Introduction

October 15, 2016
13 Tishrei, 5777

Dear Friends,

Following Shmuel Rosner's last year ringing endorsement of the integrity and quality of Hiddush's polling last year, [LINK], Rosner once again focuses on Hiddush's Israel Religion & State Index [LINK] (published on the Eve of Rosh HaShana, 5777/2016).

Whereas we wholeheartedly embrace Rosner's observation that the Chief Rabbinate is crumbling, as evidenced in the Religion & State Index and other studies done recently, we strongly disagree with his conclusion that we should just sit back and watch this happen. As monopolistic establishments go, they have strong survival urges, and given the political nature of the institution and

Click HERE for the 2016 Israel Religion & State Index

Preferred form of marriage for yourself and your children in 2016
Assuming all forms are recognized by law

Click HERE for Rabbi David Lyon's Rosh HaShana sermon

Click HERE for Rabbi Yoni Regev's Rosh HaShana sermon

Don't waste your time: The Israeli rabbinate has already lost its battles


Click HERE for the full article

The new survey by Hiddush – an organization dedicated to freedom of religion in Israel – gives many reasons for hope. It gives hope that Israel will gradually improve itself – and also gives hope that the level of hysteria concerning state-religion relations in Israel will be reduced. In fact, it ought to be reduced, as the survey proves that most of the great problems are going to be solved without much need for aggressive intervention. In other words:
the high political stakes that it represents for the Government Coalition players, it is unlikely that the Rabbinate will crumble all on its own any time soon.

In the meantime, the Rabbinate’s continued monopolistic powers mean the continued denial of the dignity and the right of marriage to hundreds of thousands, the questioning of the legitimacy of Modern Orthodox conversions (including by mainstream U.S. Orthodox rabbis), continued obstacles to the attempts to introduce state recognized more inclusive conversions (such as Rabbi Riskin’s initiatives), or allow legal Orthodox alternatives to the Rabbinate’s kashrut exclusivity (such as Rabbi Liebowitz’s hashgacha pratit).

This, of course, is only the tip of the iceberg. Knowing that in all likelihood none of our members in North America and elsewhere would consent to being put in the position of our Israeli colleagues who are denied basic dignity and recognition of their functions, we should not entertain Rosner’s placating approach. Rather we should seize the opportunity, the clear will of the public, and the save the campaigns for something else – the Israeli rabbinate is crumbling anyways.

Take a look, for example, at the percentage of Jewish Israelis who’d rather have a non-Orthodox marriage ceremony. Last year, 63% of Israelis still said they wanted an Orthodox marriage even in case all marriages will be legally equal. This year, the percentage of Israelis insisting on Orthodox marriage declined by a whopping 10% to 53%. Among secular Israelis, almost eighty percent prefer other-than-Orthodox marriages (78%).

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**Study finds Israelis hold liberal views with traditional personal choices**

*Ynet news, Oct. 3, 2016*

[Click HERE for the full article]

Just a few weeks after the largest coalition crisis of 5776 that threatened to bring down the government, which revolved around violating halachic law by carrying out train infrastructure works on Shabbat, the public has indicated its disappointment with political involvement in religious matters in a related survey. 81% percent of the respondents were disappointed with the government’s performance on matters of religion and state, which is one of the only points of agreement amongst secular, traditional, religious and ultra-Orthodox Jewish Israelis.

84% of respondents agreed that the state should permit free choice regarding religious behavior to the secular and religious alike according to their beliefs. Most of the ultra-Orthodox public also agreed with this. 63% of all respondents indicated their support for complete separation of state and religion, but religious and ultra-Orthodox respondents disagreed.

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*ה_RESULTS_**

*במרץ, יוני, יולי, 2016*

[Click HERE for the full article]
The compelling importance of the cause, and join together in bringing Israel fully onto the path of religious freedom and equality as promised by its Declaration of Independence.

Chag Sameach,

Uri

Rabbi Uri Regev

Head of Hiddush

Resources

- Vision of Hiddush and Rabbis for Religious Freedom
- Hiddush resources
- Courts - religious & secular
- Conversion
- Death & burial - ancient & now
- Diaspora-Israel
- Diversity & inclusivity among Jews
- Diversity & inclusivity in relations with non-Jews
- Economic opportunity
- Education
- Gender
- Kashrut
- Marriage & divorce
- Mikvaot
- Shabbat transportation for poor & inform
- Western Wall
- Women

Israeli Jews displeased with haredi-driven government policies

Andrew Tobin, JTA, Oct. 2, 2016

Click HERE for the full article

The haredi Orthodox parties are back in power, and Israelis aren’t thrilled with their work.

An annual survey shows widespread dissatisfaction with haredi influence and exemptions when it comes to education, the army and religious life.

After being left out in 2013, Shas and United Torah Judaism entered the governing coalition in 2015. In the first Knesset session since the election, they thwarted laws that challenged their state-sponsored way of life, forced a political and transportation crisis over work on Shabbat and blocked the creation of a pluralistic prayer section at the Western Wall.

The Israel Religion and State Index, published Sunday, shows just how far these and other government actions are from the views of most Israeli Jews. The Smith Polling Institute conducted the survey of 700 Israeli Jewish adults at the end of July for Hiddush, a group that supports religious freedom in Israel. The survey has a 4 percent margin of error.
Rabbis for Religious Freedom and Equality in Israel represents a broad spectrum of Jewish belief and practice, and champions the values of religious freedom and equality fundamental to World Jewry, in partnership with Hiddush for the realization of these principles in Israel and the Diaspora.

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