

Additional Reflections from Rabbi Bernstein's Colleagues

Rabbi Gustavo Surazski - Ashkelon

Sometimes you see a war on TV and sometimes you see it through the window of your home - this is the situation today in Ashkelon.

At times, it is difficult to convince Israelis how important a community is (unlike Jews abroad). However, in such situations, they understand how necessary and important a community is and how much support can be received from the community. We saw it during Covid and we see it now - volunteering and mutual help is one of the strengths we have as a society.

The strength of the Masorti Movement in such times is similar. I think it is important for the community to be part of the Movement because it receives support, from other communities in the country and from colleagues and leaders from around the world who call me up, just to ask how we are. It greatly strengthens us and is not obvious in such an individualistic world.

Rabbi Sigalit Ur - Moshav Shorashim

Life of Jews and Arabs in Galilee is intertwined like a piece of embroidery. For 20 years the level of integration has risen; there are Jewish and Arab workers in kindergarten, in the infirmary, and in our council. However, the current reality is very confusing and unsettling because we are used to visiting each other's villages and suddenly we think about it twice, maybe out of fear, or perhaps due to a sense of discomfort.

It feels like the rug has been pulled out from under our feet. There is a sense of mourning because since October 2000, webs of friendship and Arvut have been woven and now are torn apart. We will once again have to work to return to the community we worked so hard to create and that existed here only a week ago.

I had just returned from a protest at the main Junction, which was organized within hours. I saw many people from the area, Jews and Arabs in white clothes and flowers in their hands providing mutual support. This is a statement, despite the storm around us that we do not forget that we live together and the fabric of coexistence will continue. Our lives will not be good if our neighbors' lives are bad.

Rabbi Jeff Cymet - Tel Aviv

We have been experiencing crises for a long time: the corona crisis, the leadership crisis in the country after elections followed by more elections and now this crisis, and I wonder how to cope with this tension between routine and emergency that we feel every day.

We spent one hour in Tel Aviv in the shelter, and the question is what to do with the rest of the time, how to live without stress in the other hours of the day. We are now debating what to do next. We still pray in the open air and we do not have an accessible shelter near us, but we want to continue with the routine, meet for prayer and celebrate Shavuot together.

The community is our extended family; it provides a safeguard for its members, support for the needy and it is important that we continue to provide this support, especially in times of crisis.

Idit Ben Moshe Grines - Moshav Sde Nitzan (The Gaza Envelope)

The Masorti minyan in the Moshav is surrounded by a larger community that is very organized and supported. We feel that we are not alone within our community. We call this situation we are currently in an "emergency routine," in which there is different conduct that everyone is familiar with and is very much embedded in the local systems.

We realized that the stronger and better we are organized internally as a community, the better we cope in times of an emergency routine. We learned over the years how to provide the resources of resilience and care we need. Your interest helps, Tefila helps, and the contribution given to us by Masorti communities from around the world toward Sde Nitzan's Shelter has enabled us to pray without security difficulty.

Children can play in this space without fear. Come visit us! Get to know where Sde Nitzan is, how close everything is. Come visit and learn from us; we have tools that can work in any community, anywhere, and it empowers us and gives place to our difficulty and our strength.

