Episode: *How Do You Find a Morality Matrix? Where Do They Come From?* **Date:** *11/3/23* **Length:** *44:05*

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SPEAKERS

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TRANSCRIPT

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Daniel Lapin 00:00

Greetings, happy warriors, and welcome to the Rabbi Daniel Lapin show, where, as usual, I, your rabbi, dedicate myself solemnly to revealing how the world really works and reminding you that the more that things change, the more we need to depend on those things that never change. And one of the things that never changes is the idea that it is difficult if not impossible, to live alongside people who operate under an entirely different moral system from yours. It is very difficult to marry somebody and to maintain a marriage. If the two of you have a different set of moral systems, it's difficult to have neighbors. And if you are a country, it is very difficult to have a peaceful border with people who have a different moral system. Israel and Gaza would be a very good example of this. But it is true on an individual level, just as it's true on a national level. And you only have to think about it for a moment to realize that this is correct. When you live with other people, whether you live with them in the same house or with a common border, there are certain things you count on. They don't even have to be explicitly mentioned. I don't believe there is any particular pact controlling the border between Canada and the United States. It's two cultures that until relatively recently, have maintained very close very similar moral matrices. I don't need much of a border between England and Scotland, although you have in the past. But right now, or at least up until recently, basically similar moral matrices. But borders, shall we say, as in Cyprus, between the Greeks and the Turks. Quite a different story. Borders in Ireland, between Protestant Island and Catholic Island. Those are issues. And so moral matrices or moral systems really do become very important.

Daniel Lapin 02:44

Indeed, Peter Singer, is a moral philosopher, who divides his time between the University of Melbourne in Australia and Princeton University in New Jersey in the United States. And he has a number of moral pronouncements that he makes, he wrote a book of years ago called The Life You Can Save. And I've spoken about it before. In it, he says that it is immoral, it violates moral law, for you to buy a third pair of pants, if the two you have are perfectly serviceable. And meanwhile, that same money, could help bring food or medicine to somebody in another part of the world who is short of both. Now, on that basis, said Peter Singer, you basically it is immoral for anybody to spend money on anything, which is beyond your

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basic necessities, regardless of the fact that defining basic necessities is different for every person. But since Peter Singer you can't spend it's not moral to spend money on anything beyond basic necessities, as long as there are people in the world who has left who have less. And so you can see that Peter Singer's view of morality is dependent to a great deal on ideas of equality. Now, Peter Singer should actually say, according to me, according to Peter Singer's law of morality, this is the case, but the way he speaks suggests that there is a universal understanding of morality. And he Peter Singer, is simply bringing the tablets down from the mountain for everybody to understand. But he the tone of his book is that it's impossible for any reasonable person to disagree.

Daniel Lapin 04:51

Well, I do disagree, because it's very important to note that whenever you use the word moral you must define the system you are referring to, you must refer to a specific system of morality, it doesn't make sense to simply say it's immoral. It depends, according to what, according to some systems of morality, things that there are certain things that are moral, and according to others, the same actions are immoral. And so it's completely nonsensical for Peter Singer or anybody else, for that matter, to speak in terms of "it's not moral if you do this...". Or this would be the moral thing to do, says who? It depends. There's not a universal system of morality. And this is, by the way, very easy to prove by means of a thought experiment, all you got to do is put a boy and a girl on a remote isolated desert island. This is a thought experiment, child advocates, please note, we are not doing this. This is a thought experiment, please note, so and then set up clandestine surveillance equipment, and watch what happens over the next few 100 years. And there are certain things that we can predict will happen, there are other things that are extremely unlikely to happen. What do I mean? Well, I mean, obviously, they are going to discover reproduction. And they're going to eventually turn into a family and then a tribe. And as the centuries go by, are these people likely to discover magnetism? Yeah, more than likely, I mean, there's probably magnetic stones just the same as other places in the world at other times of history. Discovered magnetism, there's no reason why they shouldn't.

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Are they likely to discover the idea of monogamous marriage? Absolutely not. That's very unlikely. Because again, you only have to carry through a thought experiment? I would say, if somebody came up with the idea of marriage, do you think it's more likely to be a woman or a man? Now, it's true that modern-day feminists like to stress about how they don't need men. But, you know, I remain as so many people are completely haunted by the pogrom that took place in Israel on October the seventh of this year 2023. And yes, and yes, there were there were certainly heroic actions by women, both civilian women and women of the Israeli Defense Force. But by and large, most women recognize that in extremists in horrible conditions of ultimate survival, most women would like to have near them, a man with a weapon. That's a reality. So when women say we don't need any men, that is speaking about super luxurious, ultra civilized, very evolved society, basically, United States 21st century where yes, women can dial 911 If they're threatened, and women can become financially self-sufficient. And women can just not have babies. So they don't have that issue. And sure enough, these are things we see happening. But when things go south, when things deteriorate when things go very bad. Yeah, women need men. So on our desert island, it's if anybody were to think of marriage, it would be a

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woman. And she'd come along to a guy and so I've got this great idea, you know, I think we ought to get married. And what's that? She says, Well, it means that you forego all other women other than me. And it means that when I have a baby, then you get to look after me, you actually get to feed me because I may not be able to go out to work in the, in the fields or in the fishing boat. When that happens, so And meanwhile she'll say, you know,

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Where are you going? Why are you running? Come back? I haven't finished explaining marriage yet. And he's vanishing over the horizon. There's very little likelihood at all of that emerging naturally. And if it did, you would find that in both in areas Some of Western countries as well as other parts of the world, you'd see marriage emerging just as the logical, inevitable thing that people do know, it's not logical is not inevitable, and they're extremely unlikely to have come up with it. It's just that's not how it works. One of the reasons that marriage is very closely linked to religion, which is to say that in religious societies in traditional societies, marriage is far more prevalent than elsewhere. Another thing that happens is that in societies where there is a reason that there is a purpose in life, a purpose in life that goes beyond, you know, just taking care of my next meal, and getting my next little luxury, and my next little toy societies that have that are societies in which Marriage and Family-building tend to happen. So that's, that's another reason why on our remote desert island, little growing society, we're not going to find that. Are they likely to discover steam power? Are they likely to discover iron? Are they likely to have a little mini Industrial Revolution? Quite possibly? Yeah, quite possibly they would? Are they likely to evolve a system of morality? I don't think so. This is one of the reasons that the system of social organization that they all likely to come up with is tribal. Because within a tribal system, you can have a basic system of morality, which is it's us against everyone outside, it's our tribe against the rest. And that pretty much will govern, you've got to look after your own family, your own kin, your own tribe, and that will pretty much become a system of morality. But for a society to be based, not on tribalism, the only other alternative is it has to be based on a common morality.

Daniel Lapin 12:15

And one of the tragedies that we see happening in places like the United States of America, is that for the last 40 or 50 years, we've been moving away from a system of a common morality. And the result, of course, is cultural collapse. Now, before I go on, to explain a little bit more about the system of morality, I would ask you to please make sure you are subscribed. Would you do that for me, go ahead and subscribe to the rabbi Daniel Lapin show, on whatever platform you listen to, we're available on, you know, whether it's YouTube, or iTunes or Gaana or so many different platforms, whatever it is, they all allow you the option of subscribing to the show. And I wish that you would go ahead and do that. It, it's good for everybody. As far as I know, there is no downside to subscribing. And only an upside, particularly for me. And if you're interested in knowing more about the show, well, then for you to Oh, one of the nice things about a moral system is that you don't have to be specific. And so for instance, I spoke about the border between the United States and Canada. You don't need a 3000-page document detailing how the two nations United States and Canada should interact over their border. You know, there may be trade agreements and border-crossing agreements. But basically, since both sides pretty much subscribe to a common system of morality, then it's kind of understood, and they

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don't need to detail things. Exactly the same thing happens if a man and a woman meet and begin to talk about building a life together. Ordinarily, there would have to be a multi-page contract. Of course, many people bypass this by persuading themselves, that they are unique. They're the only couple in the history of the world that love each other. Oh, we're in love, and that will solve all problems. And I think listeners to the show already are way beyond that point. And so if you're not, you know a person with childish views or on male-female relationships, and you understand that love and romance is not all you need, regardless of what the Beatles may have sung. Once you know that, well, then the only alternative would appear to be a multi-page contract with I mean, literally everything, who will do what in this partnership, you know, what is expected from each partner. And in there, there has to be I mean details on where they plan to live, and what their physical intimate relationship will be like in terms of, of, shall we say, frequency of intimacy, they will have to contract to the number of children they have to agree to, they have to agree to where they live, how they live, financial arrangements, what will be saved, what won't be saved? What happens in the event of a breakup of the marriage? How does that get resolved? This can easily be a lawyer's dream and a human being's nightmare. I could easily see a marriage contract being hundreds and hundreds of pages. Well, that's not what most people do.

Daniel Lapin 16:15

So how do people manage to get into a marriage without that, that's very simple. Two alternatives, they foolishly depend on oh, we're in love. That's one approach. The other approach is we share a common matrix of morality done, finished clear, I don't need anything more than that, that covers everything. And so a system of morality is going to include four main areas. And you're already familiar with the five F program, faith, family, finances, friendships, and fitness. And I'm going to leave faith out of it just for the moment that leaves the other four. And so any comprehensive moral matrix will cover these four areas of life. It'll cover financial interactions, and a moral matrix on finance will cover Oh, my goodness, so many things. If you are providing wheelchairs, or prosthetic limbs for people who have had amputations, do you have to give them away out of the goodness of your heart? Because those people have a problem? Or can you charge for them? Are you allowed to go and test drive a car from a dealer that you have absolutely no intention of buying that car? You're just doing it for fun? You know, that's just two areas of so many, many, many different areas that have to be covered in terms of the morality of, of financial interactions. Alright, well, you know, I spoke about this a little bit last week, you know, what happens if something unexpected happens? As long as things are going well, in a financial agreement, then there's no problem. But when they're not doing well, well, then people start looking for whose fault is it and people with the very best of intentions, it doesn't mean there's anything wrong with you. But oh, you know, what happens if you buy a field. And while plowing the field, you discover a treasure in the fields, some ancient pirates buried a treasure there. The previous owner says, Look,

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I didn't plan to sell you a treasure, I plan to sell you a field, the price was based on the idea of a field, the treasure I never ever sold you. And it's not a crazy position to take. Because in many parts of the world, in the United States, I know there are places where when you buy a field, you do not automatically get the rights to minerals found in the field or oil found beneath the fields. You know, those may have been sold to somebody else. So these things are not that simple. They're all part. Now

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you might say, well, this is just part of a legal system. You right, but the legal system flows from the underlying morality system, because if there is not an underlying morality system, there is a reluctance on the part of the population to accept the laws in exactly the same way that when a big gap opens up between the morality matrix of a population and the laws under which they live. It doesn't go well. i When people see a murderer as being let out of prison murderers getting late sentences. There is a moral revulsion. People start finding that there is this big gap between what they sense is morality and between what the law says. And they don't say, Oh, well, that's the law. People like to know that there is coherence between the law and the underlying system of morality. And so, in all of these financial areas, yes, there are laws, but the laws flow from the underlying system of morality. Think about it.

Daniel Lapin 20:39

One of the ways one of the many ways in which the United States is different from most other countries, is that donations to charity in the United States are exempt from tax. Right. So if, for instance, let us say that you have \$100 or 100 rupees of income, and the government is going to tax you a 20%. And you're going to have to pay \$20 of income tax, but it turns out, you're going to give \$10 away to charity. In England, what I'm about to tell you isn't true. But in the United States, the government says, Oh, fine, you had \$100 of income, you're given away 10, we're only going to charge you income tax on the 90. So you'll pay 18, not your excuse me your- What did I say? 18? Not 20. So where does that come from? That comes from an underlying morality that was at the heart of the people who founded the United States. And so they made the law correspond to that principle of morality. And that its origin happens to be the Bible, but that's a different story. So, one of the categories in which a moral system will have a lot to say is the financial.

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Another one is the family or family interactions. And, and so for instance, my moral system says that a man and a woman who are married to one another, have to be faithful to the marriage. So somebody will come to me and say, But Rabbi, it's different in my marriage, because my wife and I have agreed that we have an open marriage, so nobody's cheating on anybody else. We just regularly have relationships with other people outside our marriage. She does and I do. And I, we're, we're cool with that. That's all very happy. So in my moral moral system, that's not allowed, because it has nothing to do with your agreement. In America's moral system. If I choose to sell my property to you, I'm allowed to do that. Now, what is more my property then my body, wouldn't you think? So what happens if I decide I want to sell my body to you, shall we say as the slave. Turns out, our revulsion at that is such a we don't allow that, you will see that law follows morality, not the other way around. And so as you can imagine, there are many, many, many different aspects of morality, when it comes to family, because family includes sexual relationships in includes obligations between parents and children and between siblings and, and so on, and so forth. There are just so many questions that one could come up with, in under the area of family. So naturally, whenever a moral system exists, it always has a lot to say about family interactions. And how about fitness? Surely a moral matrix has nothing to say about fitness. Sure, does fitness has everything to do with your body? How about suicide? Is that moral? In different countries, what the law is about suicide? It's obviously a moot question because you can't be prosecuted after you've taken your own life. But theoretically, at least is there a law against suicide?

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Well, yeah, suicide is immoral. But wait a second, Canada's passed the Medical Assistance in Dying Act, which means that now you can legally assist somebody to take his own life. Well, in my moral system, you're not allowed to do that, regardless of even if a person asks you, even if a person signs a contract saying that's what he wants you to do. And so, how about can I take someone else's life to defend my own? If somebody threatens my life If and the only way to stop him is cannot take his life. Now, if you say well, yeah, obviously that's only because you have been inculcated in a certain Western morality system. But it's not automatically the case. Maybe this is one of the cases where you have to be a big person and be willing to sacrifice yourself. Because taking life is so unthinkable that you can't possibly say that your life is worth more than anyone else's. And yes, it's unfortunate and sad that he is murdering you. But, you know, that's the luck of the draw just happens. It's no that doesn't give you a right to deprive him of his life. How about capital punishment? For murder? Are we allowed to do that? How about taking the life of babies in the womb? These are all areas of morality that would come under fitness friendships. Sure, friendships are nonfamily, non-financial relationships. So political relationships, clubs, associations, gatherings, friendships, all of these relationships that have no financial-family component for under friendships, including military issues, if I'm a member of the military, is there a moral difference between combatants and civilians? Well, one of the nice things about a real moral system is that it endures. What was moral a century ago, is still moral today. And what was immoral 50 years ago, is still immoral today. That is, should be and should be the foundation of morality and legal systems. You'll notice that in America right now, people are being penalized for things they said or did many, many, many years ago, when those things were not viewed as reprehensible in any way whatsoever, let alone illegal. That would be an immoral thing to do. But it brings us back to the question of whose morality and remains a very important way when somebody says to you, that's not moral or that's immoral, or that is moral. It would be moral. If you did this, you would be right in immediately saying, Well, would you mind telling me according to what system of morality, where is the book that I can go and consult to see what else is moral? And what else is immoral in your system of morality? And don't let them tell you? Well, everybody agrees No, because everybody doesn't agree. There is no universal system of morality that people automatically subscribe to. Another thing about morality, as I've told you, that it doesn't just emerge by itself. And that's one of the things that makes it kind of difficult, because if it doesn't emerge by itself, then it has to be disclosed or revealed or given. And then the question is, well, it may have been given to you but not to me, why should I follow it? And you've got to remember that trying to replace a system of morality with a system of law doesn't work. Because law is only built on morality.

Daniel Lapin 28:31

The great British jurist John Locke wrote a multivolume, a treatise on law. And the first part of it is based entirely on trying to explain how a legal system depends on an underlying moral system. So I mean, that that is just the reality. Here's something else about a moral system, which is also not so popular. And that is, it's not a la carte, you have to take the whole system or leave the whole system, because all kinds of things tie into one another. For instance, I said earlier that my moral system wouldn't allow a husband and a wife to grant each other immunity from the laws of faithfulness in marriage. Okay, why would that be? Well, because in my system, the prohibition against betrayal of marriage is a rule of God. And it's not something that can be contradicted or countermanded by any

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people within that system. And so, that, by the way, is one of the reasons that the 10 commandments are given on two tablets. And not only that, but that if you were to read through the five books of Moses You'd only find about three or four or five references to the 10 commandments, you'd find over 30 references to the two tablets. In other words, it's trueness. Its quality of two, the duality is more important than the quality of 10. Why is that? Well, because the first tablet is laws that have to do with my relationship with God, they're vertical. The second tablet contains principles five through 10, six, pardon me six through 10. And those are horizontal, they're how I relate to my fellow human beings. And those two things, they actually interact, because there's going to turn out in many, many areas, that if I do not have the divine underpinnings of the first tablet, then many of the interpersonal rules of the second tablets fall away as well. So it's not it. None of this is simple.

Daniel Lapin 31:06

But it is important to understand so what, what is the moral system? And where does it come from? How I don't know how many moral systems there are in the world? I think there's an Islamic-based moral system, along with an Islamic-based legal system called Sharia on top of that, and I think that there's a Judeo-Christian-based Bible system of morality plus a legal system in the Anglosphere, based on top of that, and that's about it. I don't know of any other systems of morality. I'm not sure about China, I don't know. Africa was largely tribal. So that was how you managed without a system of morality. A match of Arabia was tribal before the arrival of Islam in the sixth and seventh century. So I am not aware of any moral matrix that is not based on an underlying religious system. There may be I'm just not aware of it. But what I am aware of is that secular regimes seldom endure. It's the Soviet Union was about 70 years, Cuba, I don't know how much longer they'll be going. Because a secular regime means that with no religion, there probably is no moral matrix that emerged. And secular regimes try to run their societies entirely on law entirely on legal systems with no underpinning of a moral matrix, it does not appear to work very well at all. So now, let me touch on some of the questions that I looked at hypothetical questions that I looked at in the last show. And let's try and look at them in the context of a Judeo-Christian morality matrix. I spoke about the trolley problem, you might remember, you're on a railway track, train, driverless train coming down five death maintenance workers on the track, they're about to be killed. If you switch the lever, the train will move on to another track where it'll kill only one person. And I think that the whole field of utilitarian morality, which is one of which Peter Singer, as I alluded to earlier, is an exponent, they would probably say, Yes, you should pull the lever because that way, you say, for human beings, and only one dies. In my moral matrix, you don't do that. Because you simply are never allowed to be the agent of the killing of another innocent person. That's different from executing a guilty murderer. But in this case, it's not your job to, as it were, play God. Is the train going to kill these five people sad, and it's not another thing you can do about it? And right now, there are accidents taking place, in cars, and there are all kinds of horrible things. There's not a thing you can do about all those people are being killed. Part of the dilemma and challenge of being a human being, we're not gods, we're human beings. We cannot always make everything right. And part of the progressive dream is that we can it requires a mature outlook to recognize That life is imperfect. And we have to be able to live with that. Are these five people going to be killed by the train? Yes. If you pulled the lever, would you be responsible for saving their lives? Yep. And you'd be responsible for executing that other guy on the track, not your right to execute anybody at

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all. Even if you think it's for a good reason. Now, if that guy was busy killing the other guys, well, then you can take his life, obviously, shoot him without hesitation, it's the only way to save their lives, different case know what we're talking about. I spoke about a case where somebody wanted to get medicine for his wife, and the evil pharmacist raised the price on the the medicine. And I asked you, Is it moral for him to break into the pharmacy that night and steal the medicine for his wife? And the answer is no. It's never moral for him to do it. But he should do it anyways. And here we come to law and morality. Right, theft isn't moral. But in this case, go ahead, break in, steal the medicine, save your wife's life. And in the morning, turn yourself into the police and say, Hey, last night I broke in and I stole a \$10 bottle of medicine. The pharmacist says, Well, I priced it at \$1000. And a judge will rule on this and in all probability will say we award you damages of \$10 plus the costs of repairing your window. and you are a horrible human being. That's probably what a judge would be likely to say. Is it moral to tell a lie in order to save the lives of people who are being hunted and pursued? The answer is yes. And there are specific cases where telling a lie is the moral thing, if somebody asks me whether such and such an individual loaned me money when I was in trouble, and I know that his intention is to go and ask that person for money, I'm allowed to lie and say no, in fact, I should. Because if I don't, I will be causing the that kindness that person did me to be used against him and to penalize him. So that and in areas of areas that have to do with husband and wife intimacy for outsiders, If outsiders asked you any questions about that area of your life, you can either say none of your business or you can lie, because that is not an area that you have to tell the truth in. So how about torturing a enemy combatant in order to save the lives of your people? Yeah, absolutely. No question about it. Is there a difference between civilians and combatants? No, there isn't. None whatsoever. And, and so you remember, I asked you how you would feel if the Hamas terrorists did not torture and rape and do horrible unspeakable things. But they executed everyone with a clean shot.

Daniel Lapin 38:35

wouldn't make any difference from a moral perspective, you still go in and take them out. There is not a difference. And here you see how awkward it is. It's more than awkward. It's destructive, when a moral system changes with the passage of time. And one of the great things about a Judeo-Christian-based morality is hasn't changed for 1000s of years, not going to change. And so as since it was moral, to try and bring the war to an end, by firebombing Tokyo and killing 100,000 civilians. Yeah. That is when your country goes to war, you're all one nation. You are part of that. And it's not as if you can designate certain gladiators to put on the uniform and go into the ring for you. You're all at war. And there's no getting away from that at all. The important thing to understand. But unfortunately, as a society develops a growing distance between its underlying morality, and it's legal system, that is a sign of impending extinction, that becomes a problem for that society a very real problem. So I think it's clear and important to understand that throughout Western civilization, the underlying system of morality is Bible-based. And upon that, Western societies then built their legal systems - with a degree of variation, and with idiosyncratic distinctions in different cultures and different nations. But by and large, that is where it's from. And so the the idea that life is important, that is distinctively a Bible-based idea that finds expression in the legal system of Western civilization's in from what I understand of Islamic culture, and I've seen this written and repeated from Islamic learned sources, repeatedly is that Islam loves death, the way the West loves life. Now, I can't relate to that emotionally. You know, I relate to it

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intellectually, I hear the words, I understand them. But I recognize it's a different culture. It's a different morality matrix. And consequently, it will be a different legal system. And so, in many countries that operate under Islam, there are instances where the death penalty is meted out, often in a very harsh fashion, in a way that most Westerners simply cannot relate to. And it would be a mistake for us to say, well, that's the moral of what they're doing. No, it's you remember what I said, you can't use the word moral or immoral without specifying the underlying moral matrix. And there are different moral matrices in the world. And you cannot judge an action taken within one under the principles of another. So that's really important that we have to understand. And if you want to understand more clearly how the morality matrix we know. And the legal system built to top it emerges from the letters and verses and words of the Bible. Well, then I strongly recommend you go ahead and take a listen to Scrolling through Scripture. This is an online course that we have created, which I think maybe, well, I don't want to I don't want to sound too full of myself here. But it is possibly one of the very best disclosures of how the letters and the words and the verses and the chapters of the Bible, spring off the pages and become real-life guidance. It's called Scrolling through Scripture. And you will find that on the website at Rabbi Daniel Lapin.com. And I strongly recommend that you take a listen to actually it's more than take a listen. Because you get to listen to each lesson more than once I guarantee it. It's called scrolling through scripture, go for it. And so until our next show, I wish you a week of wonderful progress. With your five F's, with your family, with your friendships, with your faith, your fitness and your finances. I'm Rabbi Daniel Lapin. God bless you