

Kedoshim 5784

HIGHER THAN THE ANGELS

RABBI SHRAGA SIMMONS (Aish.com)

This week's Parsha begins with the Mitzvah to "Be holy." How do we achieve holiness?

The Torah provides many avenues, and keeping Kosher in a primary one. Imagine you're on vacation and you come upon a restaurant offering roasted pork at a good price. Your mouth waters and your stomach growls. But the food is not Kosher, so you pass it by. That's called mind over matter - the soul exercising control over the body. And that's holy.

But there's a much deeper level to the Mitzvah to "Be holy." Nachmanides explains that holiness is the result of exercising restraint in areas that are permitted to us.

Let's go back to our example of keeping Kosher. It may be no great challenge to refrain from eating roasted pork. But the question is: When we sit down to eat Kosher food, what is our frame of mind: Do we pronounce a blessing with concentration, appreciating G-d's gift of bounty? Do we eat slowly and with dignity? Do we focus on the fact that the ultimate purpose of food is to nourish the body - in order that we'll have strength to do good deeds?

Indeed, it has been said that "all holiness begins at the dinner table."

The story is told of the Baal Shem Tov, the great kabbalist, who looked out the window and saw his neighbor sitting at the dinner table. In the eyes of the Baal Shem Tov, the neighbor appeared not as a human, but as an ox. The neighbor was eating for purely physical reasons, just as would an ox (and the holy Baal Shem Tov was able to perceive this). Although the neighbor was acting in a permitted manner, it was not a holy one.

Sometimes a child will do something that demonstrates particular self-discipline, and the parent will say: "You're an angel!" But in actuality, the child is greater than an angel. An angel is a purely spiritual being, with no sense of "free will" to choose spirituality over the mundane world of animalism. But we humans - every time we make such a choice, we refine our soul, and achieve a level ... higher and holier than even that of angels.

RETIREMENT

RABBI YEHUDA APPEL (Aish.com)

For many years, America had lost its most capable and knowledgeable people to ... retirement. In universities as well as business, there were mandatory retirement rules demanding that a person leave his profession when he reached age 65. Fortunately, in recent years, there has been a rethinking of this policy.

From the vantage point of Jewish tradition, which prizes wisdom, these rules make little sense. The older a person is, the more likely he or she is to have acquired life experience and wisdom. Thus, rather than being denied an opportunity to share their knowledge, Judaism teaches that elders should lead our people.

In the Torah, many of the greatest leaders of the Jewish People gain their positions at an advanced age. Abraham first responds to G-d's call that he go to Canaan when he is 75 years old. Later on, when the Israelites leave Egypt, they are led by Moshe and Aaron - ages 80 and 83 respectively.

The Talmud states: "If the youth tell you to build, and the elders tell you to destroy, you should destroy and not build, because the destruction of the elders is in itself constructive."

Rechavam, King Solomon's son, is described in the Bible as abandoning the advice given to him by his older advisors for the counsel of his younger advisors. The result? He loses most of his kingdom and the Jewish nation becomes irrevocably divided into the Northern Kingdom and the Kingdom of Judah. Had he followed the advice of the elders, this tragedy could have been prevented.

Respect for elders is discussed in this week's Torah portion, Kedoshim. The word "kedoshim" means "holiness," and much of the Parsha discusses laws which are designed to help the Jewish People become a holy nation. Among these laws is an injunction to "stand up before an old person and give respect to the elders" (Vayikra 19:32). This injunction was taken quite literally by the sources and Jewish law mandates that one stand up out of respect when an elder passes by. The Shulchan Aruch, the Code of Jewish Law, says that a person acquires the status of "elder" at age 70. Gentle elders are also to be honored and respected. The observance of this Mitzvah is still followed today by many observant Jews.

Included within the laws of respecting an elder is not to sit in his seat, not to answer in his stead, and not to contradict his words. Interestingly, these laws are similar to those that are to be observed by a child toward his or her parents. In both instances there is, among other things, the recognition of greater wisdom on the part of the senior partner in the relationship.

However, Jewish tradition does not relegate the province of wisdom solely to those who have reached the age of 70. The same respect and recognition is given to those who achieve great scholarship and wisdom even at much younger ages. For instance, Jewish law also requires that one stand when a young Torah scholar passes by.

The Torah concludes there are two ways to acquire wisdom: Through life experience, and through learning Torah.

THE THINGS YOU SEE

RABBI YANKI TAUBER (Chabad.org)

The things you see:

A single shoe in the middle of the road.

A flicker of fear on a child's face.

A frayed cuff on an otherwise well-dressed man.

A door ajar, a stifled cry, a pleading look...

Walking down a crowded downtown sidewalk, tens of thousands of objects will enter and exit your field of vision every second. Some of them you'll see; the vast majority you won't. The things you see, I won't notice. And vice versa. It's not that your vision is better than mine, or that I'm more perceptive. It's simply that from the millions of stimuli competing for your attention every minute, a certain few will snag on the fibers of your consciousness, while the rest flits by like a school of tiny fish passing through a loosely-woven net. Why do you see the things that you see? Is it all just a swirling galaxy of chance? Or is there something deeper at play here?

"DO NOT STAND UPON YOUR FELLOW'S BLOOD" commands the Torah (19:16). Quoting the sages of the Talmud, Rashi adds the following words of explanation: "to see his demise and you can save him."

The simple meaning of this statement is clear. The Sages are telling us that the meaning of the Torah's instruction, "Do not stand upon your fellow's blood," is that it is forbidden to stand by and watch your fellow die if you can save him.

But there is a deeper meaning to the Sages' words.

In his teachings, the founder of Chassidism, Rabbi Israel Baal Shem Tov, greatly expanded the doctrine of Hashgachah Peratit, "Specific Divine Providence." Specific divine providence means that not only did G-d create the world for a purpose, but every event in G-d's world, and every detail and aspect of every event, is specifically ordained and to serve a particular function within that purpose. Everything that happens is for a reason, and every aspect of every thing that happens—where it happened, when it happened, how it happened, how that person was affected by seeing it happen, etc., etc.—is also purposeful.

So if you see something, not only is what you saw significant, but also the fact that you saw it. Indeed, you could just as easily not have noticed. The fact that you did means that you can do something about it.

"To see his demise and you can save him."

If you see a fellow human being in mortal danger; if you see suffering or need; if you hear a cry for help that others fail to notice, that doesn't mean that you are more "sensitive" than they are. In fact, it stands to reason that there is an equal number of things which someone else will sense and you will not. It simply means that each person is shown and made aware of things in which he or she is meant to take a part.

In this world that G-d made, there are no tourists—just local residents. There are no fans in the bleachers—only players on the field. No audience—just actors.

The things you see—the very fact that you saw them means that you can, and must, help in some way.

SWEET REVENGE

RABBI MORDECHAI KAMENETZKY (Torah.org)

A verse in his week's portion reminds me of a terse retort that American politician, Senator Henry Clay, made to his antagonist, Virginia's John Randolph, right before their infamous duel in April of 1826.

The two were walking toward each other on a narrow footpath, with little room to pass. One would have to give way. "I never make room for scoundrels," sneered Randolph.

"I always do," Clay smiled as he stepped off the paved path to let Randolph pass.

In commanding us not to revenge nor bear grudges, the Torah alludes to two distinct character flaws.

"You shall not take revenge and you shall not bear a grudge against the members of your people; you shall love your fellow as yourself — I am Hashem" (Vayikra 19:18).

What does the Torah mean, "You shall not take revenge and you shall not bear a grudge," what is the difference?

Rashi explains: If Joe says to David "Lend me your sickle," and David replies, "No!", and the next day David says to Joe, "Lend me your hatchet", and Joe retorts, "I am not going to lend it to you, just as you refused to lend me your sickle" — this is avenging; and what is "bearing a grudge"? Rashi continues. "If Joe says to David, "Lend me your hatchet", and David replies "No!" and on the next day David says to Joe "Lend me your sickle", and Joe replies "Here it is; I am not like you, because you would not lend me" — this is called "bearing a grudge" because he retains enmity in his heart although he does not actually avenge himself."

In both cases, the avenger and the grudge bearer have committed a sin. They have transgressed a negative commandment of the Torah.

But what about the initial denial of the loan? What is the punishment for the men who initially refused to lend their sickles or hatchets? Neither punishment, nor even a warning is issued to them. Why is the grudgingly generous man treated worse than the outright denier of kindness and sharing? A famous tale that circulates among disparate fund-raisers, goes as follows: The Rabbi came to the millionaire in search of a contribution for his Yeshiva. The man took him in warmly, but after the rabbi made his pitch, the man began a semi-tirade.

"Do you know that I have a brother that is in a wheelchair? His five children have no means of support!" The rabbi shook his head, apologetically. "And," continued the magnate, "Did you know that I have a nephew with 12 children in Israel?"

The rabbi began to stammer; he was unaware of all these obligations. The rich man cut him short. My mother is still alive in a nursing home that charges 1200 dollars a week! And my sister's home just burnt down and they have no place to live!" The rabbi began backing away sure that there was surely no funds left for his's Yeshiva, but the broad grin on the man's face stopped him. "And, Rabbi," continued the mogul, "I don't give a penny for any one of them, so why in the world should I give something to you?"

The Chofetz Chaim explains:="A0 The Torah's objective in this mitzvah is to train us not to be hateful or spiteful. Cheap is cheap.And it's tough to do something about that. It is a character flaw, but it is not hatred. Some of the nicest most warm, friendly even loving people do not like to give or lend. They will offer you their ear, their home and their time. They just will not give something that they physically possess. The Torah, does not deal with them the same way as the person who would be generous, but for the animus in his heart, or the one who does give, but, his openhandedness is shrouded snide remarks, and a harbor of hate. That overbearing enmity, despite his tainted giving is worthy of a Torah transgression.

Though the Torah tries to get us to control our emotional responses, it is more important for us to be kind, loving, and compassionate than generous with a hateful heart.

AS YOURSELF?

RABBI MENACHEM FELDMAN (Chabad.org)

According to Rabbi Akiva, "Love your fellow as yourself" (19:18) is "a great principal of the Torah," yet it is a commandment easier said than done. How can we love every person as we love ourselves? People possess the full gamut of negative traits, shortcomings and failings. Often, the closer we become to someone, the more we see his or her personality flaws. How then can we be expected to love every person? Must we ignore one's negativity?

The most seemingly problematic part of the statement is "as yourself." Even if, somehow, we learn to love our fellow, can the Torah expect the love to rise to the level of self love?

Classic philosophy explains that the words "as yourself" are the key to the ability to love our fellow. When a person loves himself, he is not ignorant of his own personality flaws. On the contrary, no one is as aware of his flaws as he himself is. But somehow, the awareness of his own flaws does not contradict or destroy his self love. That is because a person does not see his own flaws in isolation; he sees his own flaws against the backdrop of self love.

The person who is aware of his own flaws will work very hard to conceal those flaws from others. He fears, often correctly, that the other person's focus will zero in on the fault alone, and the person will define him by his flaws.

The Talmud relates that a gentile who sought to convert asked the great sage Hillel to teach him all of the Torah while standing on one foot. Hillel told him, "What is hateful to you, don't do to others." (Talmud Shabbat 31A)

You hate when others define you by your shortcomings; therefore, don't do the same to others. Never look at the shortcomings of your child, your spouse, your neighbor or your fellow in isolation. See them only against the backdrop of love.

Adapted from Derech Mitzvotcha, Ahavat Yisrael.

RABBI AKIVA'S PRINCIPLE

RABBI YISSOCHOR FRAND (Aish.com)

One of Rabbi Akiva's most famous sayings is, "Ve'ahavta lereicha kamocha. Love your neighbor as you do yourself. This is a fundamental principle of the Torah." This mitzvah is one of the pillars of the entire Torah. We find a similar thought expressed by Hillel. The Talmud relates (Shabbos 31a) that a prospective gentile convert to Judaism asked Hillel to teach him the entire Torah "while standing on one foot." Hillel replied, "Do not do to others that which is hateful to you. This is the essence of Torah. All the rest is explanation."

It seems to me that Rabbi Akiva was most suited to speak about the importance and centrality of this mitzvah. Rabbi Akiva was a great rosh yeshivah with many thousands of students, and he experienced a shattering tragedy. All of his twenty-four thousand students died during the Omer period between Pesach and Shavuot. It is an incredible number, a number that fails to penetrate the consciousness even in our day of huge yeshivos.

How would one of us have dealt with such a blow? What would we have done if all twenty-four thousand ¼ twenty-four thousand! ¼ of our students had died in one fell swoop due to some character flaw, a catastrophe that inevitably must have reflected somewhat negatively on their rosh yeshivah? First, we would, of course, have to deal with a serious bout of depression and despondency. And if we managed to get over that, we would probably retire with a broken heart.

What did Rabbi Akiva do? The Talmud tells us (Yevamos 62b), "When Rabbi Akiva's students died and the world was desolate, he went to the south of Eretz Yisrael and started over again!"

Rabbi Akiva clearly had unbelievable resilience. No matter how great a disaster he suffered, he would find a silver lining in the darkest cloud. He would discover something positive, something to give him new hope, and this would give him the strength and the confidence to start all over again. "All is not lost!" he would exult when he had lost just about everything.

Rabbi Akiva lived through the destruction of the Beis Hamikdash. The Talmud relates (Makkos 24a) that several Sages were walking past the ruined Beis Hamikdash and saw a fox emerging from the site of the Holy of Holies. They all burst into tears, except for Rabbi Akiva, who began to laugh. "Why do you laugh?" they asked him. He replied, "Because if the prophecy of destruction has come true so literally, then the prophecy of redemption will also come true literally."

This ability to find the glimmer of light in the deepest darkness, to find the positive, the spark of hope, in the worst of times, made Rabbi Akiva singularly attuned to the mitzvah of loving others. He – more than anyone else – was able to see the worth in all people and love them for it.

The Baal Shem Tov give us an additional insight into the concept of loving your neighbor "as you do yourself." When a person gets up in the morning and takes stock of himself, he thinks, "I am basically a good person. I have my faults and foibles; I am not perfect. But I am more good than bad." This, the Baal Shem Tov says, is how we must evaluate our neighbor. He is basically good. I can overlook his faults.

WHAT BECAME CLEAR TO ME WHEN I WAS DIAGNOSED WITH ALS

RABBI YITZI HURWITZ (Chabad.org)

There are many mitzvahs in the portion of Kedoshim, but one stands out of the pack as a central pillar of Judaism. This is the mitzvah to love your fellow Jew. In the Torah's words, "And you should love your fellow as yourself." Rabbi Akiva says, "This is a great principle in the Torah."

How does one love every Jew, even those never met? It's hard enough to like the ones you know, never mind loving the ones you don't. Why does the Torah have to add the words "as yourself"? The commandment could have been "and you should love your fellow." What can we learn from the words "as yourself"?

These words teach us that to love your fellow, first you need to love yourself. How does loving yourself help you love somebody else?

In order to love yourself, you need to understand who and what you are. Being a Jew means that at your essence, there is a neshamah that is truly a part of G-d. When you think about this, you realize how amazing you are, and that you are one with G-d. You realize that you must be capable of doing great things. You start to love yourself.

Now, if you realize that your neshamah and your fellow's neshamah are one, then loving him is equal to loving yourself. The more in tune you are with your neshamah, the more your love for other Jews grows. Regardless of their differences, you love them because you are tuned to their essence.

This is why every Jew felt loved when he or she came to the Rebbe because the Rebbe was truly in tune with his neshamah, and therefore with yours as well.

It was due to a lack of this love that the Holy Temple was destroyed, and it will take love to have it rebuilt. This is a key aspect to bringing Moshiach.

We desperately need Moshiach. We are all suffering in one way or another in exile, and it's time for it to end.

It is unbelievable how small and petty differences drive us apart. It's time to get past our trifling differences and show love to our fellow Jews. You will also be surprised how a show of love will be reciprocated.

It seems that the ones closest to us pose the greatest challenge of all: This one doesn't talk to her mother, that one doesn't talk to his brother, etc.

When I was diagnosed with ALS, it was sobering. It became clear to me what is really important. It was clear that family is more important than the senseless arguments. It was clear that external differences are petty. It was clear that we need to unite, and that united, we will bring Moshiach.

NIPPING IT IN THE BUD

AVROHOM YAAKOV

The final section of this week's Torah reading deals with prohibited relationships, one of which is between a man and a beast. The upshot is that the man is executed and the animal is also killed.

Ibn Ezra (20:15) explains why the animal is destroyed – "People looking at the animal will be reminded that a human being committed a sexual act with it (see Mishnah, Sanherdin 7:4). Lest the beast should go through the market and people say, this is the beast by reason of which so and so was stoned."

The Torah is concerned that people will see the animal which was used in a sinful act walking around unscathed.

But why should we care that the animal was used in a sin?

Commentators explain that human nature is such that when we see something bad happen, we are initially outraged but eventually the shock wears away when the object or concept continually appears. It gets to the point that it becomes de jure and acceptable behaviour.

Think claims that men can get pregnant, or that savage terrorists are really victims as current examples.

Continually seeing the animal used in an act of bestiality wandering the streets will have the long term effect of degrading societal morals. Therefore the animal needs to be destroyed.

MARKETING COMPANIES learned long ago that the success of a campaign is based on repetition, not on the cleverness of the message. Repeated enough times, the advert gets in (like this chalk!).

The same applies to aberrant behaviour. Through repetition, it becomes acceptable and even desirable.

The only solution is to nip the behaviour in the bud.

News, Views & Opinion

BIDEN BETRAYS ISRAEL WITH HAMAS 'DEAL' THAT WASN'T

POST EDITORIAL BOARD (NYPost.com 7-5-24)

Joe Biden betrayed Israel last night.

Hamas announced with great fanfare that it had accepted a ceasefire proposal. There were celebrations in Gaza, and the White House said it was "reviewing" the deal.

Except: The Israelis knew nothing about it.

The supposed agreement wasn't even on the table. Hamas had changed the terms of a previous treaty to one more favorable to the terror group. To take just one horrific alteration: Rather than turn over hostages in exchange for Palestinian prisoners, Hamas would surrender dead bodies of the hostages it had killed.

That Hamas would try to pull this ruse, with the help of negotiators in Egypt and Qatar, is typical. It wants to pretend that Israel was the one "rejecting" a ceasefire it never knew about. Anti-Israel protesters in the US and a compliant media would eat it up, and they did.

But there's a shameful twist. Axios reports that the US was aware of the Hamas deal but did not brief Israeli officials.

"Two Israeli officials said the feeling is that 'Israel got played' by the U.S. and the mediators who drafted 'a new deal' and weren't transparent about it," the outlet says.

Just as those same officials are willing to give Iran everything and more for the terrible nuclear deal, so Biden would bend over backwards for Hamas if only it will placate the Israel-haters on his left.

But this is beyond the pale. To push through an agreement without Israel's input? To let Hamas, which attacked Israel, killed, raped and took hostages, dictate the terms? The US is siding with terrorists!

It's no wonder Israel decided to begin its Rafah operation last night. When its supposed "closest ally" doesn't have its back, it has no choice. Israel must stop this threat to its existence.

Biden could have been a partner in that. Instead, he went down in ignominy as a traitor to a friend.

BRITAIN'S 'LIBERAL IMAM' SAYS POLITICIANS SHOULD BE 'CALLED OUT' FOR HAVING JEWISH FAMILY MEMBERS

DANIEL BEN-DAVID (TheJC.com 6-5-24)

The founder of a charity that promotes a more tolerant and modernised Islam for British Muslims has compared Zionists to Nazis and stated that politicians should be "called out" for having Jewish family members.

Taj Hargey, a historian and imam who has previously been described as "Britain's liberal imam", was speaking to the Yorkshire Post about the specific issues Muslim voters have.

He said during the interview there had been an "awakening" among Muslims in recent months who now understand the "distinction between Germans and Nazis," adding, "Not all Germans were Nazis. And similarly, not all Jews are Zionists."

Hargey, who leads the Oxford Institute for British Islam (OIBI), added it is "important that prominent British politicians" who "blindly support Israel" should be "identified" if they have family links to the Jewish State.

Hargey went on to talk about Sir Keir Starmer having close family who are Jewish, saying he should be "called out on this."

"And so that's part of the reason why he's pussyfooting on this whole issue," he added.

Hargey also accused both former Home Secretaries Priti Patel and Suella Braverman of being "married to a Zionist."

Speaking to the Sunday Telegraph, Hargey asked how politicians can "be non-partisan and unbiased if they do not declare their personal connections to Zionism and Israel?"

"Is this not the case when the public are frequently reminded directly or indirectly about the faith of Muslim leaders", Hargey said using London mayor Sadiq Khan, politicians Humza Yousaf and Scottish Labour Party leader Anas Sarwar as examples.

The Campaign Against Antisemitism (CAA) said they would be contacting the Charity Commission over Hargey's "atrocious" comments.

The CAA said: "The analogy of Zionists to Nazis is particularly vile, given that our polling shows that eight in 10 British Jews consider themselves to be Zionists. This rhetoric is hugely divisive, and has no place in the charitable sector."

According to the Sunday Telegraph, Hargey dismissed CAA's comments, adding "Zionists and their camp followers do not have any substantive merit."

Writing for the JC in 2022, Hargey argued that Islam needed a similar reformation to that of which Judaism and Christianity went through. He promoted OIBI as a "progressive new Muslim think tank" which focuses on "inclusivity and tolerance", and aims to advance "free-thinking pluralism by providing fresh insights benefitting the five-million strong Muslim community."

The Charity Commission is reportedly assessing the comments to determine if there is a role for the regulator.

WHY ARE PRO-PALESTINE PROTESTERS HECKLING HOLOCAUST SURVIVORS?

LAUREN SMITH (Spiked-online.com 7-5-24)

What on Earth could compel a person to travel to Auschwitz to yell at Holocaust survivors? As incredible as it sounds, this is precisely what a group of 'pro-Palestine' protesters did yesterday. In Poland, half a dozen activists gathered around the former site of the Nazis' largest extermination camp in order to disrupt a remembrance march for victims of the Holocaust. Seemingly, this was to make some sort of point about the war in Gaza.

The International March of the Living is an annual silent walk between two former death camps, Auschwitz and Birkenau, to honour the victims of the Nazis. This year, 56 Holocaust survivors took part in the march. They were joined by survivors of the 7 October pogrom in Israel and by relatives of those still held hostage by Hamas.

Anyone with an ounce of compassion or common sense would have let these marchers commemorate history's most brutal genocide in peace. And yet, covering their faces with keffiyehs, protesters aligned with a movement that claims to be about 'peace' decided it was a good idea to turn up waving Palestinian flags and chanting 'Stop genocide' at those taking part in the remembrance march.

This is a sickening display of either mind-numbing ignorance, staggering tone-deafness or outright anti-Semitism. Of the six million Jews who died in the Holocaust, an estimated one million of those died at Auschwitz between 1940 and 1945. Then, last October, in the worst massacre of Jews since the Holocaust, Hamas slaughtered 1,170 people, mostly civilians, and kidnapped 250. What message, exactly, were the pro-Palestine protesters hoping to convey by heckling the people commemorating these awful anti-Semitic crimes?

To make matters worse, the protest at Auschwitz comes at a time of increasing anti-Semitism, both in Poland and across Europe. Just last week in Warsaw, the Żoźyk Synagogue was attacked and set alight with Molotov cocktails. This was the city's only synagogue to have survived the Holocaust.

Of course, the people waving Palestine flags outside Auschwitz are unlikely to be the same thugs who are setting fire to synagogues. In fact, the keffiyah-wearing activists probably think of themselves as 'anti-racist', on the 'right side of history' and opposed to genocide. But clearly something has gone horribly wrong if Jewish people are being made to feel afraid to exist again. Almost 80 years after the world pledged 'Never Again', protesters seem to be getting a righteous thrill out of soiling the memory of the Holocaust.

Even in the UK, once a safe haven for Jews fleeing Nazi persecution, police had to cover and guard the Hyde Park Holocaust Memorial in London last month. There were fears that it would be targeted and vandalised during a pro-Palestinian demonstration. Given that protesters regularly chant anti-Semitic dogwhistles like 'From the river to the sea' and call for the eradication of Israel, these fears were hardly unfounded.

Anything associated with Israel and Judaism is now seen as fair game for attack by the pro-Palestine set – even commemorations of the Holocaust and of 7 October. Anyone who still thinks this movement is solely concerned about the plight of civilians in Gaza, or peace in the Middle East, needs to have their head examined.

TRUMP IS BETTER FOR PALESTINIANS

RICH BERDAN (TheJewishVoice.com 3-5-24)

President Joe Biden finds himself in the corner of the sandbox when the mainstream media calls him out for his dithering on the anti-Semitic demonstrations across universities in America by politically conflating Islamophobia on the same level. The escape hatch for Biden's media friends to prop him up is a growing narrative that if you do not like Biden's bungling policy in supporting both Israel and Gaza, then you will be aghest on what former President Donald Trump will do to inflict pain on the Palestinians if he is elected.

Let's seriously look at the two leaders who have a track record as President on who will be best to solve the tinderbox in the Middle East. It is clear that there are two very different approaches by both presidents.

Trump had removed the ISIS caliphate threat, tightened the noose on Iran through sanctions that cut off weapons flowing to their terrorist proxies and significantly reduced Iranian regimes pursuit of nuclear weapons, he swiftly authorized 51 tomahawk missile strikes against Syrian and Russian military infrastructure in Syria for the use of chemical weapons, he cut off funding to the Palestinians for rewarding families of suicide terrorists and their unwillingness to recognize Israel, his first visit abroad was to Saudi Arabia to solidify relations with America, and he moved the embassy in Israel to Jerusalem.

Trump's actions resulted in four Arab countries entering into an unprecedented economic and cultural relations with Israel under the Abraham Accords. The former president did not waver on principle and was resolute in carrying a big stick to protect American interests while ensuring change took place in the Middle East that culminated in a relatively peaceful presidential term. Trump was not the warmonger that many touted and nor should American's be manipulated into thinking he will be if elected again.

On the other hand, President Biden reversed much of the Trump foreign policy by reinstituting aid to the Palestinians that essentially propped up Hamas terrorists, he allowed for billions of dollars held up in foreign banks to be released to Iran along with removing Trump's sanctions on Iranian oil to fund Hamas, Hezbollah, and the Houthis, he interfered in Israeli politics in an attempt to remove Prime Minister Netanyahu, shipping routes to the Suez Canal are threatened, he ruined strategic relations with Saudi Arabia, and overseen a complete mess of America's withdraw from Afghanistan. Biden's actions sent a clear signal to Russia, China, North Korea, and Iran that America is weak under this president and now is the optimal time to move against Israel and the West. Hamas now had the means and support from Iran to inflict a gruesome attack on Israel that has culminated in the poor people of Gaza suffering the consequences for their actions, and the rise of a disgusting, well funded, and orchestrated anti-Semitic demonstrations throughout American campuses. Not only did Biden's actions cause war to break out during his term, but mayhem on the home front not unlike the Nazi brownshirt youth persecuting Jews in Germany.

Regardless of who is running against Biden's, his dismal leadership and miscalculated political decisions should essentially disqualify him from winning the general election. Throw in inflation and cost of living, an open border bringing in drugs killing Americans and potential terrorists, and billions of dollars being sent to Ukraine to fight a war of his own doing; and he should not even be considered as the Democrat presumptive nominee. Good for Republicans but at what cost to the country. Democrats still have a chance to throw him out before their convention.

Well, who would be better to lead peace in the Middle East and see the war between Israel and Hamas come to an end that leads to Israeli security and the rebuilding of Gaza? If any reasonable person seriously weighs the results of the past two administrations, it is not even close. The narrative by some in the media that Trump would be worse for the Palestinians living in Gaza than a vacillating Biden holds no water.

What would Trump do on day one? He would likely begin to telegraph his expectations prior to taking office in a similar manner to former president Ronald Reagan who made it clear to the Iranians that he would start bombing upon taking office if the American hostages were not released by Iran in 1980.

Conventional wisdom must be thrown out under Trump. Perhaps he will have a plan that leverages a Marine Strikeforce being sent into Gaza to rescue the hostages or see the belligerents take up a one-time offer that removes the terrorist threat without being annihilated, rebuild the Gaza Strip with Middle East countries lined up with oil revenues, and Saudi Arabia brought into the Abraham Accords while isolating Iran. Trump will provide Israel with the assurance to stand down and the loss of life in Gaza will cease. One can only hope that this situation will be resolved before the election however under Biden, one should expect further conflict in the region. Trump's hard negotiations is best for a Palestinian and Israeli future.

J'ACCUSE: THE ANTISEMITIC LIES OF 2024

GARY WILLIG (Israeln.com 1-5-24)

The Jewish people are used to lies being spread about them. Nearly a millennium ago, the first of many blood libels accusing the Jews of murdering gentle children to consume their blood emerged. This was joined by accusations that Jews committed 'host desecration,' the supposed mistreatment of Communion Bread, and the accusation that Jews poisoned wells causing the Black Death.

Each of these false accusations led to massacres of innocent Jews. Unfortunately, lies about Jewish evil did not end with the enlightenment, nor did their deadly consequences.

The false charges against Alfred Dreyfus in France in the 1890s, the publishing of the antisemitic forgery 'The Protocols of the Elders of Zion' by the government of Tzarist Russia in 1903, Henry Ford's diatribes against the 'international Jew' in the Dearborn Independent, and of course, the originators of the 'big lie,' Adolph Hitler and his Propaganda Minister, Joseph Goebbels, whose lies dehumanized the Jewish people enough for the Holocaust to be committed.

As the world's only Jewish nation, it is not surprising that Israel has frequently been the victim of many 'big lies' designed to foment hate and justify the murder of its citizens.

American readers will remember how in 2000, the Associated Press wrongly captioned a photograph of an American Jewish student, Tuvia Grossman, who had been beaten by Palestinian Arabs in Jerusalem as a Palestinian, leading readers of the New York Times and other newspapers to conclude that Israeli police had beaten an Arab man when the police had saved the American citizen.

This was nothing compared to the 'big lie' that was told two years later, when, after 30 people were murdered in a suicide bombing at a Passover Seder in Netanyahu, the IDF went into Jenin to put an end to the terrorism plaguing Israel's streets. The Palestinian Authority and so-called human rights NGOs such as Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International accused the IDF of "war crimes" and a "massacre" of as many as 500 people. These claims were reported without question by British media such as The Guardian and the BBC, which worked to spread the 'big lie' of the non-existent massacre. In reality, about 55 Arabs were killed in the battle, most of whom were combatants, and 23 IDF soldiers were killed, in part because of the IDF's efforts to prevent civilian casualties. But a 'big lie' turned an otherwise unremarkable military engagement into a crime that justified any actions taken against Israel, Israelis, and Jews.

The sheer abundance of lies about Jews throughout history makes it easy to draw comparisons to past instances where such lies led to Jews being murdered. It is common nowadays to look at the horrific scenes on American college campuses, the intimidation, threats, and assaults against Jewish students, the open calls for genocide against Jews, and the failure of college administrations to combat this hate, and say that we are now living in a repeat of 1938 Germany.

The current situation could also be considered reminiscent of France during the Dreyfus Affair. Indeed, one of the chief propagators of the 'big lies' against Israel deliberately invited such comparisons soon after the Hamas massacre of October 7.

In late November, less than two months after the worst massacre committed against the Jewish people since the Nazi Holocaust, United Nations Special Rapporteur on Palestinian Territories Francesca Albanese published a book she titled 'J'Accuse: The 7 October Attacks, Hamas, Terrorism, Israel, Apartheid in Palestine and the War.'

'J'Accuse,' meaning 'I accuse,' was the title of an open letter published by the journalist Émile Zola in the L'Aurore newspaper on January 13, 1898 in which he laid bare the facts of the conspiracy to frame Alfred Dreyfus for treason and to protect Ferdinand Walsin-Esterhazy, the man who had actually committed the crime for which Dreyfus was falsely accused.

As described in Maurice Samuels' new autobiography, 'Alfred Dreyfus: The Man at the Center of the Affair,' Zola's letter revealed to many in France and around the world how Dreyfus was accused and convicted based on nearly nonexistent evidence, how his trial was conducted in an illegal manner in which the defense was not allowed to see the supposed evidence against him, how when the real traitor was discovered, powerful forces in the military conspired to protect the traitor and keep an innocent man imprisoned rather than admit they had been wrong.

It revealed the truth that so many, as now, are thrilled to latch onto lies in order to justify their hatred for Jews.

Albanese, in her irrational hatred, probably thought she was following in Émile Zola's footsteps, but in reality she was following in the footsteps of the villains of the Dreyfus Affair.

In rushing to defend Hamas and blame Israel for the massacre of its own people, Albanese was following in the tradition of Édouard Drumont, the writer who did so much to develop and spread racial antisemitism in France in the late 1800s. He used the antisemitism whipped up by the Dreyfus Affair to get himself elected to the legislative assembly as a representative of Algiers and founded the "antisemitic caucus" in the legislature. She was following in the footsteps of Hubert-Joseph Henry, the officer who forged documents used by the French military court to prevent Dreyfus from being exonerated and who committed suicide in prison when his deception was uncovered.

The anti-Jewish riots which followed the original 'J'Accuse' were extremely reminiscent of the anti-Jewish protests and riots seen on college campuses across the US over the last two weeks and in cities across the world since October 7. The day after Zola's letter was published, Catholic students demonstrated in Paris shouting "Down with the Jews!" The anti-Jewish protests continued to grow, with a mass demonstration ten days after the letter was published featuring shouts of "Death to the Jews! Death to the Yids!"

The homes of Jewish professors and Jewish-owned businesses were attacked, and anti-Jewish riots resulted in multiple Jewish people being killed in French-controlled Algeria. Many people who donated to the fund raised for Hubert-Joseph Henry's widow wrote letters openly calling for the extermination of Jews. In his autobiography of Dreyfus, Samuels writes that these letters included such phrases as "Long live the saber that will rid us of all the vermin" and "For G-d, for his country, and the extermination of the Jews."

The echoes of these calls to murder and exterminate the Jews of late 19th century France can be heard in the anti-Israel protests of today, in the celebrations of the Hamas massacre that began in the days immediately following October 7, and in the attempts to blame Israel for what Hamas did by more than 30 student groups at Harvard University before the victims' blood even had a chance to dry. They can be heard in the cries of "From the River to the sea, Palestine will be free," in the cries of "There is only one solution, Intifada revolution," and "we are Hamas." They can be heard in the voices of the protesters who declare that October 7 will be repeated "10,000 times" and "every day."

Alfred Dreyfus' captivity after his wrongful conviction was itself an eerie presage of the plight of the innocent people kidnapped by Hamas on October 7. Sent to Devil's Island, kept in isolation for years in unsanitary conditions and chained to his bed while bugs crawled all over him in what today would be considered nothing less than deliberate torture, Dreyfus experienced frequent illness and continued to suffer medical ailments from his time on Devil's Island years after his release.

Like Dreyfus, the hostages held by Hamas are also kept in unsanitary conditions, given little food, and denied medical care from the Red Cross. Former hostages who have been freed described a life of hell. Dozens of hostages are believed to have died in captivity, just as many hoped Dreyfus would die alone on Devil's Island, and it is unknown how many of the 133 hostages remaining are still alive.

Like Dreyfus, many believe the hostages, including the smallest of children, to be guilty merely by virtue of their being Jewish. The hate it takes to tear down a poster of Kfir Bibas, the youngest hostage who was kidnapped at just nine months old, is unfathomable to all decent human beings. Just as unfathomable is the depth of the evil in condemning calls for Hamas to release little Kfir as "unacceptable" as Francesca Albanese has done.

Like the French military courts, the UN has attempted to cover up the truth and to defend the guilty while punishing the innocent. Outrageously, the UN has still failed to condemn Hamas for committing the massacre or for taking and holding innocent hostages. Now there are rumblings that the International Criminal Court is considering issuing arrest warrants against Israeli leaders over fake war crimes, before an investigation has even been carried out and ignoring all of the evidence to the contrary. Much as Dreyfus was condemned for being a Jew in the absence of real evidence, Israel is condemned for being a Jewish State in the absence of real evidence.

The purpose of these lies and propaganda, of these protests and riots, is to facilitate the destruction of the State of Israel and another massacre of the Jewish people by delegitimizing their refusal to let themselves be murdered. If all self-defense is considered "genocide," then the only thing the Jewish people can do is submit to another genocide as Hamas, Iran, and all of their supporters around the world fulfill their dream of finishing Hitler's work.

The people behind these lies and those who are actively attempting to bring about another Holocaust must be called out, condemned, and defeated. And so, in the spirit of Émile Zola, I accuse them.

I accuse Francesca Albanese of antisemitism and of using her position to support and defend Hamas in its war to exterminate the Jewish people.

I accuse the United Nations which employs Albanese of antisemitism in seeking to save Hamas so that it can murder again, in continuing to employ Albanese no matter how much evil she spews, and of complicity in Hamas's campaign of genocide through UNRWA, which spreads, Nazi-like anti-Jewish propaganda and employed multiple terrorists involved in the massacre of October 7.

I accuse the International Committee of the Red Cross of abandoning the hostages by never visiting any of them even once or even putting in the effort to do so. The blood of any hostage who dies as a direct result of a medical deterioration in captivity is on the hands of the Red Cross.

I accuse the former human rights NGOs Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International of abandoning their core mission to defend the human rights of all in order to deny rights to Jews. Like Hubert-Joseph Henry, they knowingly lie about evidence in order to blame the Jewish State while defending the guilty.

I accuse the anti-Israel protesters at Columbia University and at all the colleges where antisemitic protests have broken out in recent weeks of antisemitism and of demonstrating in support of genocide. Their claims that Israel is committing genocide are a smokescreen of the true goal of these protests – the complete destruction of the State of Israel and all 7 million of its Jewish citizens, along with as many Jews outside of Israel as possible. That is why these demonstrations turn violent so easily, why open calls for

genocide and “10,000” October 7s, declarations that “we are Hamas,” and signs calling on Hamas to murder Jewish students on campus are features and not bugs of these protests.

There are many students at these protests who are simply ignorant of the true evil they are supporting through their actions, but there is no excuse for this level of ignorance when you are actively supporting a second Holocaust.

I accuse the university leaders who did not act decisively to stop these orgies of hate of cowardice in the face of antisemitism. Émile Zola welcomed a lawsuit by the military officials he accused so that he could further bring the truth to light, but these administrations will bend over backwards so as not to hurt the feelings of people who call for the murder of all Jews everywhere.

I accuse all those who defend these protests as mere displays of peaceful free expression of gaslighting the intended victims of the genocide the demonstrators so openly seek. Like those who defended Ferdinand Walsin-Esterhazy despite the irrefutable proof of his treason, they want us to deny the truth of our own eyes and the words we hear with our own ears, and if we listened to those who defend the indefensible and tolerate this naked Jew-hate, those who seek the lives of Jews will only grow more emboldened, and soon it really will be 1938 all over again.

I accuse the media of continuing to fall for lies by serial liars whenever the subject of the lies is Israel. After the fake Jenin massacre of 2002, they should have learned. After the false accusations that Israel bombed a hospital and killed 500 people on October 14, when it was quickly revealed that the blast was the result of a failed Islamic Jihad rocket and the death toll was a fraction of what was originally claimed, they should have learned. But they did not and refuse to learn.

And finally, I accuse Western leaders of failing to stand up for the truth and for what is right by failing to call out antisemitism when it is put on display, for telling liars that they “have a point,” for creating environments where police can threaten to arrest a man for being “visibly Jewish” rather than the people who would attack him, for pandering to the liars and people who hate everything a democratic nation stands for in the name of political expediency.

And the more they clash with Israel to appease the liars and genocide-seekers, the more emboldened the liars become.

It took many years, but in the end, the truth revealed by Émile Zola won out when Alfred Dreyfus was exonerated in 1906.

It also took many years and much death and suffering, but Hitler was ultimately defeated and his lies recognized for what they were. The truth will ultimately have its day in the present conflict. But it is up to us to ensure that this happens as quickly and as painlessly as possible. If the lies of Francesca Albanese, the UN, the fake defenders of human rights, and those demonstrate in favor of another Holocaust are not confronted and defeated quickly, then it will be a long, drawn-out process as it was with France from 1894-1906, and as it was with Germany from 1933-1945.

If we let the liars and the antisemites win, even for a little while, it will be our children who accuse us of failing to defend not only the Jewish people, but democracy and the truth themselves.

In the face of evil lies, even if it is the entire world that is lying, never be afraid to say ‘I accuse.’

SAVING HAMAS

LEE SMITH | Tabletmag.com 2-5-24)

Reports are circulating that the Israelis are planning an operation in Rafah to eliminate the last Hamas stronghold in Gaza. If so, the Netanyahu government will be acting against the very public wishes of the Biden administration, which has spent the last half year moving heaven and earth to save a terrorist organization from destruction. Bizarrely, the White House’s statements and actions show that Hamas’ survival is more important than the security of a traditional American partner, Israel; more crucial to American interests than the preservation of the U.S.-led order of the Middle East; more precious than the dozens of American lives that Hamas ended on Oct. 7; more valuable than however many Americans and Israelis are still alive in the terror army’s tunnels.

Why? As the money and prestige that the U.S. has invested month after month in protecting Hamas demonstrate, the Biden administration sees the terror group as a valuable asset.

A day after the massacre, before Israel’s campaign against Hamas even began, Secretary of State Antony Blinken wrote that he was encouraging the Turkish government’s “advocacy for a cease-fire.” It makes no difference that the tweet has since been deleted, since the White House has produced no shortage of evidence since that its top priority is to deter Israel from defeating Hamas, by increasing Israel’s vulnerabilities at every turn, and conditioning aid on Israel adopting a purely defensive posture.

The Biden administration has stopped Israel from entering Rafah by demanding it produce plans to protect the civilian population, piously insisting that “even one civilian death is too many.” That would be a hard task in any military scenario, but given that Hamas hides among noncombatants, the White House’s policy openly reinforces the terror group’s political and military strategy.

What distinguishes the Palestinians from other ethno-national groups born of the breakup of the multiethnic empires of Europe and the Levant after World War I is that their claim on the world’s attention issues largely from their willingness to hire themselves out as terrorist mercenaries.

The president abdicated America’s historical role of vetoing anti-Israel activity at the U.N. Instead, the U.S. delegation abstained from a key Security Council resolution in March demanding an immediate cease-fire—thereby putting America’s diplomatic weight behind Hamas’ demand that it should be allowed to keep its hostages and continue ruling Gaza. The White House then sanctioned Israeli civilians on the West Bank for crimes dreamed up by left-wing pro-Palestinian organizations, while ignoring a Palestinian terror wave aimed at murdering Jewish civilians who were guilty of crimes like stopping at a red light, buying gas, and herding sheep.

Much of the false reporting supporting the pro-Hamas offensive is channeled through U.S. Army Gen. Michael Fenzel. The U.S. Security Coordinator for Israel and the Palestinian Authority are spending taxpayer resources to build a Palestinian terror army on the West Bank that may soon be repurposed for Gaza, too.

By compelling Jerusalem to “surge” food aid and energy to Gaza, the White House broke Israel’s siege, and demanded an ally resupply its adversary at wartime. Whenever Israel goes on the offensive, Biden and aides publicly threaten to stop resupplying arms. After Iran’s massive missile and drone attack last month, administration officials let on that if Israeli retaliatory strikes exceeded meager U.S. limits, the White House would hobble Israel’s air defense systems. Thus, the Israelis were forced to adopt the battle-tested American military strategy of bombing sand.

The White House has used CIA Director William Burns as one of its main instruments of diplomatic deterrence. He’s traveled to Egypt, Qatar, and elsewhere for endless hostage negotiations with the Palestinian terrorist organization. That none of these negotiations has gone anywhere is the point. Burns’ jawboning is designed to stall Israel’s war while legitimizing the act of hostage-taking, even as it’s become increasingly clear that many of the hostages whose release he is supposedly negotiating for are dead.

To emphasize its evenhandedness in the conflict between a key U.S. military ally and a designated foreign terrorist organization, the White House has amplified Hamas propaganda that has repeatedly been shown to be false. The president himself and the secretary of state enthusiastically repeated accusations that Israel intentionally murdered World Central Kitchen aid workers. Without evidence to support USAID head Samantha Power’s claims of rampant famine in Gaza, the administration and its validators began calling it a “reported famine.”

To fight the mythical famine, Biden is sending thousands of U.S. troops to build a \$320 million pier to resupply Hamas—an arrangement that will turn American forces into human shields to deter Israeli military operations against the terror organization. By leaking fake news, most recently an internal State Department memo alleging Israeli war crimes, that Israel was hindering aid to starve Gazans, the administration laid the groundwork for arrest warrants likely to be issued by the International Criminal Court. While the warrants reportedly target Netanyahu and other members of Israel’s war cabinet, the action is likely to set a precedent broad enough to justify arresting any Israeli who served in the Gaza campaign.

It’s useful to remember that what distinguishes the Palestinians from other ethno-national groups born of the breakup of the multiethnic empires of Europe and the Levant after World War I is that their claim on the world’s attention issues largely from their willingness to hire themselves out as terrorist mercenaries.

During the Cold War, the Palestinians were used by the Soviets against the U.S. and American interests and allies. Regional powers like Nasser’s Egypt, Assad’s Syria, Saddam’s Iraq, and Ghaddafi’s Libya used the Palestinians to advance their own interests, against the superpowers and/or each other. Not infrequently, Palestinian factions fought each other on behalf of their Arab patrons.

It was through this nonstop violence that the Palestinian cause flourished. The Palestinians won a place in regional and then international forums not because of a world-historical injustice done to an ad hoc confederacy of minor Levantine bloodlines. Rather, it was because if you didn’t employ a mercenary gang of Palestinians against your enemies, you would be exposed to a terror campaign waged by a rival band of Palestinians, sponsored by your rivals.

What Middle East watchers call the “Palestinian veto” refers to the ability of Palestinian terrorists to destabilize any given regional order that doesn’t suit the ambitions of whoever their dominant patron happens to be. For instance, the 1979 Israel-Egypt peace treaty came about only because Egyptian President Anwar Sadat insisted on keeping the Palestinians out. Unlike Jimmy Carter, Sadat didn’t care about a comprehensive peace in the Holy Land with the Palestinians front and center—he knew that giving the Palestinians a seat would give the Soviets and their Arab allies an opening to derail an agreement he needed to advance Egyptian interests.

On whose behalf were the Palestinians acting when they destabilized the region with their gruesome Oct. 7 attack? Iran—but also the Biden administration. The two share an interest in collapsing the traditional U.S.-led order of the Middle East that Donald Trump had restored, after Barack Obama began the process of dismantling it.

Up until Obama, the pillars of America’s security architecture were the Persian Gulf’s oil-rich Arab states, led by Saudi Arabia, and, in the eastern Mediterranean, Israel and Egypt. Early in his first term Obama signaled he intended to undo that order when he gave a speech in Cairo and invited officials from the Muslim Brotherhood, existential enemies of the military regime then led by Hosni Mubarak. Within two years, the White House withdrew its support for Mubarak during the Arab Spring revolutions and ushered in a Muslim Brotherhood government. Egypt became the first pillar of the old U.S. security order to fall.

Obama’s aides made it clear that his second term would be devoted to securing a nuclear deal with Iran. The purpose of the deal, officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), was not to prevent an Iranian bomb—in fact, the agreement legalizes the clerical regime’s nuclear weapons program. Rather it was to realign U.S. interests with Tehran while stifling traditional U.S. partners, especially Riyadh and Jerusalem, the other regional pillars of the American order. To cap off his eight years of dismantling the instruments of U.S. policy in the Middle East, Obama’s final foreign affairs initiative was to push a U.S. Security Council resolution adopting the Palestinian position that Israel was in violation of international law by occupying, among other places, historic Jewish holy sites.

Then came Donald Trump, who not only reversed Obama’s realignment but reinforced Washington’s traditional security architecture. Trump’s first official trip was to Saudi Arabia. He explained that the U.S.-Saudi alliance was good for the U.S. because it meant affordable oil, investment in America, and American jobs. Trump defended the Saudis when retired U.S. spies, the Washington Post, Obama operatives, and foreign intelligence services joined in an information operation to isolate Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman after the murder of former Saudi intelligence official Jamal Khashoggi.

That was only the beginning, as step by step Trump erased Obama’s legacy in the Middle East, and restored the pillars of the American-led regional security order. He backed the military regime in Cairo, and moved the U.S. Embassy in Israel to Jerusalem. He acknowledged Israeli sovereignty over the Golan Heights, the Jordan Valley, and large parts of the West Bank. The Trump-brokered normalization agreements between Israel and other regional states, known as the Abraham Accords, reaffirmed the U.S.-led regional order by binding our allies to each other—and thus to America.

Crucially, the Abraham Accords also ignored the Palestinians. After all, the Palestinians could never normalize relations without forfeiting their ability to project power and demand tribute. Like Sadat, Trump and his diplomats understood that peace could only be made by sidelining the Palestinians and whoever was sponsoring them, in this case Iran.

Naturally, the Abraham Accords were repugnant to the Obama faction. The normalization deals undid Obama’s balance of power project—i.e., strengthen U.S. adversaries at the expense of allies—and pushed the left’s longtime darlings, the Palestinians and the Islamic Republic to the margins. Accordingly, the Biden administration unfroze money to fund Iran’s war chest and undermined regional normalization under cover of expanding it to Saudi Arabia. Any direct talks between Israel and Saudi, the steward of Islam’s holy shrines, would, if only for the sake of protocol, have to involve the Palestinian cause. Thus, the Biden administration put the Palestinians at the center of the region again.

That’s how we got to Oct. 7. Contrary to the Biden administration’s talking points, the Iranians didn’t see Saudi-Israeli normalization talks as an existential threat; rather, they correctly saw it, and other Biden moves, as an invitation to disrupt and destabilize the regional order that Trump had rebuilt. Subsequently, in traditional regional fashion, the Iranians mobilized their Palestinian proxy. And yet for many good-faith observers, it remains a mystery why Obama and then Biden sought to undo the U.S. order of the Middle East, an arrangement that has kept a volatile and strategically vital region relatively stable. Is it ego alone that requires Obama and his party must be proven right, and that Trump’s successes must be transformed into failures at America’s expense—and at the additional price of destroying the prospects of a relatively hopeful future for Middle Easterners?

The key fact is this: The regional order that Trump restored has long been part of the formula that ensures continued U.S. domestic peace and prosperity. To put it another way, the moves made by Obama and now Biden are not primarily about destabilizing the Middle East. Rather, they are designed to destabilize the United States.

The Biden team’s moves to shelter Hamas are best understood in the context of a revolutionary program of domestic initiatives that aim to reconstitute American society on a new basis, and which in turn require the outright rejection of the country’s history and culture, its existing social arrangements, and constitutional order. The current regime has weaponized the security state, labeled its opponents “domestic terrorists,” and waged a third-world-style campaign against the opposition candidate because it’s a revisionist faction. Its political and cultural manifesto is a program for remaking America, whether through social pressure, or censorship, or bureaucratic fiat, or threats of violence, or actual violence. Among other devices to transform America, the Biden administration has opened the border to at least 7 million illegal aliens (and counting), many from places in the Middle East where Hamas is revered, and for whom political violence means steady, well-paid work.

It’s not the traditional U.S.-led order in the Middle East that the revisionist faction, Obama’s faction, is most determined to dismantle but rather the existing order in the U.S. And it’s not Israel that it’s most keen to grind into dust, but America. For the party that Obama remade in his image to triumph at home, the Palestinians must win.

UN WOMEN PREFER HAMAS “MEDIA OFFICE” FOR STATISTICS TO THE GAZA HEALTH MINISTRY

ELDER OF ZIVON (ElderofZivon.blogspot.com 7-5-24)

According to UN Women as of April 16, 1000+ women have been killed in Gaza from figures supplied by the Gaza Media office. The Gaza health ministry Telegram channel today reports less than 5,000 women killed, but over 10,000 weeks ago according to the Hamas media office.

For months, we have been told that 70% of the dead were women and children. But when they actually count them, it is only a little over 50% - and male adults of military age, who are less than 25% of Gaza’s population, is the largest category of those killed. Even if the total number of correct, and every single one of the missing 10,000 are women and children, it is impossible to reach 70% women and children fatalities.

Why is UN Women taking inflated statistics from Hamas instead of from the health ministry, which issues detailed reports every couple of days?

The key word is “inflated.”

UN Women want to grab the highest number they can, and if Hamas is the one behind those numbers, they just call it the “Gaza Media Office” which sounds like a real organization and not some masked guy with a Telegram channel.

When they exaggerate by 100%, though, perhaps the UN is not the most honest broker.





Hamas Lifecycle

1. Accumulate weapons
2. Attack Israel
3. Spread lies worldwide
4. Be a victim
5. Ask for ceasefire
6. worldwide Fundraising

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

OPENING CANS ON SHABBAT

RABBI CHAIM JACHTER (KolTprah.org)

This week we will discuss the permissibility of opening cans on Shabbat. We will trace the development of the debate from the Gemara and Rishonim to the Shulchan Aruch and its commentaries, and through twentieth century Halachic authorities.

GEMARA AND RISHONIM – SHABBAT 146A AND ERUVIN 34B

The Mishna (Shabbat 146a) states that one may break open a barrel in order to retrieve the figs contained in the barrel, if one does not intend to create a functional opening for the barrel. A problem with this rule is that it seems to be a destructive act (Soter), which should be forbidden (on a rabbinic level) on Shabbat. Rashi (as interpreted by the Ran to the Rif Shabbat 61b s.v. Shover Adam) explains that since one destroys the barrel to obtain Shabbat needs, the rabbinical prohibition to destroy is waived. This Gemara indicates that one may open a container to gain access to the food inside.

On the other hand, the Gemara (Eruvin 34b) indicates that one may not break open an object in order to gain access to the contents. This Gemara teaches that one may not break a shed to obtain the food inside it. Accordingly, the Gemara in Eruvin appears to contradict the Gemara in Shabbat.

There are two main schools of thought in the Rishonim regarding how to resolve this apparent contradiction. The Ran (Ibid.) and other Rishonim argue that Shabbat 146a represents the conventional case. Eruvin 34b constitutes the exception, as it is speaking of breaking an exceptionally large vessel. The policy of Chazal to suspend the rabbinic prohibition against breaking items if the breaking is done for Shabbat needs, applies only to breaking items normally used for food storage. However, Chazal never waived their prohibition in the case of breaking a very large item such as a shack.

Tosafot (Shabbat 146a s.v. Shover), on the other hand, argue that Eruvin 34b represents the conventional case. Shabbat 146a constitutes the exceptional case because it is speaking of breaking a makeshift and flimsy vessel (a Mustiki). Tosafot argue that Chazal prohibited opening a conventional vessel because of concern that one create a viable opening. Chazal are not concerned that he may make a viable opening when one opens a Mustiki. Since a Mustiki is a poor quality item, it is not worth investing the effort in order to make a functional opening.

The Rambam (Hilchot Shabbat 23:2) seems to agree with the Ran, as he does not limit permission to break open a vessel containing food to a Mustiki. The Rambam and Ran do not believe that Chazal were concerned lest one create a viable opening. The Rosh (Shabbat 22:6), however, follows the approach of Tosafot.

SHULCHAN ARUCH, ITS COMMENTARIES, AND NINETEENTH CENTURY CODES

The Shulchan Aruch (314:1) rules in accordance with Tosafot and the Rosh. This is somewhat surprising since the Shulchan Aruch here rules in accordance with the Ashkenazic Rishonim and rejects the approach of the Sefardic Rishonim. The Biur Hagra (O.C.314:1 s.v. Sheeinah Machzeket), though, rules in accordance with the Ran and the Rambam. The Mishna Berurah (314:7) mentions the ruling of the Vilna Gaon, but does not regard the Vilna Gaon’s opinion as normative.

This decision of the Shulchan Aruch troubles the Aruch Hashulchan (O.C. 314:7-8). The Aruch Hashulchan wonders why the Shulchan Aruch chose to reject the opinion of such a significant number of Rishonim on this issue, which involve only a Rabbinic prohibition. The Aruch Hashulchan concludes that one should not rebuke those that follow the opinion of the lenient Rishonim and the Vilna Gaon in this context.

CANS – FOUR APPROACHES

The issue of opening cans has been vigorously debated for many decades. Four basic approaches have emerged. The Tehillah Ledavid (314:12) believes that cans constitute sturdy vessels, which are forbidden (on a rabbinic level) to open, lest he fashion a proper opening.

On the other hand, some Poskim (Kaf Hachaim 314:38; Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach, cited in Shmirat Shabbat Kehilchata 9: footnote 10; Rav Ovadia Yosef, Teshuvot Yechave Daat 2:42) regard cans as a Mustiki, since cans are customarily discarded after use. We stress that even these authorities prohibit opening a can if one intends to use the can for storage after removing its contents. Moreover, these authorities urge accommodating the stricter opinion and opening cans before Shabbat. Rav Yosef Adler reports that Rav Yosef Dov Soloveitchik subscribes to the lenient approach.

The Chazon Ish (O.C. 51:11) adopts a very interesting position regarding cans. He believes that a sealed can is not the Halachic equivalent of a barrel, which is forbidden to open only on a rabbinic level. He argues that a can, unlike a barrel, does not have the Halachic status of a vessel (Kli). The Chazon Ish therefore asserts that when one opens a can he "transforms a [functionless] sealed item into a functional Kli." Hence, the Chazon Ish believes that opening a sealed can constitutes a violation of the biblical prohibition of Binyan (building) on Shabbat. Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach (Shmirat Shabbat Kehilchata 9:footnote 10) notes, however, that one could argue that Binyan occurs when sealing the cans in the factory. It seems counterintuitive to Rav Averbach that sealing the cans constitutes an act of Soter when one's intention is to facilitate shipment and long-term integrity of the food contents.

Rav Moshe Feinstein (Teshuvot Igrot Moshe O.C. 1:122) wrote a lengthy responsum on this topic. It is interesting to note that Rav Moshe wrote this Teshuva in 1935 when the Soviet police placed him under house arrest because of his service as a community Rabbi. Ironically, this Teshuva explores this issue in great depth, perhaps because of the extra time Rav Moshe had available to concentrate on his writing because of the limitation the Soviet authorities put on his activities outside the home (note Shemot 1:12, which tells us that the more they try to hurt us, the more we flourish).

Rav Moshe writes that it is theoretically permissible to open cans that people customarily discard after emptying their contents. He believes that opening these cans is analogous to cracking open a nut or peeling a banana (see Shulchan Aruch O.C.314:8). Rav Moshe argues that even Tosafot, Rosh, and Shulchan Aruch would permit opening this type of can, since there is no concern for fashioning an opening. However, Rav Moshe writes that it is forbidden to open those cans that some people use after emptying its contents. Regarding these cans there is concern that one will create a functional opening. Rav Moshe also believes that when one intends to use a can after emptying its food contents, he creates a Kli. Rav Moshe believes that the can is not a Kli because people intend to use it only once. Only when one intends to reuse a can does it attain the status of a Kli.

These assertions also have ramifications for the Halachot pertaining to Tevilat Keilim. Rav Moshe (Teshuvot Igrot Moshe Yoreh Deah 3:23) rules that Tevilat Keilim is not required for disposable items, since they do not enjoy the status of a Kli. Similarly, one who wishes to fill a Snapple bottle with water need not immerse the glass in a Mikvah before drinking the water based on these principles that Rav Moshe outlines. The Snapple bottle is disposable and is not regarded as a Kli. When a Jew decides to use the empty Snapple bottle as a water container, he has upgraded the bottle to a Kli status. It is considered as if the Jew created the Kli and therefore the bottle does not require Tevilah according to Rav Feinstein (Teshuvot Igrot Moshe Yoreh Deah 2:40; but others disagree, see Teshuvot Seridei Eish 2: Y.D. 75).

Rav Moshe writes that in practice one should not even open cans that people customarily discard. He expresses concern that people who are not learned will be unable to grasp the distinction between cans that we may open and those we may not. He cites Shabbat 139, where the Gemara forbids certain permissible activities for communities where the people are not scholars, as a precedent for this approach. Rav Moshe notes the lack of Torah scholarship and the prevalence of Chillul Shabbat in our generation. Hence, he refrains from issuing a lenient ruling that he feels will ultimately lead to Chillul Shabbat.

My student Mashiach Farzanfar notes that Rav Moshe's concern is particularly relevant today when people fill empty cans with garbage in order to save space in the garbage can. Since one intends to use the can as a receptacle for garbage after emptying its food contents, it seems that he violates a biblical prohibition of creating a Kli when opening a can.

Nevertheless, Rav Moshe permits asking a non-Jew to open a can that people customarily discard after use in case of great need. It is for this reason, Rav Moshe writes (Teshuvot Igrot Moshe O.C. 5:21:24), that such cans are not Muktzeh.

We should note that Rav Moshe Feinstein (Teshuvot Igrot Moshe O.C. 3:76) and Rav Moshe Soloveitchik (cited in Nefesh Harav p.189) forbade Yom Tov Sheini burials in America due to concern that this practice will lead to violations of Hilchot Yom Tov in this country due to the low level of Torah scholarship among the broader Jewish community. Chassidim continue to practice burial on Yom Tov Sheini in this country.

CONCLUSION

There is a rich debate whether one may open cans on Shabbat. Almost all poskim agree that the best policy is to survey the situation at home on Erev Shabbat and open any cans that one might need on Shabbat. Next week we will discuss the issues of opening various containers on Shabbat.

Candle lighting (Melbourne) Kedoshim 10/5/24 3 lyar 5784 5.05pm/6.04pm