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SHMINI ATZERES 5786

Alone and in Love

ELANA MIZRAHI (Chabad.org)

It's the middle of the night. All the children are sound asleep (at last!). There's peaceful quiet in my home. The phones are turned off. I have no errands to make, no dishes to wash, no clothes to clean or meals to prepare. No clients. No distractions. I'm sitting on the couch with my baby in my arms. It's her and me, alone. Alone. It's so precious, these moments, when it's just the two of us. She nurses and cuddles, and I kiss her pudgy cheeks. Such sweetness, these moments in the middle of the night, when we are alone.

Throughout the day, I sit with her to nurse, but there are always distractions and so much to do. My attention disperses in a thousand directions. Come the middle of the night, and once again my entire being is focused on her. We're alone, and I'm in love.

It's not just the baby. I have these moments when I take walks alone with my older children or tell a story to a younger one. One on one, when I make sure to turn everything off so that I can just focus and be present with the child in front of me. It's hard work nowadays, isn't it? To turn everything off and just be present with one. To have a conversation with your spouse or a friend over a cup of coffee, sitting down, without any distractions. To go for a walk and be disconnected. Yes, it's hard nowadays to be alone with anyone and genuinely feel, "I'm totally focused on you." Still, you make the effort and find that special time. It can be done.

I look down again at her, my baby. She looks up at me, coos and smiles. I take delight in these precious middle-of-the-night moments when it's just her and me. We're alone, and I'm in love.

When the Holy Temple stood during the holiday of Sukkot, a special sacrifice was brought as an offering. The Torah instructs: "And you shall offer ... thirteen oxen ... and on the second day, twelve oxen ... and on the third day, eleven oxen ... " (Bamidbar 29: 12, 17, 20) for a total of 70 oxen corresponding to the 70 nations of the world. As Sukkot concludes, Shemini Atzeret, a festival in and of itself, begins. The sages explain (Rashi on Bamidbar 29:35) that atzeret is a term of affection, as would be used by a father who, when his sons were leaving his home, tells them, "Your departure is difficult for me. Put it off for another day." One more day, just for them to be together, to be alone together.

On Passover and Shavuot, the additional sacrifices offered for the holiday included two oxen, and on Sukkot, as described, many oxen were brought. On Shemini Atzeret, however, the additional sacrifice included only a single ox.

Why is this?

One more day, just to be alone and together

Our sages explain that the sole ox with a parable:

There was a king who made a feast lasting for seven days to which he invited all of the country's inhabitants. When the seven days of feasting were concluded, he turned to his close associate and said, "We have given the citizens that which is due them. Let us now celebrate together, you and I, with whatever can be found—a portion of meat, or of fish or a vegetable." This is what G-d told Israel: "On the eighth day, it shall be an assembly for you." Celebrate with whatever can be found, with a single ox. (Bamidbar Rabbah)

For me, Shemini Atzeret is like the middle of the night when I'm alone with my baby. We've already spent so much time together on the holidays of Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur and Sukkot in prayer and connecting to G-d. But even with all the time and "doing," G-d says, "Don't leave yet. Let's be together a bit more."

It's the holiday of one more day. We're alone with G-d, and G-d tells us: "Israel, with you, I'm in love."

Getting Real

RABBI NAFTALI SILBERBERG (Chabad.org)

Here's another area where Jewish and secular values greatly differ: holidays. Jewish life and "secular" life both consist of workdays and holidays. But beyond the semantic relationship, Jewish holidays and secular holidays have very little in common.

On the secular calendar, vacation days are dispersed throughout the year to provide a respite from the drudgery of the daily work routine. In fact, most people work for their vacations: their job is merely a means towards an end, the end being the relaxation and enjoyment on the day when one is not in the office. Granted, the primary reason for working is to generate income to pay the basic bills and make ends meet, but it's the holiday vacation plans which provide the added incentive to volunteer for the overtime shift. And unless you are a certified workaholic, the office will not be on your mind when you are enjoying your family barbeque, sunset over the Pacific, or the slopes in Aspen. The office has served its purpose; now it's time to enjoy the reward!

Jewish holidays, on the other hand, do not populate the Jewish calendar to provide for relaxation and vacation from Jewish everyday life. In fact, Jewish holidays are characterized by intensification in religious activity, added hours spent in the Jewish office (aka: synagogue), and multitudes of seasonal rituals and traditions. Rather, the holidays are beacons of light interspersed through the year, each one intended to illuminate the rest of the Jewish "work year" with its unique shade of spiritual light and inspiration.

In short: in the business world people work in order to be able to holiday; in the Jewish world, we holiday in order to be able to work!

G-d is more interested in our mundane workdays than our extra-curricular holiday antics. We can be portraits of piety when clad in a kittel (long white robe) swaying to the High Holiday prayers, braving the elements to eat in the sukkah, or ecstatically dancing on Simchat Torah — but is this the real you? It is our daily routine which truly reflects who we are, not our occasional inspired outbursts of holiday holiness.

And G-d so desperately wants to be part of our real life — not just part of our holiday plans. So He gives us holidays, hoping that during these moments of inspiration we will allow Him to enter our hearts - and hoping that we won't evict Him during the havdallah ceremony which follows the holiday.

Will we?

I'm a Jew and I'm Proud

RABBI LEVI AVTZON (Chabad.org)

The cycle has come to an end. In the past year, as every year, we read and were inspired by the Torah—the story of our nation.

We were awed by Adam (how awesome to be created by G-d and have the world for yourself), sympathized with Noah (poor guy, saw the whole world go down), were impressed with Abraham (first thrown into the furnace, then almost sacrificed his son), were caught up in the sibling rivalry between Joseph and his brothers, and held our breaths at the breathtaking saga of the Exodus.

And then, from when Moshe received the Torah on Mount Sinai until his final departure on Mount Nebo, we experienced the tumultuous forty-year journey through the desert. Laws, mistakes, complaints, smashing of the tablets, spies, plagues and the entire gamut of the nail-biting drama which our drama-addicted ancestors lived through on their historic trek from the pyramids to the land of Israel. The Torah reading every Shabbat morning was quite an entertaining and educational experience.

And as we start all over again, we hold our breath, aware of the journey to come. What lessons, insights, and inspiration will we derive from our patriarchs and matriarchs next time around?

But before we roll back the Torah from the Jordan River to 2,500 years earlier, let us reflect for a moment on Moshe's final words, uttered just before he went up to the mountain and was buried by G-d. Let his last words linger in our hearts:

"Fortunate are you, O Israel..."

What wonderful parting words. Moshe was proclaiming to the Jew of Israel and of Babylonia, the Jew of Tunisia and Spain, of France, Poland, and America:

"My beloved nation and my fellow Jews, how lucky, how fortunate you are. How wonderful it is to be a Jew."

No, being a Jew is not an "eternal damnation."

No, it's not hard to be a Jew; nor is it a burden you must carry.

No, secularism, assimilation, and self-hate are not the way for a Jew.

Rather...

Yes, you are lucky to be Jewish!

Yes, although you may live through hell on earth for the next three millennia, you should – and will – always hold your head high!

Yes, being Jewish is a gift, a cause for joy, a piece of heaven.

Yes, Torah and mitzvot are a blessing. They connect us to our Creator, and transform this world into a better place for all mankind.

Dear friend:

As the month of Tishrei comes to a close and we look back on the most powerful month of the year – accepting G-d's sovereignty on Rosh Hashanah, being forgiven on Yom Kippur, uniting with G-d and our fellow Jews on Sukkot, dancing our souls and soles out on Simchat Torah – it is now the time to declare our pride in our Jewishness.

I am a Jew and I'm proud.

ACHIEVEMENT

RABBI BEREL WEIN (Rabbiwein.com)

Human frailty and mortality is a given factor in all of our lives. How to achieve blessing and eternity in spite of that frailty and mortality is the challenge that Jewish life and observance thrusts before us. At one and the same time we realize our mortality and we strive to achieve immortality.

This seeming paradox lies at the heart of all Jewish life and strivings. The solemnity and even foreboding that Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur engender within us is replaced by the joy of Succot and Simchat Torah. The gravity has not disappeared; it simply has been transformed by the observances of the commandments of the Succot holiday into meaningful optimism and confidence that mortal beings can truly achieve immortality and be influential and remembered long after their physical departure from this world.

Perhaps that is the main lesson of the parsha of Zot Habracha itself – Moshe the mortal human being is no longer but Moshe the immortal leader and inspiration of Israel lives on eternally in the hearts and minds of his people.

The food and drink of Simchat Torah are meant to be only aids to enhance our spirit of accomplishment and inner delight. Like Purim, Simchat Torah allows our bodies to partake freely of food and drink. But also like Purim, Simchat Torah is predicated upon an inner feeling of joy, of uplifted spirit and renewed dedication that create within us the sense of commitment and tenacity that characterizes Jewish life, individually and nationally. Alcoholic intoxication is unnecessary and even counter productive to creating this sense of inner joy and dedication. The rabbis characterized the service of G-d as being able to be realized through “simcha shel mitzvah” – the inner joy that our soul experiences when doing a good deed and fulfilling one of G-d’s commandments. It is this attitude towards the service of G-d that makes Simchat Torah the joyous holiday that it is.

We are aware of all of the positive things in life that we have accomplished and all of the myriad opportunities to continue to do so in the future. We sense that in these acts of goodness and Torah observances we are punching our ticket to immortality, to being remembered and appreciated. There can be no greater joy in a person's life than to experience this feeling of holy importance and positive achievement. And it is this very idea that Simchat Torah and Zot Habracha represent to the fullest.

Self-Transformation Through Torah

RABBI AVRAHAM KOVEL (Aish.com)

The greatest threat to Jewish survival isn't found in Gaza tunnels or Iranian nuclear facilities. It's found in our own homes, synagogues, and communities. Throughout history, this enemy has proven more destructive than any external force—and it's entirely within our control to defeat.

In this week's Torah portion, the final portion of the Torah, we find a profound revelation about the relationship between G-d and the Jewish people. "Then [G-d] became King in Jeshurun (Israel), when the heads of the people assembled, the tribes of Israel together" (33:5). G-d becomes King amongst Israel specifically when the leaders assemble and the tribes come together. The revolutionary insight: G-d's kingship depends on Jewish unity. The Daas Zekenim, a 12th century commentary comprised of the disciples of Rashi, explains:

"When the Jewish people are truly united and relate to one another as true brothers, then G-d is truly King over them. When they quarrel among themselves, G-d cannot truly be seen as being their King."

CROWNING THE KING OF KINGS

Why does G-d's kingship depend on our unity?

The Vilna Gaon distinguishes between two Hebrew terms for leadership: Moshel and Melech. A Moshel rules by force, imposing his will on the nation, while a Melech derives authority from the willing acceptance of the people. Throughout the Torah, G-d makes it clear that He seeks to be recognized as a Melech rather than a Moshel - "I have set before you life and death, blessing and curse; therefore choose life" (Devarim 30:19).

This distinction reveals why unity matters to G-d's kingship. If only half the nation accepts G-d as King, then G-d can only be half a Melech. Further, even

when we all acknowledge G-d as our King, if we lack respect for one another, His Kingship is fractured. How can we claim to serve the same King while treating His other subjects with contempt?

A true king's authority stems from the people's unified acceptance of His will, and their ability to live and work together to carry out that will. The Midrash (Sifri 346) on our verse explains this concept with a powerful metaphor: Picture two ships bound together, supporting a magnificent palace. As long as the ships remain connected, the palace stands firm. But if they drift apart, the palace cannot stand. So it is with the Jewish people - when we maintain our bonds of unity, we create a foundation for G-d's presence in our world.

But there's another crucial dimension to this divine kingship: when we unite to crown G-d as our King, we activate His divine protection. The Ramban explains that when Israel fully accepts divine sovereignty, "their lives are not governed by nature at all... for G-d will bless their bread and their water and remove illness from their midst." When we stand united under G-d's sovereignty, we access a protection that operates beyond the normal rules of history and politics.

TOGETHER WE STAND, DIVIDED WE FALL

Unity and division have shaped Jewish history with striking consistency.

What preceded the giving of the Torah at Mount Sinai? The Torah describes the Jewish people's encampment using the singular form ויחן (vayichan) rather than the plural ויחנו (vayachanu). The Talmud (Shabbos 88A) explains that their singular encampment meant they came to receive the Torah "like one person with one heart." In this instance, unity led to the greatest Divine revelation in history.

During the Second Temple period, despite careful observance of Torah law, internal strife led to catastrophe. The Talmud records how one Jew's public embarrassment of his fellow, with no protest from the generation's leaders, ultimately led to the Roman siege and destruction.⁸

In the story of Purim, Haman understood this principle all too well. When convincing Achashverosh of the Jews' vulnerability, he described them as "scattered and separate among all the nations" (Esther 3:8). Rabbi Shlomo Alkabetz explains that "scattered" referred to their geographic dispersion, but "separate" described their internal discord and indifference. Haman recognized that a divided Jewish nation would be unable to access divine protection and plotted their destruction accordingly. Queen Esther's response was telling: she instructed Mordechai to "Go, assemble all the Jews"—through united fasting and prayer, G-d restored His protection, turning what would have been our darkest hour into a time of light and celebration.

Even in recent decades, this pattern continued. In 1987, the late Rabbi Nachman Bulman—a prominent American Orthodox rabbi and educator—witnessed violent clashes between religious and secular Jews in Jerusalem. He warned prophetically: "We are surrounded by tens of millions of Arabs, yet they remain docile. This peace is only due to brotherhood amongst Jews. The day a Jew raises a fist against another Jew, all our protection will be lost." A week later, the first Intifada erupted.

Most recently, the devastating Hamas attack of October 7th, 2023 struck during a period of intense internal division over judicial reform—a conflict that had brought Israel to the brink of civil war. Yet this tragic hour sparked an extraordinary resurgence of unity across political and religious divides. Since achieving this renewed solidarity, Israel has systematically dismantled its enemies: eliminating Hamas and Hezbollah's leadership, toppling Iran's proxy network, and destroying much of Iran's military infrastructure. While these wars did cost Israeli lives, Israel's achievements and protection of its soldiers and civilians exceeded military experts' predictions by many orders of magnitude.

The pattern is unmistakable, and the Midrash beautifully illustrates the principle of divine protection through unity:

"Picture a man who had a bundle of reeds. One reed, he can break easily, but a bundle of them together, he cannot break. So too, the Jewish people. When they are united, no nation or people can harm them, but when they are divided, they can be destroyed, one by one." (Vayikra Rabba 26:2)

STANDING UNITED TODAY

Today, as antisemitism resurges worldwide, unity becomes more crucial than ever. We might not support every decision of Israel's government. We might disagree with fellow Jews on matters of politics or religious practice. We might even strongly dislike certain members of our extended Jewish family. But fundamental brotherhood must take precedence if we hope to ward off external threats.

This means making concrete choices: Defending fellow Jews publicly when they're attacked, even if we disagree with them privately. Supporting Jewish institutions and Israel, even when we question specific policies. Refusing to amplify Jewish voices that delegitimize other Jews or Israel. Choosing Jewish solidarity over political partisanship when our people face existential threats.

The pattern of history is clear: when we stand united, we access divine protection that defies all odds. When we fracture, we revert to the natural vulnerabilities of a tiny nation surrounded by its enemies.

In these challenging times, let us choose to be 'like one person with one heart.' For when we stand together as one nation, we stand with the King Himself. And no force can penetrate the 'Iron Dome' of the King of kings.

WHY ISRAEL?

AVROHOM YAAKOV

In relation to the blessings given to the tribe of Yosef, Moshe concludes:

“To his firstborn ox is [given] glory. His horns are the horns of a re'em. With them, he will gore peoples together [throughout all] the ends of the earth these are the myriads of Ephraim, and these are the thousands of Manasseh.” (33:17)

On the words “the ends of the earth”, Rashi comments that this refers to the thirty-one kings whom Yehoshua bin Nun (a descendant of Yosef) conquered. Is it possible that they were all of the land of Israel?

He answers:

“There was no king or ruler who did not acquire for himself a palace and territory in the land of Israel because it was so prized by all of them (Sifrei Devarim 353:12).”

LOOKING AT WORLD EVENTS, it never ceases to amaze why almost every country and every nation is so obsessed with events in Israel? While many conflicts take place around the world, none fires up the protesters in the same way.

We have the answer spanning back millennia – all nations from time immemorial claimed some ownership in the land of Israel. This proprietorship has meant that secretly all wish to take possession of that which their ancestors owned. It is a yearning that they probably don't even understand.

Four Giants

RABBI JAY KELMAN (Torahinmotion.org)

“And Moshe was one hundred and twenty years when he died” (Devarim 34:7). It is a beautiful, if somewhat unrealistic, custom to offer blessings to those celebrating a birthday that they should live to be 120. While this quantity of life is (usually) unrealistic, the blessing to live to 120 relates not only to quantity, but to the quality of life; “his eyesight did not diminish and his strength did not wane” (ibid).

The Midrash notes that three other giants of Jewish history also lived to be 120; Hillel the Elder, Rabbi Yochanan ben Zackai, and Rabbi Akiva. And like Moshe, the Midrash claims that they, too, “gave sustenance to the Jewish people for forty years”, forty being the number representing transformation. These four are the transformative figures of Jewish history. It takes forty days for foetus to develop, the flood lasted forty days, Moshe spent forty days receiving the Torah, and we wandered for forty years in the desert, fulfilling G-d's promise to Abraham that we would be strangers in a land for four hundred years.

Not surprisingly, the Midrash divides the lives of these four heroes into three periods of forty years, with the culmination being their service to the Jewish people for forty years. Moshe, the Midrash notes, spent forty years in Egypt, forty in Midian, and forty “sustaining the people”. Rabbi Akiva became interested in Torah at the age of forty, and Hillel arrived in Israel from Bavel at forty.

The message of the Midrash is not to convey their age at death, but to link these four great heroes of Jewish history. Each led at a time of great historical crisis, and they literally “sustained (parnesh) the Jewish people for forty years” (Sifri 36:7). Without their efforts, there would have been no Jewish history. Moshe not only redeemed the people as they came perilously close to total assimilation—something the Midrash claims did indeed happen in the case of at least 80% of the people—he spared them from the destruction due them for their sinning. Hillel established the “house” (Beit Hillel) that set up the contours of Jewish law. He was extolled for his great humility like Moshe, and had an uncanny ability to relate to all. His student, Rav Yochanan ben Zackai, perhaps single-handedly saved the Jewish people by not attempting to save Jerusalem, affording the opportunity to rebuild Judaism from the ground up in Yavne. With the Temple lost, many groups of Jews disappeared; and if not for Rav Yochanan's understanding that the Temple is only a means to an end, we would not be here today.

While Rav Yochanan ben Zackai saved Judaism, it was Rabbi Akiva who developed it. It was to his Beit Midrash that Moshe was “transported” at Sinai—to witness Rabbi Akiva “expound on every thistle and thistle, mountains and mountains of Jewish law” (Menachot 29b). His willingness to sacrifice his life in order to worship G-d with all his soul is the (tragic) model that was emulated by many. It is he and his students who are the primary teachers of the Mishnah and halacha.

Anthropologists generally divide life into three stages; growth, maturity and decline. Yet that is true in the physical realm only. If one is immersed in “sustaining the Jewish people”, something each of us can do in some form or another, the legacy we leave for our people will endure for all time.

Staying Young

RABBI JONATHAN SACKS (Chabad.org)

Moshe did not fade. That is the accolade the Torah gives him at the end of his long and eventful life:

Moshe was a hundred and twenty years old when he died, yet his eyes were undimmed and his natural force unabated. (34:7)

Somehow Moshe defied the law of entropy that states that all systems lose energy over time. So do people, especially leaders. The kind of leadership Moshe undertook – adaptive, getting people to change, persuading them to cease to think and feel like slaves and instead embrace the responsibilities of freedom – is stressful and exhausting. There were times when Moshe came close to burnout and despair. What then was the secret of the undiminished energy of his last years?

The Torah suggests the answer in the very words in which it describes the

phenomenon. I used to think that “his eyes were undimmed” and “his natural force unabated” were simply two descriptions, until it dawned on me that the first was an explanation of the second. Why was his energy unabated? Because his eyes were undimmed. He never lost the vision and high ideals of his youth. He was as passionate at the end as he was at the beginning. His commitment to justice, compassion, liberty and responsibility was unyielding, despite the many disappointments of his forty years as a leader.

The moral is clear: If you want to stay young, never compromise your ideals. I still remember, as clearly as if it happened yesterday, a bruising experience I had almost forty years ago as I was starting my studies to become a rabbi. Whenever a congregation needed someone to give a sermon or take a service – their own rabbi was ill, or taking a holiday – I volunteered. It was often arduous and thankless work. It meant being away from home on Shabbat, preaching to a three-quarters empty synagogue, and more often than not being taken for granted. I once voiced a complaint to the rabbi of one of these communities whose place I had temporarily taken. “So,” he said, “you are an idealist, are you? Well, let's see where that gets you.”

I felt sorry for this sad and embittered man. Perhaps fate had been unkind to him. I never knew why he replied as he did. But somewhere along the road he had accepted defeat. He still went through the motions, but his heart was no longer in what he was doing. Idealism seemed to him an illusion of youth, destined to be shipwrecked on the hard rocks of reality.

My own view was and is that without passion you cannot be a transformative leader. Unless you yourself are inspired you cannot inspire others. Moshe never lost the vision of his first encounter with G-d at the bush that burned but was not consumed. That is how I see Moshe: as the man who burned but was not consumed. So long as that vision stayed with him, as it did until the end of his life, he remained full of energy. You feel that in the sustained power of the book of Devarim, the greatest sequence of speeches in Tanakh.

Ideals are what keep the human spirit alive. They did so under some of the most repressive regimes in history: Stalinist Russia, Communist China. Whenever they catch fire in the human heart, they have the power to energize resistance.

So, the rule is: never compromise on your ideals. If you find one way blocked, seek another way. If you find that one approach fails, there may be another. If your efforts do not meet with success, keep trying. More often than not, success comes just when you are about to believe that you are a failure. So it was with Churchill. So it was with Lincoln. So it was with writers who had their books rejected by publisher after publisher, only to go on to high acclaim. If achievement were easy, we would take no pride in it. Greatness demands persistence. The great leaders never give up. They keep going, inspired by a vision they refuse to lose.

Looking back on his life, Moshe must surely have asked if he had really achieved anything at all. He had led the people for forty years only to be denied the chance of reaching the destination, the promised land itself. He gave them laws they often broke. He performed miracles yet they continued to complain.

We sense his pent up emotions as he said: “You have been rebellious against the L-rd from the day that I knew you,” (9:34) and “For I know how rebellious and stiff-necked you are. If you have been rebellious against the L-rd while I am still alive and with you, how much more will you rebel after I die!” (31:27) Yet Moshe never gave up or compromised on his ideals. That is why, though he died, his words did not die. Physically old, he remained spiritually young.

Cynics are lapsed idealists. They began with great expectations. Then they discover that life is not easy, that things do not go as we hoped they would. Our efforts hit obstacles. Our plans are derailed. We do not receive the recognition or honor we think we deserve. So we retreat into ourselves. We blame others for our failures, and we focus on the failings of others. We tell ourselves we could have done better.

Perhaps we could have done. Why then did we not? Because we gave up. Because, at a certain point in time, we stopped growing. We consoled ourselves for not being great by treating others as small, deriding their efforts and mocking their ideals. That is no way to live. That is a kind of death.

As Chief Rabbi I often visited old age homes, and it was in one of these that I met Florence. She was 103, going on 104, yet she had about her the air of a young woman. She was bright, eager, full of life. Her eyes shone with a delight-in-being-alive. I asked her for the secret of eternal youth. With a smile she said, “Never be afraid to learn something new.” That was when I discovered that if you are prepared to learn something new, you can be 103 and still young (see Shabbat 30b). If you are not prepared to learn something new, you can be 23 and already old.

Moshe never stopped learning, growing, teaching, leading. In the book of Devarim, delivered at the very end of his life, he rose to an eloquence, a vision, a passion that exceeded anything he had said before. This was a man who never gave up the fight. The Times once interviewed a distinguished member of the Jewish community on his 92nd birthday. The interviewer said, “Most people, when they reach the age of 92, begin to slow down. You seem to be speeding up. Why?” He replied, “When you get to the age of 92, you see the door begin to close. I have so much to do before the door closes that the older I get, the harder I have to work.” That too is a recipe for arichut yamim, a long life that does not fade.

Psalm 92, the song of Shabbat, ends with the words, "Planted in the house of the L-rd, [the righteous] flourish in the courts of our G-d. They still bear fruit in old age, they stay fresh and green, proclaiming, 'The L-rd is upright; he is my Rock, and there is no wickedness in him.'" What is the connection between the righteous bearing fruit in old age, and their belief that "the L-rd is upright"? The righteous do not blame G-d for the evils and suffering of the world. They know that G-d has planted us as physical beings in a physical universe, with all the pain that involves. They know it is up to us to do the good we can and encourage others to do more. They accept responsibility, knowing that for all the trials and torments of human existence, it is still the greatest privilege there is. That is why they bear fruit in old age. They keep the ideals of their youth.

Never compromise your ideals. Never give in to defeat or despair. Never stop journeying merely because the way is long and hard. It always is. Moshe's eyes were undimmed. He did not lose the vision that made him, as a young man, a fighter for justice. He did not become a cynic. He did not become embittered or sad, though he had sufficient reason to be. He knew there were things he would not live to achieve, so he taught the next generation how to achieve them. The result was that his natural energy was unabated. His body was old but his mind and soul stayed young. Moshe, mortal, achieved immortality, and so, by following in his footsteps, can we. The good we do lives on. The blessings we bring into the lives of others never die.

G-d Wants Our Hearts

SARAH MADDALI (Aish.com)

This is the last portion of the Torah. The very last word is 'Yisrael'. The last letter, thus being the Hebrew letter 'Lamed'. The first letter commences with the Hebrew letter 'Beis' comprising the Hebrew word 'lev', or heart, when you put them together.

Interestingly, it is as if the whole Torah is summed up by 'lev'. What is the purpose of the Torah? It is to be contained in our hearts. G-d tells us again and again throughout the entire Torah that He wants our hearts. (In the last two paragraphs of Shema prayer alone, G-d mentions our hearts five times.) What is it about the heart that is so integral to the entire Torah?

Lesson:

The Torah is not a history book, recounting generations, chronology, and genealogy, nor is it a story book spinning tales of conflict and triumph. Contained within the Torah, from the very first letter to the very last letter, is the heart of the Jewish people, that not only defines who we are, but keeps us alive.

G-d lovingly gave us the Torah as a guidebook how to fulfill our purpose and answer all questions one might have. Why were we created? What is my mission? How do I respond in certain (or every) situation? How do I obtain the most pleasure? How do I figure out who I am and who I can be? How do I fulfil my potential? How do I get to know myself? How can I have deep and meaningful relationships with others? How can I have a relationship with my Creator?

G-d gave us everything. He gave us our lives. He made every detail of us just so – every cell in our body is known and working properly because G-d made it so. As parents, we love our children, but we do not decide anything about them. We have them and love them because they are ours. But G-d created every single detail of them. Every detail. Their physical features, the spacing of their facial features, their emotional make-up, their strengths and talents, their weaknesses, etc. G-d created all of us out of love for us. He created us and gives us life for our pleasure and benefit.

But how do we know how to respond? What to do? G-d gives us the Torah to tell us. G-d wants a relationship with us. Sometimes it's hard to imagine that the Creator of the World cares about little old me, but He created you because He loves you! Otherwise we wouldn't be here. He wants us! He loves us! He tells us again and again that He wants a relationship with us – and that takes heart.

Not the type of relationship that we just do things out of rote. Ok, G-d, I do mitzvot, commandments, isn't that enough? No! G-d wants our hearts! He wants us to actually be in a relationship where we feel it. We don't want a child to just follow rules because a parent said, but not care about the parent. We want our children to trust us and know and feel that we love them and that's why we give them rules. We want them to love us because we love them.

G-d is the same way. He loves us and thus wants us to love Him. G-d doesn't want to just throw a bunch of rules at us and expect us to blindly follow them like robots. G-d gives us the Torah out of love for us for our benefit. When we are able to truly feel that – to hold the Torah in our hearts – then we fulfill the purpose of the giving of the Torah, please G-d.

The next level is to feel it with our body. Often, things start high and get lower, from the head and then we have to hammer it down to our hearts. But once our hearts get it, we can work on having it be incorporated into every cell of our body. Even the lowest parts of ourselves. Yaakov – whose other name is Israel, and the last word of the Torah, is derived from the word 'heel'. Maybe he was able to incorporate and synthesize the point of the Torah and Judaism into his entire being – that even his lowliest parts, his heels, were radiating with holiness. This is the level. To permeate every fiber of our being – first with our head, next our hearts, and then our body so it can pulsate with the knowledge and feeling that there is nothing beyond G-d, that the Creator loves me, cares about me, and wants a relationship with me.

News & Views

'GLORY TO HAMAS': PRO-HAMAS GRAFFITI in Sydney, Melbourne

REUTERS (Jpost.com 7-10-25)

Australia's most populous state criticized a pro-Palestinian group's plan to stage a protest event in Sydney on Tuesday, the second anniversary of the attacks by terrorist group Hamas that killed 1,200 Israelis and triggered a deadly war in Gaza.

The Stand for Palestine Australia group is planning a 'glory to our martyrs' event on Tuesday evening in Sydney's Bankstown suburb, drawing condemnation from Chris Minns, the premier of the state of New South Wales, which includes Sydney.

"Terrible timing, shockingly insensitive," Minns told radio station 2GB.

"We understand that there is concern about innocent Palestinian civilians in Gaza, but to do it ... on 7th, seems like they are glorifying the actions of these Hamas terrorists, and not the circumstance of those that are living in Gaza."

Hamas also took some 251 people hostage in the attacks, with 20 thought to still be alive in Gaza.

Palestinian activist lawyer Ramia Abdo Sultan, who is scheduled to speak at the event, said in a video on the group's Instagram account that Palestinians had been silenced and were not allowed to mourn or grieve their loved ones.

"Our own prime minister in Australia has decided to completely disregard the thousands of Palestinians that have died over the past two years," she said.

Pro-Palestine protests have been happening in both Sydney and Melbourne almost every weekend, with some attended by thousands.

A rally is planned at the Sydney Opera House on Sunday, to which the Executive Council of Australian Jewry said it would object. Police had approached the court to stop the protest citing safety reasons.

Prime Minister Anthony Albanese has said any protest events on October 7, the deadliest day for Jews since the Holocaust, would undermine the support for the "Palestinian cause."

His center-left government, alongside Canada and Britain, last month formally recognized the State of Palestine as part of an effort to push for a two-state solution.

Since the Israel-Gaza war began in October 2023, Australian homes, schools, synagogues, and vehicles have been targeted in antisemitic vandalism and arson, while Islamophobic incidents have also surged.

On Tuesday, a 'Glory to Hamas' message was spotted on a billboard and 'Oct 7, Do it Again' messages were painted on at least two walls in Melbourne. Albanese called the billboard message an "abhorrent" act and "terrorist propaganda."

NEW ZEALAND ATTACK

A man was charged on Tuesday in neighboring New Zealand after a window at the home of Foreign Minister Winston Peters was smashed with a crowbar, though police did not specify the motive behind the attack.

Speaking in parliament on Tuesday about the October 7 attacks, Peters said the violent targeting of private homes by some protesters was "a disgrace."

"It has caused distress to our families and disturbed the peace of our neighbors. Means such as these corrupt the protesters' ends, such as they are."

Peters has come under pressure from protest groups and opposition parties after he announced New Zealand would not be following Australia in recognizing the state of Palestine.

AFTER MANCHESTER, THERE CAN BE NO DOUBT

BRENDAN O'NEILL (Spiked-online.com 4-10-25)

There were two horrifying events in England on Thursday. The first was the fascistic murder of two Jews at a synagogue in Manchester. The second were the anti-Israel protests that swept big cities before the bodies of our two Jewish countrymen were even cold. 'From the river to the sea!', the Israelophobic mob hollered in the deathly wake of the barbarous assault at Heaton Park. Two dead Jews were not enough, it seems – these people desire the violent erasure of the entire Jewish nation.

We need to grapple with just how sick it was, how heartless, for mobs in London, Edinburgh and Manchester itself to rain hatred on the Jewish State mere hours after two Jews were murdered. This was the salt of Israelophobia rubbed in the wound of anti-Semitism. 'I hate Jews', that vile knifeman essentially said. 'We hate the Jews' homeland', followed up the keffiyeh creeps on our streets. As Jews in England were feeling insecure, these wailing activists were rallying for the destruction of the one, tiny patch of land that promises Jews security. 'There's nowhere to run' – that was the implicit and horrific cry of the Israel-hate that followed the Jew-murder.

But there was more to the marches than heartlessness – they were nothing less than a reverse Cable Street. On 4 October 1936 – today is the 89th anniversary – the radical left rallied to the defence of London's Jews from the menace of fascism, then of the European rather than Islamist variety. They stood with Jewish EastEnders against the threat of Oswald Mosley and his blackshirts. Fast forward 89 years and now the left responds to violent Jew hatred not by siding with Jewish people but by raging against the Jewish nation. Let us speak plainly: in the wake of the terroristic murder of

Jews on English soil in 2025, the left hit the streets to echo the vile prejudices of the Oswald Mosley in this situation – knifeman Jihad Al-Shamie. They have officially crossed the barricade of Cable Street. They are now on the other side.

The orgy of Israelophobia that followed the slaughter at the synagogue made it crystal clear: hatred for the Jewish State is a close cousin of hatred for Jewish people. In fact they are spiritual siblings. That these two frothing ideologies exist in tandem in modern Britain is not a coincidence, as the anti-Israel left would have us believe. It is not an accident that Britain is overrun with both ‘respectable’ loathing for the world’s only Jewish nation and ‘unrespectable’ animus for the Jewish people. The one feeds the other. Israelophobia is the rotten soil in which Jew hatred festers and grows. And it’s time more of us said so.

A wave of defensiveness swirled through left-wing and liberal circles in the UK following the racist savagery at Heaton Park. Influential ‘progressives’ made perfunctory condemnations of the attack – making sure to mention the scourge of ‘Islamophobia’ while they were at it – but then they got down to their real business. Don’t blame this horror on us, they essentially said. We campaign against a state, not a people. Our fury is reserved for a ‘genocidal entity’, not any ethnic or religious group. We’re anti-Israel, not anti-Jewish.

Enjoying spiked?

Social media were awash with desperate efforts to draw a line between anti-Israel agitation and anti-Jewish hatred. ‘Conflating protests against the genocide in Gaza’ with ‘an anti-Semitic attack’ is ‘deeply irresponsible’, said Zack Polanski of the UK Green Party. There is no comparison between anti-Semitism and opposing ‘a foreign state which a consensus of genocide scholars... concluded is committing a genocide’, said Owen Jones. The mob of Israel-bashers that swarmed Liverpool Street Station and other sites across the UK clearly thought likewise – that their curiously intense hatred for one nation had nothing to do with the mindset behind the horrors at Heaton Park just a few hours earlier.

I’ve never bought into the idea that you can neatly separate the activist class’s myopic dread of the Jewish State from the bubbling up in our society of bigotry against the Jewish people. After Manchester I accept it even less. This moment calls for frankness. The stakes are too high for linguistic tiptoeing around the sicknesses in our society. The bottom line is this: if you spend every hour of every day obsessing over the unconscionable wickedness of the Jewish nation, if you ceaselessly damn Zionism as the cruellest ideology on Earth, then you have no right to come over all coy and shocked when Jews are targeted with invective and even violence. You’re like a bull in a china shop asking: ‘What happened to all these plates?’

Anti-Zionism is anti-Semitism. It’s the main form Jew hatred takes in the Western world in the 21st century. It is the uncanny likeness this ancient hatred wears in these supposedly post-racist times. You expect me to believe it is purely by chance that the activist class now says about the Jewish State all the things that fascist scum once said about the Jewish people? Israel, they say, is uniquely murderous. It’s a bloodletting entity. It derives pleasure from the murder of children. It wields staggering levels of global power. It has even mighty states eating from the palm of its blood-stained hand. Zero out of 10 for originality – every one of these libels was feverishly issued against the Jewish people before you co-opted them for your campaign of demonisation against the Jewish State.

Consider the sheer fixation with Israel. I have opposed wars fought by America, Britain, France, Turkey, Russia and Rwanda, but not once did any of those states occupy my every waking thought. Not once did I call for their violent obliteration from the family of nations. Never did I obsessively visit campuses, write articles, make videos and stand on street corners to say not only that ‘Turkey is wrong to bomb the Kurds’ but also that ‘Turkey is the most demonic, bloodthirsty entity in existence and the whole of humanity is fucking doomed until this vile so-called “country” has been wiped from the face of the Earth’. You know why I didn’t say that? Because I am not racist.

Here is the key commonality between anti-Zionism and anti-Semitism – both ideologies hold some Jewish thing, whether the Jewish nation or the Jewish people, to be the true source of evil in the world. That is always what distinguished anti-Semitism from other forms of racism – the fact its fuel was not merely prejudice and bigotry but also a conspiratorial derangement that sees the Jews as the corrupters of the Earth, the spoilers of men’s souls. And it is what now distinguishes anti-Zionism from politics, from the realm of reasoned discourse that the followers of this ideology falsely claim to inhabit – it, too, finds a Jewish phenomenon, the Jewish State, guilty of manifesting evil, of sullyng our species, of letting the blood of innocents and warping the minds of Westerners. It, too, sees ‘the Jew thing’ as the poison in the well of humanity.

To my mind, anti-Zionism is like a laundering scam. It is the passably political belief system that allows certain sections of society to launder their fear of Jews and present it as ‘criticism of Israel’. From England’s upper classes, who’ve long been iffy about Jews, to radical Islamists, who openly hate Jews, anti-Zionism has become the cloak under which they might spirit their Jew suspicion into everyday life. From far-right filth to leftists drunk on the old Socialism of Fools, anti-Zionism is a mask for the lingering, latent belief that there is something noxious, something unholy, about Jews.

To sow so much rancour for the Jewish nation and then reach for the smelling salts when Jews are demonised – no. We aren’t having it anymore.

The reason ‘Zios’ – Jews – are getting it in the neck is because you have polluted public life with the fanatical, chauvinistic belief that Zionism is evil and everyone who supports it is evil. That Israel is uniquely cruel and everyone who backs it is cruel. That the Jewish State is the most despicable state, so much so that it deserves to be destroyed, ‘from the river to the sea’. Only Jihad Al-Shamie is responsible for the barbarism at Heaton Park. But here’s what you are responsible for: rebirthing in pseudo-political language the medieval derangement about evil Jews. After Manchester, I, for one, am devoted to the complete defeat of anti-Zionism.

BRITAIN’S CHIEF RABBI TARGETED IN ANTISEMITIC CAMPAIGN

FERN SIDMAN (TJVnews.com 5-10-25)

The atmosphere of grief and fear that has gripped Britain’s Jewish community following the Yom Kippur massacre at Manchester’s Heaton Park Synagogue has been further poisoned by a new wave of online antisemitism targeting the country’s most senior Jewish leader. Britain’s Chief Rabbi, Sir Ephraim Mirvis, has become the latest victim of an orchestrated smear campaign on social media, with senior physicians and public figures deploying grotesque rhetoric that community leaders warn risks normalizing violence against Jews.

According to a report that appeared on Sunday at Israel National News (INN), the torrent of hatred erupted within hours of the terrorist assault in Manchester, where two worshippers were murdered and four others severely injured by a radical Islamist assailant. Instead of restraint, a segment of Britain’s professional elite appeared to indulge in conspiracy theories and vilification of Jewish leadership, reinforcing the sense of insecurity already felt by British Jews.

The Daily Mail first reported that Dr. Rahmeh Aladwan, an NHS trauma surgeon already under investigation for prior antisemitic statements, circulated a doctored image of Rabbi Mirvis with the words “Rabbi Genocide” scrawled across his forehead. She described him as “genocidal as ever” and accused the Jewish community at large of “serious extremism.”

As INN underscored in its report, the timing of the post—so soon after the Heaton Park tragedy—intensified the perception among Jewish communities that antisemitism has not only gone mainstream but is openly tolerated within Britain’s institutions.

Dr. Aladwan’s case is not an isolated one. She has a documented history of inflammatory rhetoric, having previously praised Palestinian terrorists as “martyrs” and referred to a London hospital as a “Jewish supremacy cesspit.” Despite these revelations, Israel National News noted that she continues to practice medicine, with the General Medical Council (GMC) reportedly still “reviewing” her status.

Another high-profile physician, consultant neurologist Dr. Rehiana Ali, compounded the situation by taking to social media to claim that Rabbi Mirvis “should be arrested.” Dr. Ali, who was suspended last year for inflammatory online postings but later reinstated by the GMC, appeared to promote conspiracy theories about the Manchester attack itself.

Drawing on the attacker’s name, Jihad Al-Shamie, she implied the incident could be part of an Israeli-orchestrated provocation, linking the individual’s identity to the concept of jihad as a fight against Islam’s enemies.

As the INN report stressed, the effect of such commentary is profoundly corrosive: by casting suspicion on Jewish victims and leadership even in the wake of an unambiguous terror attack, Dr. Ali’s words fuel a narrative that Jews are always to be blamed for violence committed against them.

The antisemitic targeting of Britain’s Chief Rabbi has triggered an avalanche of condemnation. Lord Walney, formerly the government’s adviser on political violence, told reporters that it was “deeply alarming for British Jews to see so many people in senior positions spouting vile antisemitic hate speech.”

Jewish advocacy groups echoed that view. The Campaign Against Antisemitism issued a statement, reported by INN, insisting that regulators must act swiftly against professionals who spread antisemitic tropes. “The torrent of antisemitic hate from senior medics fuels an atmosphere where violence against Jews is seen as acceptable,” the group warned.

Alex Hearn of Labour Against Antisemitism was even more blunt, saying that the weekend’s protests in London and Manchester, which featured demonstrators waving swastikas and chanting for the “dismantling of the Zionist state,” revealed “the true face of this movement.” The use of Nazi symbols, he said, was nothing less than “grotesque and racist.”

While Jewish leaders struggled to contain the impact of inflammatory rhetoric from professionals, demonstrations across Britain intensified the sense of siege. Protesters in both Manchester and London ignored appeals for restraint in the aftermath of the synagogue killings. Instead, they brandished swastikas, carried placards accusing Jews of genocide, and shouted slogans demanding the destruction of Israel.

As the Israel National News report highlighted, such scenes are no longer fringe. They are becoming part of the visible mainstream of British protest culture, where anti-Israel activism increasingly bleeds into overt antisemitism.

For Britain’s Jews, already shaken by the violence in Manchester, these images reinforce the sense that hostility towards them is both unrelenting and unchecked.

Health Secretary Wes Streeting weighed in, expressing disbelief that medical professionals could continue to use such language with impunity. “I

fail to see how medics using such language doesn't undermine confidence in the medical profession," he remarked, calling on regulatory bodies to ensure accountability.

Yet, as the INN report pointed out, many in the Jewish community remain skeptical of whether words will translate into meaningful action. Britain's medical regulators, particularly the GMC, have been criticized repeatedly for failing to act decisively against physicians who use their positions to spread hate.

Community leaders argue that unless firmer steps are taken, antisemitism will continue to metastasize within public institutions.

The targeting of Chief Rabbi Mirvis is not viewed as an isolated incident but as part of a broader, escalating pattern of antisemitism across Britain. Israel National News has documented how incidents of anti-Jewish hate have surged since Hamas's October 7 massacre in Israel, with British Jews reporting harassment in schools, vandalism of synagogues, and intimidation on public streets.

For many, the attacks on Mirvis represent a new threshold—where not just anonymous trolls or extremist activists but credentialed professionals feel emboldened to malign the country's most senior Jewish cleric.

Community leaders warn that the normalization of such rhetoric paves the way for physical violence. "If you allow senior figures to call the Chief Rabbi genocidal, you are telling extremists that Jews are legitimate targets," one communal activist told INN.

Observers note the disturbing echoes of earlier eras of European antisemitism. The use of defamatory labels—portraying Jewish leaders as dangerous or genocidal—resonates with propaganda campaigns of the 1930s and 1940s.

As the INN report observed, the fact that such language now emanates not from fringe hate groups but from doctors entrusted with public care adds a chilling dimension. It speaks volumes about the degree to which antisemitic narratives have seeped into the heart of Britain's professional class.

The immediate demand from Jewish organizations is accountability. The Campaign Against Antisemitism, Labour Against Antisemitism, and other groups have all called for disciplinary proceedings against Dr. Aladwan and Dr. Ali. They insist that allowing them to practice medicine while spreading hate violates not only community trust but the foundational principles of healthcare ethics.

As Israel National News reported, the GMC has yet to issue a final ruling. For many Jews, the delay itself is evidence of institutional indifference, reinforcing a perception that antisemitism is treated with kid gloves compared to other forms of hate.

Rabbi Mirvis himself has not yet publicly responded to the attacks. But those close to him say the smears are painful reminders of the precarious position facing British Jewry. The Chief Rabbi has long sought to balance the defense of Jewish communities with outreach to wider British society, emphasizing interfaith dialogue and civic responsibility.

To be caricatured as "Rabbi Genocide" in the immediate aftermath of a synagogue massacre, said one senior community figure to INN, is not only vile but emblematic of a society "that has lost its moral bearings."

The attacks on Chief Rabbi Ephraim Mirvis following the Manchester synagogue massacre illustrate the new and frightening terrain of antisemitism in Britain. No longer confined to anonymous corners of the internet or extremist rallies, it now emanates from the very professionals entrusted with public care.

As the Israel National News report emphasized, Britain's institutions face a stark choice: confront this rising tide with decisive action, or risk normalizing it to the point where antisemitic violence becomes an accepted feature of public life.

For Britain's Jewish community, still mourning the dead of Manchester, the targeting of their spiritual leader is a bitter signal that their fears are well-founded. Without urgent accountability, the danger will only grow.

Reminder: Hamas and the Palestinian Authority Do Not Believe In Any Peace Process

BASSAM TAWIL (GateStoneliInstitute.org 6-10-25)

Any attempt to portray Hamas's purported acceptance of US President Donald J. Trump's proposal to end the war in the Gaza Strip as a sign that either the Palestinian Authority (PA) or the Iran-backed Palestinian terror group is now interested in peace with Israel is misleading and baseless.

Both Hamas and the Palestinian Authority are not, and never were, interested in peace with Israel. The only peace they envision is one that would see Israel eliminated and replaced with an Islamist state, preferably, each with itself as the head.

Trump is a man with good intentions, and his sincere efforts to end the war should be commended by all those who want to see an end to the death and destruction in the Gaza Strip. The US president, however, needs to bear in mind that both the Palestinian Authority and – a branch of the Muslim Brotherhood organization – were established with the sole purpose of waging jihad (holy war) to kill Jews and destroy Israel. Hamas and the Palestinian Authority have never recognized Israel's right to exist. That is why they have repeatedly rejected all attempts by Muslim and Arab states to make peace with the Jewish state.

In 1993, Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) leader Yasser Arafat was describing the Oslo Accord he had just signed between Israel and the PLO to his own people – in Arabic – as basically no different from the Islamic Prophet Muhammad's Treaty of Hudaibiyya, in which Muhammad agreed

not to attack the tribe of Qurayish for ten years, then gathered together an army, came back in two years, and wiped the tribe out.

Hamas, for its part, strongly opposed the Oslo Accords. The terror group, in addition, rejected the PLO's alleged recognition of Israel's right to exist, as expressed in a letter signed by Arafat but never ratified by the PLO. According to Hamas, the Oslo Accords "constitute treason to Islam and legitimization of the existence of the Zionist entity."

It is worth noting that despite Arafat's letter of recognition, his successor, Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas, has made it clear that the Palestinians would never recognize Israel as a Jewish state. "We will never recognize the Jewishness of the state of Israel," Abbas declared in 2014.

In 2013, Hamas said that the Oslo Accords "have brought nothing but disasters and shame to our people, our national cause, and the present and future of our generations." In 2021, in a statement marking the 28th anniversary of the signing of the first Oslo Accord, Hamas called on all Palestinian factions to form a broad national front to end the agreement. "The Palestinian people have spoken by adhering to the option of resistance [terrorism] as the path to liberating Palestine," the terror group asserted.

In 2022, on the occasion of the anniversary of the first Oslo Accord, Hamas urged the PA to abrogate the agreement and revoke the PLO's alleged recognition of Israel's right to exist. "We call on all [Palestinian] factions, and on our people, to end the Oslo era and to agree on a unified strategy based on the comprehensive resistance," Hamas stated.

Hamas's "positive" response to Trump's plan to end the war does not include a pledge to recognize Israel's right to exist or end the terrorist group's jihad to obliterate Israel. Hamas's response also does not indicate any readiness to lay down its weapons or relinquish control over the Gaza Strip.

Hamas, in fact, rejected Trump's proposal to place the Gaza Strip under a "temporary traditional governance of technocratic, apolitical Palestinian committee made up of qualified Palestinians and international experts, with oversight and supervision by a new international transitional body."

Hamas's response clearly suggests that the terror group is opposed to any international administration and still sees itself playing a role in the management of the Gaza Strip in the day after the war:

"The other issues mentioned in President Trump's proposal regarding the future of the Gaza Strip and the inherent rights of the Palestinian people are linked to a comprehensive national position and based on relevant international laws and resolutions. They are to be discussed within a comprehensive Palestinian national framework. Hamas will be part of it and will contribute to it with full responsibility."

After delivering their reply to Trump's proposal, senior Hamas officials announced that their group will not lay down its weapons. "Hamas will hand over its weapons [only] to the future Palestinian state," Hamas official Musa Abu Marzouk told the Qatari-owned Al-Jazeera TV network. "The weapons will be in the hands of those who rule the Gaza Strip."

Hamas's partial acceptance of the Trump proposal, specifically to launch negotiations for the release of the 48 Israeli hostages being held in the Gaza Strip since October 7, 2023, is nothing but a ploy that aims to win time to allow the terror group to regroup, rearm and prepare for more atrocities against Israel. Hamas does not see Trump's proposal as a pathway for any kind of lasting peace in the Middle East. Rather, it considers the US proposal an opportunity for another temporary ceasefire, similar to previous ones reached with Israel — and which the terror group repeatedly breached.

Two years after the war that Hamas began by invading Israel and murdering 1,200 Israelis and foreign nationals and wounding thousands, the terror group, which has lost thousands of its men and most of its military capabilities, is understandably desperate for a lull in the fighting and the possibility of gaining more ground during the pause for negotiations.

Hamas remains fully committed to its 1988 charter, which quotes Muslim Brotherhood founder Hassan al-Banna as saying: "Israel will exist and will continue to exist until Islam will obliterate it, just as it obliterated others before."

Notably, the charter also quotes the words of the Islamic Prophet Mohammed:

"The Day of Judgement will not come about until Muslims fight the Jews (killing the Jews), when the Jew will hide behind stones and trees. The stones and trees will say 'O Muslims, O Abdullah, there is a Jew behind me, come and kill him. Only the Gharkad tree would not do that because it is one of the trees of the Jews.'"

In the eyes of both the Palestinian Authority and Hamas, all proposals and peace initiatives are unacceptable and a "waste of time":

"There is no solution for the Palestinian question except through jihad. Initiatives, proposals and international conferences are all a waste of time and vain endeavors." —Hamas charter, Article 13.

Any proposal or deal that allows Hamas, the Palestinian Authority (or Qatar, but that is for a later date) to hold on to its weapons and maintain any form of presence in the Gaza Strip will only facilitate their plans to pursue jihad against Israel.

The group that carried out the worst atrocities against Jews since the Holocaust and is responsible for the death of tens of thousands of Palestinians has no right to exist, not as a political, military or civilian force. As long as the Palestinian Authority, Hamas and other Qatari-promoted Palestinian terror groups exist, there will never be peace or stability in the Middle East.

1,500-YEAR-OLD SYNAGOGUE UNEARTHED IN THE GOLAN HEIGHTS

FERN SIDMAN (TJVnews.com 5-10-25)

The stones of the Golan Heights have spoken once more, this time revealing the remnants of a vibrant Jewish past long buried beneath centuries of soil and silence. According to a statement released Sunday by the Israel Nature and Parks Authority, archaeologists have uncovered a 1,500-year-old synagogue during an excavation in the Yehudiya Nature Reserve — a discovery that VIN News described in their extensive report on Sunday as both “a historical milestone and a powerful reaffirmation of the Jewish continuity in the land of Israel.”

The excavation, conducted jointly by the Israel Nature and Parks Authority and the University of Haifa, has solved a mystery that had eluded researchers for decades: the precise location of the synagogue. While scholars knew that Jewish communities flourished across the Golan during the Roman and Byzantine eras — roughly from the first century B.C. through the seventh and eighth centuries A.D. — this specific synagogue had long been hidden from view.

VIN News reported that dozens of decorated artifacts, basalt lintels, and column fragments were uncovered at the site, each one confirming the presence of a synagogue that once stood as both a spiritual and communal anchor. Excavators unearthed two rows of stones belonging to the building’s southern wall, carefully hewn and still standing after a millennium and a half. The wall included three doorways — a deliberate orientation toward Jerusalem, underscoring the ancient worshippers’ unyielding connection to the holy city.

Two basalt lintels, one adorned with decorative motifs, were found near their original placement opposite the entrances. These architectural details are consistent with other synagogues discovered across the Golan, suggesting both stylistic continuity and a shared cultural emphasis on the dignity of sacred space.

Dr. Michael Azband of the Zinman Institute of Archaeology at the University of Haifa, one of the excavation’s directors, emphasized to VIN News that the discovery was the culmination of years of painstaking research. “As part of a long-term project documenting architectural elements from villages in the Golan with Prof. Chaim Ben-David and Dr. Benny Arubas, we recorded more than 150 significant items within the Yehudiya Reserve,” he said. “Many were reused in the abandoned Syrian village nearby. But the synagogue’s actual location had remained an enigma until now.”

It was only after noticing an unusual concentration of column drums and decorative fragments laid out along a path that archaeologists decided to dig more intensively in this section of the reserve. The decision quickly yielded remarkable results: the outline of the synagogue itself, as though the earth had finally decided to give up its secret.

According to the information provided in the VIN News report, this is not the first synagogue discovered in the Golan Heights — far from it. Archaeologists have uncovered approximately 25 other synagogues dating to the same general era, evidence of a dense and thriving Jewish population across the region. These finds collectively illustrate a society where Jewish communal life, literacy, and Torah study were central.

Dr. Dror Ben-Yosef, an archaeologist with the Israel Nature and Parks Authority, told VIN News that the role of these synagogues went far beyond ritual prayer. “They were not only places for communal worship,” he explained, “but also hubs for learning, teaching, and passing on Jewish knowledge. Sages used these buildings to bring the Torah into the lives of every member of the community, young and old alike.”

The Golan, often thought of today primarily in terms of strategic or political significance, emerges in this narrative as a stronghold of Jewish civilization during late antiquity. Villages flourished, synagogues stood at their center, and Jewish communities maintained a distinctly vibrant life, even under shifting empires and foreign rule.

The synagogue discovered at Yehudiya now joins a distinguished cohort of ancient houses of prayer in the region, including sites at Katzrin, Umm el-Kanatir, and Ein Keshatot. The report at VIN News noted that these synagogues share common features: basalt construction, ornamental stonework, and a central role in village life.

Yet each synagogue also carries its own character. The lintel discovered at Yehudiya, for example, reveals a craftsmanship that archaeologists believe was intended to visually uplift worshippers as they entered. Even in an era when Jewish communities lived under Byzantine rule, the investment in architectural beauty testifies to their resilience and creativity.

That resilience is particularly poignant in Yehudiya. The modern landscape includes an abandoned Syrian village, a reminder of the many layers of conflict, settlement, and displacement that have marked the Golan. That Jewish antiquities remain so abundant and visible underscores, as VIN News reported, “the deep and continuous bond between the Jewish people and this land.”

For decades, researchers catalogued architectural fragments from the Yehudiya Reserve without being able to pinpoint the synagogue they once belonged to. The breakthrough came only with the most recent dig, revealing not only the synagogue’s wall and doorways but also enough structural context to eventually reconstruct its layout.

According to the information contained in the VIN News report, the Israel Nature and Parks Authority has pledged to complete the excavation and ultimately make the site accessible to the public. “Our intention is to

preserve and present this magnificent synagogue to all visitors,” Dr. Ben-Yosef affirmed. The plan would integrate the ancient synagogue into the Yehudiya Nature Reserve, allowing future generations of Israelis and tourists alike to experience its grandeur firsthand.

Such an initiative would mirror other successful heritage projects across the Golan, where ancient synagogues have been stabilized, conserved, and opened to the public. In doing so, Israel seeks to ensure that these structures serve not only as archaeological treasures but also as living educational resources.

The rediscovery of the Yehudiya synagogue comes at a time when debates over heritage, identity, and legitimacy in the Middle East are as heated as ever. Against this backdrop, the VIN News report described the powerful symbolism of the find: “At a moment when Jewish ties to the land are questioned in international forums, the stones themselves answer with irrefutable clarity.”

Indeed, each synagogue uncovered in the Golan Heights becomes a statement of historical truth. These were not transient encampments or isolated hermits but organized, educated communities rooted deeply in Jewish tradition. Their houses of worship were oriented toward Jerusalem, richly decorated, and central to communal life — unmistakable markers of enduring Jewish presence.

Archaeological discoveries such as this one inevitably evoke questions about memory and continuity. How do we relate to stones that stood for centuries in silence? How do we integrate their testimony into the modern narrative of Jewish life and sovereignty in the land of Israel?

The VIN News report, reflecting on the discovery, suggested that the answer lies in transforming these finds into educational opportunities. By preserving the synagogue, explaining its significance, and ensuring public access, Israel can link past and present in tangible ways. Visitors walking among the basalt walls will not only see architecture; they will step into a story of continuity, resilience, and faith.

The synagogue unearthed in the Yehudiya Nature Reserve is more than an archaeological site. It is a bridge across centuries, connecting modern Israel with the Jewish communities that flourished in the Golan during antiquity. Its walls, doorways, and decorated stones whisper of prayers recited, Torah studied, and lives lived in faith and perseverance.

As the VIN News report indicated, “the rediscovery of Yehudiya is not only an academic triumph but a national one, reaffirming the Jewish people’s enduring bond with their ancestral land.” With plans underway to complete the excavation and eventually open the site to the public, this ancient synagogue may soon become a place where Israelis and visitors alike can not only witness history but feel themselves part of its ongoing story.

Kosher & Halacha Korner

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Sharp Awareness in the Kitchen

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On one of my first visits to a food production facility, I cried. Not because I discovered a gross kashrus violation, chalilah; and not from tears of joy over the privilege to promote the availability of kosher food. My tears flowed because at one end of the enormous fruit and vegetable processing factory, the deafening machinery was slicing and packaging – onions! Despite a distance of a few hundred feet from the onion production line, my lachrymal glands were working hard to flush out sulfuric acid from my eyes. Only veteran workers were immune to the effects of the intruding irritants permeating the air.

The same property that makes slicing onions so annoying is also responsible for the pungent flavor and aroma, which have endowed them with culinary popularity for millennia. The Chumash (B’midbar 11:5) enumerates onions as one of the five vegetables the Jews were fond of eating while still enslaved in Egypt.¹ During the Middle Ages, before the discovery of the New World, onions were among the three main vegetables of European cuisine, along with beans and cabbage.² Today, onion growing and processing is a multi-billion dollar industry. This explains why the large factory I visited had an entire section dedicated to slicing and packaging pre-measured amounts of onion slices for fast-food restaurants.

Halacha also recognizes the unique pungency of onions and accords them a special status of *davar charif*, literally ‘a sharp item’. Other common foods with this classification are radishes, garlic, lemons, hot peppers, spicy pickles and very salty foods.³ These items must be treated with extra caution in a kosher kitchen because, as we will see, they present potential kashrus pitfalls.

EXCEPTION TO THE RULE

Generally, the result of a kashrus mishap in the kitchen is mitigated when the surface of the offending utensil is clean and the contact was made below the temperature of *yad soledos bo* (at least 120oF). A Rav can often advise how to correct the situation with minimal losses. However, when a *davar charif* is involved, the equation changes and the repercussions are more serious.⁴

For example, if one uses a fleishig knife to slice an onion, even if the knife was clean from any prior residue or grease⁵ and the onion was cold, the onion will adopt a fleishig status. The reason for this atypical stringency is because the confluence of the sharpness of the onion, together with the concentrated pressure from the knife blade (duchka d'sakinah), imparts the absorbed meat taste from inside the knife into the onion.⁶

How much of the onion became 'fleishig'? The Rema⁷ rules that due to its sharpness, the entire onion becomes saturated with meat flavor and none of it may be used with dairy. He concedes that, b'dieved, if the onion was inadvertently added to a dairy soup, we may assume that the meat taste penetrated only a k'dei netilah, approximately one inch around where the cut was made. Therefore, the soup would be permitted if it contains sixty times the volume of that area of the onion.⁸

The stringencies applied to a davar charif entail other halachic anomalies. The Talmud⁹ teaches that an absorbed taste inside a utensil becomes stale if it remains dormant for more than 24 hours (eino ben-yomo). Subsequently, that taste will no longer prohibit a food that it enters. This is based on the principle of nosein ta'am lifgam, that an adverse infusion of taste cannot create a prohibition. For example, if a pot was used to cook meat and more than 24 hours later it was accidentally¹⁰ used to cook milk, the milk is permitted. However, this rule is suspended for a davar charif.¹¹ The sharpness of the food rejuvenates any stale taste (whether meat, milk, or non-kosher) embedded in the walls of a utensil, and can have an effect even after 24 hours have elapsed.¹²

Underscoring this entire matter is the assumption that davar charif defies yet another standard rule of kashrus, known by its acronym nat-bar-nat.¹³ The Talmud¹⁴ describes a case where hot meat was served on a plate, rendering the plate fleishig. Steaming fish was then served on that same plate. The halacha states that the hot fish is only able to extract a minimal amount of meat taste from the plate, and one is still permitted to eat that fish together with cheese or milk.¹⁵ Nevertheless, when a davar charif extracts a meat taste from a knife, its sharpness causes the full potency to be absorbed; consequently, it may not be consumed together with a milk product.

FURTHER APPLICATIONS

A cold taste transfer may occur with any utensil that applies concentrated pressure, not just a knife as in our previous example. For instance, if the prongs of a milchig fork are inserted into a spicy pickle, the pickle would then be considered dairy and could not be added to a meat sandwich. Food processor or blender blades are also examples of duchka d'sakina.

Furthermore, davar charif is not limited to imparting tastes into food; it can also impart a taste into a utensil. One scenario would be when a mixture of meat and sharp spices is being chopped with a blade. The sharpness of the spices combined with the pressure of the blade will cause the meat taste to become absorbed into the chopper.¹⁶

This stringency is also relevant to cutting boards. The Chochmas Odom¹⁷ discusses cutting a piece of salty herring (a davar charif) on a non-kosher plate. He states that the combination of the sharp taste and the pressure from the blade will draw absorbed issur out from the plate and impart it into the fish. Similarly, Rav Shlomo Kluger¹⁸ writes that if an onion was cut with a fleishig knife on top of a milchig plate, both the onion and the knife will absorb a combination of meat and milk tastes, thus rendering them both non-kosher.¹⁹

For all the above reasons, it is prudent for a kosher kitchen to maintain a pareve knife and cutting board for cutting a davar charif, in order to avoid inevitable mix-ups.

HOW FLEISHIG IS IT?

If someone eats an onion that became fleishig through a cold taste transfer from a knife, is he then required to wait six hours (or whatever his custom is) before consuming dairy? Poskim say the answer is no.²⁰ Although the onion is considered to be fleishig, to the extent that it may not be eaten with milk, no waiting time is necessary before eating dairy food.

The reverse situation is a matter of dispute. Some Poskim²¹ do not allow consuming an onion that was cut with a milchig knife within six hours of eating meat. Other Poskim permit this.²²

HOW FAR DOES IT TRAVEL?

To what extent does an absorbed taste travel when transported through the medium of a davar charif? Consider a case where an onion was sliced with a fleishig knife and then chopped inside a pareve food processor. The Magen Avraham²³ rules that since the onion is a davar charif and contains a full absorption of meat taste, it will render the blades of the food processor 'fleishig'. Taking this further, if these blades were then used to chop a second onion, that onion would also become 'fleishig' and may not be eaten with dairy. If a third onion was cut with a milchig knife and chopped in the same food processor, the blades have now absorbed basar v'chalav and may not be used until they are kashered.

Even HaOzer disagrees and holds that b'dieved, when the food processor was used for a second onion, we may assume that the meat taste from the first onion did not compromise the pareve status of the blades.²⁴ Contemporary poskim follow this leniency when necessary.²⁵ However, Even HaOzer himself concedes that ideally the blades should be kashered prior to using them for pareve items.

FISH AND ONIONS

Based on a statement in the Talmud,²⁶ widespread practice is to avoid cooking or eating fish together with meat (including fowl) due to concern

that this may cause illness. May one add onions that were sliced with a fleishig knife to a dish of fish?

This question relates to another issue: May one cook fish in a pot that was previously used to cook meat? Since actual meat is not being combined with the fish (only meat taste expelled from the walls of the pot), there should be no problem provided the pot is clean from any meat residue.²⁷ However, many follow an ancient custom recorded in the Tur (13th-14th centuries) to be strict and use a dedicated fish pot. It is reasonable to suggest that one's conduct regarding the meat pot should determine how to treat a davar charif that was cut with a meat knife. Some suggest that even those who are lenient with regard to the pot should be strict with regard to adding a davar charif.²⁸

ARE ONIONS ALWAYS SHARP?

All onions are not created equal. There are many varieties, each with its own characteristics.

Red onions are milder; among yellow and white onions, the Vidalia, Spanish, Bermuda, Walla Walla, and White Crystal Wax are less bitter. The degree of pungency is also a product of other factors, such as growing and storage environments.²⁹ Are they all classified as davar charif, or are there some exceptions?

The Shulchan Aruch does not differentiate between different varieties of onions. Later poskim acknowledge scenarios when they are not considered charif. Pischei Teshuva³⁰ notes that while onions are still small, they are mild and have not yet attained the status of a davar charif; therefore, he is lenient if the knife was not a ben-yomo. Kaf HaChaim³¹ emphasizes that this leniency is limited to onions that are immature, but varieties of onions that are naturally small are certainly considered charif.³²

Another factor is that onions and other devarim charifim often lose their sharp quality after some processing. This fact is readily supported by observing an onion fried in oil, baked into a kugel, or cooked in a soup. Homemakers with sensitive eyes know that peeling and chilling an onion before cutting it will also dull its sharpness.³³ Based on the item and the method of cooking, a competent Posek can determine at what point a davar charif is no longer considered sharp.³⁴

A more general leniency to this entire topic is found in the Beis Meir (glosses to Y.D. 96:3). As mentioned above, a davar charif supersedes the usual dinim of eino ben-yomo and nat-bar-nat. The Beis Meir proposes that these stringencies are compounded only in the case of a tznon, radish, the sharp item mentioned explicitly in the Talmud. However, one may be lenient with regard to other seemingly sharp vegetables provided that there is doubt as to whether or not the blade absorbed meat or dairy within the previous 24 hours. Some Poskim will utilize this ruling in the event a mistake occurs.³⁵

More than separating the meat from the milk, keeping a kosher home requires vigilance for issues that pertain to a davar charif. This discussion should encourage us to maintain 'sharpness' in the kitchen, and enable us to properly present the issues to a Posek should any problems arise.

OVERNIGHT ONIONS

The Talmud³⁶ teaches that one puts himself in a serious danger from ruach ra'ah if he eats onions, garlic cloves, or eggs that were left peeled overnight. The danger exists even if they are wrapped in a cloth or enclosed in some other way. To block the ruach ra'ah, some of the peel – even a minute amount – must remain attached. It is enough to just leave the hairy strands on top of the onion.³⁷

Kaf HaChaim³⁸ observes that people do not refrain from eating salads or other dishes that contain peeled onions and garlic, even though the salads were left overnight. He suggests that the concern applies only when these items are alone, but not when they are mixed with other ingredients.³⁹ Divrei Yatziv⁴⁰ says it is sufficient to just sprinkle enough salt to impart a salty taste; likewise, an onion sautéed in oil is not a problem.

Today, kashrus agencies certify processed foods such as onion/garlic powder, peeled garlic, pasteurized/ frozen egg products, and even buckets of hard-boiled eggs. They utilize the ruling of Rav Moshe Feinstein zt"l⁴¹ who held that the danger described by the Talmud does not exist when produced in a large scale industrial setting.

1. Chizkuni comments that the onions were not eaten raw, rather they were used to add flavor to cooked meat. Indeed, ancient Egyptians treated onions with sanctity; they took oaths while holding an onion, and onions were entombed together with the pharaohs.

2. www.foodreference.com/html/onions-history-of-onions.html

3. Shach 96:18 includes salt as a davar charif.

4. The halochos of davar charif are found primarily in Yoreh De'ah, siman 96, based on Chullin 111b – 112a.

5. The cases described in this article assume that all blades are clean. When they contain residue or grease, the halacha is more strict.

6. One opinion in Tosafos (Chullin 8b, in the name of Rivan) holds that concentrated pressure from a clean knife can create an absorption even into a cold non-davar charif. The halacha does not follow this view. Nevertheless, Poskim record a commendable minhag to always use a dedicated pareve knife when slicing bread. (Aruch HaShulchan 89:16, citing Pri Chadash)

7. Y.D. 96:1

8. Alternatively, if a k'dei netilah around the area of the cut was removed prior to the addition of the onion to the dairy soup, the soup is permitted even without shishim. (Badei HaShulchan 96:32)

9. Avodah Zarah 67b

10. There is a specific Rabbinic enactment against doing this on purpose. Avodah Zarah 76a

11. Rema Y.D. 96:3, Shach #3. Also one opinion in the Mechaber 96:1. Pischei Teshuva 95:4 discusses if this is Biblical or Rabbinical in nature.
12. See Y.D. 103:6. Even in the absence of duchka d'sakinah, this property of davar charif still pertains. For example, borsht with high vinegar content is considered sharp. Therefore, if it was cooked in a meat (or milk, or non-kosher) pot, even if the pot was unused for 24 hours, the borsht is fleishig based on the principle of rejuvenating taste. See later note #34.
13. Nosein Ta'am Bar Nosein Ta'am
14. Chullin 111b
15. This leniency has many limitations. For instance, it only applies when the initial absorption is intrinsically permitted (heteira), such as a kosher meat taste. But if the taste absorbed in the plate is non-kosher, it will carry over to all further hot foods, rendering them all prohibited.
16. See Badei HaShulchan: Tziyonim 96:155
17. Y.D. 56:2
18. Tuv Ta'am V'Daas 3:215. See also Kitzur of Rav Pfeifer 8:2:7.
19. A dissenting opinion is found in 'Sefer Yehoshua', by Rav Heshel Bavad, P'sokim 122. See also sefer 'Davar Charif' by Rav Dinkel (1:13, note 57), who quotes Rav Elyashiv as ruling leniently in a b'dieved situation. In the event a davar charif is cut on a non-pareve surface, a moreh hora'ah should be consulted.
20. Based on Rabbi Akiva Eiger, glosses to Y.D. 89, on Shach number 19.
21. P'ri Megadim, O.C. 494, A.A. 6. This is especially so if the knife was known to be a ben yomo.
22. Darkei Teshuva 86:42; Kitzur of Rav Pfeifer 8:2:7 says this is the minhag. This position holds that it is no different than eating food cooked in a ben-yomo milchig pot within 6 hours of eating meat which Rav Aharon Kotler told Rav Heinemann is permitted.
23. Magen Avraham (451:31); Chochmas Odom (49:10) concurs with this position.
24. Even HaOzer, glosses to Y.D. 96:4. He reasons that although a davar charif has the capacity to draw out the full taste absorbed inside a utensil (thereby mitigating the leniency of nat-bar-nat), it is unable to impart a full taste into a second utensil. Thus, the blades will remain pareve. Chavas Da'as 96:6 concurs.
25. See Badei HaShulchan 96:56
26. Pesachim 76b, Shulchan Aruch Y.D. 116:2
27. Even if the pot would be a ben yomo, the meat taste emitted would not generate a sakanah. See Taz Y.D. 95:3.
28. Sefer 'Davar Charif' (15:6), records in the name of Rav Chaim Kanievsky that in the house of his father, the Steipler Gaon, they cut the onions for fish with a dedicated knife. Unlike a pot, a davar charif absorbs a full taste and is an exception to the rule of nat-bar-nat.
29. See <http://www.ag.ndsu.edu/pubs/alt-ag/onions.htm>
30. Y.D. 96:3
31. Y.D. 96:3
32. Rav Tzvi Pesach Frank, Mikra'ei Kodesh, Pesach, I:80:3, suggests that some varieties of onions are not charif at all.
33. See Pischei Teshuva 96:4 who brings that Chazal themselves used empirical methods to determine the halachos of davar charif. See also Badei HaShulchan 96:46.
34. Thus, if an onion that is fried in a non-ben yomo fleishig pan becomes hot (yad soledos bo) before losing its sharpness, the stale meat absorption will be rejuvenated and the onion is now fleishig. But if the onion lost its sharpness prior to becoming hot then it can still be deemed pareve.
35. Albeit, the Darkei Teshuva (96:62) cites the Mishmeres Shalom who is hesitant to apply the leniency of the Beis Meir, except in the exact circumstances that he was discussing, i.e. where an onion was cut with a milchig knife that is assumed to be an eino ben-yomo. This is opposed to a fleishig knife, which is more likely to have been used for hot food.
36. Niddah 17a. It is prohibited for a person to submit himself to a dangerous situation. See Rambam, Hilchos Rotze'ach u'Shmiras HaNefesh, chapter 11; Shulchan Aruch Y.D. 116. The Talmud (Chullin 10a) remarks that dangers to health are dealt with more severely than prohibitions.
37. Semak (4:171) countenances the practice of some people to ward off ruach ra'ah by replacing the garlic peel even after it was once removed. Divrei Yatziv (Y.D. 31:14, the Klausenberger Rebbe) says that this is not the accepted minhag.
38. Y.D. 116:92, quoting Zivchei Tzedek 116:61.
39. Alternatively, he invokes the position of Maharshal (Yam Shel Shlomo: Kol HaBasar 12) who maintains that the ruach ra'ah of Talmudic times is not prevalent nowadays. This is similar to the statement of Tosafos (Yoma 77b), that certain types of ruach ra'ah no longer exist in parts of the world. (See also Magen Avraham 173.) These halachos are omitted from Shulchan Aruch (see Shevet HaLevi 6:115:5 who sees this as a justification for leniency), but the consensus among Poskim is that this is not sufficient evidence to allow one to place himself in a potentially dangerous situation. (See Chofetz Chaim, Likutei Halachos, Niddah ad. loc.)
40. Y.D. 31:14
41. Igros Moshe, Y.D. 3:20

Candles (Melb) Monday 13 October 2025, 22 Tishrei 5786 7.17p/8.16p/8.18p