

It's the System, Stupid

by

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Election day in Israel. Will it be a harbinger of a new dawn, or of a tragedy foretold? When Bill Clinton ran for the presidency for the first time, his aide, James Carville, found a way to focus the campaign's primary message in a slogan that entered the history books. On the walls of campaign offices in every state across America, he hung signs that said just one thing: "It's the economy, stupid".

In a country whose living standards are falling farther and farther behind – in relative terms – the leading Western countries for three and a half decades in a row, in which rates of poverty and inequality have been rising steadily since the 1970s, a country with the worst education system in the Western world and a university system that is still one of the best, but is on the verge of a free fall, with large and growing population groups who do not participate in either the economy or in the defense of their country, with severe water and transportation problems that were known in advance decades ago but were systematically and outrageously neglected, with a growing brain drain problem that is already unparalleled in the West, in a country that despite all the above can still become the most amazing success story of the 21st century, all this can be summed up in one simple phrase: it's the system, stupid.

If there is one issue which is imperative that the next government implement, it is the adoption of a system of government whose leader and whose Knesset members are personally elected to fixed terms of office. Enough with the system in which we choose between Netanyahu, Livni, Barak and Lieberman, and end up receiving a Pandora's box of MKs from lists that are separately chosen by large groups of people who do not even personally vote for the lists that they themselves created. Enough with the system in which cabinet ministers know nothing about their ministry, but know very well that being a minister is a key vehicle on the road to removing and replacing the person who appointed them. Enough with the system in which the process of bringing about early elections begins the day after the previous elections take place.

There is a country to save, a country that has been marching clearly and steadily for over three decades along a path with a predetermined ending – unless it comes to its senses and changes its system of government before it crosses the point of no return. The segment of the population that is not receiving the tools nor the conditions for managing in a competitive and modern market, is growing at a much faster pace than the segment of the population that is financing it. Already today, it is almost impossible to pass laws in the Knesset that will enable the country to change direction. But when the majority in Israel will not be able to independently finance its own existence, who will then be able to change the laws in order to reduce the necessary assistance – support that will be shouldered by an ever declining portion of the population?

It's the system, stupid, and we have a special opportunity immediately after the upcoming elections, when at the helm of the large parties there will still be a unique constellation on the political landscape: individuals with exceptional personal abilities who are able to understand the significance of the hour at hand. For the sake of saving a dream that comes to fruition only once every two thousand years, start working together and change the system, for your own children's sake and for the sake of the Children of Israel.