

Film Review: An Insider’s View of Religious Tradition in ‘Fill the Void’

Submitted by [PatrickMcD](#) [1] on June 17, 2013 - 2:14pm

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CHICAGO – The absolution of marriage is difficult enough without having the specter of the “arranged” situation within a religious tradition. A new Israeli film, “Fill the Void,” explores the issues and answers within these arrangements, as the modern world pushes against Orthodox Hasidic Judaism.



This is fascinating stuff, especially as an insider’s view of the circumstance. We see the highly patriarchal arm of the Jewish faith, the orthodox rabbis who give tithe to their male followers and make decisions for girls either still in or barely outside their teens. And as in any relationship landscape, there is a competitive nature about the pairings, with long-time unmatched women destined for spinsterhood (in this film, the old fashioned term applies) and ostracism from the tribe. This wonderfully sensitive drama is unerringly written and directed by Rama Burshtein, with an emphasis on balanced motivations. But no matter how it’s sliced, it’s less of a good deal for a modern women.

Shira (Hadas Yaron) is an 18 year old girl, the youngest daughter of her devout Hasidic family. Her sister Esther (Renana Raz) is nine months pregnant with her first shcild, and her husband Yochay (Yiftach Klein) is in a state of bliss. As the family celebrates Purim, an unexpected circumstance occurs – Esther dies in a premature labor, but the baby survives.

Yochay is now a widower in his early thirties, with a young son to take care of – he must find a new wife. An offer for a match from Belgium comes through, but Rivka (Irit Sheleg) – the bereaved mother of Esther and Shira – doesn’t want her only grandbaby to move away. She looks to her youngest daughter Shira as a potential match, and the machinations are put into place to “fill the void.”

“Fill the Void” continued its limited release in Chicago on June 14th. See local listings for theaters and show times. Featuring Hadas Yaron, Yiftach Klein, Irit Sheleg and Raza Israeli. Written and directed by Rama Burshtein. Rated “PG”.

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Hadas Yaron as Shira in 'Fill the Void'

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