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**1. Neuerlicher Lockdown stellt Israels Demokratie und Wirtschaft auf die Probe**

In Israel stiegen Ende September die Covid-19-Infektionszahlen weiter auf zwischenzeitlich fast 9000 positiv Getesteten an nur einem Tag. Die Regierung entschied, die aktuelle Ausgangssperre bis zum 14. Oktober zu verlängern. Bis zur vollständigen Aufhebung des zweiten Lockdowns seit Beginn der Pandemie im letzten Frühjahr könne es Monate, vielleicht sogar ein Jahr dauern, warnte Ministerpräsident Benjamin Netanyahu. Zudem verschärfte die Regierung die geltenden Beschränkungen und strich Auslandsflüge für Staatsangehörige, die ihre Tickets nicht bis zum Beginn des Lockdowns erworben hatten, bis Mitte Oktober. Für diese Maßnahme gab eine Vertreterin des Gesundheitsministeriums eine seltsame Erklärung ab: Bei dem Flugverbot gehe es eher um „Gerechtigkeit“ als um den Schutz vor Ansteckungen. „Es ist schwer, den Menschen in Israel zu vermitteln, dass sie sich nicht bewegen dürfen, aber wer Geld hat, kann ein Flugticket kaufen.“ In den sozialen Medien reagierten Bürger\_innen mit heftiger Kritik. Noch umstrittener ist das neue De-facto-Verbot von Protesten: Von nun an dürfen sich maximal 20 Menschen für eine Demonstration versammeln – und sie dürfen sich dafür nicht weiter als einen Kilometer von ihrem Wohnsitz entfernen. Netanyahu erhoffte sich davon ein vorläufiges Ende der großen wöchentlichen Proteste gegen ihn und seine Regierung. Allerdings hat das Verbot lediglich zur Verlagerung der Protes-

te aus Jerusalem in die Städte und Ortschaften in ganz Israel geführt: Am Abend des 3. Oktober 2020 protestierten laut Schätzungen der Polizei rd. 130.000 Menschen in ganz Israel. In Tel Aviv kam es zu schweren Auseinandersetzungen mit der Polizei. Schulen und Synagogen bleiben geschlossen und auch die Wirtschaft ist schwer betroffen. Vorläufig darf nur noch in sogenannten essentiellen Unternehmen gearbeitet werden. Die ohnehin schlechte Wirtschaftslage in Israel dürfte sich dadurch weiter verschlechtern. Offiziell soll mit dem Lockdown die Funktionsfähigkeit des Gesundheitssystems gesichert werden.

**The coronavirus and Israeli Kulturkampf**

This cunning virus is blind to the identities that divide us. It attacks anyone who violates rules of social distancing (...). On the surface, this means that the battle against the virus should be equally blind to identities, but that is far from the case. (...) The most important consideration of all, protecting public health, must be weighed (...) against the infringement of other essential values: the blow to the economy (...), the severe limitations on freedom of expression if public demonstrations are banned, and the disappointment of the many observant Jews if they are denied the spiritual experience of public prayer on the High Holy Days. Our political leaders are tasked with finding the right balance among these values (...). The correct balance is not just a matter of equity and non-partisanship; it is also an

on-the-ground must, in order to rally the public to be active partners in the battle against the virus. We see, however, that the outcome has been precisely the opposite: There are fears of a popular revolt, by the political protesters, by the business community and by the ultra-Orthodox. Many Israelis do not have confidence in our elected officials. Why is this so? The politicians have been managing the public health crisis glancing sidewise toward the possibility of imminent elections coming up just around the bend. The positive potential of the unity government has been squandered, as the passengers on the coalition Titanic continue their arm-wrestling competition, even with the iceberg looming dead ahead. (...) The possibility of elections is also one of the motives behind the arbitrary operation of the money fountain that showers public funds in every direction, without a semblance of economic logic, and the unforgivable delay in the appointment of a pandemic czar and enlistment of the Defense Ministry in the war against the virus. (...) Today we see that the various positions bandied about as to the appropriate balance – between safeguarding public health and dealing a blow to freedom of religion, freedom of expression, freedom of movement, property rights and human dignity – are determined by narrow interests, and not by an overarching view of the public good. As a result, every decision sparks bitter complaints and stirs up fears of noncompliance. The overall picture is bleak and terrifying. We used to know that when push comes to shove, the fundamental solidarity among Israel's tribes would overcome all our disagreements. (...) The Israeli Kulturkampf that some people systematically try to exacerbate has penetrated deep into the fabric of our lives (...) it has seriously jeopardized our national resilience. (...)

Yedidia Stern, JPO, 17.09.20

### **Lockdown is an opportunity to take responsibility over coronavirus**

(...) This is the time to follow the instructions, to take care of yourselves and those dear to you, to join hands to help those around you in need of assistance. (...) After the number of coronavirus infections soared to a new daily record of almost 5,500 before the lockdown, it's incumbent on every person to take upon themselves to follow the rules and bring down the infection rate. (...) the recent surge in COVID-19 cases requires drastic action, as painful as it may be for the country's citizens. (...) The ball is now in everyone's court. We have to stand united and act together to beat this dangerous

plague. (...) Let's follow the government's new regulations as best as we can, with the hope that we will emerge with a dramatic decrease in the number of infections after the holidays. (...)

Editorial, JPO, 17.09.20

### **The danger of the second lockdown**

(...) the second lockdown is the direct result of the failed policies of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, who is too busy to devote himself to "life itself" of the country's citizens. (...) Despite the understandable anxiety of Health Ministry officials about the high rate of infection, there is cause to doubt that a lockdown will greatly reduce this. (...) What can be expected, however, is for the economy to crash and for another half a million people to lose their jobs. And that's on top of a rise in the incidence of depression, anxiety and even of suicide attempts. The uncertainty regarding the effectiveness of the lockdown calls into doubt the degree to which Israelis will comply with it and raises the question of how far the state will go in enforcing it in the event of noncompliance. Draconian regulations, especially illogical ones (ritual bathing in a mikveh is permitted, but swimming in the sea is not; demonstrations are permitted, but not picking up your own takeaway order from a restaurant), require complete trust in the government imposing them. The government, however, has done everything possible to destroy the public's trust in it. (...) Israel is about to enter an ineffective lockdown that is liable to wreak great harm, without guaranteeing a decline in infection rates that could justify such an extreme measure. (...)

Editorial, HAA, 17.09.20

### **After second lockdown, liberal Israelis will flee the country**

The second lockdown could have far-reaching consequences for the future of the liberal Israelis living in the Land of Israel. It is expected to accelerate the pace at which they are leaving the country. It is a lockdown that proves that Israel is being managed very badly, relative to other advanced nations, which could be immigration targets for liberal Israelis. (...) Israel is incapable of giving liberal Israelis the life they want. In addition, to a large extent this lockdown was not their fault, but they – who pay most of the taxes in the state – will be forced to bear its intolerable economic cost for years to come, including a toll on the future they would like to give their children. Israel is a very profitable deal for Haredim and for settlers, but it screws over its liberal citizens and treats them like slaves. From an economic

perspective, Europe, Canada, Australia and parts of the United States offer much better and above all much more fair deals. The lockdown (...) is a very extreme measure that wreaks havoc on the livelihood, the quality of life, the standard of living and the most basic freedoms of liberal Israelis, without being limited in duration. (...) Israel of the second lockdown appears to be a state that brutalizes and oppresses them and doesn't offer them a future. To them, personal happiness is more important than national self-determination. They'd rather live better somewhere else than sink in the slough of despond in their national homeland. (...) After the lockdown, we'll flee.

Rogel Alpher, HAA, 21.09.20

### **Shorten the quarantine**

(...) the Health Ministry has rejected every proposal to shorten the quarantine period (...) even though according to the ministry's own data, the vast majority of Israelis who entered quarantine because cellphone tracking showed them in contact with a coronavirus patient didn't actually catch the virus (...). The majority of Israelis who were quarantined due to the Shin Bet security service's cellphone tracking over the course of two and a half months did not contract the virus, and many of them did not even have contact with a verified case. This is a troubling statistic that raises difficult questions about both the effectiveness of cellphone tracking and the optimum number of days in quarantine. (...) Economists estimate that cutting the quarantine period by two days would save the economy 200 million shekels a month. As the number of verified cases rises, so does the number of people quarantined. Given the fact that just 2 percent of those quarantined are diagnosed with the virus, the decline in the likelihood of infecting others after a week and damage to both the economy and the people quarantined, the Health Ministry must consider shortening the quarantine period. A period of a week, like France has adopted, would make it easier for the public to comply with the state's demands and for the state to enforce them.

Editorial, HAA, 23.09.2

### **Protests are important, but now is time to stop**

I don't believe I have ever felt so pessimistic about the state of the State of Israel (...). Under the auspices of the coronavirus pandemic, the most bloated government in Israeli history has wrought economic devastation upon millions of people. (...) The responsibility lies with (...) the government and (...)

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. The public watches in horror at the leadership's lack of personal example, the strings of hasty decisions, the rampant inconsistency, and the ever-present miasma of alleged corruption hanging over Netanyahu - whose every move is stained with politicking and desire for survival. When you live in political and national anarchy for so long, you witness red lines crossed on a regular basis. It is no wonder then that this anarchy boiled over and tainted all of us, turning us all into anarchists railing against the health regulations. And yet we have to stop, for we the people share in the national responsibility. In the absence of decent leadership - and perhaps because of it - it is time to shoulder that responsibility and say now is the time to suspend the protests against the prime minister. (...) All those wishing to protest the state of the country can do so at a predetermined time, waving a black flag from the comfort of their own balcony or window. Imagine thousands of balconies all over the country hoisting a black flag alongside the Israeli flag. It could be a far more effective protest than the ones in Jerusalem. (...)

Yoel Hasson, YED, 24.09.20

### **The law for declaring war on protests**

A new amendment to the coronavirus law is meant to enable the cabinet to prevent demonstrations outside the prime minister's residence in Jerusalem. This is a dangerous amendment that undermines Israel's democratic character. Virtually its only purpose is to give the cabinet the power to prevent people from protesting in the places where they have been doing so until recently. (...) there's no evidence that the protests in Jerusalem have contributed significantly to the rise in the number of COVID-19 cases in Israel. (...) A demonstration is not a personal right that a person can exercise alone or near their home. The number of people at a protest, as well as its location, has critical significance. Netanyahu understands this very well, and therefore, he is seeking to restrict protests to within a very short distance from a person's place of residence, while banning entirely demonstrations outside the Knesset or government offices. This undermines one of the fundamental rights of citizens in a democratic state. Government officials have repeatedly echoed the claim that Israelis will not comply with the lockdown rules if demonstrations are not restricted. This is a direct continuation of the propaganda disseminated by Netanyahu and his toadies, according to which the protests are a source of infection, as well as their ridiculous attempt to

equate the outdoor demonstrations with indoor prayer services. In any case, this argument does not justify infringement of a fundamental democratic right. (...) This is liable to deepen public distrust and lead to noncompliance. Israel's high rate of infection requires some restrictions on demonstrators, and in fact, it's possible to set conditions for how the protest should take place under the existing law. But a democratic state must not eliminate entirely the right to protest.

Editorial, HAA, 25.09.20

### **Media must do its part to fight corona**

(...) As is often the case in times of crisis, it is the media that dictates the agenda and sets the national mood. (...) This wisdom, mind you, is not the prerogative of only the senior commentators – often you see young reporters offer eloquent criticism and advice to government officials. One must remember, however, that it's easy to give advice and offer solutions from the sidelines when you shoulder none of the responsibility for the outcome. (...) It's time to evolve from talking to taking action. If you believe we are dealing with an epic failure, if you believe this is a war – act like it. Start covering the funerals of coronavirus fatalities – daily coverage, like you do for fallen soldiers or the victims of terrorist attacks. Join forces here and there and lead with the same headlines, to shake the public out of its indifference. Set competition aside in favor of the solidarity you demand from politicians and the public. Cover the bereaved families and the critically ill patients in hospitals (...). Stop reporting on those calling to violate lockdown directives, especially when it comes to celebrities. If anything, get as many celebrities as possible to join a campaign calling on the public to follow the rules. (...) Show the empty streets and shuttered synagogues. Have rabbis who call on worshippers to pray at home or outside. (...) Show the doctors and nurses, who are about to collapse with exhaustion, the overworked paramedics and lab technicians. If this is a war, then the media is the air force. It has the power to help decision-makers win the battle.

Memi Peer, IHY, 29.09.20

## **2. Hoffnung und Zweifel an jüngsten Friedensabkommen**

*Israels jüngst vereinbarte Friedensabkommen mit Bahrain und den Vereinigten Arabischen Emiraten bleiben Thema heftiger Kontroversen. Palästinenserpräsident Mahmud Abbas kritisierte in einer vor-*

*ab per Video aufgezeichneten Rede vor der Generaldebatte der UN-Vollversammlung die Abkommen zur Aufnahme von Beziehungen zwischen Israel und den beiden arabischen Golfstaaten. Gleichzeitig sprach sich Abbas für eine neue Friedenskonferenz aus. Den von US-Präsident Donald Trump vorgeschlagenen Plan zur Lösung des Nahost-Konflikts lehnte er erneut scharf ab. Analysten in Israel hegen hingegen die Hoffnung, dass den neuen Abkommen weitere folgen werden. Auch die Entkopplung der Abkommen vom Friedensprozess mit den Palästinensern stieß bei der konservativen Regierungskoalition auf Genugtuung.*

### **Despite UAE, Bahrain agreements, Israel's annexation plan is being realized**

While Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is signing diplomatic agreements, which have supposedly taken the annexation plan off the table, the reality on the ground is the other way around. In fact, gradual and continuous de facto annexation is happening in the West Bank. (...) To Western countries – including the United States – and Arab countries (...) as well as to the Palestinians and the Israelis, it was clear that Area C would be within the Palestinian state to be established alongside Israel. But Israel not only perpetuated its civil and security control there – it sought constantly, through cynical bureaucratic and military methods, to reduce the number of Palestinians living there, while preventing all necessary development and construction stemming from the needs of the protected population, and shirking its obligations as an occupying power.

(...) MKs from Likud and Yamina and settlers (...) openly declared (...): The Palestinians must make do with Areas A and B; that is, no more than 39 percent of the West Bank, with non-contiguous strips of land. (...) Neither the coronavirus, nor Netanyahu's indictments nor lip service paid to the Palestinians at the peace agreement festivities – none of these can hide it: The "vision" of Palestinian enclaves is the nightmare reality coming true before our very eyes. It has no connection to the two-state solution, which is supposed to be mentioned in the agreement with the UAE. This is the realization of the settlers' vision, which in the end will officially turn Israel into an apartheid state.

Editorial, HAA, 16.09.20

### **Peace treaties back Iran into a corner**

(...) the historic deal with the UAE and Bahrain (...) achieves more than one goal. This move (...) pushes Iran into a corner. The Iranians consider Bahrain

a Persian province (...). Yet lo and behold, Bahrain was not deterred by Iran and signed the peace deal with Israel. The treaty signings generate momentum. Iran (...) is now even more isolated diplomatically. It is perceived as the single largest force against peace in the region. Israel is suddenly in the spotlight as a champion for peace in the Middle East. (...)The Europeans don't like this peace, and as surprising as it may sound, this was also their position when Israel and Egypt made peace. It's good to start the new year with an optimistic diplomatic horizon, but the Israeli psyche has changed since those treaties of old. Which is a good thing. We need to shed the concept of a utopian peace. (...) The treaties (...) are a partial victory over the campaigns to delegitimize and boycott Israel, and the strategy of destroying the Jewish state. (...) If Israel would have continued sputtering in place in pursuit of fruitless negotiations and concessions to the Palestinians, and continued delegating the authority to fight the Iranian nuclear program to "the world," we would never be where we are now. The moment the Palestinian cause was severed from Israeli-Arab relations. This is the right time to begin rethinking solutions to the Palestinian issue. Perhaps even solutions that have been gathering dust for decades.  
Amnon Lord, IHY, 17.09.20

### **Regional peace, global influence**

(...) is the decades-long Israeli-Arab conflict coming to an end? Not quite (...). Until a peace agreement between Israel and the Palestinians is concluded, the Israeli-Arab conflict can never truly come to an end. Nevertheless, it appears that a growing number of Arab states are getting increasingly impatient waiting for the Palestinians to finally make peace with the Jewish state and want to take advantage of having normalized relations with Israel sooner rather than later. (...) Once Israel establishes diplomatic relations with all the Arab states, the Arab and Jewish peoples can chart a course towards the gradual integration into an economic and political alliance similar to the European Union. (...) In the mid-1990s (...) there were ads on Israeli news sites advocating for a confederation between Israel, a future Palestinian state, and Jordan. (...) such a confederation should stretch from Morocco all the way to the Arabian Peninsula. In other words, it should be a confederation that encompasses Israel and all Arab states. Israel and the growing number of Arab states with which it has relations can begin forging the path towards such a confederation even now. The European Union did not start as a full-blown political and

economic alliance. (...) It took decades for what we now know as the European Union to emerge. In the same sense, Israel and the Arab states should also pursue a gradual path towards integration. (...) As impressive as the EU may be, however, a confederation encompassing Israel and all the Arab states has the potential to be even more impressive, and perhaps even more powerful. Together, Israel and the Arab countries have a population well over four hundred million. (...) We, the children of Abraham, control forty percent of the world's oil reserves. And if that isn't enough, we also have full or partial control of several of the world's strategic waterways, including the Suez Canal, the Strait of Gibraltar, the Strait of Hormuz, and the Bab al-Mandab Strait, located between Djibouti and Yemen. Hence, the recent opening of full diplomatic relations between Israel and a growing number of Arab states can be the first step towards the creation of a political and economic global superpower.  
Jason Shvili, IHY, 21.09.20

### **The European Union should follow the UAE's example on Israel relations**

Formal, peaceful, normal relations between Israel and the United Arab Emirates, as well as between Israel and Bahrain, became possible when those two Persian Gulf countries concluded that linking their ties with Israel to the Palestinian issue was useless. (...) it is about time that the European Union (...) decouple their ties with Israel from the Palestinian issue. Because linking the two (...) has done nothing to help move Israel and the Palestinians closer to a diplomatic solution; has led to a loss of European impact in the region because Israel does not trust the EU as an honest broker; and is harming both European and Israeli interests – as both sides could benefit by working even closer together. It is hard to believe that the Emiratis or Bahrainis care less about the Palestinians than EU bureaucrats in Brussels, or various politicians in Ireland, Spain, France, Belgium, Luxembourg or Sweden. Yet while key players in the Persian Gulf – with a wink from Saudi Arabia – have concluded that they can pursue independent policies with Israel and the Palestinians, there are powerful forces inside the EU insisting on keeping the two issues intertwined. (...) if Israel does what the EU says – if it creates a Palestinian state on the basis of the 1967 lines, with east Jerusalem as the Palestinian capital – then there will be an upgrade of ties. If not, there will always be something holding those ties back. It's a

good thing the UAE and Bahrain did not adopt this model. (...)

Editorial, JPO, 22.09.20

### **The Abraham Accord is the starting point for radical tolerance and love in our region**

(...) peace is the key to, well, about just everything in our lives: To be a better parent, to be a better artist, to be a better spouse, to be a better investor, to be a better athlete, to be a better scientist, to be a better neighbor, to be a better even human being and to unlock all that we're capable of in this life. (...) To make something visible, we first have to go inside to understand what is in us, what's invisible: our hopes, our dreams, our fears, our pain, our judgments, our love. And then we put those into action. (...) I was blown away in learning about teshuva, about returning to oneself in the core values and practice of peace as an individual and as a community. And now with the start of the year, we have a perfect call to shake out old fixed ways, to review who we want to be as individuals and as nations. A time of truth telling, a time to do the work within ourselves. A time to shake it up. It's also a time to look at parts of ourselves that we don't like, that we're not proud of. It can be a time of forgiveness of self and others, a time of compassion to others and ourselves. You all have my commitment to bring my utmost to the work of building bridges. And with your help we can inspire, equip and empower young people in our nations to work together, to build new channels of communication and pathways to partnership and prosperity, to make the invisible visible. The United Arab Emirates is committed to making the invisible visible through our deep commitment to inclusion, diversity, hope, love, tolerance, peaceful coexistence. (...) My dream is that peaceful coexistence will become a conversation across faith denominations, disciplines and generations. (...) the movement stirred by the Abraham Accord will not only be the beginning of radical tolerance and radical love in our region and the world, but that it will change it.

Shamma Sohail AIMazrui, TOI, 29.09.20

### **3. Rosh HaSchana und Yom Kippur im Lockdown**

*Das jüdische Neujahrsfest Rosh HaSchana und der heilige Versöhnungstag Yom Kippur stehen in diesem Jahr ganz im Zeichen des Lockdowns. An beiden Festen kommen gewöhnlich die Familien zusammen, was die Regierung diesmal auf die im*

*selben Haushalt zusammenlebende Kernfamilie einschränkte. Auch die Anzahl der Betenden in den Synagogen wurde von der Regierung stark reglementiert. In vielen ultra-orthodoxen Gemeinden wurden jedoch die Vorgaben der Regierung missachtet. Religiöse Jüdinnen und Juden sind aufgefordert, sich in den zehn Tagen zwischen den beiden Festen ihrer moralischen Pflichten bewusst zu werden, begangene Sünden zu bereuen und zu versuchen, bessere Menschen zu werden. Der Überlieferung nach sind ab Neujahr die drei Bücher bei Gott geöffnet. Der Herr schaue sich in dieser Zeit besonders kritisch an, was die Menschen so treiben, trage die Guten in das Buch des Lebens ein, die Schlechten aber in das Buch des Todes. Das dritte Buch ist für die „Mittelmäßigen“ bestimmt, die sowohl Sünden wie Verdienste vorweisen können. Durch Einkehr und Buße ist es den Menschen bis zum Versöhnungstag möglich, das Siegel des Lebens zu erhalten. Man zieht Bilanz über das vergangene Jahr und hofft auf ein gelingendes Neues Jahr. Wichtigstes rituelles Symbol dieser Tage ist der Schofar, ein Widderhorn, in das während des Gottesdienstes geblasen wird und dessen Ton die Menschen zu Einkehr und Reue veranlassen soll. Das Versöhnungsfest zehn Tage später gilt als der wichtigste und höchste Festtag im Judentum. Auch weniger fromme Frauen und Männer halten den Fastentag ein, an dem selbst das Trinken von Wasser verboten ist. In überwiegend weltlichen Wohngebieten nutzen die Leute den Tag zum Radfahren auf den autofreien Straßen.*

### **This Rosh Hashanah, let's strive to be better**

Today, Israel locks down. It is a sad moment, one that is accompanied by feelings of uncertainty, fear and disappointment. (...) we know we could have done things better. (...) with Rosh Hashanah starting this evening, it is an opportunity for some introspection (...). We did not do mass testing fast enough (...); we didn't involve the IDF quick enough; we still don't have the contact tracing system in place needed to fight this disease and we opened up our economy way too fast (...). Where we failed as a people was in the way we let ourselves get sucked into a culture of division. We saw the mudslinging among our politicians and figured that was a good place for us to act likewise. (...) The secular blame the haredim (...) for what has happened (...). The haredim blame the secular (...) everyone has someone to point a finger at. But the blame is really on each and every one of us. (...) we know it is supposed to be different. Deep down, after we break

through the cynicism, we know what kind of country is supposed to be here. (...) We do not need a politician to tell us how to behave as a people, we know ourselves. It is in each and every one of us. (...) This lockdown will not be easy, and this virus is not just going to disappear, but the virus of hate, dismissal, rejection and condemnation can. It is up to us. It is Rosh Hashanah. We need to be better. Shana Tova.

Yaakov Katz, JPO, 17.09.20

### **Israeli society, heal thyself**

On Sunday morning, at the apex of Rosh Hashanah, dozens of children and adults stood side by side at the park under my apartment, all wearing masks and keeping a reasonable distance from one another, as they waited to hear the festive blow of the shofar. That familiar sound was the most beautiful and yet the saddest shofar blowing I have ever heard. The broken, raw sound of the shofar echoed the sadness and distress nesting in our chests. But also the feeling of solidarity and mutual responsibility.

(...) For years, Israeli society has taken pride in its human stock. (...) In times of adversity, we know how to reach out and lend each other a helping hand without questions, and without conditions. (...) This is the beauty of Israel. This is us. Passionate, helpful, inventive, dreamers, and merciful. The biggest tragedy of this pandemic is the fractured society it leaves behind - we are no longer able to recognize ourselves or those same people whom we so love to love. Suspicion has become a default mental state; conspiracy theories are now the norm. (...) In an ideal world, the government would have asked the Israeli public for forgiveness on Yom Kippur, and shown us their long term goals, their parameters for success and their other options. In this cold, bitter world, there is no trust and no leadership, just a national crisis. All we can do is piece ourselves back together. (...) We must flex those muscles that have entropied so much in the pandemic, the ones that make us who we are and the society we could and should be.

Chen Artzi Srur, YED, 23.09.20

### **Holding Our Mental Health Sacred This Tishrei**

(...) around Rosh HaShana and Yom Kippur, where we are (...) celebrating His Kingship and believing that He will be there for us whenever and wherever we need. It can feel vulnerable to stand there and admit all your faults and transgressions, even silently, while praying for forgiveness and a chance to grow. (...) We're spending more time alone, there's

less celebration around meals, and even shul can't be a space of connection. So, here we are sitting with ourselves, in a very deep head space, without the usual availability of connection and oneness. The question is how can we, and all people really, guard our mental health and hold it sacred right now? (...) truly utilize the month of Elul. It's there for us to lean into our connection with Torah and to reflect on this past year. So, that by the time we get to Rosh HaShana we are able to celebrate being alive and a part of the Jewish people. (...) find some form of real world connection on the days where online isn't an option. In 2020 this is particularly difficult, but try to see if a friend will have coffee outside (...). Give yourself a reason to leave your bed and your couch. (...) mindfulness is key during those long services. (...) paying attention to where your mind wanders and bringing it back to what you're doing. (...) Nothing about this year is going the way we thought it would. Especially not when it comes to holidays. So, it's important to hold these days and ourselves sacred throughout. Give space, allow for struggle, and create ways to stand back up. (...)

Barbara Schiffer, TOI, 24.09.20

### **What we can learn financially from wearing white on Yom Kippur**

(...) with New Year's resolutions, we often fall way short of having them make a significant change to our character. (...) To truly be introspective we need (...) to take a look back and analyze what went wrong in the past. (...) Yom Kippur is very much a day of simplicity. (...) In fact there is a custom to wear plain white clothes. (...) Reviewing the past isn't just for spiritual improvement. Reviewing your investment 'sins' of the last year is a great way to get yourself back on the path to financial stability. Where do you want to be? It's important when trying to get back on the path to financial stability, to know where that path ultimately leads. You need to define your goals. Whether you invest to fund your retirement, to pay for children's weddings, to leave an inheritance for the next generation or a combination of these, understand your goals and invest with those goals in mind. (...) If you understand your goals and you invest with an eye on meeting them, your chances of success will be much greater. (...) May we all merit to be inscribed in the book of life. Gmar Chatima Tova.

Aaron Katsman, JPO, 24.09.20

### Can we forgive each other?

(...) The 10 days that encompass Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur are a period of introspection (...). If you've wronged someone in your life, this is the moment to sincerely ask for forgiveness and, in turn, to forgive those who might have wronged you. While most think this solely applies to interpersonal conduct, it has particular relevance to intense political polarization. (...) Many have come to believe that attacking or shaming those who disagree with us is the right thing to do. (...) And we count on our "friends," both virtual and real, to cheer us on. You can blame this on social media (...). But we can't just blame this on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. The fault is ours. (...) We should think seriously about how much of our public and social-media exchanges fall into the categories of conduct for which repentance is required. Behaving with contempt, offensive speech, scoffing, slander, passing judgment and groundless hatred are just some of the sins that are staples of political discourse that now resembles a tribal culture war more than a democratic election. (...) The Days of Awe are a moment in time when we should focus on finding the courage and the moral strength to forgive and to apologize. We should remember that none of us are in possession of faultless truth. And we should be able to say we are sorry for offending others, forgiving those who have done the same to us and resolving to conduct ourselves, even on issues we feel the strongest, with more restraint and civility. (...)  
Jonathan S. Tobin, IHY, 27.09.20

## 4. Medienquerschnitt

### Israels Telekommunikationsbranche holt international auf

#### Israel narrows the telecoms gap

(...) Two recent events - the entry of HOT Telecommunication Systems Ltd. (...) into the fiber-optic venture IBC (...), and government approval for Bezeq Israeli Telecommunication Co. Ltd.'s (...) fiber-optic program - represent a big bang in Israel's telecommunications (...). The closeness in time of the two events is not coincidental. The outline plan that enabled Bezeq to embark on an investment in the billions of shekels is also what accelerated Hot's entry into IBC. These two events, together with the award of 5G licenses in the mobile market and the forthcoming abolition of the split in the Internet market between infrastructure and service provision, set

out new borderlines for the Israeli telecommunications market. The main aim is to narrow the gap between Israel and the rest of the world when it comes to surfing speed. This will facilitate the development of digital services and greater innovation in the economy. (...) Bezeq finds itself where it likes to be. It comes to life when it has a big infrastructure project before it. After many delays, crises, and disputes with the Ministry of Communications, the company is back to dealing with such a project. (...)  
Gad Perez, GLO, 30.09.20

HAA = Haaretz  
YED = Yedioth Ahronoth / Ynetnews  
JPO = Jerusalem Post  
IHY = Israel HaYom  
TOI = Times of Israel  
GLO = Globes

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Verantwortlich:

Dr. Paul Pasch,  
Leiter der Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung Israel

Redaktion:

Susanne Knaul  
Judith Stelmach

Homepage: [www.fes.org.il](http://www.fes.org.il)

Email: [fes@fes.org.il](mailto:fes@fes.org.il)