



## **WHAT IS THE "MAIN ISSUE" OF THESE ELECTIONS?**

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We go through this familiar ritual every time we enter the time period prior to the elections in recent years: the political campaigns of the different parties try to convince us that there is a specific topic we should worry about, and based on it, the voter will define, in theory, his/her future vote decision.

In the 1992 campaign, we saw, for example, as one of the most important issues, the fight against terrorism and the relations with the Palestinians. In the 2013 elections, we felt the effects of the social justice protests, thus making the economic issue one of the main focuses. Similar to these examples, we see how, in every elections campaign, the politicians and campaigners attempt to bring solutions to a particular "trendy" problem or to the public's immediate concerns .

Along with the main issue of each election, we will also see the presence of parties which try to divert the conversation to one side or another and present an added value to the issue under discussion .

So we ask ourselves in these elections, what is the "main issue"? As we have seen so far, the main issue is Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu himself and whether we want to see him continue as a prime minister or whether we want him out of the political map. The issue is not the resolution of a particular conflict (we have several from which to choose), the economy which suffers from major problems, nor the character of the state or the return to negotiations with the Palestinians. No, the issue is Benjamin Netanyahu himself.

Various factors cause Netanyahu to be the center of attention. On one hand, there are a series of investigations revolving around the prime minister, due to which several parties have expressed their desire not to join a coalition with him, should he be prosecuted. On the other hand, there is constant criticism regarding his way of governing—for example, his long term as prime minister, the number of positions he holds in parallel, his propaganda tactics, his constant criticism of the media, his attack on, and even demonization of, the Israeli left and more.

All of the above led to the current situation in which the Prime Minister struggles to hold on to power and secure his position, even if it means making deals with extremist groups, ideologically speaking. In contrast, the "anti-Bibi" parties unite to guarantee a victory in the number of seats (mandates), even though there is no clear ideological line between them .

But all this "show" is, from my point of view, just the tip of the iceberg of a long process of deterioration that we suffer in the political field in Israel—cracks in the country's democratic character in several aspects; cases of political corruption, defamation and loss of a tolerant political dialogue; internal economic crisis; social inequalities; a lack of political horizon in the area of the negotiations with the Palestinians and in general; a very unclear domestic policy with no vision. Today's politics lacks vision.



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Unfortunately, the average voter will cast his/her ballot paper in the polling box for other reasons. Instead of voting for the party which offers a program according to his/her political ideology as a citizen, they will prefer to be led by other axioms, that in my opinion, should not be a part of the game when speaking of our beloved country's future .

Therefore, the main issue of these elections should not and must not be the figure occupying the prime minister position, but rather the character of our country and to what direction we want to take it. Israeli politics does not only need a "captain" to guide us, but also a clear map and a tolerant strategy that are capable of healing wounds, reducing differences, generating a feeling of "BeYahad"(unity), and letting us know that we are going in the right direction without losing our character as a Jewish and democratic state.