage of the preparation of the vessel. Rav Isser Zalman Meltzer in his Even HaAzel (Shabbos 10:17) understands the prohibition of makeh b'patish as a general category that involves anything that is done to make a kli perform. Rav Asher Weiss, shlita, expounded on

this same halachic view when he spoke at the White Shul in Far Rockaway a number of years ago.

The more famous Group A opinion is that of Rav Avraham Yeshayahu Karelitz, zt'l (1878–1953), the Chazon Ish (O.C. 50:9). He writes (both in his commentary and in his subsequent letters to Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach, zt'l) that electricity is a violation of boneh, building, for two reasons:

1. Connecting the two formerly disconnected wires involves the creation of a circuit and one complete unit. This is no different than taking formerly disconnected parts of a vessel and connecting them, which the majority of Rishonim holds is a Torah prohibition.

2. Allowing for the flow of electrons through a circuit is a violation of “nesinas tzurah l'hi'gashem,” placing shape into physical form. This is like awakening the wires from “death to life,” which is a violation of boneh according to the view of the Ramban.

The shutting off of the circuit also involves the prohibition of soser, breaking.

The way motion-detection cameras work is with the opening and closing of secondary side circuits, which would be a violation of a Torah prohibition according to the Group A poskim. The difference between the two views may be as to whether the shutting off of the secondary circuitry would involve a prohibition according to the Mishpetei Uziel and Rav Asher Weiss, as there is no “opposite” melachah for makeh b'patish. (Although it is possible that the shutting off is a form of makeh b'patish, too.)

There are also some prominent poskim who have taken the view that since, according to the Yerushalmi in Shabbos (7:2), there are a total of 1,521 varying Torah prohibitions on Shabbos (called tolados), it is veritably impossible that such a far-reaching concept of electricity is not a violation of one of them. [If we add to this the original 39 melachos, we get 1,560.] We thus have three different opinions as to what exactly is the Torah prohibition involved in the use of electricity.

The utilization of the extra use of the electricity often involves an indirect action known as a “grama.” That may make the violation significantly less rigorous according to the Group A poskim. According to this view, we would need to further understand the parameters of a grama.

The most famous view disagreeing with the Group A poskim is that of Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach, zt'l (1910–1995) in his Minchas Shlomo (Vol. I #9). What prompted his analysis of the issues was the fact that, at the time, hearing aid batteries needed to be changed more often than they do nowadays, and his own mother had times when the battery died on Shabbos. The action involved in changing it allowed the electricity issue to be heard.

GROUP B POSKIM

The second view of electricity being a rabbinic violation of molid was first espoused by Rav Yitzchok Yehudah Shmelkes (1828–1906) in his Bais Yitzchak (Y.D. Vol. II #31). His argument is that just as there is a rabbinic prohibition of introducing a nice fragrance into clothing, likewise, there is a prohibition of inserting electricity into a circuit. We find the idea of molid in three other places in Shas: molid aish—fire (see Taz O.C. 502:1); molid mayim—water from snow (Shabbos 51b, according to Rashi); and molid kol—sound (Eiruvim 104a according to the Vilna Gaon and Rabbeinu Chananel). This seems to be a debate between the Rema and the Mechaber as to how to understand it exactly (see Shulchan Aruch O.C. simanim 338 and 339).

GROUP C POSKIM

The notion of uvdah d'chol is considered to be less of a violation than an out-and-out rabbinic prohibition and is, at times, permitted by poskim when there is a strong dvar mitzvah involved. This is only when it stands alone, however. Uvdah d'chol is not permitted for a dvar mitzvah when there is any srach melachah involved.

This is the clear ruling of the Pri Megadim in his Aishel Avraham 306:16. One could possibly argue that this Pri Megadim is only for Ashkenazim (although we do not find any Sefardic authority who argues). There is a clear proof from the Gemara in Shabbos 143b proving the Pri Megadim. The Gemara there states: u'bilvad shelo yisfog.” Yisfog is an example of uvdah d'chol and it is not permitted for the tzorech mitzvah of the classic example of saving the three meals for Shabbos.

KESIVAH

The second issue is that these security cameras may involve a prohibition of writing. Rav Moshe Feinstein, zt'l, had addressed a similar issue in regard to closed circuit television in a letter dated February 7, 1982, to Rabbi Yisrael Rosen, a'h (1941–2017), the former director of the Tzomet Institute written

by Rav Moshe's grandson, Rabbi M. Tendler. [Three days later, Rav Feinstein affirmed that this was, in fact, his opinion.] His ruling is that since the writing is not of a permanent nature, it is just an issur d'rabbanan at best. He further stated that one who passes by is only performing a psik reisha that he does not care about; it would be permitted to pass by. This letter is reprinted in Techumim Vol. XIV p. 433.

Rabbi Rosen posed the question again to Rabbi Yehoshua Neuwirth, zt'l (1927–2013), author of the Shemiras Shabbos K'hilchasa, on December 5, 1990, and informed him of Rav Feinstein's ruling. He questioned whether it is, indeed, to be considered a psik reisha that one does not care about. Rav Neuwirth responded: (the date in the letter is incorrect) (1) Who is he to question Rav Feinstein, especially since it is true that it is not a permanent writing; and (2) who ever said that this is considered writing? (3) He discussed the issue with Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach who said that there is no concern and that it is not writing. And (4) he expressed that it may use extra electricity.

He did not address the issue as to whether it is a psik reisha that one cares about.

Rav Elyashiv, zt'l, and others held that digital writing is definitely a forbidden act. This can be seen from the letter signed below. Rav Hershel Schachter, shlita, in a conversation with this author, also held that digital writing certainly can be considered a d'rabbanan for writing.

OTHER HALACHIC ISSUES

There are also a number of other halachic issues that need to be taken into account. First, we know that there is a debate in regard to a psik reisha that one does not care about regarding a d'rabbanan. The Aruch holds that it is permitted, while Tosfos (Shabbos 103a) holds that it is forbidden.

Second, we need to know what is a grama or a semi-grama and where the definitional differences lie. What are the halachic factors that would make something that is causative a semi-grama rather than a grama?

There are three main approaches in the poskim:

1. Some poskim hold that if there is a delay in time between the person's action and the result then it would be considered a semi-grama.
2. Other poskim hold that if the secondary action will not perforce occur, then the causative action is not even considered a grama. If it is not definite that the secondary result will happen, it would be considered a semi-grama, not a grama.
3. Yet, other poskim hold that if it is not the normal way in which this causative action is performed, then it is considered a semi-grama.

Thirdly, we can also ask whether mere walking in front of a light or a camera is forbidden. Rav Vosner in his Shevet HaLevi (Volume IX #69) rules that it is just walking, and cannot be forbidden.

There is also the issue of a concern for pikuach nefesh. This may depend on where one lives as well. A number of issues were raised in this article; hopefully, it will lead people to a greater understanding of what is involved. Each person, however, should ask his or her rav as to what is halachically advisable in a specific situation.

LAB-GROWN ‘CHICKEN’ CERTIFIED KOSHER

MENACHEM WECKER (JNS.org 11-9-23)

The latest of more than 1.3 million products that the Orthodox Union certifies as kosher is lab-grown “chicken,” which is produced by the Israeli startup SuperMeat. It is the first lab-grown “meat” product that the nonprofit is certifying.

“The OU is pleased to provide certification to a product that meets kosher standards, while also leading innovation in food technology,” stated Rabbi Menachem Genack, CEO of OU Kosher, in a press release.

Lab-grown chicken is grown from fertilized chicken egg stem cells, and as such, doesn't come from a live animal, which would be prohibited under Jewish law.

“The product is currently the product of a laboratory. Ultimately, in order to produce the product at an industrial volume, the company plans to perform a process in which the cells are propagated in industrial sized bioreactors,” Genack told JNS.

Given that the cells are taken during a “narrow zone of time” between when the egg is laid and blood spots—which would render the egg non-kosher—would appear, there is no concern about such spots, according to Genack.

The kashrut executive also told JNS that ritual slaughter, shechita, is not required for the lab-grown “chicken,” and although there might be issues of forbidden mixtures (kilayim) in other areas, “there is no such problem in this case.”

“Essentially, what happens is that the cells—initially a minimal amount—are introduced into an environment in which the cells divide. One becomes two, two become four and so on,” Genack said. “The environment that the original cells are delivered into is composed entirely of kosher (pareve) ingredients.”

The chicken will be considered meat, he said.

The environment is designed to provide energy to the cells and to stimulate their growth, and chemicals that mimic natural systems instruct the cells.

“Through this process of cell division, the original miniscule sample obtained from the newly-laid egg becomes more substantive,” Genack said.

“Through additional technical processes, that substance can adopt a specific form and even assume the identity of specific types of cells, like a muscle cell.”

“In this way, one can produce something that resembles a chicken nugget, for example.”

Haazinu (Melb) 22/9/23, 8 Tishrei 5784: 5:58pm/6:56pm