

# Weekly Teaching

July 28, 2017

It's been a week since our return from Israel, and I find myself still processing our most recent experience in our Holy Land.

One image that continues to stick with me was from the Boardwalk of Tel Aviv.

Jews of every possible different ethnic, cultural and religious backgrounds were omnipresent.

Besides differences in dress, clearly heard were conversations in Hebrew, Yiddish, English, French, Spanish, Russian and some other dialects I couldn't make out.

It was a sharp reminder that in Israel there is an incredible mixture of Jews from all "walks of Jewish life."

That Jewish pluralism is so physically manifest makes it all the more sad to realize how the Israeli governmental leadership has significantly failed to safe-guard Jewish religious pluralism within the Jewish State.

Israeli Coalition Politics routinely has handed over too much political power to ultra-Orthodoxy, and as a result, vibrant Institutional Jewish Religious Pluralism hasn't been appropriately nurtured.

The physical Jewish pluralism of Israeli bodies in the streets hasn't been granted the opportunities that might further nurture the Jewish pluralism of the Soul.

I love Israel and understand that one must protect the Jewish body first.

But, there is a "tipping point" where the "Jewish" part of the body can be made to so greatly diminish itself that it too results in the cessation of needed protections.

Halacha (Jewish Law) has historically never been without significant differences in how the law is interpreted.

Throughout the Jewish Ages, the laws, traditions and/or customs of one town might have been completely different from how it was observed in another town.

Additionally, differences of opinion were always present within the towns themselves.

This is why the first Chief Rabbi of Israel, Rav Kook, declared that the Law must always be "an expression of the heart; the heart of the nation of Israel; the heart of the people of Israel."

The Talmud overtly teaches that multiple Jewish legal interpretations are to be welcomed and embraced because "these and these are the words of the living God."

I will continue my overt support for Israel, but, I plan on broadening my efforts to better pursue the Zionist Pluralistic agenda.

I do this because the reality is that the body can't live effectively unless it possesses a healthy heart and mind.

I don't wish to see the collective body of Israel "living" on spiritual "life-support."

Shabbat Shalom,

Rabbi Mitch

[rabbimitch@templesholom.com](mailto:rabbimitch@templesholom.com)