

No Beeping – Shabbat Observance

Framing this unit

This is a sign from August 1951 published by the municipality of Tel Aviv-Jaffa and signed by the mayor, announcing that it is forbidden for drivers to beep their horns during the evening and on Shabbat and holidays. The prohibition is for the benefit of residents who would like to rest during those times. The prohibition is in effect from 8:00 pm until 7:00 am on work days and all day on Shabbat and holidays. The announcement acknowledges the potential for an increase in accidents, since drivers will not be able to use their horns to warn pedestrians, so pedestrians are asked to take extra care when crossing the road. The mayor ends by expressing his confidence that residents will follow the new rules and there will thus be no need to issue traffic tickets.

Group Activity

The place of Shabbat in Israeli public life has been debated since the very establishment of the State of Israel. There are those that advocate for Shabbat playing a role in Israeli life, even if it is not observed according to Jewish law. Read this [opinion piece](#) by Uri Heitner.

- What are his main points?
- What aspects of his argument do you agree with?
- What do you disagree with?
- Do you think that the municipality has the right to decide on special laws for Shabbat or Jewish holidays?
- Have you ever had difficulty sleeping because of street noise?
- Would you like your city to pass a similar law?
- Would you be willing to give up beeping in order to help keep the peace?

Discussion

- Who published the sign?
- Who is it signed by?
- What, according to the sign, is now prohibited at night, on Shabbat, and on Jewish holidays?
- What does it state is the reason for this prohibition?
- What might happen due to the implementation of this new prohibition, and what does the poster advise the residents of Tel Aviv to do?
- Why do you think the Tel Aviv municipality felt the need to publicize this new municipal law?
- Do you think it would have been easy for residents to follow this law?

Tel Aviv is largely known as a secular city.

- Why, despite this, do you think that the municipality prohibited beeping on Shabbat and Jewish holidays?

- Do you think that this law affected the atmosphere in Tel Aviv on these days? If so, how?
- In what ways is Shabbat in Israel different from the other days of the week?
- Do all Israelis observe Shabbat in the same way?

Compare the ways in which religious and secular Jews make Shabbat a special day.

Creative Activity

- Think of another rule that would make your city more pleasant to live in. Write a sign announcing the new rule.
- Take photographs of signs that remind residents of rules that enhance the quality of life in your city. Display them online or on a poster.
- Interview people about their Shabbat experiences. Make an online presentation with their responses.

Primary sources in this lesson

[No Beeping Poster](#)