

## CONGREGATION KODIMOH

124 SUMNER AVENUE, SPRINGFIELD, MASS. 01108

ALEX WEISFOGEL, RABBI

April 10, 1970

AKIVA LEFKOWITZ, CANTOR

Rabbi Norman Lamm  
The Jewish Center  
131 West 86th St.  
New York, N. Y. 10024

Dear Norman:

First let me tell you how deeply I appreciate your phone calls and the continuing interest you have displayed.

Attached herewith are copies of the two letters from Rabbi Unterman as well as the letter of Professor Low. All of the above I received from Manny Forman.

I am also enclosing Tendler's letter to me. In this letter, it seems to me that his statement that it would be improper to issue any statement in this matter without Rabbi Feinstein's permission is crucial. It implies that his p'sak that it is halacha v'ei morin kein is also the p'sak of his father-in-law. I have been discussing this problem with him for several years and I am convinced that he is fully aware<sup>of</sup> Reb Moshe's point of view. In conversation he has repeatedly quoted it but this is the first time, to my knowledge, that he has put it in writing.

With warm personal regards and best wishes to the family.

Sincerely,

*Handwritten signature: Alex*

Rabbi Alex Weisfogel

AW:bk  
enc.

בעז"ה,

תש"ל, ירושלים ת"ו



ועש"ק מ' וירא, י"ט בתשון

RABBI I. J. UNTERMAN  
CHIEF RABBI OF ISRAEL

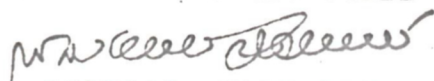
הרב הראשי איסר יהודה אונטרמן  
ראש הרבנים לישראל

לכבוד ראשי הקהילה "שערי שמים" בעיר טורונטו יצ"ו, שלום וברכה מציון.

מצאתי לנכון להודיעכם חוות-דעת הרבנות הראשית לישראל, שהיא דעת היהדות  
החרדית בעולם בכלל, כי אסור להשתמש ברמקול בשבתות ויום-טוב. כן גם מקובל בכל  
בתי הכנסת המסורתיים, בין בנוגע לשלית צבור לתפילה ובנוגע לדרשה ונאום, וחלילה  
לשנות מזה.

אכן מכירים אנחנו היטב שיש צורך גדול למצוא עצה וסידור שכל הצבור כולו  
ישמע את תפילת הש"צ וכן את הדרשה של הרב. וכבר באנו בדברים עם אנשי מדע למצוא  
דרך ולקבוע רמקול כזה, שלא יפגע ח"ו בהלכות התורה בנוגע לשמירת שבת ויו"ט.  
נענה לנו הפרופסור המפורסם ד"ר זאב לב(לעוו) וביחד עם עוד מומחים סידר  
אופן טכנולוגי כזה שאפשר לקבוע רמקול שלא יגרום חלול ש"ק. הפרופסור הנ"ל  
הוא ידוע לשבח במקצוע המדע וגם הוא ירא ה' באמת. ולכן אם תואילו לסדר לפי  
הוראתו וברכת ה' עליכם תבוא.

בכבוד וברכת כל טוב לכם

  
איסר יהודה אונטרמן  
הרב הראשי לישראל



אנחנו מצאנו את הדרך הנכונה  
ועש"ק מ' וירא, י"ט בתשון





הרב הראשי איסור יהודא אונטרמון  
ראש הרבנים לישראל

1969 OCT 7

ב"ה, כ"ה תשרי, שנת תש"ל.

לכבוד

שר הדתות ד"ר ז. ורהפטיג נ"י  
ירושלים.

שלום וברכה,

קבלתי צילום מהמכתב של ה' משלא רחמן פור מטהרן שהעברתם אלי, בנוגע להשאלה  
אם מותר להשתמש ברמקול בשבתות ויו"ט, כדי שישמעו כולם את תפילת הש"ץ וקריאת התורה,  
וכן דרשת הרב וכדומה. שאלה כזו קבלנו גם מכתי-כנסת מאפריקא הדרומית וכן גם מדרום  
אמריקה, וענינו להם דברים כדלקמן, ותואילו נא להמציאם להשואל ולכל מי שישאל בנדון  
זה.

אין ספק כי להשתמש ברם-קול בשבת ויו"ט אסור, ואפילו אם נעשה החיבור לפני  
השבת בין המכשיר המגביר קול ובין החשמל, כי ידוע שבשעה שהקול יוצא קרוב להמכשיר  
מתגבר בזה כחו של החשמל, כפי שנחברר ע"י הנסיון וזה אסור בהחלט. הבעת פה פתח  
לפני מומחה גדול בענין זה כי כדאי ורצוי שימציאו מכשיר כזה שיש בו מצבר של כח חשמלי,  
באופן שהחבר קרוב להמכשיר לא ישפיע כלל על זרם חי של החשמל אלא על המצבר, ולפני  
איזה זמן קבלתי מכתב מאת הפרופיסור המהולל ד"ר צבי לב (שהוא גדול במדע וגם ירא שמים  
ומדקדק במצוות) כי ישנה אפשרות לעשות דבר כזה.

אפשר איפוא לפנות להפרופיסור הנ"ל על הכתובת של "המכון הטכנולוגי לבעיות  
הלכה", רחוב חיד"א 37, בית וגן, ירושלים.

ובכן אם יש את נפשכם באמת להינצל מחלול שבת ויו"ט אל תחוסו על הטרחה ולא  
על ההוצאות. כתבו להפרופ' לב את משאלתכם והוא יתן לכם פירוש מדויק על הדברים הנחוצים  
באנגלית ותוכן בנקל להזמין את זה גם אצלכם.

והנני בכבוד וברכה כי נזכה להזהר בקדושת השבת והמועדים וע"י כך יחיש הקב"ה  
לבאלנו גאולה שלמה בגוף ובנפש. ונזכה לכל האושר המובטח לנו ע"י תוה"ק ונביאי האמת.

איסור יהודא אונטרמון  
הרב הראשי לישראל



July 9, 1969

Rabbi Leonard Oschry  
10 Jabotinsky Street,  
Jerusalem.

Dear Rabbi Oschry:

In answer to your inquiry, we have sent Chief Rabbi Unterman our recommendations for altering the public address system in the Green and Sea Point Congregation of Cape Town, South Africa. The halakhic and technological considerations involve the following legal principles and questions: *הדלקת נרות* producing fire or incandescence; *הכחדת נרות* the softening of metal by heating; the emission of sparks; *הקמת בניין* the erection or completion of a system; *הקמת ישות* the creation of a new entity, in this case electric current. These problems have, to a large extent, been solved by our technical recommendations.

Three other questions remain: *הפרת שבת* widespread awareness of the use of the public address system leading to the drawing of false conclusions regarding electricity in general and resulting in widespread Sabbath transgression; *הקול בשבת* the producing of sounds on Shabbat; and the subtle question of creating a situation in which the public and private observance of Shabbat might be impaired by incorrect interpretation of the recommendations or by ignorant inferences leading to a general lowering of Shabbat observances. We have taken these observations into account, and some of the recommendations overcome, to some extent, some of the other objections as well. Our recommendations are:

(1) There must not be any electron tubes (valves) or any pilot lights in the entire system. All pilot lights must be removed. The system must be completely transistorised.

(2) The microphones must all be of the capacitator or condenser type.

(3) The current should be produced by car batteries and hence the batteries should be disconnected from the city electricity supply before the Shabbat or Yom Tov. The batteries must be charged before the onset of Shabbat or Yom Tov. The batteries should have at least twice the capacity of the current to be used for the one, two or three days of Shabbat or/and Yom Tov respectively. The change to batteries should not be difficult in a transistorised system.

(4) The system should be switched on and off automatically by a time clock for specific hours of the day or evening, and the time-clock should preferably be mechanical.



(5) A large number of speakers should be set up through the auditorium, the volume produced by each not exceeding the loudness of the human speaking voice. This will prevent the sudden booming or screeching that sometimes occurs when a public address system suddenly malfunctions. It makes, moreover, for more pleasant listening.

(6) The system should be checked by a competent technician, preferably the same person each time, before each Shabbat or Yom Tov to make sure that it is in proper working condition. Care must also be taken that the batteries are recharged in good time, and indicators showing this to be so should be connected.

(7) The storage batteries and amplifiers must be enclosed in boxes which have locks, preferably kept outside the synagogue auditorium, and the keys must be handed to the rabbi or someone appointed by him, so as to prevent the system being adjusted during the Shabbat or Yom Tov.

(8) Proper publicity must be given, by posters on the synagogue notice board and in other appropriate media, to the fact that the public address system has been specially designed to prevent its use entailing infractions of the Sabbath or Yom Tov and that, therefore, no conclusions may be deduced from its operation concerning the use of electric appliances or even a microphone system in private homes.

(9) The system should be reexamined annually, since constant developments in the technological field may allow further improvements or redesigning.

(10) Before the system is installed, the blueprint<sup>st</sup> should be submitted to the Institute for Science and Halacha and to Rabbi Unterman for final approval. The Institute will charge a reasonable fee for consultation. If necessary, the Institute is prepared to send a scientist to South Africa to assist in the implementation of the changes recommended here.

I trust that the congregation will accept these recommendations which will certainly lead to a great improvement in the public observance of the Shabbat and Yom Tov in the community.

With kindest personal regards, I remain,

Sincerely yours,

Professor Zeev (William) Low,  
Chairman,  
The Institute for Science and Halacha.

We rely, among other things, on the decision of Rabbi S. Z. Auerbach that does not apply to orally produced sounds.



# YESHIVA COLLEGE



## YESHIVA UNIVERSITY

Amsterdam Avenue and 186th Street / New York, N.Y. 10033 / (212) LOrraine 8-8400

400

December 4, 1969

Rabbi Alex Weisfogel  
23 Spruceland Avenue  
Springfield, Massachusetts  
01108

Dear Rabbi Weisfogel: *NRB*

Upon my return from Israel this week, I learned that a note that I had written to a colleague is being used to undermine your congregation's confidence in you as their Halachic authority.

As you know from numerous discussions we've had, the Halachic considerations for the permissibility of the use of a voice amplifier system on Shabbos and yomtov are most complex. With the aid of modern technology, many of the Halachic prohibitions can be obviated. Indeed, your own contribution of a feed-back cut-off is most significant in the final construction of a Halachically acceptable system. My own personal view is that such a system is actually feasible today were it not for ancillary considerations. It is for this reason that I have not been able to concur with any actual heter lest the door be opened to many unacceptable activities on the Shabbos involving automatically controlled audio-visual equipment. This is in keeping with the principle of *lo y'f'el mu'ad*.

This problem was presented by me in the name of the A.O.J.S. to my Father-in-Law, shlita, for his decision. Despite his appreciation for the Halachic advantages of the new technology and their ability to minimize many of the old reasons for prohibiting voice amplification systems, he has not been able to reach a firm conclusion other than to confirm the previous stand against the use of such systems on Shabbos and yomtov. Since this question is still on "my Father-in-Law's table", it would be most improper for me or anyone else to issue any definitive statement without his permission.

It is superfluous for me to express my own confidence in your Halachic integrity and in the meticulous care you always use before you reach a Halachic decision. I am certain that your entire congregation shares this intuition although they may not have as good



Rabbi Alex Weisfogel

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a basis as I do for this statement. I am sure that any final decision that you took on this issue was within the framework of Halacha.

With warmest personal regards and Torah blessings,

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Moshe Tenaler".

Rabbi M. D. Tenaler,  
Ph.D.

MDT:bs