

Israeli Calendar Can Boggle the Western Mind

What day is it? This is how I spend most Sundays in Israel—wondering what day it is.

For 38 years, it was engrained in my head that school starts on Monday. Work starts on Monday. It was a big culture shock for me after moving to Israel 10 years ago to begin the week on Sunday (and to be clear, I am making a *cultural* statement, not a *religious* one).

Saturday morning started off feeling like Saturday. But by the time sundown came, we were making lunch for our kids, telling them to get their books ready, homework squared away (or yelling at them, “You didn’t do your homework?”) and in bed so they would be ready for school *Sunday* morning.

Suddenly my brain would begin to tell me it was Sunday night. I would think, “Oh good, NFL starts at 8 p.m. (1 p.m. EST),” only to turn on the TV and realize it was Saturday night.

The next morning would be even more confusing. I would wake up, Elana and I would get the kids up and off to school, and then I would go to Ulpan (Hebrew language school) or work, or work at home, and all day I would think it was Monday.

The worst part was that I would sometimes miss my most exciting cultural connection to the USA: the NFL. I would get home and assume it was Monday and I would forget that games were on.

Each day—even until today—I think is the day after. Or sometimes, I get so confused I think it is the day before. For instance, my most important meeting of the week is our pastors’ meeting on Tuesday. And thinking that Tuesday was

Monday, I filled it up with media work this week. I have a meeting with a group from the USA tomorrow; I was sure it was Tuesday. Ahhh!

Since you can't see my face, I am smiling, not frustrated. A little day confusion is fine in order to live and minister in the re-birthed nation of Israel (see Ezek. 36:24—I had to get at least one Scripture in here).

There are those in the Knesset, our parliament, who are fighting to make Sunday a day off. It is not so much to be like the other nations, as much as it is to have one day of rest. In fact, some economists say it will even help out the economy because there will be so much shopping on that day.

For most, Saturday is the only day to get stuff done, so instead of resting, they are working around the house, shopping, etc. They want Saturday to be a real day of rest and Sunday, a day to get stuff done.

While it would cut down on my day confusion, I am happy with the way things are. Plus, with my children grown, I no longer feel like Saturday night is Sunday night. Now, if I could just figure out the rest of the week.

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