

## Y NET-GESHER FOUNDATION POLL

### Poll: Most Israelis prefer not to shop on Saturday

Survey finds that most secular Israeli Jews do not believe in forcing employees to work on Shabbat, though they see opening of stores on the holy day as a sign of progress

Ynet

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A poll conducted by Ynet and the **Gesher Foundation** has revealed that most of the Israeli public would prefer not to shop on Saturday. However on the issue of whether a civilian can be forced to work on Shabbat the results were split.

According to 62% of those polled, the increase in places of business open on the holy day is evidence of Israel's secularization and liberalization, but 24% thought it meant a loss of religious symbols and tradition and 14% thought it testified to the state's lack of respect for a worker's right not to work on Saturday.

More specifically, 84% of secular Israeli Jews polled said they believed the opening of places of business on Saturday testified to liberalization, while 70% and 76% of religious and ultra-Orthodox respectively attributed it to the loss of religious tradition.

Regarding the question of whether an employee can be forced to work on Shabbat, 65% answered no - 35% due to religious reasons and 30% for welfare reasons. But the remaining 35% answered positively, with 24% saying that the employer was justified in making the condition obligatory and 11% saying it was justified only in certain cases.

More than 80% of religious and ultra-Orthodox Israelis polled objected to forcing an employee to work on Saturday, while half of the secular Jewss polled objected and half did not.

But the majority (53%) of Israelis does not shop on Saturday in any case. Only 25% said they would appreciate being able to shop on Shabbat, while 22% said they would not do so under any circumstances.

Executive Gesher Director Ilan Geal-Dor said, **"We feel that Israeli society is under a constant strain resulting from the dialogue between those who want a modern, liberal state and those who want to maintain Jewish symbols. Most of the public in Israel doesn't want anyone to be forced to work on Saturday and doesn't even shop on Saturdays but sees liberal progress in the opening of businesses on Saturday. We need to continue the dialogue and find the balance between tradition and Jewish character, and liberalism."**