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Jerusalem - Ultra-Orthodox Israelis Are Most Polite

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Israel - Yom Kippur (the Day of Atonement) will be observed by Jews around the world this coming Shabbat. As one of the holiest days in the Jewish calendar approaches, Jews traditionally ask friends and acquaintances for forgiveness for any wrongdoings they may have done during the past year.

This year, for the first time ever, the Jerusalem Institute for Market Studies (JIMS) conducted a survey among Israelis, to determine who among them is the most polite and most impolite.

The survey, whose results were published on Tuesday, was conducted among 992 adults representing the Jewish population in Israel, and included questions on many aspects of public behavior, such as driving, speaking on cell phones, treatment of the elderly, use of foul language, and the like. Respondents were asked to report on their own behavior and were given a politeness score based on their answers, with the average score being 2.94 on a scale of 0-4.0.

The survey found that in all areas, men are less polite than women, with their average score being 0.11 points lower. New immigrants were found to be more polite than native-born Israelis.

Interestingly enough, the ultra-orthodox were found to be the most polite group among Israelis, with their average score being 3.16. People who defined themselves as religious, traditional, or secular received lower scores. However, no correlation was found between marriage, number of children in the household or education and politeness.

According to Professor Robert Sauer, president of JIMS, "The results of the survey are important because it suggests that the public education system in Israel is making a series of disastrous mistakes. The survey shows that there is no correlation between education and politeness, indicating that focusing almost exclusively on improving grades and cognitive skills, does not at the same time succeed in improving non-cognitive skills such as manners, self-control, and persistence. And since the survey shows that income substantially increases with politeness, Israeli employers highly value these non-cognitive skills. In other words, the Israeli education system would do well to switch tracks and devote much more attention to fostering politeness and other non-cognitive skills among the student population."

JIMS also asked participants where they encounter rude behavior the most. The results were compared to the findings of a similar survey conducted in the US. 31 per cent of respondents encountered rude behavior in stores and shopping centers, 13 per cent at work or in the airport, and 9 per cent in one's close environment. These results were either similar or lower than the percentage reported in the US. However, when looking at impolite behavior when dealing with government agencies, 28 per cent of Israelis reported rudeness, compare to only 19 per cent of Americans.

The most frequent occurrence of rudeness is in the form of loud talking on cell phones in public, an occurrence that 78 per cent of Israelis reported to encounter often or all the time. 71 per cent of respondents reported encountering aggressive and inconsiderate drivers with the same frequency.

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