

The Concept of Leisure as Culture-dependent—Between Tradition and Modernity

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The article deals with the concept of leisure in Israel in terms of time, activity, state of mind, and Jewish values. The purpose of the study is to examine changes in how leisure is conceived in Judaism and the differences in the secular and religious conception of leisure, and the special relationship between leisure, work, and religious obligations and tradition. The study reviews the factors that have shaped the conception of leisure and its developments over time in Jewish religious society in general and in Israel in particular, which is a country with cultural foundations in both tradition and modernity, and one that strives to strike a balance between its multiple commitments to its religious roots and its modern democratic nature. The study proceeds to discuss the implications of such conceptions and developments for the Israeli education system. The article may have practical implications for imparting leisure behaviors, an educational challenge involving people's attitude to leisure.

Keywords: The concept of leisure, culture-dependent, tradition, modernity

Introduction

Leisure is culture-dependent, and culture determines people's ethical judgment of leisure. Cultural values and norms dictate to what degree a certain activity is considered legitimate, good or bad, socially acceptable or unacceptable. Different societies and cultures have different attitudes to the legitimization of leisure. For example, some cultures, such as the Protestant (Weber, 2010) or the Jewish worldview ("Man is born to labor" and "Work is the essence of our life"), have a value scale that places work on the highest level, while others recognize leisure as a distinct value and work is considered a means of achieving leisure (Pronovost, 1998; Roberts, 2010; Poel, 2006; Marsden et al., 1982). The most recent relevant OECD (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development) index (OECD Better Life Index) indicates that the average worker in Israel works 1,910 hours a year, versus 1,765 in the OECD. The workday of 19% of Israeli workers is very long, versus that of nine percent of OECD workers. This means that Israel has a customary norm of long work days compared to the Western norm. This is part of Israeli culture.

The history of leisure shows the rapid development of the emphasis on leisure over time. This development was influenced by religion, society, economics, and technological developments. Israel is currently considered a developed country, as determined by economic, social, and technological parameters (Delle Fave, & Maassimini, 1988; Csikszentmihalyi & LeFevre, 1989; Aguiar & Hurst, 2007). This article focuses on the concept of leisure in 21st century Israel—between modernity and tradition. It distinguishes

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between a secular and religious conception of leisure.

As stated, Israel is defined as a developed country, as determined by economic, social, and technological parameters. It is placed 16th among the 47 countries, defined as developed countries by the UN Development Program; i.e., it is in the upper half of developed countries (Index of Human Development 2013, Wikipedia).—Thus, its culture of leisure is part of the culture of the modern global world. Nonetheless, Israeli leisure culture has local features and unique courses of development, and these are affected by constant demographic changes, a high birthrate compared to the Western world, and Israel's character as a society of immigrants that encompasses various cultures (the extreme disparity between immigrants from the CSI and those from Ethiopia is a good example), affect leisure patterns. In addition, Israeli culture is linked to tradition, a fact that affecting attitudes toward leisure. Within the traditional-religious orientation, the attitude to leisure is not as a distinct value. In fact, the modern approach to leisure is often at conflict with the classical traditional Jewish approach. The latter requires Jews to devote all their time to the study of Torah: "Meditate on it day and night" (Frankel, 1981, p. 16), whereby Jews by definition have no leisure time.

However, the transformations and development of leisure patterns around the world are evident in Israel as well, although in this small young state, they have unique features. On one hand, the country has been waging both a national-defensive and personal struggle for its existence; on the other hand, it "sanctifies" the value of work, as evident in its long work days.

On Leisure and Labor

Israel began its way as a country that sanctified the value of work. For example, in the early 1950s, Israel's culture of leisure involved issues occupying the country: The core of Hebrew literature in that era dealt with subjects, such as, the struggle against Arab rioters who wished to destroy people, songs of praise for work and artisanship, for the country's protectors and defenders, and art depicting life in the countryside and on the kibbutz. In those days, leisure was a way of reinforcing existing values. For example, contemporary children's literature sought to assimilate values of heroic combat and Jewish laborers. Flowery language was used, and morals conveyed were full of ethics and ideals. Newspapers, as well as books, were all utilized for this purpose (Caspi & Limor, 1992). Contemporary leisure was not a value per se, rather a means of strengthening the sense of communality and collectivism (Darin-Drabkin, 1961). Leisure was also enlisted in service of the national cause of creating a new Israeli culture (Rosenberg, n.d.). Over the years, Israel's patterns of leisure changed. In their pioneer study, Katz and Gurevitch (1973) found that "time with the family" was a main contemporary area of leisure. The researchers described Israeli society as having a tradition-affiliated collective orientation. In any case, in the 1970s, future-labor-oriented values were more important to Israelis than present-oriented values of leisure. In this study, only less than half of the respondents attributed significance to leisure time (Katz & Gurevitch, 1973).

In a further study (Levy, Levinson & Katz, 1993), which was conducted 20 years later, an ethical change was found to have occurred, described by the researchers as "a complete turnabout" (Katz & Gurevitch, 1973, p. 10). Society had become individualist, stressing the "self" and hedonism. The significance of leisure had risen, compared to the significance of work and the emphasis had changed from one of future values (goals for the future) to one of present values (in 1993, 67% declared that leisure is no less important than work, versus only 48% in 1973). In 1993, a higher proportion agreed with the statement that "life is short and risky and we must focus mainly on the present" (Katz & Gurevith, 1993, p.10).

The essential transformation in leisure time between 1970 and 1990 is evident from the following table, based on the two studies of Katz et al. (1998) and of Levy et al. (1993).

Table 1

Change in Leisure Patterns, 1970 and 1990

Spending time with friends–1990	Spending time with family–1970
Individualism	Collectivism
Privatization – dissolution	Solidarity
Informal	Formal
Outside the home	Within the home
Secular	Traditional
No commitment	Commitment

At the same time, it is also notable that the comparison between the leisure culture of the 1990s and of the 1970s indicates a significant rise in the variety of leisure and culture activities. This comparison, however, also points to greater differences between the different life styles. This is evident in the different time frames allocated to recreation and to the growing disparity between what social sciences define as high culture and popular culture. Among observant Jews, there is a growing inclination to avoid taking part in common leisure activities. The disparity between secular and religious with regard to the culture of leisure is on the rise (Katz et al., 1998; Soen & Rabinovich, 2011).

Since 1993, no comprehensive study has been conducted on the Israeli culture of leisure by an Israeli university or major research institute. Nonetheless, there is no doubt that the rise of leisure as a value, evident in the 1990s, has at present reached sacred dimensions. For example, Almog (2004) says:

“...The hedonist expression ‘indulge me’ is common today. Indulgence has become a categorical order, a science of the senses and of moods. Indulgence has turned into a goal. People don’t merely talk about their vacation, of this and that room at a hotel, of the Jacuzzi, rather they analyze the strength of the experience, the monetary returns...” (p. 88)

One manifestation of this trend is evident in the results of a survey conducted on behalf of the Brandman Institute—a private institute in Tel Aviv—in 2002, indicating that the average Israeli invests in leisure almost the same number of hours as he does in his job: 141 hours of leisure activities versus 183 hours of work (Brandman Institute, 2002).

Obviously, what is true of the wide public is even truer of teenagers, for whom leisure constitutes a major value:

“One of the distinct characteristics of this generation is their attitude to entertainment, fun, and leisure. I would say that for them it is the center of their existence and consciousness... Their life centers on entertainment, which receives an almost ritual dimension. You can see this by observing their parties. They don’t necessarily come to relieve stress and alleviate burnout... For them the party is a goal rather than a means (the emphasis is ours, the authors). They prepare for it on a material and mental level and invest resources... Their devotion to the pleasures of the party is complete. It’s a full trance.” (Almog, 2004)

Utilization of leisure in Israel may be said to be affected by a long list of variables (Almog, 2004): one’s cultural background; one’s religiosity; the geographical variable (place of residence in Israel); the age variable; one’s gender and socioeconomic cross-section. In this context, it must be emphasized once again that of all factors affecting utilization of leisure, religiosity has a significant weight (Katz-Gerro et al., 2009).

The Jewish Attitude to Leisure

In contrast to Israeli society's attitude to leisure, there is the particular case of the religious sector. In this context, it is once again possible to differentiate among teenagers. The culture of youth is linked to its time and place; therefore different youth cultures may be expected in secular and religious circles (Katz-Gerro et al., 2009). This differentiation between secular and religious, with regard to how teenagers spend their leisure time, was indicated by another study conducted about 45 years ago (Cohen, 1970).

An important explanation of this distinction is suggested by pointing to the strong family orientation within religious society. Cohen's (1970) study claimed that this orientation limits in advance any entertainment outside the home. Another explanation (Katz & Gurevitch, 1973) added the strong collectivism among religious circles compared to secular circles.

A later explanation (Katz-Gerro et al., 2009) attributes the difference between the two sectors to the fact that religiosity requires one to adhere to a certain life style. This life style is subject to social supervision and pressure by those whom sociology designates the "peer group". Within religious educational circles, this was interpreted to mean that the culture of young religious people should focus on conduct that honors parents, upholds the laws of modesty, and other religious values and precepts. Furthermore, membership in religious youth movements—Bnei Akiva and Ezra—common among religious teenagers, also contributes to the different entertainment patterns of the two groups. It has a conspicuous impact on the television consumption of religious youth and it also reduces or prevents other types of entertainment (Ben Zvi, 1995).

Nonetheless, Jewish Orthodox's attitude to leisure is not static. Even within Orthodox society, it has developed over the years, progressing from complete rejection of leisure to adopting leisure as a way of strengthening one's relationship with God.

Leisure in Terms of Time

According to the traditional-conservative Jewish outlook, leisure does not exist for observant Jews (Stav, 2012). In this approach, leisure, conceived as free time from obligations, is not possible for Jews, as they are required to devote all their time to the study of Torah. This approach is rooted in the biblical verse that commands one to "Keep this Book of the Law always on your lips, meditate on it day and night" (*Joshua*, Chapter 1, p. 8). This verse was reinforced and became the obligatory halakhic view once it was included in the Tosefta (Brandes, 2011). Rabbi Yehoshua was asked: Can a man teach his son a Greek book? He said: "He can teach it at a time that is neither day nor night, as it is written: Meditate on it day and night" (*Avodah Zarah*, Chapter 1, 18). This is a cynical answer, meaning that it is permitted to engage in leisure activities only at a time that is neither day nor night.

Moreover, in early sources, it is possible to identify a negative attitude toward leisure as activity, stemming from the concern that leisure activities, such as the theatre, the circus, and hunting, would lead to sin, as written in Tractate Avodah Zarah: "Happy is the man that hath not walked to theatres and circuses of idolaters" (*Avodah Zarah*, Chapter 1, 19b). "Nor stood in the way of sinners" (*Avodah Zarah*, Chapter 1, 18b)—that is he who does not attend contests of wild beasts. "Nor sat in the seat of the scornful" (*Avodah Zarah*, Chapter 1, 18b)—that is he who does not participate in [evil] plannings (magic and clowning shows). The reason is described as a concern from sliding down a slippery slope: "Maybe a man will say: I shall go and challenge sleep?" (*Avodah Zarah*, Chapter 1, 18). Rabbi Stav (2012) explains that when the sages forbade leisure activities they had before them the concern that people would lapse into the material world.

Leisure as a State of Mind

In *Pirkei Avot*, one is required to be in a state of mind of worshipping God, even when performing actions that supposedly have no direct connection to the study of Torah or to the belief in God, as otherwise he might lapse spiritually: “Sleeping away the morning, drinking at noonday, childish playing and sitting in the meetinghouses of the unlearned, remove a man from this world” (*Avot*, Chapter 3, mishna 10). The believer must constantly be in a state of mind of serving God, or as it is written: “And all your deeds should be in the name of God” (*Avot*, Chapter 2, mishna 12). According to this rule, even optional acts, such as eating, drinking, sitting, getting up, walking, lying down, having sex, conversing, and all bodily needs, should be done for the purpose of worshipping the Creator or for that which leads to His worship. R. Yona (b.1305) explains that:

“In general, every person must focus his eyes and his heart on his ways, and weigh his deeds on the scale of the mind, and when he sees something that leads to worship of the Creator he should do it, and if not he should avoid it” (p. 231).

This is a type of “rule of thumb” that enables one to define whether a certain leisure activity is permissible. This approach was adopted and enhanced in later texts. The Rambam (b.1135) describes the need to perform only those actions that help one reach the main goal, which is “knowing God Himself” (*Book of Knowledge*, Chapter 1, halakha 5). Following on this distinction, the Rambam obliges one in certain circumstances to “listen to music and singing, and walk among pretty gardens and buildings and with beautiful shapes” (i.e., visual art). The Rambam also cites: “When the Sages grew tired of their studies, they would tell humorous things”. The Babylonian Talmud (Tractate *Shabbat* 3b) as well says “Raba was accustomed to begin his lesson with humorous words” (*Shabbat* 30), and in this way, according to Rashi (b. 1060) on site, “the hearts of the listeners would open” (*Shabbat* 30). Moreover, the Rambam says in *Moreh Nevochim* 3:25:

“[Man’s] actions are divided as regards their object into four classes: they are either purposeless, unimportant, in vain, or good. An action is in vain if the object which is sought by it is not obtained on account of some obstacles... Purposeless are such actions, which serve no purpose at all. Some persons, for instance, do something with their hands whilst thinking of something else... Unimportant are such actions by which a trivial object is sought, an object that is not necessary and is not of great use... Useful are such actions as serve a proper purpose: being either necessary or useful for the purpose which is to be attained”... “For many things are necessary or very useful in the opinion of one person and superfluous in the opinion of another” (p.25).

Rabenu Bechayei in “*Hovat Halevavot*”, *Worship of God*, Chapter 4, added: “The Torah divides people’s deeds into three: commands, warnings, and the permissible... and the permissible is divided into three parts: that of gratification, exaggeration, and reduction” (Exaggeration—exaggerated indulgence. Reduction—abstaining, which is desirable when stemming from asceticism and piety and undesirable when unrelated to higher goals. Gratification —when positive and necessary).

The Rambam’s laws laid the foundation for the advent of leisure in its ethical-normative-cultural definition. This means that in contrast to the earlier bans, the Rambam thought that ethical judgment should be employed when considering leisure activities. This judgment defines leisure activities as permissible when they have a supreme goal (even in the Babylonian Talmud, people can find cases where Rabbis told jokes before class to attract students and involve them in their studies).

Leisure and Its Significance for Israel’s Education System—Between

Modernity and Tradition

The influences of surrounding society affected the development of Jewish leisure. While in the past, it was customary to engage in collective leisure, today, in order to achieve their goal, people engage in individual leisure, such as seclusion and meditation. The reasons have to do with the development of modernity, for example, the growing significance of the “self” as the central focus. Judaism, existing as it does within a wider context, is required to adjust and to adapt the Torah to changing life. One manifestation of the conceptual shift may be found in recent halakhic laws. For example, Rabbi Isser Frankel (1981) in an article, “On the culture of leisure in Judaism”, presents an interpretation whereby since Judaism sees the body and the soul as one entity, it is necessary to maintain the body as well, rather than only the soul. This means that studying the Torah (strengthening the soul) is not enough, rather it is also necessary to engage in leisure activities that strengthen the body (= leisure). This legitimizes leisure activities, but only if the activity has the purpose of strengthening one’s relationship with God, whether directly or indirectly.

Bar Lev (1981) in his article “Changes in the leisure patterns of the religious Jew”, explains that even at a time when a culture of leisure was forbidden, in practice the Jewish community found ways of dealing with the ban by integrating leisure activities in various religious frameworks, such as: mitzvah feasts, helping a needy bride, the festive meal after the Sabbath, etc. The reason is, the understanding including leisure in formal religious settings makes it possible to supervise and limit it while also restricting leisure that is not purposeful (for the purpose of worshipping God). At the same time, this forbade leisure that does not have a purpose.

Today as well, this approach is the dominant one, and the religious population in all its sectors takes part in leisure activities. In this context, Rabbi Cherlow (2011) writes:

“A large majority of the components of Zionist religious society live a life of leisure with no excuses. They do not see themselves as sinners and they have no bad conscience, rather the opposite – it is part of one’s enrichment” (p. 14).

In early studies held among the religious population (Bar Lev, 1977), most were already found to have adopted the modern concept and values of leisure, while only four percent restricted themselves to leisure activities with religious contents. The researcher indicated the process of secularization both of leisure patterns within the home and of those outside the home. Nonetheless, it is notable that among teenagers who define themselves as religious or traditional, a larger proportion takes part in enrichment activities than among secular teenagers (Bar-Lev, 1977; Katz & Gurevitch, 1973; Levy & Gutman, 1974; Sivan, 1984). A larger proportion of the latter participates in diversion-oriented leisure activities or those of a mixed nature. As part of the patterns of secularization, most yeshiva graduates engage in leisure activities, such as radio, computer, non-religious literature, etc. Nonetheless, there is an absolute rejection of leisure activities perceived as distinctly secular, unrelated to the worship of God. Similar processes were also found among ultra-orthodox society, which has begun to embrace leisure activities from the secular world as well, such as opera, concerts, tourism, etc., albeit gradually (Egozy, 1976).

In later studies too, a similar trend may be discerned. For example, Ne’eman (2008) found that “secular” values of leisure had trickled into religious society. Nonetheless, Ne’eman (2008) claims that the adoption of leisure values and patterns has been “converted”. For example, the normative need for parties is answered by ceremonial parties and celebrations of the Bnei Akiva youth movement, high school yeshivas and ulpanot. These are examples of leisure as an activity that has been adapted to the religious world of values. These events are dictated by the norms and events of religious tradition, but in their framework, the religious population

(particularly religious teenagers) enjoys modern leisure activities. Still, Ne'eman (2008) concludes and says that the leisure patterns of religious teens have been transformed from normative activities dictated by the religious establishment to permissible activities.

As stated repeatedly, studies (Ne'eman, 2008) recurrently indicate that the element of religiosity as a major factor affects the choice of leisure activities. While those who study in secular settings tend more towards activities of a relaxing nature capable of relieving daily tensions (cinema, cafes, restaurants, pubs, and discotheques), religious teens tend to attribute more significance to activities of a spiritual nature (Bar-Lev, 1997). An example is youth movement activities on ethical-religious subjects, for example: on Sabbaths, Rosh Hodesh, Jewish festivals, etc. Thus, the issue of leisure in religious society has progressed from complete rejection in the middle ages to selective acceptance of leisure activities that have no conflict with religious values (Bar-Lev, 1997; Liptzin, 1981). On the level of leisure, as time in which one does not engage in work, Jewish Sabbaths and festivals may be seen as an expression of time that is not work. This is leisure enabled and required by virtue of the heavenly command—"Observe the Sabbath day to sanctify it"—when the observant person is required to "take time" to rest. One can fill this framework of time that is free from work with contents or activities (attending the synagogue, reading, and time with the family), and this is compatible with the idea of purposeful leisure that does not exist for its own sake. Leisure, to which Jews are obligated by the Torah, can also be perceived as state-of-mind leisure in which believers are required to distance themselves from any behavior with weekday features. The demand to separate oneself from any weekday activities and the religious commandment bring believers to a state of mind in which they "refrain from any labor" on the conscious level as well.

Israeli education, both the State and State-religious systems, have ethical emphases that are also manifested in teens' leisure preferences (Katz & Yanovitzky, 1998). The trend of secularization and the filtering of modern values into the religious world, even if they do not directly contradict the values of religious society, arouse "discomfort" within the religious establishment. One possible reason is the conflict between the traditional Jewish outlook with its authoritative approach, and the modern outlook, which espouses a decentralized non-hierarchical approach (Gopas, 2011). Some of the modern definitions of leisure culture are compatible with human values and with the values of the national religious public, but many are not fully compatible with the fundamental values of this group (Cohen, 2011). As a result, the culture of leisure has become a major topic of discussion in the world of Torah, with many parents, educators, and Rabbis dealing with the question of how to relate to the consumption of leisure activities, whether as something permitted to begin with (planned and initiated) or after the fact (not planned or initiated, when teens are drawn to the temptations and accessibility of leisure activities) (Bemachshava Techila, 2011). In each generation, the way of Torah faces new educational challenges and new educational questions. Managing leisure in the current generation is a significant challenge both for the public in general and for traditional society in particular. The wish to adapt the Torah to modern times on one hand, and the attempt to continue adhering to traditional ways, constitutes a real challenge for the establishment and for educators, be whom they may. In the 2011 issue of the journal *Machshava Techila*, the central role of this topic within the religious sector was emphasized. A variety of educators and religious leaders presented their impressions of the risks posed by leisure and of how to properly prevent and manage leisure activities. The diverse presentations show that despite drawing closer to modernity, the religious public is still subject to a series of limitations and restrictions on how they can grasp and consume leisure activities. Educators and leaders of religious Zionist education are agreed on the

prohibition of leisure as a value in and of itself, preventing leisure from becoming a “new God”, as may have happened in modern society. As stated repeatedly, leisure in traditional society cannot be a distinct value, rather only a means of reaching a higher purpose. In this respect, religious society must proceed carefully, as it must teach its students about choice, self-control, and self-responsibility (Eldar, 2011), specifically because they live in a halakhic world of Torah. In a world full of opportunities and temptations, a world where “students’ access to the world, with all its challenges and risks, is greater than ever, even when they are at home, in their room, facing the computer and the internet” (Eldar, 2011, p. 11).

Despite the above, it must be remembered that, in all parts of Israeli society, leisure is gradually becoming legitimized on two dimensions: The objective definition of leisure is perceived as measurable, for example, the allocation of time, space, financial resources, the frequency and duration of activities. These measures are identified with the gradually growing time that Israelis devote to leisure due to changing family, social, and cultural circumstances. The size of the average Israeli family has diminished, work days have been shortened, working from home is considered legitimate, there is a growing awareness of laws of retirement and pension plans, life expectancy is rising, there is a wide supply of recreational and pleasure venues. All these have created changes in the “budgeting of leisure”, the utilization of free time from work and activities related to the essential vital human existence of Israeli citizens. The subjective definition of leisure is identified as the meaning of leisure as perceived by citizens, ethical legitimization that is immeasurable, part of the citizen’s meaning, values, and responsibility for his life.

In this context, it must once again be emphasized that as the research literature indicates, beginning from 1970, dramatic changes have occurred in Israeli society, impacting the concept of leisure (see Table 1 above).

From a future-orientation to a present-orientation, reflecting the approach of enjoying the moment, in the spirit of “eat and drink for tomorrow we shall die”.

From “we” to “I” —A growing focus on the “I”, legitimization of personal pleasures. Not only the good of the collective, activities on behalf of the collective and sacrificing for society, is legitimate, rather also activities for one’s self.

A rise in the meaning attributed to free time, similar to that attributed to work. There is also a drop in time devoted to work.

A sharp drop in time devoted to housework.

A change in the ethical-moral judgment employed towards those who “know how to enjoy life”. The change reflects a different weight given by Israelis to work and leisure. The concepts of work and leisure begin to blur.

For example, sociologist Oz Almog described this in 2004 in an interview on the new culture of leisure:

“I’m not sure whether the word leisure is applicable at all. What is leisure? Assumedly the opposite of work. But we know that today you can work and entertain yourself simultaneously. For example, I am sitting at my computer at the office, writing an article, and on the screen I have a little window where I watch a live soccer game. What am I doing at this moment? Am I working or being entertained? In fact, I am doing both. When I surf the web, search for websites, occasionally play a game, text someone, am I working or being entertained? The terms of leisure and work become blurred in such circumstances.”

In summary, despite all the changes, both in consciousness and in practice, leisure in Israel is still perceived by wide segments of the population as a means, rather than a value per se, and in this respect, Israeli society’s attitude to leisure is “traditional” (a means rather than a goal).

In any case, with all this in mind, the Ministry of Education and Culture decided, as early as the mid-1990s, to establish a public committee headed by Dr. Hillel Raskin, to prepare a study program on leisure education. This program was made public in 1995 and confirmed by the World Leisure Organization. Its general goal was to help provide tools for proper utilization of leisure time by developing and nurturing what it called ethical, social, and other aspects. This in affiliation with Israel's educational goals and the diverse heritage of Israel's different cultures. Naturally, this program avoided rigid definitions and made room for variations in the different sectors.

Conclusion

In order to understand the complexity of current attitudes towards leisure time in Israel's Jewish sector, it is necessary to be aware of the following points:

Israel is a modern country with a traditional orientation among considerable parts of the population. Leisure activities are conservative compared to those customary around the world. Leisure is culture-dependent, and to a large degree, it is linked to Jewish holidays, Sabbaths, and national events. Leisure in Israel may be said to be guided by or draw from values that are traditional by nature, such as: reinforcing family ties, studying, etc. The differentiation among leisure activities derives from the different weight attributed to Jewish holidays and Sabbaths by the secular and religious sectors. Leisure consumption is mainly technology-based, i.e., based on new technology (tablets, i-phones, etc.) that has entered the homes. This trend is characteristic of the 21st century. The possibilities of working from home, as well as entertainment at home, have created changes and blurred the distinction between home and work—as well as the challenge of distinguishing between personal and family leisure and social leisure, between passive leisure (people who spend their leisure time facing one electronic screen or another) (Raskin, 1999, p. 430) and active leisure, and among various skills—the Israeli education system must cope with all of these.

Leisure in the modern world has changed its status—from a relatively marginal time unit in people's life, it has become a meaningful dimension, constituting part of the individual's social identity. Where the term "leisure" was once used by people to denote time not devoted to work, today it has attained the status of a "culture". The transition from "mere" leisure to a "culture of leisure" is a significant milestone in the development of leisure. Culture is ethically compelling. It dictates judgments, such as good or bad, worthy (for example, high culture) or unworthy (popular or low culture). The values associated with the consumption of leisure have transformed it into a compelling part of life. This means that people consume leisure based on the (conscious or subconscious) view that it says something about them: One's culture of leisure speaks of one's personality. In this respect, leisure has become another product of people's consumer society and, as such, leisure is unlimited and insatiable.

Working in the modern era is not a distinct value; rather it is a means of acquiring more and more leisure—a culture of leisure that has achieved its own independent and desirable status. Today people often work more hours or harder, not because of the value of work per se, but in order to make more money in order to finance their next vacation. In the modern era, consumerism is the "new God" and people literally worship it.

In religious society, it is forbidden to worship idols, and for this reason, in many respects, modern leisure clashes with the values of religious society. This society exists within an open and modern society (Arend, 2000), and tries to make adjustments in order to remain part of the changing world. In contrast, there is a limit to the flexibility desired and utilized by this society. The most significant educational challenge within religious

society in the 21st century is the need to cope with the interplay between tradition and modernity. This relationship exists in a large range of areas, however, in light of the place occupied by leisure in the lives of young people, it is one of the most essential and major areas in their value education. This means that how this sector will educate its future generation to spend their leisure time, will dictate their entire world of values.

Tradition and modernity are seemingly two separate worlds of values; however, experience has shown that it is possible to bridge the differences between them. Leisure activities in religious-traditional society make it possible, on one hand, to enjoy leisure activities customary in the secular sector, and on the other hand, to set them in a regulated and supervised framework. In this way, the possibility that leisure will become a sanctified value is curbed. Religious society emphasizes restrictions (Rimon Internet, the limited cellular route) and the extent of leisure consumption, fearing a slippery slope. Indeed, in people's contemporary world, there are many temptations and sometimes they feel almost "brainwashed" by constant messages aimed at convincing them that they need more of everything. In such a world, in particular, faith is an anchor that makes it possible to put the temptations facilitated by the culture of leisure into proportion; it reminds one that real inner fulfillment does not come from outside, rather from one's connection to the Creator. The purpose of educators in this sector is at present to preserve the old world of values within the new course, "the old shall be renewed and the new shall be sanctified" (Rabbi Kook, 1925, p.216) meaning a merging of the best of Jewish tradition and of general modern culture to form a unified ethical outlook.

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