LEHRHAUS

OVER SHABBOS

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Wearing a Smartwatch on Shabbat

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A. The Question

One of the new gadgets that has become popular over the last few years is the smartwatch; a popular brand at the forefront of the industry is the Fitbit. At first, the Fitbit watch was a fancy pedometer designed to count a person's steps, number of floors climbed, heart rate, pulse, and sleep cycle. Nowadays, though, the newer smartwatches include features that replicate the smartphone, such as a phone, bluetooth, voice recognition, text messaging, email, internet, and more. What is the status of the Fitbit with regard to possible use on Shabbat? Modern *poskim* agree that using communication features such as phone calls, text messages, and email are forbidden.[1] They also agree that using the ambient display feature, which uses a proximity sensor to turn on or brighten the dim screen when it is being looked at or used, is also forbidden, unless the display is set to stay on (which might drain the battery). But assuming the communication and notification features are turned off and the screen is set to remain on, may one wear a smartwatch on Shabbat and utilize its health monitoring features? This article will begin by introducing generally the prohibition of using electricity on Shabbat, addressing the question of modifying the amplitude of a current on Shabbat, and exploring the responsibility a person has for actions that unintentionally cause a violation of Shabbat. Building upon those principles, the article then discusses the permissibility of the smartwatch on Shabbat.

B. Electricity on Shabbat

Why is closing an electrical circuit forbidden on Shabbat in the first place? Famously, the *Hazon Ish* (O.H. 50:9) asserts that completing a circuit is a Biblical prohibition of *boneh*, constructing, and *makeh be-patish*, completing a vessel. *Boneh* is violated when one constructs a permanent structure, such as hammering a few boards of wood together to create a cabinet. *Makeh be-patish* is violated by performing the finishing step in the completion of a vessel or article; for example, smoothing the sides of a stone after it was chiseled out of the ground is *makeh be-patish*. The Hazon Ish holds that when one completes a circuit, in effect he/she is doing *boneh* by making a structure that could last forever; this act of completion can also be considered *makeh be-patish*. Most *poskim*[2] disagree with the Hazon Ish and hold that electricity on Shabbat is only a rabbinic prohibition.

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[1] For citation of *poskim* on the subject, see my *Halachipedia* article, "Communication on Shabbat."

[2] *Beit Yitzhak*, *hashmatot* to Y.D. 2:31; *Yabia Omer* 1:16; *Menuhat Ahavah* 24:2; Rav Hershel Schachter; Rabbi Michael Broyde's & Rabbi Howard Jachter's article "The Use of Electricity on Shabbat," n. 41.

One notable contemporary *posek* who thinks that completing an electric circuit is a Biblical violation of *makeh be-patish* is Rav Asher Weiss (*Minhat Asher* 1:30). His explanation is not that closing a circuit fits the standard definition of *makeh be-patish* as laid out by the *rishonim*, but rather that *makeh be-patish* is the catch-all for any action which is clearly a *melakhah*, a prohibited act on Shabbat, despite not fitting any category.

On the other hand, many *poskim* hold that completing a circuit is only a rabbinic violation of *makeh be-patish*. Rav Hershel Schachter[3] explains that completing a circuit is similar to the case of *Ketubot* 60a, which says that a clogged pipe can be fixed for the purposes of promoting *kevod ha-beriyot*, human dignity. A clogged pipe is not broken, but simply is not functioning and must be fixed. Fixing it is therefore an act which would only be rabbinically categorized as *makeh be-patish*, (which is why there is greater latitude for leniency in the case of *kevod ha-beriyot*). Similarly, rewinding a watch on Shabbat is characterized by the *Tiferet Yisrael* (*Kalkelet ha-Shabbat,* no. 38) as rabbinic *makeh be-patish,* since the watch was always a utensil though it was temporarily nonfunctional.

Others explain the prohibition of closing an electrical circuit differently. In the late nineteenth century, Rabbi Yitzhak Shmelkes of Lemberg (*Beit Yitzhak*, Y.D. 2:31) wrote that completing an electric circuit is a violation of the rabbinic prohibition of *molid*. *Molid* is a rabbinic restriction on creating something that appears to be a new creation. For example, Hazal forbade infusing a nice smell in a garment by placing it over incense since doing so "creates" a new feature in the garment. Similarly, closing a circuit introduces a current into that circuit, thereby giving the impression of a new creation within that wire. Although Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach (*Minhat Shlomo* 1:9) suggests that perhaps we cannot add to the category of *molid* as was established by Hazal, he takes the opinion of Rabbi Shmelkes into account and concludes that closing a circuit is a rabbinic prohibition.[4]

In summary, all *poskim* agree that closing a circuit on Shabbat is forbidden, though opinions differ as to whether it is a Biblical or rabbinic prohibition. Rav Asher Weiss commented that since there is a unanimous conclusion of the *gedolim,* it is as though a heavenly voice declared in the *beit midrash* of the previous generation that using electricity on Shabbat is forbidden.

C. Changing a Current

According to the Hazon Ish, changing the amplitude of the current in a circuit is also forbidden, potentially even on a Biblical level (as understood by Rav Elyashiv; *Kedushat ha-Shabbat* 7:7, p. 23). Increasing or decreasing the current in a circuit makes the electric device useful and, so to speak, imbues it with life, therefore violating the Biblical prohibition

[3] All *pesakim* from Rav Schachter are based on his shiur at YUTorah on Electricity on Shabbat, as well as on oral communication (January 23, 2018).

[4] This was also the opinion of Rav Ovadia Yosef (*Yabia Omer* O.C. 1:19).

of *makeh be-patish*. Rav Asher Weiss (*Minhat Asher* 1:31) seems to concur that it is a Biblical prohibition even to increase a current.

However, according to Rav Shmelkes and Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach, there is no technical issue with changing the amount of energy in a circuit. Closing a circuit is forbidden only when it introduces a new feature in the wire; increasing what the wire previously had, however, is not *molid*. An analogous case in the Maharil (*Dinei Etrog*, no. 15) may serve as a precedent: He explained that if a person took an *etrog* out of a wool cloth on Yom Tov, he can return it to the wool on Yom Tov even though the wool will become scented because of its contact with the *etrog*, since the wool was already scented beforehand. It is only *molid* to introduce a smell, not to increase the potency of a preexistent one.[5]

Nonetheless, Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach cautions that altering an electric current could be forbidden if the ramifications of that change are inappropriate for Shabbat. For example, it is forbidden to speak into a telephone that is already off the hook or a microphone that was turned on before Shabbat, or to turn up a radio that is already on. These actions, despite not creating any new electrical current, are all forbidden since they are inappropriate for a Shabbat atmosphere. He compares it to the prohibition of leaving one's watermill running on Shabbat even though it was set up beforehand. *Shabbat* 18a forbids doing so since the mill's loud noise is in and of itself a *zilzul Shabbat*, a desecration of Shabbat.[6] Yet, Rav Shlomo Zalman (cited by *Sha'arim Metzuyim be-Halachah* v. 2 p. 137 80:39:5) held that using and even adjusting a hearing aid on Shabbat is permitted and considered to be within the spirit of Shabbat since only the person who is wearing the hearing aid can hear the noises produced by the appliance. To clarify, according to Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach, from the perspective of *melakhah* there is no problem with using a microphone, phone, or radio that is already on; they are prohibited only because of *zilzul Shabbat*.

Interestingly, Rav Schachter—who holds that completing a circuit is a rabbinic violation of *makeh be-patish*—nonetheless agrees with Rav Shlomo Zalman that adjusting the voltage in a circuit is permitted, although for a different reason. *Makeh be-patish* is only violated when completing a utensil, whereas adjusting the voltage to make the appliance useful is considered using an already complete utensil.

To summarize, there are three approaches to electricity on Shabbat: one holds completing a circuit is a Biblical violation of *boneh* or *makeh be-patish*; another holds it is a rabbinic version of *makeh be-patish*; a third approach considers it to be the rabbinic prohibition of *molid*. The first approach would forbid changing the amplitude of an existent current, while the latter

[5] This extrapolation is quoted by the *Magen Avraham* 511:11 and clarified further by the *Shulhan Arukh ha-Rav* 511:7.

[6] This is codified and generalized by the *Rama* 252:5 and *Mishnah Berurah* 252:48.

two approaches hold that the permissibility of a change in a current depends on the results it creates.

Turning to the smartwatch, although no circuits are noticeably being opened and closed, the inner workings of the silicon chip involve opening and closing circuits constantly. On the silicon chip inside the smartwatch, as is the case of a smartphone and computer, are thousands or millions of tiny transistors and circuits that are constantly being changed in order to enable different processes and apps. Some of the activities in the smartwatch are purely pre-programmed—such as checking for pulse every five seconds—as was the case in older health trackers. In such a case, although the computer chip is opening and closing circuits, since they run automatically they are not an issue for Shabbat, just like it is permitted to pre-program a timer before Shabbat. However, most of the health monitoring is dynamically personalized and respond to the wearer's activity. For example, during workouts, the Fitbit Alta switches from checking heart rate every five seconds to checking every one second. Another example are the sleep cycle alarm apps which wake up the wearer within a half hour window based on the wearer's depth of sleep. The functionality to change modes dynamically exists in practically every smartwatch app. Therefore, wearing a smartwatch that monitors a person's health on Shabbat more than just alters a current; it closes and opens circuits in response to the wearer's actions.[7]

D. Triggering an Electronic Sensor

One smartwatch feature is automatic sensors that adjust their functionality according to the need. For example, as mentioned above, when the wearer exercises, he/she triggers sensors which cause the watch to increase how often it checks his/her pulse. Can these sensors be used on Shabbat? More broadly, in the digital age, the cutting-edge questions of electricity on Shabbat are no longer of changing a current but often revolve around inevitable non-observable reactions. To illustrate and to shed light on our question about smartwatches we will use the analogy of security cameras. Because of their ubiquity it is nearly impossible to walk the streets of New York City today and not trigger some electric device or sensor, whether it be a security camera or automatic door.[8] Using the example of security cameras we can examine the *halakhot* regarding a person's responsibility for the inevitable consequences of their actions.

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[7] See *Be-Mareh ha-Bazak*, v. 9, p. 44, which concludes that if the health tracker wristband does not react to a person's actions at all it is permitted to wear on Shabbat if one was already wearing it before Shabbat. However, those conclusions are outdated, since they were written in 2011, before the 2014 release of updated smartwatches which have sensors that do react to a person's actions.

[8] The opinion of Rabbi Nahum Rabinovich is that electricity is only considered inappropriate for Shabbat (*uvda de-hol*), while tripping an electrical sensor is permitted. However, his opinion is rejected and disregarded by the vast majority of Orthodox *poskim* (*Emunat Itekha*, v. 104, p. 70).

When a person walks in front of a house or store with surveillance cameras, their image appears on a digital screen and is recorded for a short period of time. According to many *poskim*,[9] having one's image appear on a screen is a violation of *kotev*, writing, since making the image appear is considered like drawing, which is a subcategory of writing. Nonetheless, most *poskim*, as will be outlined shortly, agree that it is still permitted to walk in an area that is monitored by security cameras, including the Kotel Plaza. There are two major approaches as to why this is permitted.

Rav Ovadia Yosef (*Yabia Omer* O.C. 9:35) explains that walking in front of a security camera is permitted because of the confluence of two factors: 1. Creating a temporary drawing is only rabbinic. 2. Since one does not intend to produce the drawing, it is considered a *pesik reisha de-lo niha leih*, where the prohibited consequence is unintended and non-beneficial. Generally, a case of *pesik reisha* occurs when one does a permitted act that is inevitably accompanied by a *melakhah*. The influential opinion of the *Arukh*, the Italian eleventh century lexicographer and Talmudist, is that *pesik reisha* is only forbidden if it is beneficial to a person; otherwise it is permitted. While *Tosafot* disagree with the opinion of *Arukh*, they do agree in certain cases where the gravity of the prohibition is only rabbinic. Therefore, Rav Yosef concludes that we can rely on those who permit a *pesik reisha de-lo niha leih* for a rabbinic prohibition to walk in front of a security camera on Shabbat. Many *poskim*, including Rav Elyashiv (*Or haShabbat* v. 25 p. 157) and Rav Mordechai Willig, accept this approach.

Fundamentally in line with this first approach, Rav Schachter adds a nuance to permit walking before a security camera if one does not intend to have one's picture drawn on the digital screen. Based on the *Avnei Nezer* O.C. 194, he explains that a *pesik reisha* is only forbidden if the result is physically connected to the actions one takes, but if the *melakhah* occurs in a disconnected, distant location it is permitted. For our discussion, both of the above explanations assume that a *melakhah* is taking place, but it is still permitted because it is unintentional and non-beneficial or distant.

In trailblazing a second approach, Rav Shmuel Wosner (*Shevet ha-Levi* 1:47, 3:41, 3:97, 9:68, and 9:69) holds that it is permitted to walk in front of a security camera since one is not adding any action or effort to cause the drawing on the camera. In fact, one is walking just as one would have walked had the camera been off or absent. When a person drags a heavy bench and the legs dig a furrow, part of his energy is spent transporting the bench, but some of his energy is expended upon digging the furrow with the bench. A *pesik reisha* is only

[9] This is the opinion of many of the *poskim* that discuss this topic including: *Orhot Shabbat* v. 1 ch. 15 n. 55 citing Rav Elyashiv, Rav Nissim Karelitz, Rav Shlomo Zalman, Rav Wosner; *Yabia Omer* O.C. 9:35; Rav Elyashiv cited in *Or ha-Shabbat*, v. 25 p. 157; *Shevet ha-Levi* 9:68; and Rav Schachter. See however, *Shemirat Shabbat ke-Hilkhatah*, ch. 23 n. 175, who only considers it writing if the video is saved temporarily or permanently but not if it is simply projected on a screen.

forbidden if one does an action where some of his energy and efforts are spent on the forbidden *melakhah*. However, when a person walks and is simultaneously being videoed, he expends no energy for the videoing to occur. The fact that his walking was the basis for the actions of another being or device is irrelevant to his own actions, and thus the *melakhah* is not understood to have taken place at all.

An interesting precedent can be drawn from Rashba (*Responsa*, 4:74) which would challenge Rav Wosner's approach. The Rashba was asked whether it was permitted to carry a silkworm on one's body on Shabbat if due to one's body heat it will continue to create silk, which it would not have done had it been situated elsewhere. He answered that putting the silkworm on one's body with the intention that it will create silk is considered a *melakhah*. Seemingly if a person did this unintentionally it would be considered a *pesik reisha*, even though the person wearing the silkworm did not expend any effort to have the worm function. Rav Wosner answered that the Rashba only said it was a *melakhah* since it was intentional, otherwise it would not be considered a *melakhah* or *pesik reisha* at all. In any event, it is noteworthy that a significant group of *poskim* do not follow Rav Wosner's approach.[10]

Therefore, almost all *poskim* agree that it is permitted to walk in front of a security camera. Some permitted it based on the classical principles that focus on the fact that the *melakhah* was unintended and non-beneficial, and others based on the premise that it isn't considered *melakhah* at all. Both approaches agree that if a person's action cause a result that is not intentional and not beneficial it is permitted. They only disagree if it is not intentional but is slightly beneficial. The classical *poskim* are strict when it is beneficial since the leniency of *pesik reisha de-lo niha leih* is inapplicable. On the other hand, Rav Wosner is lenient even if there is a slight benefit because it is not considered a *melakhah* at all when one doesn't add any effort for the *melakhah* to occur.[11]

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[10] Besides the *poskim* cited in the above discussion who explicitly suggest alternatives to the *Shevet ha-Levi*, the *Orhot Shabbat* v. 3 p. 79 comments that the *Shevet ha-Levi*'s approach is very nuanced and should not be extended without the approval of the *gedolim*. See *Shemirat Shabbat ke-Hilkhatah*, ch. 23 n. 176 who echoes the idea of the *Shevet ha-Levi*.

[11] Rav Yosef Zvi Rimon (presentation at Yeshiva University, November 7, 2018) explicitly clarified that Rav Wosner would permit, when one adds no personal effort, even if it is beneficial. This seems to be supported from Rav Wosner's treatment of the automatic security lights outside people's houses. He permits walking in a street at night when one's walking would turn on a security light in front of someone's house. He writes that it is not considered beneficial since it is possible to walk anyway. It is plausible that this too is slightly beneficial especially if the street is dark. Additionally, in discussing the automatic self-winding watch, even though having the watch wound with one's movements on Shabbat is slightly beneficial he is lenient. With respect to wearing it for a three-day Yom Tov or a case where without one's movements it would stop working he leaves the question unresolved. This last point implies, contra Rav Rimon, that Rav Wosner would agree if the result is completely beneficial he is strict and he is only lenient if it is only slightly beneficial. See the article by Rabbi Rif and Rabbi Dr. Fixler in *Emunat Itekha* v. 104 p. 63 who make similar inferences.

Now let's apply these principles to wearing a Fitbit which monitors one's health. According to the first approach there is no basis for leniency, since the Fitbit's monitoring is beneficial. As such, wearing it and thereby allowing it to compute and record bits of information is considered a *pesik reisha* and is forbidden. Based on the second approach, it is reasonable to argue that wearing a Fitbit which monitors one's health is permitted, since one did not have any specific intention for the sensors to monitor his actions, one did not expend any effort for that to occur, and the benefit is minimal and delayed.

E. Insignificant Digital Results:

The key part of the smartwatch is the digital chip on which computer operations are processed and results are recorded. If we are to answer the question whether one may wear a smartwatch on Shabbat, given that it will make digital recordings of his/her health, understanding the functionality of the digital chip is critical. To this effect, we will draw upon a parallel discussion about digital refrigerators.

Among the halakhically challenging and complex issues in contemporary technology is the digital refrigerator. These refrigerators have a computer chip that records the temperature, when and how long the door is open, and computes calculations regarding when a defrost is necessary. Although resolving the various questions involved with using such a refrigerator on Shabbat is beyond the scope of this article, there are two approaches with respect to the digital recordings of the computer chip that further our above analysis.

Many *poskim*, including Rav Shlomo Miller and Rav Shmuel Kamenetsky (cited by *Or ha-Shabbat* v. 27 p. 201), permit causing the computer chip to make these recordings. This is because one does not really care that they are recorded, as the refrigerator could just as well work on a periodic schedule of defrost (although with less energy efficiency). In technical terms, this adds up to a *pesik reisha de-lo niha leih* of a rabbinic restriction of using electricity, which results in it being permitted, as described in the previous section. This assumes that there is no prohibition of *kotev* in having the information recorded in a computer chip, since it is not considered writing in any intelligible language. Alternatively, if one assumes that the concern about recording is *makeh be-patish*, it could be permitted according to a position of the *Maggid Mishnah* (*Hilkhot Shabbat* 12:2) that it is only possible to violate *makeh be-patish* while intentionally trying to create a utensil. An unintentional creation of a "utensil," as in our case, is not considered the creation of a "utensil" at all.

However, Rav Schachter takes issue with this approach and its consideration of these elements as unintentional or not to one's benefit. If the system is functioning properly one benefits from the efficient and intelligent design of its makers. Therefore, it is to be considered a *pesik reisha de-niha leih*, an unintended beneficial consequence, and is forbidden.

Yet, other *poskim* hold that this feature of the digital refrigerators is permitted since the results are unobservable and unintentional. Rav Heinemann (cited in *Or ha-Shabbat ibid.*) holds that a *melakhah* is defined by something which has a tangible result that can be perceived with one of the five senses. Since the results of the computer chip are unintentional and unobservable to any human being, they are completely insignificant halakhically and do not violate the prohibition of using electricity on Shabbat. Furthermore, if one assumes that the issue with electricity is *makeh be-patish*, it is permitted since the result of the actions is unobservable and thus halakhically inconsequential. In fact, that is also the opinion of Rav Asher Weiss (*Minhat Asher* 1:31). In a sense, this is reminiscent of Rav Wosner's approach to security cameras—that the electrical sensor reacting to one's actions is not considered one's halakhic responsibility at all.

To recap our analysis, for both the case of walking in front of a security camera and the case of the computer chip in digital refrigerators, we had two approaches as to why it is permitted; in each case, one position argued that triggering electronic sensors on Shabbat could be permitted if it is unintentional and one didn't do anything for the results to occur or they are unobservable and insignificant. This approach is important to consider for wearing a Fitbit on Shabbat.

F. Kinetic Watches

Before returning to smartwatches, let us consider the interesting halakhic query of self-charging kinetic watches. While the classic automatic watch winds itself by capturing the energy of the wearer's movements using a system of mechanical springs and gears, the newer kinetic watch uses the wearer's movements to recharge its electric battery. An automatic quartz also charges itself by movements but stores the energy in crystal oscillations. Can a person wear such a self-winding watch on Shabbat?

Regarding wearing automatic mechanical watches, Rav Ovadia Yosef (*Yabia Omer* O.C. 6:35) outlines numerous reasons to be lenient. Firstly, he points out that it is a dispute whether winding a watch that completely stopped on Shabbat is considered *makeh be-patish* Biblically or only rabbinically. The *Hayyei Adam* holds that winding it would be a Biblical violation of *makeh be-patish*, since that is the finishing touch which makes the watch functional. Many *poskim* including the *Tiferet Yisrael* disagree, since a stopped watch is only temporarily unusable, but is still a complete utensil. Winding it is considered its regular use rather than its completion. Nonetheless, the *Tiferet Yisrael* concedes that there is a rabbinic prohibition to wind a stopped watch. Yet, if the watch is still running, winding it to prevent it from breaking would be permitted. Accordingly, wearing a self-winding watch on Shabbat is permitted.

A final consideration upon which to base a lenient ruling is that winding the watch happens simultaneously with wearing it normally. The *Ben Ish Hai* claims that it is permitted to fix the

permanent folds of one's turban while wearing it and it is not considered *makeh be-patish*. It is comparable to the permitted separating good from bad food immediately prior to eating. Rav Ovadia Yosef extrapolates based on this permissive position to allow wearing a self-winding watch, since the improvement of the watch is immediate. Although a similar argument is made by Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach (cited by *Shemirat Shabbat ke-Hilkhatah* ch. 28 n. 57), this factor as well is subject to debate (c.f. *Taz* 340:2 and *Hazon Ish* O.C. 61). In any event, most *poskim*, including *Shemirat Shabbat ke-Hilkhatah*, Rav Heinemann, and Rav Schachter, agree that it is permitted to wear a self-winding watch on Shabbat.

If we move from a mechanical to an electrical kinetic watch, other factors for leniency still apply: it is a *pesik reisha* of a rabbinic prohibition (if we assume using electricity is only a rabbinic concern), it might be abnormal, and it is winding while one is wearing it. Rabbi Yisrael Rozen and Rav Schachter take the position that it is permitted.

Based on the opinion of Rav Wosner regarding walking in front of security cameras and that of Rav Heinemann regarding the computer recordings in the digital refrigerators, we can suggest yet another reason to permit wearing an electrical kinetic watch. Just like a person walks without thinking about whether a security camera is observing him, so too a person walks without considering the swaying of his hand. As such, he is adding no effort to cause the charging of the watch and, according to Rav Wosner, the resultant charging is not his halakhic responsibility at all.

G. Smartwatches

Based on the above opinions outlined in our various modern day applications, we can suggest two main approaches for wearing a smartwatch that tracks a person's health on Shabbat. As mentioned, smartwatches today have sensors that alter their functionality based on the wearer's actions. The question is whether just having a device respond to one's activity is considered his/her halakhic responsibility. According to those *poskim* who look at a lack of intention and lack of benefit, the question would hinge on whether the results of the tracking are beneficial. According to those who look at the lack of intention and lack of effort expended on the *melakhah*, the question would hinge on whether one is intentionally triggering the sensors.

Those *poskim* who applied the classic rules of *pesik reisha de-lo niha leih* for the security cameras, digital refrigerators, and kinetic watches consider whether the health tracking on a smartwatch is also unintentional and non-beneficial. Rav Hershel Schachter and Rav Mordechai Willig (oral communication, Jan 25, 2018) hold that the smartwatch monitoring is considered beneficial. Even if one will only look at the statistics after some time and out of curiosity, it is still considered beneficial that the information was recorded. If a person did not actually care about the information being picked up, they would simply wear another watch for Shabbat. Those who wear these watches often prefer them precisely because of

their useful health monitors. Therefore, according to that approach, wearing such a watch is tantamount to plugging in an electrical device on Shabbat because the results are beneficial, an attitude which renders the action intentional. Additionally, they explain that by wearing the watch one is causing it to monitor one's health and record data in a computer chip which, in their opinion, is categorized under the *melakhah* of writing, erasing, or constructing.

On the other hand, according to those *poskim* who discuss not being responsible for an inconsequential *melakhah*, there is more to analyze. According to Rav Wosner's approach, we can suggest that the recordings are a passive result of wearing the watch, not based on expending any extra effort to cause the monitoring to occur. Therefore, in a technical sense there is no violation of Shabbat since one isn't doing any action to cause the watch to take one's pulse or track one's steps and the benefit of the recordings is minimal. One is simply living normally, breathing, sleeping, and walking, and the watch is simply doing its job by monitoring that activity. While not all *poskim* accept Rav Wosner's novel position, as mentioned earlier, Rav Yosef Zvi Rimon extended his opinion to permit wearing a Fitbit that would track a person's health or sleep. It was unclear which watches he would not practically allow. Similarly, Rabbi Rozen[12] argues that since the health tracking is an unobservable result that isn't immediately retrievable for someone observing Shabbat, the digital recordings are considered not one's action at all. Therefore, in his opinion, it is technically permitted to wear a Fitbit on Shabbat; however, in practice it is highly discouraged since it isn't in the spirit of Shabbat.

H. Conclusion

Being that Halakhah is a vibrant and advanced system built upon principles of Torah and Hazal, it is always equipped to address and offer religious insights into the newest innovations of the world. In general, closing an electric circuit on Shabbat is forbidden either Biblically or rabbinically. Changing the current in a circuit, which is relevant for speaking into a microphone that is already on or adjusting the volume on a hearing aid, is subject to a dispute. Even those who are lenient about altering a current would not permit it in cases where it would desecrate the sanctity of Shabbat.

We discussed three scenarios where the unintentional and insignificant consequences of electrical appliances on Shabbat apply. All rabbis permit walking in front of a security camera on Shabbat, but they differ as to the reason; some are lenient since the writing caused on the screen is unintentional and non-beneficial to the walker, while others say that it is permitted, as the walker didn't expend any effort to cause that result. There was a similar discussion regarding the permissibility of causing computer chip recordings of digital refrigerators. The question hinged on whether unintentional and unobservable results were a person's

[12] The details were clarified by Rabbi Binyamin Zimmerman (written communication, Jan. 19, 2018) who worked with Rabbi Rozen at Zomet.

responsibility at all. Then we discussed wearing an electrical self-winding watch on Shabbat. Some consider this permissible because it is unintentional and not considered fixing since it is a normal use of the watch; others say that the violation of Shabbat entailed is not attributable to the wearer, either because he didn't expend any effort for the results or because the results were unintentional and unobservable.

Based on these principles, we focused on the health tracking capabilities of the smartwatch, including tracking calories burnt, heart rate, pulse, and sleep cycle. Communication, notifications, and even having the screen display vary its brightness as per the proximity sensor are certainly not permitted on Shabbat. Regarding the health tracking, some *poskim* including Rav Schachter and Rav Willig think that wearing the smartwatch is rabbinically forbidden because one's actions cause the smartwatch to open and close circuits on Shabbat. In their opinion, the health monitoring is considered beneficial and therefore the Shabbat-violating action is attributed to the wearer. However, Rabbi Rozen held that technically it is permitted since the results of the tracking are unobservable and not immediately beneficial. Nonetheless, Rabbi Rozen agreed that one should not wear a smartwatch that has health monitoring since it is not appropriate for Shabbat. As evidenced above, the Halakhah carefully discerns between technology that threatens the sanctity of Shabbat, from those that enhance it. As the world continues to evolve we strive to continue to embrace modernity through the lens of Torah.

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The Development of Neo-Hasidism: Echoes and Repercussions Part III: Shlomo Carlebach and Zalman Schachter-Shalomi

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Editor's note: This article, presented in four parts, is a revised version of a paper presented at the Orthodox Forum convened March 15-16, 2015. It will appear in the forthcoming volume, Contemporary Uses and Forms of Hasidut, ed. Shlomo Zuckier (Urim, 2019), as part of the Orthodox Forum series. It is intended to spark a conversation about the origins of neo-Hasidism and to consider its contemporary relevance. After some preliminary notes, the first three installations are devoted to exploring in brief the works of foundational neo-Hasidic writers, thinkers, and leaders. This intellectual genealogy paves the way for the fourth part of the series, considering the impact of neo-Hasidism, and particularly its liberal forms, upon Orthodox Jewish life and examines how such liberal neo-Hasidism may continue to influence Orthodox religious thought.

Rabbi Shlomo Carlebach

Rabbi Shlomo Carlebach (1925-1994) was a gifted musician, teacher, and storyteller.[13] The scion of a great rabbinic family, Carlebach was raised in a traditional German Orthodox community but met the religious world of Hasidism in his youth. After the Second World War, he came to imagine a renewal of contemporary Jewish life grounded in the teachings of Hasidism. Described variously as "the singing rabbi," "the dancing rebbe," and "the Hasidic troubadour," Carlebach became a worldwide Jewish sensation; his influence spilled across boundaries both geographic and denominational.[14] Reb Shlomo, as he was popularly known, mobilized the spiritual legacy of Hasidism to lift the hearts and minds of Israel out of the incomparable damage wrought by the Holocaust.

Shlomo and his twin brother Eli Chaim were born in Berlin but raised in Baden bei Wien, a town frequented by members and leaders of several Hasidic communities. The Carlebach family escaped to Brooklyn on the eve of the Second World War, and Shlomo continued his studies in the academies of Torah Vodaas and then in Lakewood under the aegis of the great Rabbi Aharon Kotler. But he left the insular yeshiva world in the late 1940s, following his brother to the Chabad court. The Chabad community, while fiercely Orthodox, was already beginning to show signs of interest in reaching beyond its own borders; Reb Shlomo later described this move from Lakewood to Crown Heights as having been motivated by a need to help the Jewish people after the Holocaust.[15]

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[13] For an outstanding biography of Carlebach, see Natan Ophir (Offenbacher), *Rabbi Shlomo Carlebach: Life, Mission, and Legacy* (Jerusalem and New York: Urim Publications, 2014); see also the Hebrew work of M.H. Brand, *R. Sheloimel'eh: Masekhet Hayyay ve-Olamo shel R. Shelomoh Karlibakh* (Efrat: 1996).

[14] His remarkable presence in American culture is attested by the recent Broadway musical *Soul Doctor*, based on the story of his life.

[15] The moves, both to Lakewood and then to Chabad, signaled a rejection of Carlebach's German Orthodox heritage, perhaps because of its embrace of rational, secular culture as a necessary complement to modern religion, a belief that was shattered by the Holocaust; see Yaakov Ariel, "Hasidism in the Age of Aquarius: The House of Love and Prayer in San Francisco, 1967-1977," *Religion and American Culture: A Journal of Interpretation*

The young Shlomo was sent out by Lubavitch to gain new recruits for Chabad. This outreach program, which was initiated by R. Yosef Yitzchak Schneersohn and blossomed under the leadership of his son-in-law R. Menachem Mendel Schneerson, reflected the belief that the Jewish people needed more than great Talmud scholars: they needed sensitive, dynamic rabbis who could "talk to people about Judaism."[16] Together with a brilliant and outgoing young rabbi named Zalman Schachter, about whom much more will be said below, Reb Shlomo went to college campuses and gave impromptu performances that included Hasidic stories and music. Reb Shlomo and Reb Zalman were tasked with something quite new. Their goal of returning assimilated Jews toward a traditional life of commitment and observance had little precedent in the Hasidic world. The earlier figures of Buber and Zeitlin had inveighed against the apathetic and spiritually vapid lives of secularized European Jews, but neither of them suggested that their readers should actually become Hasidim. Reb Shlomo and Reb Zalman hoped that those inspired by their teachings, melodies, and stories would journey to Crown Heights and devote themselves to a traditional life of observance. However, even in these early years Reb Shlomo molded the Hasidic tradition so that it would speak to the post-War seekers. In doing so he too was dramatically reshaped by the new generation of Jewish youth.[17]

Reb Shlomo traveled throughout the 1950s, developing a reputation as a talented Jewish performer. But he drifted away from Chabad, led by his belief that strict gender separations and the traditional prohibition against women singing were impediments for many contemporary Jews.[18] In 1966 Reb Shlomo was invited to participate in the Berkeley Folk Festival. In the Bay Area he saw the world of the counter-culture in all of its beauty and complexity: drug addiction, rebellion, youthful energy, sexual liberation, spirituality, the quest to recover one's roots, a longing for peace and universalism, a deep distrust of authority, and the fundamental belief that the world is broken and in need of repair. Reb Shlomo found himself deeply attracted to the soulfulness of many of the young people he met in that world, finding them more open to his own sort of spirituality than many in the yeshiva world from which he had come. At the same time, he quickly interpreted the 1960s hippie culture as a displaced yearning for the sacred among a generation that was dissatisfied with the empty, close-minded bourgeois life of their parents.

13:2 (2003), 140; Yitta Halberstam Mandelbaum, *Holy Brother: Inspiring Stories and Enchanted Tales about Rabbi Shlomo Carlebach* (Northvale, NJ: Jason Aronson, Inc., 1997), 52.

[16] "Practical Wisdom from Shlomo Carlebach," *Tikkun Magazine* 12, no. 5 (Fall, 1998): 53.

[17] Ariel, "Hasidism in the Age of Aquarius," 141.

[18] In the *Tikkun* interview Reb Shlomo expressed sadness that the Lubavitcher Rebbe was unwilling to come with him into these uncharted and unconventional waters. But in 1959 Rabbi Moshe Feinstein penned a responsum in which he alludes to Reb Shlomo in veiled terms, referring to a prodigal scholar whose infractions are not heretical beliefs but rather the fact that he plays before mixed audiences. See *Iggerot Mosheh, Even ha-Ezer*, vol. 1, no. 96; Ophir, *Rabbi Shlomo Carlebach*, 89; and for a different incident, see ibid, 243. More broadly, see Yaakov Ariel, "Can Adam and Eve Reconcile?: Gender and Sexuality in a New Jewish Religious Movement," *Nova Religio: The Journal of Alternative and Emergent Religions* 9, no. 4 (2006): 53-78.

Throughout the 1960s-70s Reb Shlomo attended hippie gatherings and cultural or religious ceremonies of all kinds, performing together with swamis, gurus, and other spiritual sages. In 1967 he founded the House of Love and Prayer in San Francisco.[19] This institution, which existed in various forms for nearly ten years, was a synagogue for spiritual seekers as well as an experiment in communal living and a loving home for lost souls.[20] And, although they did not lead the services, the House of Love and Prayer created a far more embracing and welcoming space for women than most traditional houses of worship. In addition to continuing the Hasidic emphasis on the power of prayer, the House of Love and Prayer allowed Reb Shlomo to emphasize the Shabbat atmosphere as a method for inspiring ecstatic experiences rivaling those created by controlled substances; it is no surprise that one of his songs from these years was called "Lord Get Me High."

When the House of Love and Prayer closed its doors in 1977, many of its former members joined other disciples of Reb Shlomo in founding a community in Israel called Moshav Me'or (Mevo) Modi'in. This settlement, located between Jerusalem and Tel Aviv, might be described as part yeshiva, part pioneer *kibbutz*, and part Jewish ashram. And although the community was variegated and approaches to Jewish practice and life varied somewhat, the rhythms of life—and communal standards—were largely traditional.

Although he became more interested in Israel after 1967, Reb Shlomo's impact in the Holy Land began much earlier.[21] He gave concerts throughout Israel during a series of visits between 1959-1961, attracting young followers both religious and secular. Reb Shlomo was fiercely active in promoting morale among soldiers in the aftermath of the many wars. He drew upon Rav Kook in claiming that there is a spiritual kernel to the work of "secular" people involved in sacred pursuits. This was true for the American hippies, and was equally true for the Israeli soldiers fighting in defense of the State of Israel. Indeed, Rav Kook's mystical nationalism had a marked impact on Reb Shlomo's thought. Though describing himself as sensitive to the plight of the Palestinian Arabs, Reb Shlomo supported the Jewish right to settle the greater land of Israel. He maintained this position throughout the conflicts of the 1980s, and gave concerts in support of the settlers, performing in the West Bank alongside figures like the radical R. Yitzchak Ginsburgh.

Reb Shlomo saw himself as carrying forward the spiritual legacy of Hasidism. Like the other Neo-Hasidic thinkers surveyed in this series, he understood that Hasidism was grounded in an inward approach to religion.[22] But he also showed people a new way of living that was

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[19] On the House of Love and Prayer, see Aryae Coopersmith, *Holy Beggars: A Journey from Haight Street to Jerusalem* (El Granada, CA: One World Lights, 2011). In this same year Reb Shlomo took over the leadership of the New York synagogue where his recently deceased father had been the rabbi for several decades.

[20] It is noteworthy that Abraham Joshua Heschel and Elie Wiesel were listed as spiritual advisors to the House; see Coopersmith, *Holy Beggars*, 163.

[21] Ariel, "Hasidism in the Age of Aquarius," 156.

[22] Reb Shlomo once remarked that religion, like homeopathic medicine, "has to work from inside to outside"; see "Practical Wisdom from Shlomo Carlebach," 53.

grounded in the sacred rites of Jewish observance. Thus Reb Shlomo was, in general, not rebelling against the practices of Orthodox Judaism, but rather against the intellectual small-mindedness, the rote or perfunctory approach to religious service, and failure to recognize the paramount importance of the inner world.[23] Even after the aporia of the Holocaust, taught Reb Shlomo, there is meaning beyond absurdity. Every moment and each action, be it ritual or seemingly mundane, can be transformed into a sacred encounter with God and an opportunity for true and unbridled connection with other people. This message of the necessity of absolute and unconditional love of others, of the infinite capacity of kindness, of devotional interconnectivity across the members of a community (and between individuals of different circles), and of joyful compassion were key elements of his spiritual legacy.

Shlomo Carlebach is remembered best for his stirring and inspiring music,[24] which blended folk traditions with an innovative Hasidic style. He understood the pedagogical value of song in addition to its aesthetic power, and once explained: "I began to sing my songs, and in between one song and another I realized I could talk to people about Judaism, because when they sing their hearts are open."[25] Music can be used to grab the attention of the audience and to open their hearts to a spiritual message. This devotional aim is clearly visible in the accompanying notes from a 1965 album, which bespeak the neo-Hasidic quality of his musical project:

> Now a vibrant new Jewish personality has emerged to express the Hassidic [sic!] heritage in the context of our times. Rabbi Shlomo Carlebach, directly descended through a noteworthy rabbinic line of scholars, seeks to make manifest the original message of Hassidism. Shlomo is an Orthodox rabbi, a man of God—but he is also a folk singer in the truest sense of the word. A bard who utters from the fibers of his own being, music and words that speak with the world around him. Shlomo is a link in our time to the heroic figure of the Baal Shem Tov. In his presence one may experience that glow of

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[23] One of Carlebach's veteran students described him as follows: "Rav Shlomo was continually pushing all those around him to strive for the fullest Jewish experience at every moment, never accepting rote performance of any mitzvah… he taught that every moment is a unique opportunity to connect to God and to each other. He was a unique blend of tradition and spontaneity, *halachah* and creativity"; see Avraham Arieh Trugman, "Probing the Carlebach Phenomenon," *Jewish Action* 63 (2002), 12.

[24] See Sarah Weidenfeld, "Rabbi Shlomo Carlebach's Musical Tradition in its Cultural Context: 1950-2005," Ph.D. Diss. (Ramat Gan, Bar-Ilan University, 2008) [Hebrew]; Sam Weiss, "Carlebach, Neo-Hasidic Music, and Current Liturgical Practice," *Journal of Synagogue Music* 34 (2009), 55-75; Shaul Magid, "Rabbi Shlomo Carlebach and His Interpreters: A Review Essay of Two New Musical Releases" *Musica Judaica Online Reviews* (September 2010), accessed January 17, 2016. See also Ophir, *Rabbi Shlomo Carlebach*, 55-57; Ariel, "Hasidism in the Age of Aquarius," 141.

[25] "Practical Wisdom from Shlomo Carlebach," 53.

> warmth and courage, the Hassidic spark of divine fire that melts estrangement and soul weariness.[26]

The many hundreds of tunes that Reb Shlomo composed have seeped into Jewish communities across the globe. Some have essentially supplanted the traditional melodies of prayer, and many have become so universal that they are no longer associated with him. Many of Reb Shlomo's tunes are deceptively simple, although some, particularly the early works, are rather complicated. He was very careful with the melodies, and demanded absolute precision.[27]

Reb Shlomo was famous for his original renditions of Hasidic tales. Unlike Martin Buber, who reworked the stories in written translation and made them accessible to a broad readership, Reb Shlomo was an oral storyteller who mastered the art of live performance.[28] His appearances always included a selection of Hasidic stories, chosen because of their thematic links to musical numbers as well as to the occasion for the gathering. Reb Shlomo was less explicit about the creative element of his tales than Buber. But he too had inherited the notion that Hasidic stories are meant to inspire, and therefore must always fuse the ethos of Hasidism with the needs of the contemporary listener.

Some of Reb Shlomo's tales were recorded and included on musical discs, though many others were printed in written form only after his death. The message uniting all his stories, often heartrending yet always inspiring, is quite clear. They affirm life in the face of death, meaning in the face of absurdity, connection in the face of intractable loneliness, and sublime altruism and goodness in the face of unspeakable cruelty and destruction. The crux of every story, the moment in which Reb Shlomo invites his audience to open their hearts, is a sentence such as: "Do you know how many favors you can do in Auschwitz at night?" These are words that one cannot hear without being touched, piercing through even the most hardened veil of inattention and apathy. This painful context of redemption through kindness in the midst of the Holocaust ensures that Reb Shlomo's message—"the greatest thing in the world is to do somebody else a favor"—is a powerful reminder to strive for goodness in the face of absurdity and tragedy.[29]

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[26] Quoted in Ophir, *Rabbi Shlomo Carlebach*, 108-109. The text, from the album *Mikdash Melekh* (*In the Palace of the King*), is by Sophia Adler. See also Robert Shelton, "Rabbi Carlebach Sings Spirituals," *New York Times*, October 24, 1961, p. 24 (accessed January 26, 2016), cited in part by Ariel, "Hasidism in the Age of Aquarius," 142; and Mark Kligman, "Contemporary Jewish Music," *American Jewish Year Book* 101 (2001), 99-104.

[27] See the discography and the list of songs in Ophir, *Rabbi Shlomo Carlebach*, 463-480.

[28] The public career of this energetic performer and teacher spanned nearly five decades, but the fact that Reb Shlomo wrote very little has made it difficult for scholars to appreciate his contributions. His thoughts must be pieced together from oral testimonies, or from fragments of teachings recorded and transcribed by private individuals.

[29] Here I refer to the story "The Holy Hunchback," included in the 1980 album *L'Kovod Shabbos*.

The creative deployment of Hasidic teachings is the third element of Reb Shlomo's neo-Hasidic legacy. He frequently drew upon the sermons of Rabbi Nahman of Bratzlav together with lesser-known Polish Hasidic masters such as Rabbi Mordekhai Yosef of Izhbitz and Rabbi Kalonymus Kalman Shapira of Piaseczno, whose works he helped to popularize among a contemporary readership. Reb Shlomo quoted from a wide variety of early Hasidic masters and on a number of occasions he actually handed out copies of Hasidic books, tailoring each selection for the intended recipient. Reb Shlomo neither quoted Hasidic teachings verbatim nor simply paraphrased their contents; he summarized and repackaged the message in a way that spoke to his contemporary audience.

For example, Reb Shlomo adapted an explanation of the biblical prohibition against a priest coming into contact with a corpse given by Rabbi Mordekhai Yosef of Izhbitz. The Hasidic master suggests that a *kohen* must not be allowed to encounter death because it will lead him to anger and frustration with the injustice of divine Providence.[30] This attitude of protest makes it impossible for the priest to perform his religious function. In a second teaching, R. Mordekhai Yosef adds that priests are tasked with serving God in a state of pure and constant joy. Reb Shlomo, however, combined these two distinct homilies into a single teaching and then extended their relevance into the present day. We serve God through prayer and study, he says, and our worship must be founded in joy. Yet this pure joy is impossible after the Holocaust, to which our response can only be anger. But all is not lost:

> Young people today are so hungry for that light, for that meaning, for that melody—for the deepest inner dimensions of truth. And if they can't get it from Judaism, they'll go anywhere that love and light are to be found. Thank God our hungry, searching, younger generation found some traditions that weren't so angry with God.[31]

Optimism and happiness, argues Reb Shlomo, must be maintained despite the brokenness of the Holocaust, although things cannot continue as they have always been. So the spirituality of contemporary seekers should be embraced, because it runs from new rivers and holy places untainted by our anger at the Nazis. Reb Shlomo knew that they would go to other sources of inspiration if they could not find an authentic Jewish language for their quest, but he also acknowledged that the shattered Jewish people was in need of the new generation's type of pure joy and illumination.[32]

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[30] *Mei ha-Shiloah*, *Emor*, 39b.

[31] Based on the paraphrased transcription by his student David Zeller, *Soul of the Story: Meetings with Remarkable People* (Woodstock, VT: Jewish Lights, 2006), 148-151. See also Rodger Kamenetz, *The Jew in the Lotus: A Poet's Rediscovery of Jewish Identity in Buddhist India* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1994), 156-157; and Ophir, *Rabbi Shlomo Carlebach*, 203-204.

[32] In reworking this teaching, Reb Shlomo excludes something present in the original teaching: the literal understanding of Divine providence, a characteristic element of the Izhbitzer's Torah made frightful if applied to the Holocaust.

Another very important element of Reb Shlomo's life must be addressed. Allegations of behavioral impropriety and sexual misconduct began to surface shortly after his death. Some of these date to the 1960s, when rumors were already circulating, and new allegations have continued to emerge into the present day. He acted toward young women in his orb in unacceptable ways, taking advantage of his personal charisma and of the trust his followers had in him. This is the case even by the standards of the time in which the events occurred, but is magnified when judged by the ethos of our own day.[33]

Continuing to see the good in Reb Shlomo and use his music—even if we acknowledge his bad behavior and condemn it—does send a message about how seriously these indiscretions are treated. To do so requires a great deal of caution and sensitivity.Wholesale erasure of Reb Shlomo's legacy, however, does not account for the complexity of his legacy. Condemning such indiscretions in the strongest possible terms, it cannot be denied that he had a positive impact on many through neo-Hasidic performances filled with stories, teachings, and music.[34]

Reb Shlomo embodied the itinerant Hasidic master in the modern world, constantly moving from place to place and illuminating the people around him.[35] He trained a number of close disciples, ordaining some as rabbis and designating others as spiritual leaders of various sources.[36] His devoted followers, many of whom may rightly be called neo-Hasidim, run the gamut from Orthodox to liberal and avowedly heterodox.[37] Reb Shlomo's own perspective,

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[33] See Sarah Blustain, "A Paradoxical Legacy: Rabbi Shlomo Carlebach's Shadow Side," *Lilith* 23, no. 1 (Spring 1998): 10-17; and the replies in "Sex, Power and Our Rabbis: Readers Respond to 'Rabbi Shlomo Carlebach's Shadow Side,'" *Lilith* 23, no. 2 (Summer 1998):12-16; and Sarah Imhoff, "Carlebach and the Unheard Stories," *American Jewish History* 100.4 (2016): 555-560. Cf. Ophir, *Rabbi Shlomo Carlebach*, 421-425. See the op-ed piece by Reb Shlomo's daughter Neshama Carlebach, a talented singer and performer in her own right: http://blogs.timesofisrael.com/my-sisters-i-hear-you/ (accessed October 23, 2018).

[34] Ophir, *Rabbi Shlomo Carlebach*, 195, describes him as having "crystallized a unique style combining three types of presentation: singing-whistling-guitar playing, musical storytelling, and ethical-theological exhortations spliced with personal anecdotes." See also ibid, 53-59.

[35] For a popular collection of tales about him, see Mandelbaum's *Holy Brother*.

[36] He gave rabbinic ordination to women as well, taking such a bold step far before the issue arose in the mainstream Orthodox community. See Ophir, *Rabbi Shlomo Carlebach*, 363-380.

[37] Trugman, "Probing the Carlebach Phenomenon," 9-12; Joanna Steinhardt, "American Neo-Hasids in the Land of Israel," *Nova Religio: The Journal of Alternative and Emergent Religions* 13:4 (2010), 22-42. Shefa Siegel, "Shlomo Carlebach – Rabbi of Love or Undercover Agent of Orthodox Judaism," *Haaretz*, Sep. 4, 2011, available at: http://www.haaretz.com/jewish/books/shlomo-carlebach-rabbi-of-love-or-undercover-agent-of-orthodox-judaism-1.382475, retrieved Mar. 8, 2016. Micha Odenheimer, for example, has described his efforts on behalf of social justice worldwide as a direct outgrowth of the lessons imbibed from Reb Shlomo; see Tomer Persico's recent interview with Odenheimer, available at: https://tomerpersicoenglish.wordpress.com/2015/02/11/changing-the-world-one-bit-at-a-time-an-interview-with-micha-odenheimer/, retrieved Feb. 1, 2016.

however, tended toward a traditional—if unconventional and expansive—religious ethos.[38] He maintained close connections with many parts of the Orthodox and Hasidic world. And although Reb Shlomo changed particular laws or customs, especially those that erected boundaries between people (metaphorically as well as physically), his commitment to Jewish practice was quite traditional.

Reb Shlomo experimented throughout his life, but, in the end, he never made a clean break with his past in the Orthodox world. In this sense, he may be said to have interpreted an idea central to the theology of the Izhbitz Hasidic dynasty. Most of us, said Reb Shlomo, are still within the framework of *halakhah*, but our dreams reach far beyond it. In rare times and under rare circumstances, the will of God and the *halakhah* as codified are not identical, and in those moments, we must have the audacity to break free and answer the call of the hour. Reb Shlomo's neo-Hasidism was largely within the structures of traditional life, but without the intellectual and spiritual close-mindedness of the Orthodox world.[39] He knew that the generation of hippies and seekers would be lost without a new kind of Jewish spiritual leader. Reb Shlomo also understood that the post-Holocaust Orthodox world, including that of the Hasidim, required a burst of creative energy combined with an eternal message of hope.[40]

Rabbi Zalman Schachter-Shalomi

Rabbi Zalman Schachter-Shalomi (1924-2014) was an exceptionally creative and dynamic spiritual teacher.[41] Reb Zalman, as he was affectionately known, was born in Poland but raised in Vienna, coming of age in a diverse Jewish environment with connections to the Hasidic world. After passing through Belgium and France to escape the Nazis, Zalman's family moved to America. There he became close to the leadership of Lubavitch, who recognized his brilliant intellect and charismatic talents, and he enjoyed a short career as a Chabad missionary. But exposure to the wisdom of other faith traditions and the American counter-culture movement fundamentally changed Reb Zalman's paradigm of Jewish spirituality, and he devoted the next fifty years of his life to inspiring a spiritual awakening among North American Jews based on the teachings of Hasidism.

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[38] Ariel, "Hasidism in the Age of Aquarius," 155: "As liberal and inclusive as he was, Carlebach wished to remain within the realm of Orthodox Judaism and was reluctant to go along with Schachter. With all his criticism of the lack of flexibility and inspiration on the part of the Jewish Orthodox establishment, his goal was to bring young men and women to a traditionally observant, if open and innovative, environment."

[39] For an example of of Reb Shlomo's own thoughts on the power of traditional Judaism and his relationship thereto, see Micha Odenheimer, "On Orthodoxy: An Interview with Rabbi Shlomo Carlebach," *Gnosis* 16 (1990): 46-49.

[40] Shaul Magid, "Carlebach's Broken Mirror," *Tablet Magazine*, Nov. 1, 2012, emphasizes the extent to which Carlebach fabricated a "prewar Jewish world that never existed" in order to inspire his listener; available at: http://www.tabletmag.com/jewish-arts-and-culture/music/115376/carlebach-broken-mirror, accessed Jan. 20, 2016.

[41] Zalman M. Schachter-Shalomi, *My Life in Jewish Renewal: A Memoir*, with Edward Hoffman (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, Inc. 2012).

The young Zalman grew up in a religious world (the family's roots were in the Belz Hasidic community), but from an early age he was drawn more to the European intellectual world than to the arid spirituality in the highly-assimilated circles of his youth. During his family's sojourn in Antwerp he first encountered a community of Chabad Hasidim. Reb Zalman would later describe his tremendous disappointment at the collapse of Western culture with the rise of the Nazis, noting that this Chabad group accepted his anger and bitterness without gazing at him askance. Reb Zalman was inspired by their spiritual depth, their commitment to contemplative prayer and religious experience, their relative openness to modernity, and their holistic approach to intensive spiritual education. He later recalled that:

> I was drawn to the Lubavitch tradition, a form of Chabad, because of its promise that one could become adept enough to attain certain mystical experiences in this lifetime…. I also liked the nature of the relationship between the Rebbe and the individual Hasid. In this kind of Hasidism, the Rebbe shows you the way, but you have to do the work yourself—rather than hang onto his coattails.[42]

Reb Zalman was particularly attracted to the Chabad emphasis on the inner work of each individual Hasid. Some other Hasidic communities, by contrast, place the near-total focus on the *rebbe*'s worship and thus pave the way for a purely vicarious type of religious service. Having met and been deeply impressed by R. Menachem Mendel Schneerson, the future Rebbe of Chabad, in Marseilles in 1941, Zalman decided to study in the Chabad yeshiva in Brooklyn in the 1940s.

Reb Zalman, along with Reb Shlomo Carlebach, spent several of his formative years as a Chabad emissary sent out to American colleges in order to expose people to the teachings of traditional Judaism. In the 1950s, Reb Zalman worked as an Orthodox pulpit rabbi in New Bedford and Fall River, Massachusetts, but he also enrolled in graduate school at Boston University. He studied with the great theologian and preacher Howard Thurman, who exposed Reb Zalman to other religious traditions, particularly the powerful piety of his own mystical African-American Christian faith. Reb Zalman learned a great deal about spiritual leadership and community, and Thurman also showed him how religion could be taught in an experiential manner.[43] These skills based on the spirituality "labs"—practical exercises, such as different modes of devotional reading, singing, dancing (amplifying devotional skills that he had found in Chabad)—accompanied Reb Zalman throughout his career in communal leadership and university positions across North America.[44]

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[42] Zalman Schachter-Shalomi, *The First Step: A Guide for the New Jewish Spirit*, with Donald Gropman (Toronto and New York: Bantam Books, 1983), 2.

[43] See Edward K. Kaplan, "A Jewish Dialogue with Howard Thurman: Mysticism, Compassion, and Community," *CrossCurrents* 60 (2010): 515–525.

[44] In reflecting upon the years in which he was becoming increasingly aware of other religious traditions and their spiritual "technologies," Reb Zalman invoked the same teaching of R. Nahman of Bratslav used by Hillel Zeitlin in his description of the deep wisdom to be found in non-Jewish sources; see Schachter-Shalomi, *The First Step*, 10.

In the early 1960s Reb Zalman was beginning to push against the boundaries of Orthodoxy, although he was still part of the broadly-defined Chabad community. In a significant essay from that period, written for people totally unfamiliar with the world of Hasidism, he outlined the major tenets of Hasidic spirituality, including the Hasidic approach to study, song, introspection, and contemplative prayer. He also noted that one can only become a Hasid through apprenticing himself to a veteran member of the community, and ultimately to a particular *rebbe*, since the inner life of devotion is a skill that cannot be absorbed through books. Reb Zalman also offers the following remarks regarding the nature of Hasidism and its relationship to Jewish practice and Orthodoxy, perhaps the clearest statement of his early thinking on the subject:

> Hasidism really relates perpendicularly to any form of Judaism, including Orthodoxy. It defines its teaching as the interior Torah, the Torah's innermost part. It views its mode of prayer not in terms of liturgical dissent from the Ashkenazi ritual, but in terms of the service of the heart. Its field of action it views with an inner aliveness, with *kavvanah* (intention). It views God, Israel, and Torah as one, but with two aspects—the outer manifest one and the inner hidden one. It strives to impose interior recollection, joy and discipline, on outer traditional forms. The spontaneous is preferred over the dryly habitual. Yet it demands a higher awareness, and paradoxically, a pre-meditation within the spontaneous.
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> While basically, Hasidism has no quarrel with Orthodox Judaism, it feels that the latter is neither vital nor profound enough. Orthodoxy, while it teaches what ought to be done, does not, however, show its adherents *how* they may do this. Hasidism corrects this….
>
> While Hasidism affords its adherents great individual freedom, it gives this only within the traditional framework. Latitude is given as to whether one prays earlier or later, depending on one's interior recollectedness, or whether one wishes to pray with song or chant, rhythm or motion, or meditatively: but it does demand the praying of the liturgy in *tallith* and *t'fillin*…. It would be a mistake to assume that Hasidism frees anyone from divinely given obligations: what it does is to provide him with the joyous, fervent wherewithal to fulfill them.[45]

This is a beautiful summary of the inner path of Hasidism, which infuses existing rituals—indeed, the entirety of Jewish practice—with new religious meaning. The performance of sacred deeds does not ever replace the inward glance, but neither does contemplation or meditation supersede the obligation to act. It is important to note Reb Zalman's increasing connections with non-Orthodox institutions and his work for Hillel, work that took him beyond the "four cubits" of the highly traditionalist world of Orthodox Hasidism. Already in this essay, we see that his emergent understanding of Neo-Hasidism is

[45] Zalman Schachter, "How to Become a Modern Hasid," *Jewish Heritage* 2 (1960), 40.

not wedded to any particular mode of practice or denomination. It is a reservoir of spiritual wisdom that may be deployed in *all* religious actions and settings.

But Reb Zalman's expansive spiritual vision did not allow him to remain with Chabad forever. His drift began in the 1940s, and, though he never stopped feeling and projecting a connection to Lubavitch, by the mid-1960s he had left Chabad and become increasingly distanced from Orthodox Judaism.[46] In part, Reb Zalman left because of his appreciation for the power of psychedelic drugs, seeing in them the keys for unlocking new vistas of human consciousness. His awareness of and appreciation for the spiritual disciplines from other faith communities, his sense of the problematic strictures of Orthodoxy, and its intellectual myopia, also led him into new realms.[47] He had come to realize that Hasidism, as such, would not suffice as the religious fuel in contemporary America, due to its gender separation and inequality, and the strict hierarchy of the *rebbe* on top, untouchable, that nobody else could ever become. And, though his position on the subject changed over time, it was clear to him that *halakhah* as traditionally interpreted was no longer compelling and useful for the majority of American Jews.[48]

The encounter with Chabad was Reb Zalman's earliest exposure to living Hasidism, but he also read the works of Martin Buber, Hillel Zeitlin, and Abraham Joshua Heschel.[49] His admiration for Heschel and Buber was tempered, however, by a critique of their versions of neo-Hasidism. He argued that Buber was alienated from Jewish practice and remained an outsider to the lived experience of Hasidism. Heschel, argued Reb Zalman, spoke with an indigenous Jewish vocabulary that Buber had lacked, but had forsaken the mystical aspects of Hasidism in order to emphasize the idea of a transcendent God to whose call mankind must respond with sacred deeds. But Reb Zalman's most trenchant critique of Buber and Heschel is levied toward the fact that their neo-Hasidic projects were expressed in books rather than in charismatic leadership. Reb Zalman felt strongly that a neo-Hasidic spiritual master *must* be alive in order to offer guidance and spiritual counseling. He felt that the writings of Buber and Heschel can inspire their readers, but without a living leader to inspire embodied practice, the religious growth of a Hasid can only progress so far.[50]

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[46] Reb Zalman often later described his move from Chabad as a graduation rather than a clean break. See, for example, Zalman Meshullam Schachter-Shalomi, *Spiritual Intimacy: A Study of Counseling in Hasidism* (Northvale, NJ: Jason Aronson, Inc., 1991), xiv-xvii.

[47] He was friends with Timothy Leary and took LSD for the first time in 1962. Heschel eschewed the use of drugs altogether, citing the turn toward such addiction as a sign that the youth were looking for spiritual uplift and met only stiltedness and banal, meaningless religion; see Abraham Joshua Heschel, "In Search of Exaltation," Moral Grandeur and Spiritual Audacity, ed. Susannah Heschel (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1996), 228-229.

[48] Later in life he expressed regret over the wilder elements of his past, and at times he presented his legacy as having undergone a process of refinement.

[49] Reb Zalman also knew Heschel personally; see Schachter-Shalomi, *My Life in Jewish Renewal*, 169-174.

[50] Zalman M. Schachter, "Hasidism and Neo-Hasidism," *Judaism* 9:3 (1960), 220, notes that: "No book can be written about such things…. Neither Buber nor Heschel can replace the *Rebbe*. They can lead a prospective Hasid

The relationship between a spiritual leader and his (or her) disciples was of great concern for Reb Zalman over the course of his life. It was the subject of his doctoral dissertation at Hebrew Union College and several subsequent books, but Reb Zalman also spent much of his career cultivating and inhabiting his role as a living neo-Hasidic teacher. He sought to develop ways of communicating the spiritual tools of the Hasidic leader to the contemporary American rabbinate. The modern rabbi, claimed Reb Zalman, is more like a *rebbe* than an Eastern European *rav*, whose primary task was deciding points of law and adjudicating disputes.

The contemporary rabbi is called upon to offer spiritual guidance, and must therefore be schooled in the practical arts of pastoral psychology and how to interpret the dynamic spiritual world of Jewish theology in a modern (and post-modern) context.[51] But part of Reb Zalman's neo-Hasidism was his portrayal of the *rebbe* as a matter of function, not essential identity: the same person may be the teacher one moment and a disciple in the next.[52] This egalitarian element to Reb Zalman's neo-Hasidism, visible in his attitude toward gender and in his attempt to decentralize the *rebbe* without relinquishing charismatic leadership, represents a critical development.

Reb Zalman was also interested in establishing a devotional community.[53] Influenced by Trappist and other Catholic spiritual works, in 1964 he published a call to found a Jewish monastic order. The goal of what Reb Zalman called the "B'nai Or" community, similar in many respects to Zeitlin's dream of Yavneh, was to serve God wholeheartedly and with undivided attention. The aim of such worship is defined as follows: "so that He, be He blessed, may derive *nahat* (pleasure) from us. Or, to put it differently, to realize God in this lifetime; to achieve a higher level of spiritual consciousness; to liberate such hidden forces within us as would energize us to achieve our highest humanity within Judaism."[54] Here, presented in traditional Jewish language and then translated into the terms of counter-culture spirituality, is the ultimate goal of Hasidic devotion in the modern world.

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to one or another *Rebbe*, preaching one or another way. But without a *Rebbe*, the becoming of the Hasid is frustrated."

[51] Schachter-Shalomi, *Spiritual Intimacy*, 316-318.

[52] Ibid, xvi-xvii. Several of his disciples recall Reb Zalman embodying the role of a Hasidic *rebbe* at neo-Hasidic gatherings, delivering an illuminating sermon and sitting in seat of honor at the head of the table. But Reb Zalman would then ask everyone to move down one chair, thus allowing a new *rebbe* to ascend the throne and speak to the community. This technique reflects his attempt to retain the value of charisma while democratizing the community, something Reb Zalman saw as essential in the contemporary American Jewish context.

[53] Ibid, xiii-xv. Reb Zalman saw himself as inhabiting a place in a long chain of mystical, devotional communities of Jewish, Christian, Islamic, and Eastern seekers, all of whom strived to know the One through different practices and spiritual vocabularies.

[54] Zalman M. Schachter, "Toward an 'Order of B'nai Or'," *Judaism* 13:2 (1964), 185.

Reb Zalman notes that the members of his imagined community are drawn to this new life because they are dissatisfied with contemporary secular and religious cultures; both have become essentially materialistic and self-centered. The cure for this, suggests Reb Zalman, is to form a community of unmitigated devotion to God. The day is to be divided equally into eight hours of rest and respite, eight hours of labor, and eight hours of divine service and spiritual work. The goal of this devotional community, open to both men and women, is to devote all aspects of life to God. While this vision of B'nai Or was never realized, Reb Zalman eventually established a host of small communities that eventually coalesced into Jewish Renewal, a contemporary movement that embodies his spiritual vision as well as the fundamental teachings of Hasidism.

Many aspects of the original call to establish B'nai Or accompanied Reb Zalman over the course of his entire career. Throughout his life he became increasingly devoted to expanding the role of women as equals in all religious settings. Reb Zalman's concern with the practical methods for cultivating the art of prayer was a central aspect of his neo-Hasidism.[55] He wanted to make prayer meaningful for the contemporary Jewish community, and in order to do so he was interested in developing tools, practices, and techniques that could inspire greater levels of devotional attunement. Finally, although his approach to neo-Hasidism was primarily Jewish in thrust and practice, Reb Zalman was ready to borrow from other traditions when necessary. The heart of his spiritual vocabulary was grounded in the Chabad Hasidism of his youth,[56] but his vision of a common core of human spirituality led him to draw upon the experiential elements of other faith communities.[57]

Reb Zalman's version of neo-Hasidism includes a radical element that became more pronounced over the course of his career. Simultaneous to his own uncoupling from the boundaries of Orthodox thought and praxis, Reb Zalman came to believe that humanity was undergoing a transformation of consciousness. He described this as a "paradigm shift" or "turning," referring to a moment (or process) of total reformulation or even transvaluation of religion.[58] In a work published shortly before his death, Reb Zalman interprets the fiery spirituality of Hasidism as a specific manifestation of a universal human drive toward the life of the spirit.[59] He felt that mankind was on the verge of another such shift, in which the

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[55] Zalman Schachter-Shalomi, *Davening: A Guide to Meaningful Jewish Prayer*, with Joel Segel (Woodstock, VT: Jewish Lights, 2012).

[56] Schachter, "Toward an 'Order of B'nai Or'," 189.

[57] Ariel, "Hasidism in the Age of Aquarius," 155.

[58] Zalman Schachter-Shalomi, *Paradigm Shift: From the Jewish Renewal Teachings of Reb Zalman Schachter-Shalomi*, ed. Ellen Singer (Northvale, NJ: Jason Aronson, Inc., 1993). See also Shaul Magid, *American Post-Judaism: Identity and Renewal in a Postethnic Society* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2013); and Shaul Magid, "Between Paradigm Shift Judaism and Neo-Hasidism: The New Metaphysics of Jewish Renewal," *Tikkun Magazine* 30:1 (2015), 11-15.

[59] Netanel Miles-Yepez and Zalman Schachter-Shalomi, *Foundations of the Fourth Turning of Hasidism: A Manifesto* (Boulder, CO: Albion-Andalus Books, 2014). See also Zalman Schachter-Shalomi, *Credo of a Modern Kabbalist*, with Daniel Siegel (Victoria, B.C.: Trafford, 2005).

essence of Hasidism (itself a deeper human phenomenon) would become manifest in surprising and courageous new ways. This part of Reb Zalman's vision was an echo of his Lubavitch origins, essentially a New-Age and universalized translation of the messianic thrust of twentieth-century Chabad.[60]

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[60] See Schachter-Shalomi, *The First Step*, 124-125.