Introduction

Friends,

Our colleague, Rabbi Paul Golomb, takes a look at Israel's recently passed Basic Law as defining Judaism ethnically, even while ceding power to the Hareidim. What does the Nation-State Law tell us about the meaning of being Jewish in Israel? You may find his article on the right.

In our most recent edition, we sent an article by Rabbi Asher Lopatin with a response from Rabbi Michael Chernick. This edition includes a response from Rabbi Pam Frydman.

In the Makor Rishon newspaper Rabbi David Lau, Chief Ashkenazi Rabbi of Israel, would not

What is the Jew in the Jewish State

By Rabbi Paul Golomb

In July, 2018, the Knesset passed a Basic Law [Hok-Yasod] declaring that Israel is the Nation-State of the Jewish People. The law is broadly controversial. It passed by a bare majority, only 62 votes out of 120, raising the question of whether it should be labeled Basic. International response has not been favorable, but bashing Israel is a reflex action. The diaspora Jewish community, however, has also not been favorable. The law can be criticized on many grounds. I am less interested here in the criticism, but rather in the challenge to Jews and Judaism the law represents.

FULL ARTICLE >>>

Response to Rabbi Asher Lopatin

By Rabbi Pam Frydman
I am not sure that it is ever possible to see sufficiently far into the future to know which techniques or halachot will serve us best. How will we absorb and integrate the latest technology into our Jewish lives when that technology develops to a point that is so far from where we are now that science fiction hasn’t glimpsed it yet? How will that halacha evolve in relation to these technologies? We can guess, but in truth, we don’t really know.

There is widespread public reaction that limiting Judaism in Israel to the Haredim is simply wrong, that when a Jew dies for being Jewish that person is simply a Jew and no other questions need be asked. Typical is the article that appeared in Ynet, which we’ve highlighted in the column on the right.

b’yedidut,
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I believe it is important for the non-Orthodox movements of the Jewish people to be allowed thrive and flourish in Israel and not be treated with enmity so that the effects of these movements and the benefits of their teachings and practices can be experienced, absorbed, refuted and so on. We may be surprised to see the effect that Conservative, Reform and other forms Jewish understanding and observance may have in the communities of Israelis who see themselves as secular when they are allowed to experience these non-Orthodox types of Judaism as being acceptable and viable rather than being outlawed and shunned.
The article affirms that Reform and Conservative Jews are Jews in every situation in life, living and dying. The remainder affirms that Orthodoxy ought not have a exalted place in Israeli life, and that Israel must build bridges of love and unity with liberal Jews. We are one people bound together.

FULL ARTICLE >>>

An article in Walla News explained the problem:

"Who are the Chief Rabbis of Israel? They are Chief Rabbis of a community that prides itself on the fact that it is a community of prayer. But when the shooting started, they did not mention that the shooting took place in a place of prayer, because this is a place of prayer for the Conservative community. The Orthodox approach denies the Conservative Jewish community, but acknowledges their Judaism.

FULL ARTICLE >>>

Aronovitch: "Rabbi's murder in a synagogue is a historic statement"}

"Jews were murdered in a synagogue. They were murdered for being Jews. The location was chosen because it is a synagogue. This can never be forgotten.

FULL ARTICLE >>>
forgotten. We are one people (Am echad)." Thus Netanyahu responded to the manner Israeli Orthodox spokesmen characterized the place [of the murders], among them the Chief Rabbi of Israel, Yisrael David Lau. Netanyahu's words touched, among other things, on the background of the continuing between Israel and Reform and Conservative Judaism in the U.S.

FULL ARTICLE >>>

Ruach Hiddush is a network of Rabbis and Cantors working to fully realize the promise of Israel's Declaration of Independence, which guarantees religious freedom and equality. The fulfillment of this promise is vital for strengthening Israel as a Jewish and democratic state, and for maintaining the solidarity of world Jewry.

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