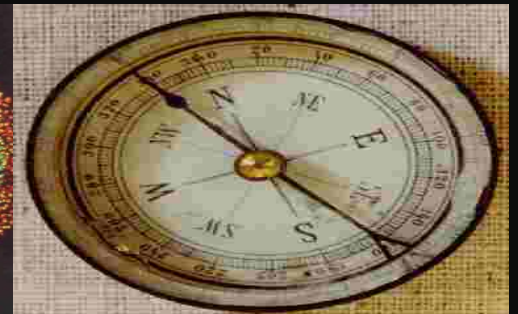
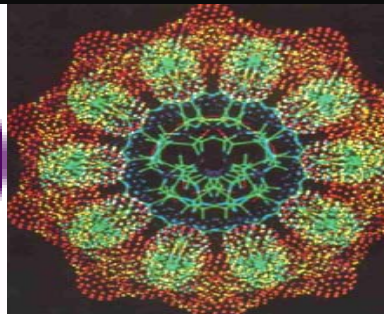


Northwestern University

CENTER FOR BIOETHICS, SCIENCE AND SOCIETY

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Not genetically linked







Meanwhile: The Jews



- **1660 CHARLES STUART (Charles II) (England)**
- Earlier that year, Thomas Violet had petitioned the London city council and the King demanding the re-expulsion of all Jews. King Charles, who recently regained the English throne, sent a Royal message to Parliament asking them to take the protection of the Jews into consideration. The Violet's petition was rejected.
- **1660 - 1746 JEHIEL BEN SOLOMON HEILPRIN (Lithuania)**
- A scholar and historian as well as rabbinical leader and dean of the yeshiva in Minsk, he is best remembered for his *Seder ha-Dorot*, which set the talmudic era in order, both chronologically and biographically.
- **1660 - 1718 (11 Iyar 5478) ZEVI ASHKENAZI, MANAH ZEVI (Moravia)**
- Fled Vilna on the arrival of the Cossacks. He left Buda in 1686 after his wife and sons were killed during the siege. Arriving in Sarajevo, he became the rabbi and started a school in Alfona. Zevi served as rabbi in Amsterdam, London and Lemberg, and was an opponent of [Shabbetai Zevi](#). His son, Yaakov Emden, later became a famous scholar and was involved in a controversy over Shabbetai Zevi with [Jonathan Eybeshutz](#).
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The questions of Jewish Ethics



- For who do we speak?
 - Do we really mean “bioethics for Jews?”
 - Or do we mean “Jews have ideas that bioethicists might find culturally interesting?”
 - Or do we mean “Jews have the best ideas for bioethics?”

Trying to do the right thing: Law and intent



- ***GEMARA.*** *It was taught: Whether they maintained that we should light [lamps] or they maintained that we should not light [them], both intended [it] for the same purpose. R. Joshua said, Raba lectured: Thy people also shall all be righteous, they shall inherit the land for ever: etc. whether they maintained that we should light [lamps] or they maintained that we should not light [them], both intended nought but the same purpose.*

The origins of the first technology



- *Rab Judah said in Samuel's name: We do not recite a blessing over light except at the termination of the Sabbath, since it was then created for the first time.*



- Was light created at the termination of the Sabbath? Surely It was taught: Ten things were created on the eve of the Sabbath at twilight. These are they: the well, the manna, the rainbow, the writing and the writing instrument[s], the Tables, the sepulchre of Moses, the cave in which Moses and Elijah stood, the opening of the ass's mouth, and the opening of the earth's mouth to swallow up the wicked. R. Nehemiah said in his father's name: **Also fire and the mule.**

But wait!



- *R. Josiah said in his father's name: Also the ram and the shamir. R. Judah said: Tongs too. He used to say: Tongs are made with tongs; then who made the first tongs? Hence in truth it was a Heavenly creation. Said they to him, it is possible to make it in a mould and shape it simultaneously. Hence in truth it is of human manufacture! — There is no difficulty: one refers to our fire, the other to the fire of the Gehenna. Our fire [was created] at the termination of the Sabbath; the fire of the Gehenna, (hell) on the eve of the Sabbath.*



- *The Gehenna, for it is written, “For Tophet [i.e., Gehenna] is ordered of old.” The Throne of Glory and the Temple, for it is written, Thou throne of glory, on high from the beginning, Thou place of our sanctuary. The name of the Messiah, as it is written, His [sc. the Messiah's] name shall endure for ever, and has existed before the sun! — I will tell you: only its cavity was created before the world was created, but its fire [was created] on the eve of the Sabbath.*

The story they are thinking of



- As soon as the sun set on the night of the Sabbath, the Holy One, blessed be He, wished to hide the light, but He showed honour to the Sabbath; hence it is written, **AND GOD BLESSED THE SEVENTH DAY**: wherewith did He bless it? With light. When the sun set on the night of the Sabbath, the light continued to function,⁶ whereupon all began praising, as it is written, Under the whole heaven they sing praises to Him (ib. XXXVII, 3)⁷; wherefore? Because His light [reaches] unto the ends of the earth (ib.).⁸

Continued



- When the sun sank at the termination of the Sabbath, darkness began to set in. Adam was terrified, [thinking,] Surely indeed the darkness shall bruise [E.V. 'envelop'] me (Ps. CXXXIX, 11): shall he of whom it was written, He shall bruise thy head (Gen. III, 15) now come to attack me! What did the Lord do for him? He made him find two flints which he struck against each other; light came forth and he uttered a blessing over it; hence it is written, But the night was light about me-ba'adeni (Ps. loc. cit.), i.e. the night was light in my Eden (be-'edni).

The law from the story



- This agrees with Samuel, for Samuel said: Why do we recite a blessing over a lamp [fire] at the termination of the Sabbath? Because it was then created for the first time. R. Huna in Rab's name, and R. Abbahu in R. Johanan's name said: At the termination of the Day of Atonement, too, we recite a blessing over it, because the fire rested the whole day.¹ R. Berekiah said in the name of R. Samuel b. Nahman: Though these things were created in their fulness,² yet when Adam sinned they were spoiled, and they will not again return to their perfection until the son of Perez [viz. Messiah] comes.

What is going on?



- A complex argument about several things at once:
 - There is a hole of loss in the world, somehow made as a part of creation. It is filled with deadly, dangerous fire, in a last act of creation, the choice of true evil a part of the “natural.”
 - But it is not the only fire
 - Humans create fire—with all attendant loss, danger and risk, as a response.

And more: the world is an unknown other



- *1 Our Rabbis taught: Seven things are hidden from men. These are they: the day of death, and the day of comfort, the depth [extent] of judgment; and a man does not know what is in his neighbour's heart; and a man does not know from what he will earn; and when the Davidic dynasty will return; and when the wicked kingdom will come to an end.*



We read ourselves into the ongoing argument



- Fire is the critical interventions of antiquity—seen in a Second Temple debate, linked to their crisis of urbanity; war; and colonialization.

Limits of technology



- A link to the discussion of sin; evil; and death
- Allows for a reflective and contextualized use of narrative over a long historical period.
- Allows for study of law and reception of law that may be suggestive for our problem
- Within a normative system which allows for strong and (competitive) analytic reasoning.
- Similar questions arise across other historical traditions.

A research project:



- Look at the Talmud for examples in which “making a fire” or “making a mule” occur.
- Times when “our fire” is a surrogate for the use of technology .
- And, when such use challenges the Law in some way.

ERUVIN 79



- For Rab Judah stated in the name of Samuel: A fire for a woman in childbirth may be made on the Sabbath. From this one might understand that a fire may be made only for a woman in childbirth but not for any other sick person, only in the rainy season but not in the summer season. It was, however, stated: R. Hiyya b. Abin citing Samuel ruled: If a person has been bled and felt chilly a fire may be made for him on the Sabbath even during the hottest period of the year.

What is Rabbi Judah up to?



May we prohibit preventively?



- Another debate with Rabbi Judah
- What can we know? How ought I to act? For what can we hope?

Is there a slippery slope?



- Beitzah 23
- **AND ONE MAY CURRY CATTLE ON A FESTIVAL.** Our Rabbis taught: What is currying and what is combing? Currying is done with a small toothed [comb] and causes wounds; combing is done with a larged toothed [comb] and does not cause wounds; and there are three views with respect to this: R. Judah maintains: An unintentional act¹⁶ is forbidden, but currying is done with fine teeth and causes wounds, [while] combing is done with large teeth and does not cause wounds, and we do not preventively prohibit combing on account of currying. The Sages are likewise of R. Judah's opinion that an unintentional act is forbidden, but they preventively prohibit combing on account of currying;¹⁷ and R. Eleazar b. Azariah holds as R. Simeon who says: An unintentional act is permitted, [hence] both currying and combing is allowed.

Is there an abnormal wind blowing?



- Shabbat 120a
- Rab Judah said: One may open a door opposite a fire on the Sabbath.⁷ Abaye cursed this. What are the circumstances? If there is a normal wind [blowing], what is the reason of the one who forbids?⁸ — If there is an abnormal wind, what is the reason of the one who permits?⁹ — In truth, it refers to a normal wind: one Master holds, we prohibit preventively;¹⁰ whilst the other Master holds, We do not prohibit preventively.

The role of law to create a future



- “That the world, this world is created and nonetheless in need of future redemption, the unrest of this double thought, is calmed in the unity of the law. The law—for view as world it is law and not what it is as the content of the revelation and demand to the individual: command—the law, therefore, in its comprehended multiplicity and power, ordering everything—the whole “exterior” namely everything of this life, that only a worldly law might somehow comprehend—makes this world and the future one indistinguishable.”
 - (Rosenzweig)



Thank you

