



online

HEIDELBERG JOURNAL OF RELIGIONS ON THE INTERNET

Institute for Religious Studies - University of Heidelberg



Simone Heidbrink, Tobias Knoll (Eds.)

Religion to Go!

Religion in Mobile Internet Environments, Mobile Apps, Augmented Realities and the In-Betweens

Special Issue

Volume 12 (2017)

HEIDELBERG
UNIVERSITY PUBLISHING

Table of Contents

- 01 **Religion to Go – Introduction**
Simone Heidbrink & Tobias Knoll
- 05 **'Judaism to go' – Hastening the redemption through Web 2.0**
Christiane Altmann
- 18 **Pokemon Go – How Religious Can an Augmented Reality Hunt Be?**
Sonja Gabriel
- 32 **Learning with tablets in a church – Experiences of augmented reality in religious education**
Mari Huotari & Essi Ikonen
- 42 **Mobile Liturgy – Reflections on the Church of England's Daily Prayer App**
Joshua L. Mann
- 60 **RELab digital – Ein Projekt über religiöse Bildung in einer mediatisierten Welt (Deutsch)**
Ilona Nord & Jens Palkowitsch-Kühl
- 93 **RELab digital – A Project on Religious Education in a Mediatized World (English)**
Ilona Nord & Jens Palkowitsch-Kühl
- 125 **Pope Francis in Cairo – Authority and branding on Instagram**
Theo Zijderveld



Online – Heidelberg Journal of Religions on the Internet, Volume 12 (2017)

As an open-access journal, *Online – Heidelberg Journal of Religions on the Internet* can be permanently accessed free of charge from the website of HEIDELBERG UNIVERSITY PUBLISHING (<http://heiup.uni-heidelberg.de>).

ISSN 1861-5813

This work is published under the Creative Commons license (CC BY-SA 4.0).



Editor in Chief:

Prof. Dr. Gregor Ahn, Institute for Religious Studies, University of Heidelberg, Germany

Editorial Team:

Tobias Knoll, M.A., Institute for Religious Studies, University of Heidelberg, Germany

Simone Heidbrink, M.A., Institute for Religious Studies, University of Heidelberg, Germany

Members of the Editorial Board:

Dr. Frank G. Bosman, Tilburg School of Catholic Theology, Netherlands

Prof. Dr. Oliver Krüger, Chair for the Study of Religion Department of Social Studies, University of Fribourg, Switzerland

Dr. Gernot Meier, Studienleiter Ev. Akademie Baden, Karlsruhe, Germany

Contributors to this Issue:

Christiane Altmann

Sonja Gabriel

Mari Huotari

Essi Ikonen

Joshua L. Mann

Ilona Nord

Jens Palkowitsch-Kühl

Theo Zijderveld

© 2017



‘Judaism to go’

Hastening the redemption through Web 2.0

Christiane Altmann

Abstract

For the last seventy years, Chabad emissaries have been reaching out to Jews and spreading Judaism in a world of increasing indifference to Jewish law and tradition. Despite their strict Orthodox lifestyle, they are up to date broadcasting Judaism worldwide, with the most modern technology. They offer apps which localize the position of their users and inform them when it is time to light Shabbat candles. Wherever you are, Chabad.org tells you where to find the next Chabad house to spend the Shabbat evening or to be part of the service. Modern smartphones seem to have created the possibility to reach Jews worldwide and thereby fulfilled an important campaign of the group: Reaching out for redemption. On the other hand, the ability to use smart phones everywhere offers the possibility for less observant Jews to be part of a Jewish community connected through Web 2.0. The paper explains how social media provides the possibility to unite different opinions and sections of Judaism.

Keywords

Judaism, Web 2.0, Social Media

1 Introduction

In modern times, Jewish groups who keep rituals and doctrines in the traditional way are constantly an object of interest. Their lifestyle seems to question liberal values of modern society (Feldman 2003). During the last years, the boom of Jewish Orthodoxy continually challenges the claim of secularism (Danzger 2000). The observant Jews have become professionals in using social media. They adapted modern technology and promote their thoughts via twitter, facebook and so on. The following paper examines an Orthodox Jewish group – the Chabad Lubavitchers, by having a look at their use of mobile apps. Over the last few years smartphones have captured the market and going

online while being on the subway, bus or plane, is nearly replacing the computer at home (see for example the developments in Germany: ARD & ZDF 2016). Chabad members dress according to Jewish law (*halakha*). They pray every day. But they also have a smartphones and use a mobile prayer app to have the texts to pray with them wherever they go. They use mobile apps that others have created, as well as they develop their own ones. Initially in the 1940ties Chabad emissaries (*shluchim*) were sent to different states, and countries to reach every Jew in the world and to educate them in religious commandments (*mitzvos*). Since that time the members of the group have used technology and deemed it worthy to fulfill *mitvos*. To outsiders the group promotes and offers its services as ‘Judaism to go’, indicating with the slogan that Jewish observance is compatible to claims of flexibility and mobility of today.

In the paper I will explain the importance of mobile apps in the philosophy of the group. I argue that delivering mobile apps is a logical step in the development of the group. The use of mobile apps to educate Judaism follows the outreach philosophy of the group. Chabad emissaries seek to reach out for every Jew and to “set another Jewish soul in fire”(Wolfson 2013, p. 96). The first part of the paper gives an introduction to the Chasidic roots of the group. I explain the theological concept that legitimizes their approach to outreach, also, how the idea of redemption inspired the group to integrate modern innovations into traditional religious routine. Especially the last leader of the group, Menachem Mendel Schneerson (1902-1994) took thereby a key role. His interpretations of modernity and his assumptions about the role of technology in the process of redemption offered the base for promoting Judaism with tools much more related to the lifestyle of non-Orthodox and even secular Jews. More than twenty years after his death Chabad works “on the cutting edge”(Wolfson 2013, p.85) in promoting Judaism compatible to social media tools. But the use of mobile apps differed according to the audience. The use of mobile apps inside the group serves dissimilar needs than that of mobile apps only designed for reaching out to people who are not yet observant.

The second part of the paper deals with the question how mobile apps offer possibilities for less observant Jews to stay connected with their Jewish heritage. Mobile apps are used in two ways: Users have the opportunity to take them around and use the service they offer wherever they go. As well, the potential to update apps continuously offers Chabad the possibility to fit the needs of their users. A kind of virtual Jewish commitment between Chabad and the user takes place, and is related to rituals and practices offered by Chabad in reality. Mobile apps offer a way to connect flexibility and mobility with Jewish observance and commitment and thereby create a kind of Jewish unity.

2 Reaching out for redemption

Chabad is perhaps the most visible Chasidic Orthodox group in the world (Sales 2017). The emissaries of Chabad are well known for using modern media to promote their version of Judaism (Shandler 2009, p. 234). Since the 1980's, observers were fascinated that these Jews - living strictly to Jewish law - occupied tools for their purposes that are highly connected to a system they actually refused (Friedman 1986, Fader 2007, Portnoy 2004). These Jews use tools to connect to a system that they are not a part of, the secular Jewish lifestyle.

Chabad is part of an Orthodox division that has its roots in Eastern Europe. At the end of the 18th century dynasties sprouted called themselves pious (*khasid*). Chasidism was a new form of spirituality that enthused the poor and disenchanting Jews. The Chasidic rabbis stressed the joy of Jewish rituals and commitment. The new division of Judaism seemed like a salvation after several pogroms in the 17th century and after a whole slew of messianic pretenders who had promised salvation, but failed. Observing Jewish law had become even harder than before. The Chasidic leaders took popular mystical ideas to reestablish Jewish observance. They pointed out their relevance and meaning in Jewish life and explained Jewish mysticism as a key to advance Judaism, and as a tool for personal elaboration, defining the significance of Jewish rituals and tradition. Becoming close to God seems to be possible in ritual and practice for every single Jew, and individual redemption become accessible for each observant Jew (*geula peratit*). The masses were inspired by the positive interpretation of Jewish law and the non-Chasidic rabbis (*misnagdim*) somehow accepted Jewish mysticism, especially after the success of reform impacts that had established as a force to be reckoned with, at the beginning of the 19th century ('Mitnaggedim' 2007, p. 371). A central role in the process of spiritual improvement was taken by the so called *rebbe*, the leader and spiritual mentor of each Chasidic group (Shandler 2009, p. 231). The first leader of Chabad was Schneur Zalman of Liadi (1745-1812). He stressed the idea of spreading kabbalistic thoughts and published the book *Tanya*, making spiritual knowledge available to the public. The name of the group also shows the significant importance of instruction: Chabad is an acronym that stands for the Hebrew words wisdom, understanding and knowledge. Other Orthodox groups admonished Schneur Zalman for making spiritual knowledge public (Elior 1992, p.21). In the twentieth century there were rabbis who criticized the group for celebrating religious rituals in public. They argued that this kind of behavior desecrated Jewish ritual, whereas Chabad, stressed the importance of spreading the joy of Judaism. The critics obviously had a problem with the fact that Chabad also offers non-Orthodox Jews the possibility to be part in Jewish observance (Feldman 2003, p. 50). Also today Chabad is famous for its visual performance of Judaism, and Katz therefore attested an 'Americanization of Hassidism' (Katz 2009, p. 241, Katz 2010). However, American society was never a favor of the Chasidim. The sixth rebbe of Chabad Yoseph Yitzhak Schneersohn

(1880-1950) and other Chasidic groups had somehow been forced to become part of American Judaism. Yoseph Yitzhak barely escaped from being killed in the Holocaust and reached New York in 1940 (Rigg 2004). Actually he denounced the decline of Jewish observance and the increasing assimilation into the Christian mainstream in the US. He declared that ‘America is no different’, entertaining the idea that it is possible to live like an Orthodox Jew even in America. He invited American Jews to return to Judaism and justified his call with proclaiming imminent redemption: „We must prepare ourselves in heart and soul to welcome the righteous redeemer. [...] Be ready for redemption soon! It is approaching rapidly although you do not see it. It is near at hand! The righteous Messiah is already around the corner, and the time for self-preparation is already very short.”(cited according to Elior 1998, p. 388f.) In his writings and talks, the traditional idea of a messianic salvation was very much related to human self-preparation. In accordance to his advice his followers continued their Eastern Europe shtetl life in Jewish observance, as well, they encouraged others to do the same. Chabad established organizations for Jewish education and founded their own journals and a publishing house named Kehot. Chasidic people traditional settled next to their *rebbe*, Chabad followers settled in Crown Heights, a district of Brooklyn – near the residence of the sixth *rebbe* (770 Eastern Parkway). Within the next decades the neighborhood developed and today kosher bakeries, shops and Chabad schools are situated next to the residence. The sixth *rebbe* had already encouraged his followers to spread mystical thinking. But his successor Menachem Mendel Schneerson, the seventh *rebbe* of Chabad, went even further, by prompting his followers to reach out for Jews that had totally left Jewish Orthodoxy: “(...) in the old days there was a person in every town who would light the street lamps with a flame he carried at the end of a long pole. On the street corners, the lamps waited to be lit. Sometimes, however, the lamps were not as easily accessible ... (T)here were lamps in forsaken places. Someone had to light even those lamps so that they would fulfill their purpose and light up the paths of others. Today too, someone must be willing to forgo his or her conveniences and reach out to light even those forsaken lamps ...”.(cited according to Heilman & Friedman 2010, p.157). The *rebbe* began sending his followers as emissaries to nearly every corner in the world, to do outreach (*uforatzto*) work in the 1960’s. He stated that the commandment to love Israel (*ahavas Yisroel*) means to love every Jew equally, regardless of their current level of observance in Judaism. That means to prepare all Jews for the coming of the Messiah (Schochet 1972, p. 20, Schochet 1977, p. 48). “They are”, described Wolfson in 2013, “the Starbucks of Jewish outreach – a Chabad rabbi on every corner.” (Wolfson 2013, p. 86) Many emissaries founded the so called Chabad houses, which are houses for Torah study and prayers. In the first years the houses were mostly located on campuses of American universities. The rabbis invited Jewish students for Shabbat and Jewish holidays, and they offered lessons for studying Jewish texts. In addition, they visited Jews in hospital and even in prison to recite prayers and help them out with their performance of Jewish rituals. In the 1970’s the *rebbe*

initiated the so called mitzvah campaigns: Students went out in rebuilt caravans (*mitzvah tanks*) to the centers of the big cities and promoted a selection of the commandments (*mitzvos*) to Jewish passersby (Haiblum 1975). They asked men to put on Jewish phylacteries (*teffilin*), encouraged Jewish passerby to study the Torah and to give charity (*tzedaka*), as well as they distributed candles for Shabbat to women and girls. Since the 1980's Chabad supporters have placed an advertisement every Friday on the first page of the *New York Times*. Therein the times of the start of Shabbat were mentioned, to encourage Jewish women and girls to light the candles in accordance to Jewish law (Bleich 1976). The *rebbe* also defended the use of technology to reach out and thereby to hasten the coming of the Messiah, by educating and informing Jews about Judaism. For example; he stressed that learning *Tanya* on the radio is a manifestation of the dissemination of the wellsprings of the Chasidism to the outside. Through the radio, the actual wellsprings spread "(...) instantly to every place in the world, engulfing the 'outside' in the wellsprings - and thereby purifying the 'outside.' It is the preparation to the fulfillment of the promise, 'The earth shall be full of the knowledge of the L-rd as the waters cover the sea,' for, as was promised to the Baal Shem Tov, Moshiach will come 'when your wellsprings shall spread forth to the outside.'" (cited according to Shandler 2009, p. 240) The *rebbe*'s acceptance for the usage of modern technology depended highly on his efforts to hasten the redemption. He thereby understood redemption as a proceeding progress, an enhancement of the world, and related technological and economic advance to Chabad messianic thought (Loewenthal 1998, p. 506). The Orthodox group became famous for its unflinching media use: On Chanukkah, the Jewish holiday during the winter season, Chabad *shluchim* lightened Chanukkah lamps (*menorah*) in public. The lightening in different cities was broadcasted to the *rebbe* in Crown Heights. The so called *Chanukah Live* program connected hundreds of communities around the world (Katz 2009, p.215). Already in 1981 the *shluchim* of Los Angeles organized a telethon. They collected money via telephone hotline to help rebuild the local Chabad house that was destroyed by a fire. The telethon established itself as an annual fundraiser for Chabad's outreach programs, and until today Jewish actors and other Jewish celebrities support the event (Fishkoff 2003, p.179). The outreach of the group entailed „new forms of contact“ (Shandler 2009, p.233) not only among the Chabad centers worldwide but also among them and their neighbors. “With telephones in every households and a fax machine in every office, gossip moves at an electronic gallop. Today a dispute may range from Jerusalem to New York, but allies and antagonists are joined instantaneously by wire, satellite, telephone, fax, the daily press, and television.” (Mintz 1992, p.6)

Yosef Y. Kazen (1954-1998), a rabbi of Chabad, digitalized and made available on the Web thousands of documents (Fishkoff 2003, p. 282). He created the first online Jewish library and thereby added to the network of outreach a 24-hour online Web sites. On chabad.org visitors find until today texts, images, audio and video recordings about Judaism (Shandler 2009, p.271). An

‘Ask the Rabbi’ column was part of the site, in which Kazan had developed automated responses to popular question as well as he responded personally to specific Emails (Harmondec 1998). Until today the column is part of the website. Additionally chabad.org offers connections to Chabad centers around the world, so that Jewish tourists can contact the site and easily find a *minyan* for service on Shabbat and Jewish holidays (Shandler 2009, p. 272). Shandler raised an interesting question at the end of his studies to Chabad’s use of the Internet: „Is Chabad’s present ability to sustain its community and sense of purpose by relying heavily on new media practices simply a continuation (...)?”(Shandler 2009, p. 273). In that context Shandler quoted a Reform rabbi that had met the rebbe in the 1960’s and soon after wrote two articles for the *Commentary*, a conservative journal for political and cultural issues of American Jews. The Reform rabbi claimed the following: “The meticulous concern for organized study, for well-edited textbooks, for public relations and good business procedure (...) was actually a key to Lubovitch’s (Chabad, C.A.) special history” (Weiner 1957, p. 323).

In summary; to use modern media seems to be a continuation of using available media to promote religious thoughts as well as to fund the work of the group. The tools to reach out merely depend on their success. The followers of the rebbe recognized that the success of their work depends very much on modern media. Chabad wants to reach Jews that use modern media. If we follow the thesis of Shandler Chabad’s use of modern technology (like radio, internet and today mobile apps) just seems to be a continuation of their outreach efforts and developed with their audience in mind.

The next chapter introduces some of Chabad’s mobile apps and shows that most of them confirm the thesis: They are created for reaching out non-Orthodox Jews.

3 Chabad and mobile apps: Old wine in new bottles

The outreach of the group influences the use mobile apps in two directions: Inside the community apps are used to stay connected over long distances. To the outside they serve as a tool to reach other Jews and their support. Chabad.org mentioned sixteen apps (Chabad.org 2017). One of them offers an app version of the website (chabad.org). Here you find the articles about Jewish traditions and customs, music, coloring books for kids and a Chabad locator which shows you the location of the next Chabad rabbi. The other mobile apps are somehow ‘uncoupling’s’ of the chabad.org app. There exists a Daily Torah Study app that presents the Torah passage for the day in English and Hebrew. It is also possible to follow a video lecture about the passage or to listen to it. The Ask the Rabbi app is designed in accordance to the column of Kazan in the 1990’s. It offers you a selection

of the actual most asked questions and automated responses. For specific questions it is also possible to write directly to a rabbi. The Shabbat Times app identifies the location of the user via GPS and informs him and her about the starting and ending time of Shabbat, when she should light the candles before Shabbos starts. The user can easily share this information with others. The weekly advertisement in the *New York Times*, about the time to light candles and the time Shabbos starts, was common in the 1990's. Today the times of Shabbat are transmitted via app as well as the *New York Times* offers the news for their readers via a NYTimes – Latest News app. The methods of communication had conspicuously changed and 'mobility' had become an essential element to reach a widespread audience. The mentioned apps are specific designed for extern use, a direction Shandler already attested to, regarding to Chabad's use of the internet (2006, p.248). Chabad Lubavitchers themselves do not use mobile apps that are created for outreach efforts. Inside the group the use of apps follows other rules. Portnoy noted in 2004 that torah-true Jews are admonish to use modern innovations like the internet for business only. The primary business of Chabad is of course the outreach. Chabad emissaries have created a network to stay up-to-date, and in touch with each other. In 2013 Wolfson described the yearly meeting of the *shluchim* in Crown Heights (*kinus*). The program of the conference offered - beside a dinner for more than five thousand rabbis - different workshops about social networking, media relations and development techniques, "(...) led by both colleagues and expert consultants outside the Chabad community" (Wolfson 2013, p. 88). The outreach network includes a password-protected Internet site, where *shluchim* can order design templates and customized production services on a 'pay-as-you-go' basis (Wolfson 2013, p. 93). The outreach efforts resulted in a world wide spread of the group. The possibilities to stay in contact with one's own relation is of course an important reason that nearly every rabbi working as an emissary of the group has a smartphone, wrote Wolfson (2013, p. 92). Chasidic people are practical people: It is much more comfortable to take a prayer book on your smart phone with you than a book in your pocket. On the other hand it is unquestioned that on Shabbat the use of a smartphone is off limits for Orthodox Jews like Chabad, using a phone is equal to driving a vehicle, which is not permitted on Shabbos, if it is not a case of danger.

Mobile apps are a new form to communicate, but as we have seen Chabad's use is related to thoughts that have already existed and structured their life since decades: The behavior of the members inside the group follows traditional standards and differs from their behavior to outsiders. Insider use mobile apps to fulfill commandments or for business reasons. Direction and guidance to that use is given by rabbinic authorities. The *rebbe* gave permission to use media to reach out for non-Orthodox Jews. Accordance to the *rebbe*'s advice Chabad emissaries became experts in recognizing the needs of their Jewish audience. They learnt to offer tools non-Orthodox Jews, so they can be educated in learning Torah and performing *mitzvos*. Fishkoff mentioned, that Kazan, the

rabbi who created the first Internet site, saw the Internet “as a way to get through to nonobservant Jews who might be turned off by a rabbi in a black hat and long beard.” (Fishkoff 2003, p. 282).

The next chapter deals with the question if mobile apps help out less observant Jews to be part of a Jewish community and in some ways provide the possibility to unite different opinions of Judaism.

4 Flexibility and commitment: Mobile apps between the lines

During the last years Jews have had a quest for more flexibility and self-autonomy in matters of their identity (Rosenberg Farber & Waxman 1999, p. 398). In 2013 Wolfson attested that North American Jews are influenced by the today’s zeitgeist known as DIY – do it yourself. „The days when Jewish institutions could count on people showing up are over.” (Wolfson 2013, p. 32). Already in 2009 Kaplan, a reform rabbi, described the rise and fall of American Jewish denominationalism. He stated that the differences between non-Orthodox denominations became more and more blurred: The Reform movement began to stress more rituals and draw near to the Conservative practice, at the same time, Reform rabbis accepted new definitions of Jewish identity. The non-Orthodox denominations were, in his view, “becoming increasingly similar” (Kaplan 2009, p.155). The approximation became increasingly obvious in a number of rabbinic programs that had been designed in a nondenominational way. The new flexibility had created uncertainty. An increasing number of individuals and congregations do not anymore affiliate with any of the national synagogue movements (Kaplan 2009, p.157).

The refusal to denominational commitment and the call for flexibility is one side of the developments. On the other side, Jews paradoxically long for Jewish values and tradition: „Today it is recognized that great and coordinated effort must be extended to install a strong Jewish identity in children. Techniques to achieve this include, but are not limited to, formal Jewish education, summer camp, and trips to Israel and Holocaust centers in Europe.”(Farber, Waxman 1999, p. 401; in this context see also the remarks of Wolfson 2013, p.130) For many Jews the services of Chabad seem to offer a more authentic version of Judaism than their liberal variety (Fishkoff 2003, p. 26.). In addition, Chabad’s presence in the media world offers a way to relate intended flexibility with the search for commitment. Mobile apps offer both: On the one hand the user’s self-autonomy and flexibility are guaranteed. The user decides which service she wants to install on her smartphone. She can check out if the app satisfies her demand. Depending on that it is easily possible to delete the app or to admit the newest update. Via update the creator reaches the user directly (Miller 2012). What is still missing is the face to face communication between Chabad and the Jewish user.

Nevertheless, apps can offer a way for people to commitment presented in rituals and personal contact.

The ShabbatTimes app reminds the user the times of the start and finish of Shabbat and also that other Jews will light the candles before sunset and celebrate Shabbat. The practice to light candles connects Jews of today and relates them with their past. A kind of unity is created by the bond of ritual (Geertz 1966, p. 6). Mobile apps presented one way for Chabad to reach other Jews and educate them with the practice of Jewish rituals. The structure of the chabad.org app follows the same idea: The visual Jewish community is related via Chabad locator to Jewish life in reality. The user can inform herself about the location of the next Chabad house and just stop in for a Shabbat service or meal. It is possible to request for a rabbi to help prepare your son for his Bar Mitzvah or for help in making the kitchen kosher. The *shluchim* offer kosher food for Jewish tourists, prayer books and always a warm welcome in a foreign merely non Jewish society.

Jewish community is transferred in reality but stays to be flexible and without obvious obligations. If you pass by at a Chabad house the rabbi will in fact ask for financial support but without any conventional obligations. Chabad emissaries eschew the dominant dues model of affiliation (Wolfson 2013, p. 86). Chabad offers a kind of Judaism that seems to “move beyond denominational labels and find spiritual meaning rather than promote what are perceived to be artificial boundaries and irrelevant distinctions” (Kaplan 2009, p.156). In this way Chabad’ services fit in the needs of its audience and are conforming with the lifestyle of the non-Orthodox mainstream. Jews of today are searching a way to relate their longing for self-autonomy (individualism and flexibility) with Jewish identity and Jewish guideline. Chabad *shluchim* seem to be successful. Observers stressed that most of Chabad’s supporters are Jews, who are not Orthodox in practice (Wolfson 2013, p.92; Fishkoff 2003, p.14).

5 Conclusion

Chabad emissaries have reached out to non-Orthodox Jews for over seventy years. Despite their strict Orthodox lifestyle, they always have been up to date broadcasting Judaism worldwide. In the case of Chabad Jewish observance means to use modern technology to reach out for Jewish people to learn about their heritage - Judaism. As we have seen, the use of mobile apps presents a new dimension of outreach but also continues their efforts to hasten the redemption. The group requires continued engagement with others to fulfill its messianic efforts (Shandler 2009, p. 258). Chabad emissaries have recognized the growing importance of the internet and social media presents a source of new methods to reach non-Orthodox Jews and ‘to light even those forsaken lamps’.

Chabad's use of mobile apps illustrates that religious groups have dealt with modernity and modified technology according to their religious needs. Mobile apps serve as an instrument to prepare the way for partial community. Chabad has created mobile apps that offer a way to connect flexibility with Jewish observance. Thereby the virtual Jewish community between the user and Chabad is related to rituals offered by Chabad rabbis in reality. Individualism also meant a shocking loneliness: "...we crave companionship, community, relationship – because through it, we find meaning and purpose, belonging and blessing." (Wolfson 2013, p. 39) The lack of face-to-face communication (Turkle 2011) is subsumed by conjuring up connotations of Jewish unity.

To remember common rituals constitutes a kind of commitment that crosses the boundaries of time and space and provokes a kind of infinity (Hubert 1929). Using mobile apps contributes a new way to preserve Jewish community which is bounded to the single moment and thereby complies the intention of flexibility and mobility. The use of mobile apps expresses a kind of self-determined action to remember Jewish heritage and to get a taste of Jewish observance and commitment. The Jewish community constituted by mobile apps constitutes a give-and-take relationship. For the group, mobile apps present one way to reach other Jews and encourage them to fulfill Jewish rituals. Less observant Jews experience a group identity while keeping their secular lifestyle. It becomes possible for Jews to cross the boundaries of denominationalism and get a taste of a world usually marked by restrictions. The emissaries of Chabad crossed the border to non-Orthodox Jews since several years. As well, non-Orthodox Jews are used to coming around, and joining the festivities at the Chabad Houses, to celebrate Jewish holidays, and send their children to a Chabad school. The outreach programs of Chabad emissaries took root in Judaism, and the people are getting used to, being able to just observe a Mitzvah, without having to commit and feel obligated to observe all the commandments. The form of commitment exists in between without any obligations. Flexibility means to be free in stopping in for a meal, or to become part of the service whenever you want as well as to refuse the service of Chabad.

In the paper I stressed flexibility as a tool to protect individualism and self-autonomy but it also seems to prevent conflicts. The Jewish tourist coming around on Shabbat, for prayer services or a meal, means no subject of danger to the structure of the Orthodox group. Chabad emissaries are used to foreigners stopping by. The non-Orthodox Jews are a part of the world created by the instructions of the Chabad *rebbe*s. Their instructions offers advice and security for decades until today. The foreign Jew is influenced by the thoughts of the group as well as the use of tools that contradict to the strict rules of Orthodox commitment. In this context it should be mentioned that Chabad's outreach aims to individuals only. Chabad leaders refused any relationship to non-Orthodox organizations. Reform rabbis have criticized the group and blamed Orthodoxy for their claim of superiority (Maslin 1998, p. 20). Flexibility and observance still present different ways to practice Judaism. Like mobile apps Chabad has included the claim for flexibility into their outreach

programs. The outreach is part of their life in Jewish observance. Of course this means that the use of technology and the option to be available anytime and anywhere gets cut off on every Shabbat.

Bibliography

Bleich, JD 1976, 'Survey of recent Halakhic Periodical Literature – Sabbath Candles for young girls', *Tradition* vol. 16 no. 1, pp.150-163.

Danzger, HM 2000, 'The 'Return' to Traditional Judaism at the End of the Twentieth Century: Cross Cultural Comparisons', in J Neusner, Jacob & AJ Avery-Peck (eds), *The Blackwell Companion to Judaism*, Blackwell, Oxford, pp. 495-511.

Elior, R 1998, 'The Lubavitch Messianic Resurgence: The Historical and Mystical Background 1939-1996', in P Schäfer & M Cohen (eds), *Toward the millennium – Messianic expectations from the Bible to Waco*, Brill, Leiden, pp. 383-408.

----- 1992, *The Paradoxical Ascent to God: The Kabbalistic Theosophy of Habad*, State University of New York, Albany, NY.

Fader, A, Goldschmidt, H, Heilman, S, Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, B, Rosenthal, P & Shandler, J 2007, 'Jewish Children's Museum: A Virtual Roundtable on Material Religion', *Material Religion* vol. 3, no. 3, pp. 404-427.

Feldman, J 2003, *Lubavitchers as Citizens. A Paradox of Liberal Democracy*, Cornell University Press, Ithaca.

Friedman, M 1989, 'Haredim Confront the Modern City', in: Medding PY (ed.), *Studies in Contemporary Jewry Vol. 2*, Indiana University Press, Bloomington, pp. 74-96.

Geertz, C 1966, 'Religion as a Cultural System', in: Banton, M (ed.), *Anthropological Approaches to the Study of Religion*, Praeger, New York, pp. 1-46.

Haiblum, I 1975, 'The Mitzvah Mobiles of Manhattan', *Moment* vol.1 no. 3, pp. 62-6.

Heilman, S & Friedman, M 2010, *The Rebbe – The Life and Afterlife of Menachem Mendel Schneerson*, Princeton University Press, Princeton.

Hubert, H 1929, 'Étude sommaire de la représentation du temps dans la religion et la magie (1905)', in: ----- & Mauss, M, *Mélanges d'histoire des religions*, Paris, pp. 189-229.

Kaplan, DE 2009, *Contemporary American Judaism. Transformation and renewal*, Columbia University Press, New York.

Katz, MB 2010, *The Visual Culture of Chabad*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

----- 2009, 'Trademarks of Faith: Chabad and Chanukah in America', *Modern Judaism* vol. 29 no. 2, pp. 239-267.

Loewenthal, N 1998, 'Contemporary Habad and the Paradox of Redemption', in: Ivry, AL, Wolfson, ER, Arkush, A (eds.), *Perspectives on Jewish Thought and Mysticism*, Harwood Academic Publications, Amsterdam, pp. 381-402.

Maslin, SJ 1998, 'The Fury of Orthodoxy', *Reform Judaism* vol. 27 no.1, pp. 18-20, 22, 24.

Mintz, J 1992, *Hasidic People. A Place in the New World*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Mass.

'Mitnaggedim' 2007, in: Skolnik, F (ed.), *Encyclopedia Judaica* vol. 14, Thomas & Gale, Detroit, p. 371.

Rigg, BM 2004, *Rescued from the Reich: How One of Hitler's Soldiers saved the Lubavitcher rebbe*, Yale University Press, New Haven.

Rosenberg Farber, R & Waxman, CI 1999, 'Post modernity and the Jews – Identity, Identification, and Community', in: ----- & ----- (eds.), *Jews in America – A contemporary Reader*, Brandeis University Press, Hanover, pp.395-407.

Schochet, JI 1977, 'Let sins be consumed and not sinners', *Tradition*, vol. 16 no. 4, pp. 41-61.

Schochet, JI 1972, 'The philosophy of Lubavitch activism', *Tradition*, vol. 13 no.1, pp. 18-35.

Shandler, J 2009, *Jews, God, and Videotape: New Media and Religion in Twentieth-Century America*, New York University Press, New York.

Turkle, S 2011, *Alone together. Why we Expect More from Technology and Less from Each Other*, Basic Books, New York.

Weiner, H 1957, 'The Lubovitcher Movement: II', *Commentary*, vol. 23 no. 4, pp. 316-27.

Internet Sources

ARD & ZDF 2016, 'ARD ZDF Onlinestudie 2016', viewed 4 July 2017, <www.ard-zdf-onlinestudie.de/2016>.

Chabad.org, 'Jewish Apps', viewed 4 July 2017, <http://www.chabad.org/library/article_cdo/aid/2192548/jewish/Jewish-Apps.htm>.

Harmondec, A 1998, 'Yosef Kazen, Hasidic Rabbi and Web Pioneer, Dies at 44', *New York Times* 13 December, viewed 28 June 2017, <<http://www.nytimes.com/1998/12/13/nyregion/yosef-kazen-hasidic-rabbi-and-web-pioneer-dies-at-44.html>>.

Miller, J 2012, 'What are the Top Jewish Apps?', *The Jewish Week* 3 March, viewed 12 June 2017, <<http://jewishweek.timesofisrael.com/what-are-the-top-jewish-apps/>>.

Portnoy, E 2004, 'Haredim and the internet', *modiya*, viewed 3 January 2011 <<http://modiya.nyu.edu/handle/1964/265>>.

Sales, B 2017, 'A Jewish hipster heaven in the heart of Chabad's Brooklyn territory', *Jewish Telegraphic agency* 17 May, viewed 1 July 2017, <<http://www.jta.org/2017/05/17/news-opinion/united-states/a-jewish-hipster-heaven-in-the-heart-of-chabads-brooklyn-territory>>.

Sichos in English, Tanya on Radio, viewed 4 July 2017, <http://www.sie.org/templates/sie/article_cdo/aid/2518286/jewish/Tanya-on-Radio-%E2%80%94-Russian-Jewry.htm>.

Biography

In 2016, CHRISTIANE ALTMANN defended her doctoral thesis under the title "Between authentic Judaism and dangerous Messianism. The controversy about Chabad Lubavitch's meshichists in the US" at the University of Leipzig. Her interests include Judaism in modern society, Yiddish culture, Jewish mysticism, rituals in transformation and the relationship of state and religion.

Christiane Altmann, Leipzig
altmann.chr.10@gmail.com