



# Israel Religion and State Index Fall 2010

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Editor: Shahar Ilan

Index 2  
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Rosh Hashana Eve

## **About the Study:**

The summer 2010 Religion and State Index is based on a telephone opinion poll, conducted between July 12th and 15th, 2010, of 800 men and women as a representative sample of the adult Jewish population of Israel (18 and over). The margin of error is 3.4%.

Survey subjects were asked to self-identify according to religious identity:

secular	48%
traditional	30%
religious	13%
ultra-Orthodox	9%

The distribution by length of residence in Israel – 87% veteran Israelis and 13% immigrants from the former Soviet Union who immigrated to Israel after 1989.

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## **Freedom of Religion: support high, continued to rise**

### **4 out of 5 oppose new religious legislation**

**There has been a large rise in the number of opponents to new religious legislation, from 70% in the spring 2010 Index to 80% in the summer Index. The percentage of opponents of any religious legislation rose from 53% to 59%, namely - three out of five Jewish Israelis opposes any religious legislation.**

### **99% of the new immigrants, 98% of the secular and 88% of traditional Jewish Israelis are opposed to the passing of new religious legislation.**

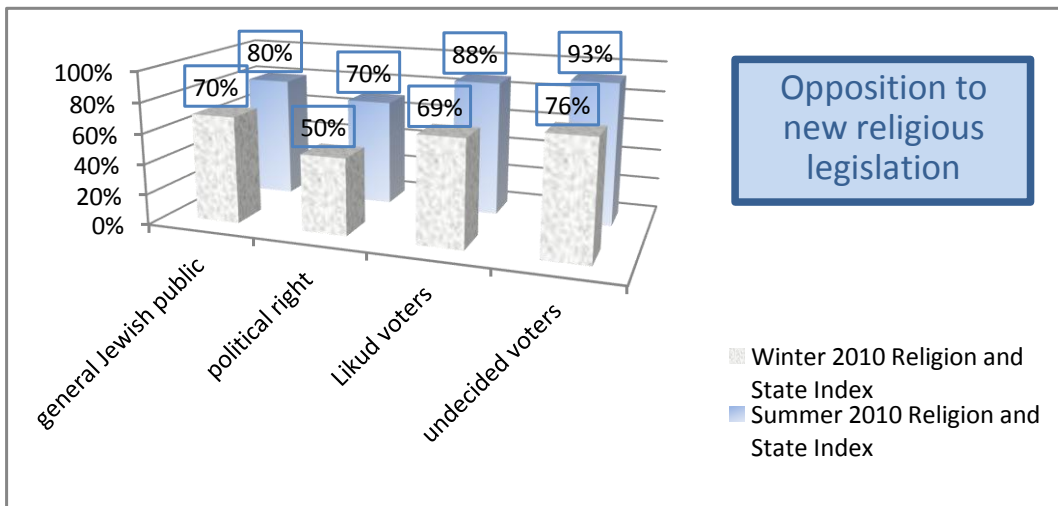
Another significant development is a large decrease in the number of religious people who support the existence of religious legislation of any kind: from 74% in the spring Index down to 55% in the summer 2010 Index. The data on opposition to religious legislation is only one example of a series of data which indicate a large rise in support for religious freedom and equality at the present time.

Among the opponents of new religious legislation are 70% of those who support right-wing political parties, up from 50% in the previous Index. 88% of Likud voters (compared with 69% in the spring Index) also oppose new religious legislation, as well as 97% of Kadima voters, 96% of Israel Beiteinu voters, 87% of whom oppose any religious legislation. Among undecided voters, 93% oppose new religious legislation (up from 76% in January<sup>1</sup>).

The freedom of religion survey is conducted and results published semi-annually. In every Index, naturally, a different issue of religious legislation is at the focal point of attention. In the summer 2010 Index the topic was Israel Beiteinu's proposed Conversion Law. The recent rise in opposition to religious legislation was likely influenced also by the Haredi struggle to defend their practice of ethnic discrimination in Emmanuel, by the mass demonstration which United Torah Judaism instigated against the Supreme Court. Also contributing to public opposition may have been the battle over the ancient burial ground in Jaffa.

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<sup>1</sup> Undecided voters comprise 23% of the sample group. The percentage of unaffiliated voters in the 2009 Knesset elections were as follows: 30% of Kadima voters, 31% of Labor and Meretz voters, 18% of Likud voters, 16% Israel Beiteinu voters, 6% of those voting for Haredi parties and 0% of those voting for religious parties.



### More people support the separation of religion and state

There has been a rise in the level of support for separation between religion and state in Israel, from 55% in the winter 2010 Index survey to 59% in the latest survey. Among those who support separation of religion and state: 84% of the secular and the immigrants.

The distribution of support for separation of religion and state according to voting patterns in the last election shows the following: 78% of Kadima voters, 74% of Israel Beiteinu voters, and 94% of Labor and Meretz voters. However, 51% of Likud voters also support the separation of religion and state. 75% of undecided voters said they support separation of religion and state.<sup>2</sup>

According to  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the public, the greatest tension in Israeli society is between Haredi and secular people

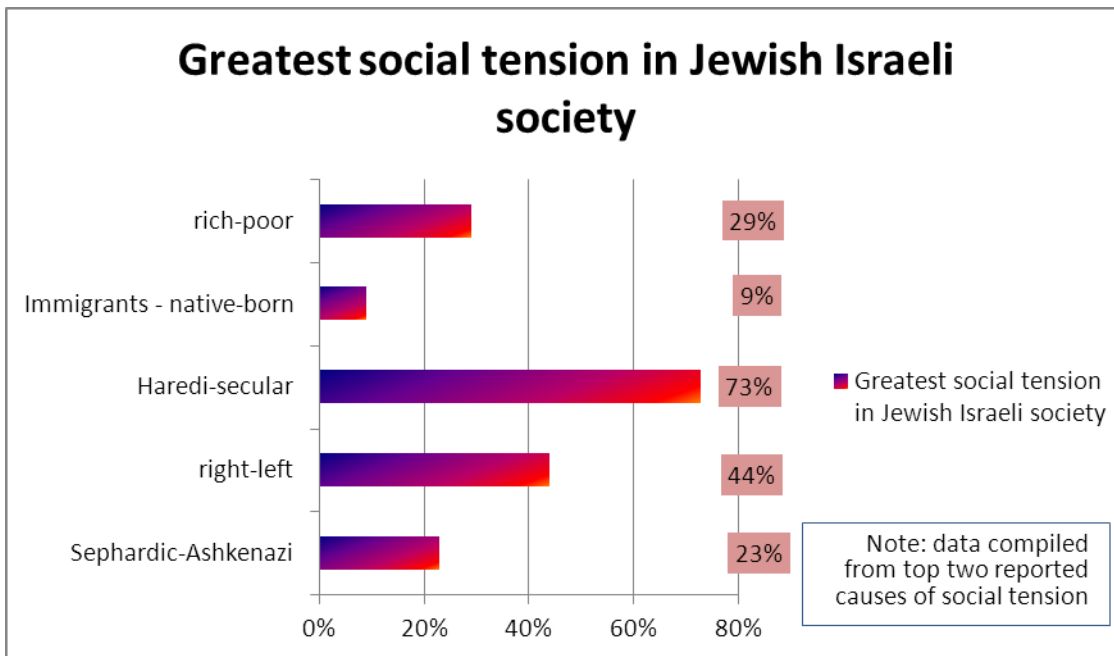
73% of the Jewish public in Israel view the tension between Haredim and secular people as the most serious (49%) or the second most serious (24%) domestic conflict. This is a significant rise compared with the figure of 65% in the spring 2010 Index. After this comes the tension between the right and the left, at only 44%. This issue expresses the continued increase in importance over the last year and a half of matters of religion in public opinion.

<sup>2</sup> Note: Hiddush sees the measurement of support for the separation of religion and state as an important indicator of religion-state relations in Israel, but does not advocate separation of religion and state. In the opinion of Hiddush, we should strive to separate religion and politics and to implement the promise of “freedom of religion and conscience” made in Israel’s Declaration of Independence, as well as equal sharing of the national burden, thus ensuring and strengthening the identity of Israel as a Jewish and democratic state.

As mentioned above, half of the public (49%) sees the tension between Haredim and secular people as the most serious social tension. More than twice as serious as the tension between right and left (21%), which occupies second place, and five times as serious as the tension between rich and poor (11%), which occupies third place. The number of those who see the tension between Haredim and secular people as the most serious has increased since the spring Index by 7%, from 42% to 49%.

The perception of the tension between Haredim and secular people as the most serious encompasses all segments of society. Among immigrants who expressed an opinion, the figure is 69%, among the Haredim – 67%, religious – 70%, traditional – 68%, and secular – 82%.

This perception also encompasses the voters of all parties: Kadima – 83%, Likud – 77%, Israel Beiteinu – 70%, Labor and Meretz – 88%, the Haredi parties – 68%. Among voters of the religious parties the majority is lower – 52%. 78% of undecided voters see the tension between Haredim and secular people as the most serious or the second most serious.



### 61% are opposed to the influence of the Haredi political parties

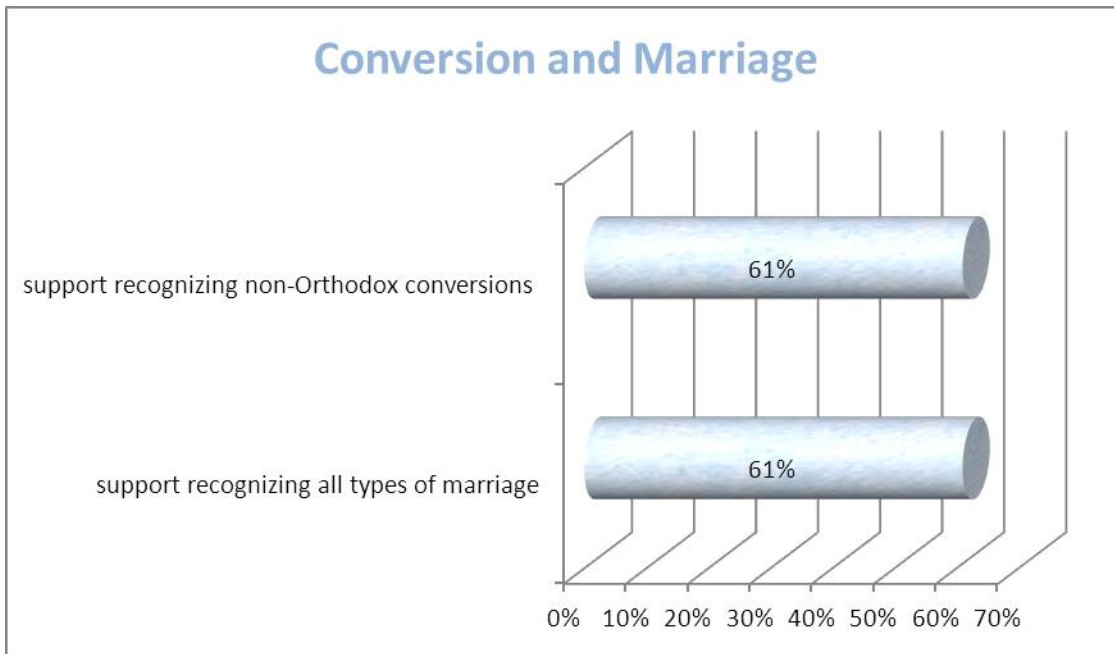
The decisive influence of the Haredi political parties on decisions concerning affairs of religion and state is disturbing for 61% of the Jewish population. This is a slight rise of three percent compared to the spring 2010 survey (58%). Among immigrants there has been a significant rise from 66% to 76%, among secular people from 79% to 85%.

## Marriage and conversion

### 61% in favor of recognizing non-Orthodox marriages

61% of the Jewish public supports the recognition by the government of Israel of all types of marriages. This is a significant rise of 6% compared to the January Index (55%). Among the supporters of all types of marriage are 90% of secular people and 92% of immigrants. A survey of voting patterns of those supporting the recognition of all types of marriage shows the following: 87% are Kadima voters, 81% are Israel Beiteinu voters, 86% are Labor and Meretz voters, and 54% are Likud voters.

On many of the issues in the Religion and State Index, the dividing line is between Haredim and non-Haredim. On the issue of marriage and divorce the dividing line is between religious and non-religious. 96% of voters who support one of the Haredi parties and 82% of voters for the religious parties oppose the recognition of non-Orthodox marriages.



### 61% in favor of breaking the conversion monopoly

61% of the Jewish public supports breaking the Orthodox monopoly on conversion and supports state recognition of non-Orthodox conversion. This is a slight increase of one percent compared to the January survey (60%).

33% of the public also supports secular conversion. This finding has significance precisely because there is no existing framework for secular conversion. 52% of secular people and 58% of immigrants support secular conversion.

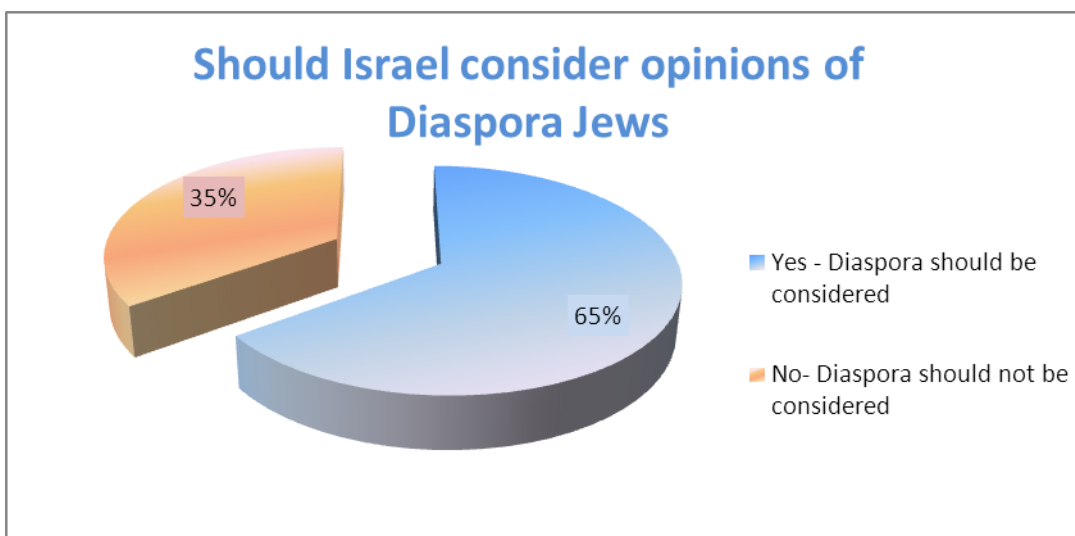
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## 65%: Opinions of Diaspora Jewry should be taken into consideration

2/3 of Israelis believe that Israel should take into account opinions of Diaspora Jewry when considering matters of religion and state such as the Law of Return, conversion, marriage and the relation between religion and state. Among those who support this stance are 66% of the Haredim.

This is a consistent stance on the part of Jewish public in Israel. In the preliminary survey for the Religion and State Index in July 2009, 66% held this opinion. This finding has great significance, particularly in light of the criticism expressed recently by Chief Rabbi Amar and public figures in the Haredi community and Israel Beiteinu about “interference by representatives of American Jewry” in the conflict over the recent conversion law proposed by MK David Rotem. It turns out that two of every three Jews in Israel maintain that the government should consider the opinions of Diaspora Jewry and, among others, three out of four Israel Beiteinu voters support this view.



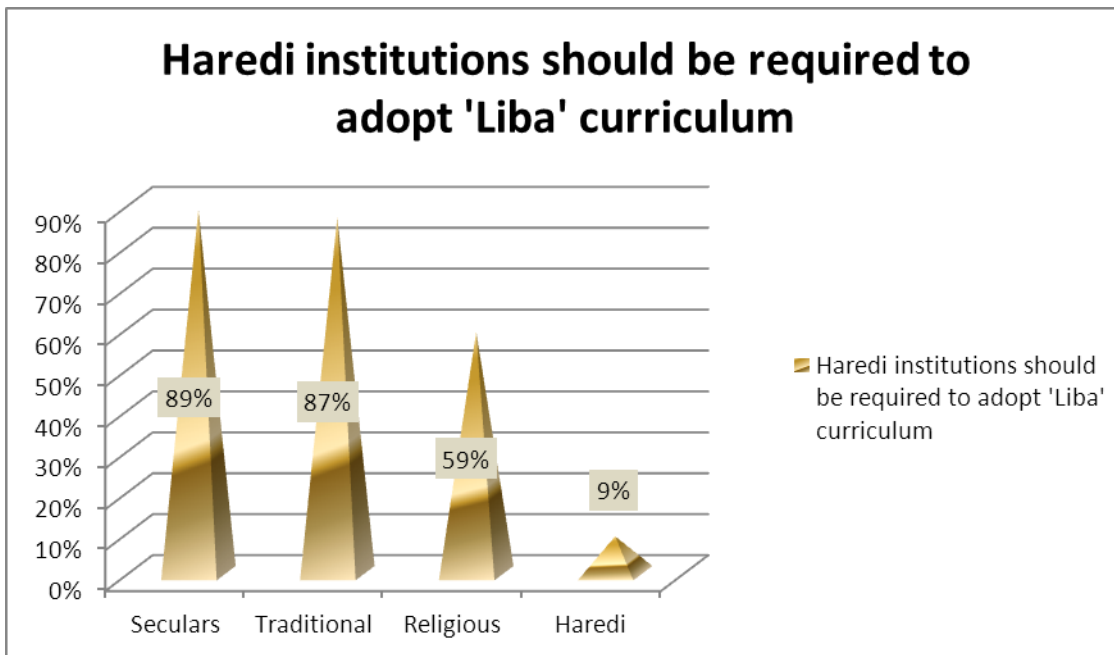
## Haredi Education

### 76% of the public support making the 'Liba' core curriculum mandatory

The fall 2010 Index devoted extensive coverage to issues concerning Haredi education: provision of a basic curriculum; the relationship between education and employment; and discrimination against Sephardi [descendants of Jewish communities of the Middle East, North Africa and the Caucasus region] children in admission to educational institutions. The conclusions are unequivocal: there is very broad public support for the elimination of financing for Haredi educational institutions that do not adopt the Ministry of Education's mandatory national 'Liba' [core] curriculum and do not end discrimination against Sephardi students. There is also broad support for reducing financial support for yeshivas and families with five or more children in order to create more of an incentive for Haredi men to join the workforce.

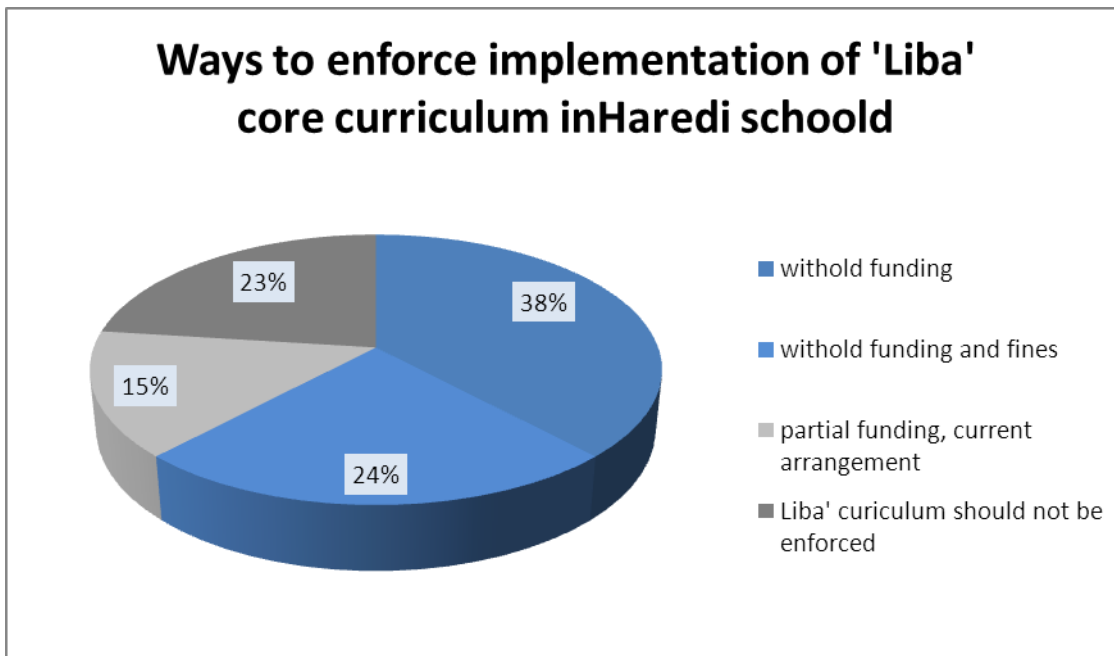
3/4 of the general public (76%) think that Haredi educational institutions should be obliged to implement the 'Liba' [core] curriculum, including mathematics, English, sciences and civics. Support is particularly great among the secular public (89%), immigrants (96%) and traditional people (87%). Even among the religious public there is majority support (59%). This is another matter in which the line of conflict seems to be drawn between Haredim and non-Haredim rather than religious and non-religious.

95% of Likud voters think that Haredi educational institutions should be obliged to adopt the 'Liba' core curriculum, as well as 87% of Kadima voters, 91% of Israel Beiteinu voters and 87% of undecided voters.



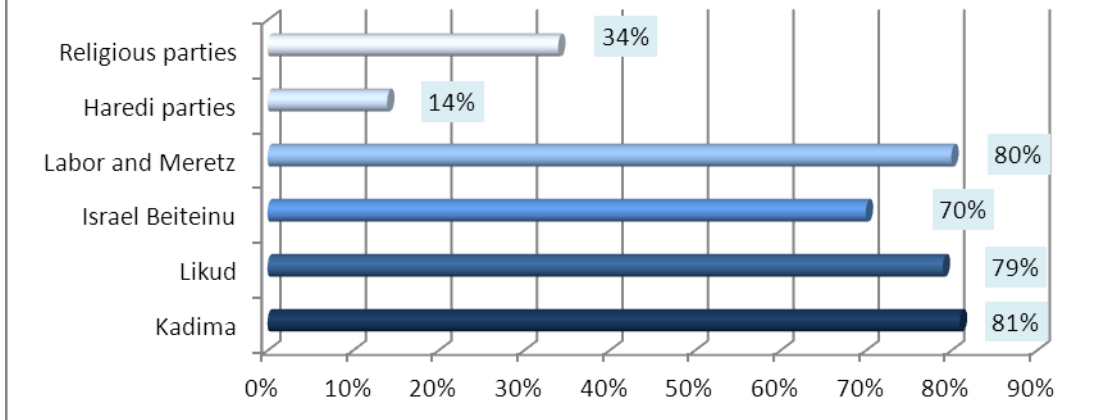
**About 80% of Likud voters are in favor of eliminating financial support for schools that refuse to implement the 'Liba' core curriculum**

62%, about two thirds of the Jewish public, are in favor of eliminating financial support for schools which do not teach the 'Liba' [core] curriculum. 24% also hold that large fines should be levied against them. Among the secular, support for financial sanctions is particularly high (79%) as well as among immigrants (74%). Among Kadima voters, 81% support ending financial support for institutions that do not teach the 'Liba' core curriculum, among Likud voters – 79%, Israel Beiteinu voters – 70%, Labor and Meretz voters – 80% and undecided voters – 75%.





## In favor of funding cuts for Haredi school that refuse to implement 'Liba' core curriculum



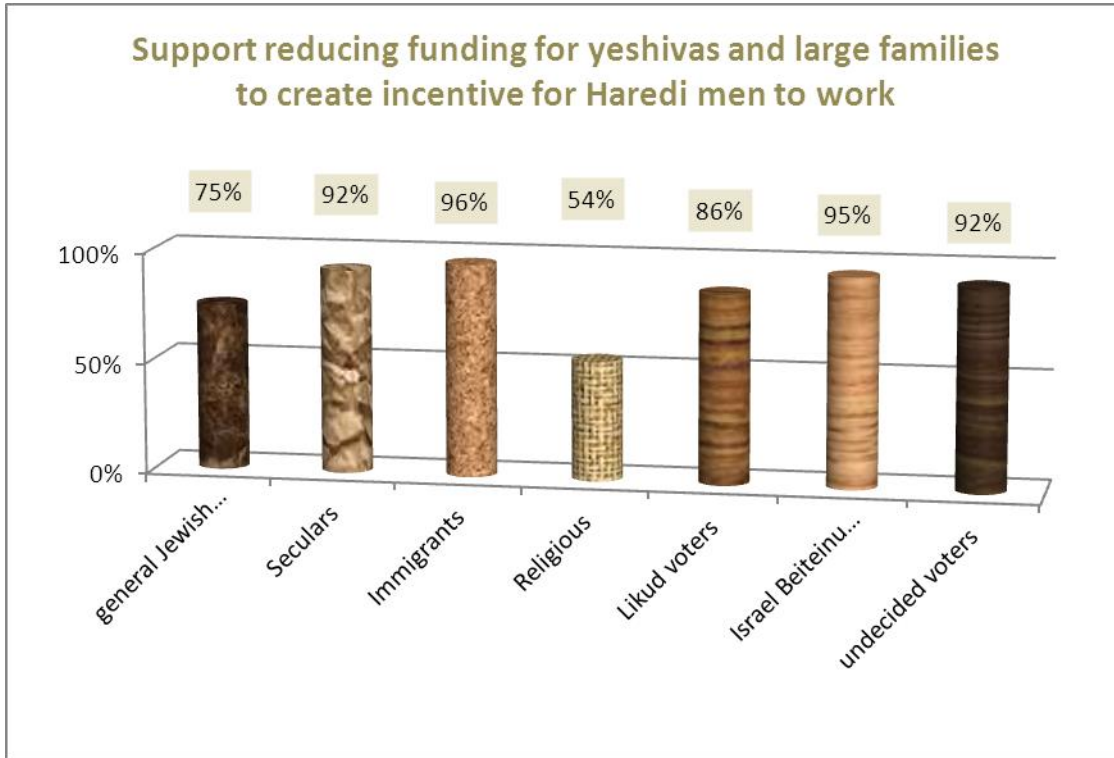
### Three out of four support reducing yeshiva subsidies

Three out of four Jewish Israelis support a reduction in the subsidies to yeshivas and families with five or more children in order to encourage Haredi men to enter the work force. This is an increase of 7% from 68% in the spring Index to 75% in the fall 2010 Index. Overall, there is strong and consistent support among the Jewish public for reducing funding of the Haredi yeshiva institutions and students in order to create an incentive for Haredi men to join the workforce.

Among the supporters of reducing these financial subsidies to yeshivas and large families are 92% of the secular population, 96% of immigrants, and 82% of the traditional population. More than half of the religious respondents, 54%, support a reduction in the subsidies to yeshivas and large families.

This seems to indicate growing awareness of the general public to the many reports demonstrating that the lack of participation by Haredi men in the labor market is a threat to Israeli economy. This is true even in the non-Haredi religious community, which itself benefits from subsidies to the yeshivas and to large families, but whose men serve in the army and work to support their families.

The distribution, by political affiliation, of supporters of reducing subsidies to yeshivas and large families is as follows: 95% of Kadima voters, 86% of Likud voters, 95% of Israel Beiteinu voters, 92% of Labor and Meretz voters, and 92% of undecided voters.



[The data on equal sharing of the national burden in the Religion and State Index usually also includes questions regarding military and national service of young men enrolled in Haredi yeshivas, like their non-Haredi counterparts. This data will be published in a special report in the coming weeks.]

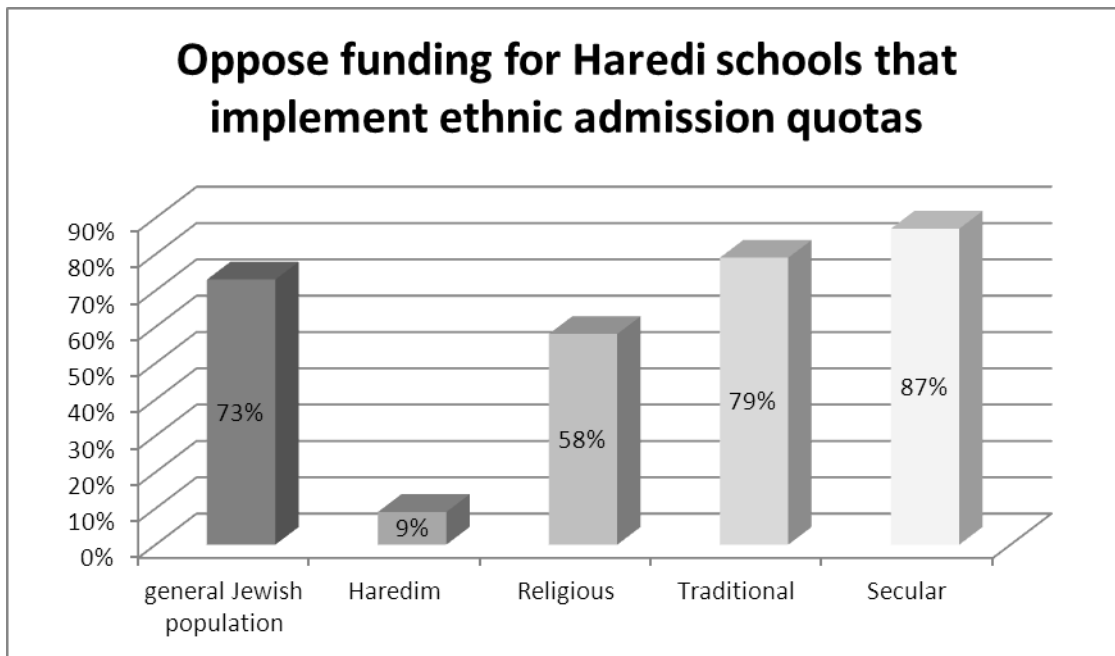
### **80% think that admission quotas practiced in Haredi schools constitute ethnic discrimination**

80% of the Jewish public holds that admissions quotas for Sephardim in Ashkenazi educational institutions constitute ethnic discrimination. Only 20% hold that this is a legitimate admissions policy, which is what the Haredi leadership contends. Among those who think it is a legitimate admissions policy were 72% of Haredim, and 37% of immigrants.

An interesting finding is that 51% of those voting for Haredi parties believe this is due to ethnic discrimination, in contrast to 28% who subscribe to this view among those who define themselves as Haredim. A possible explanation for this is that the idea that this constitutes racial discrimination is widespread among the non-Haredi Shas voters. (The Sephardic Haredi party 'Shas' is widely supported by non-Haredi Sephardic voters whose allegiance to the party is likely explained by the perception that Shas is the only political party concerned with countering general ethnic discrimination against Sephardic Jews in Israel)

**73% oppose financing of Haredi institutions that practice ethnic discrimination policies**

73%, almost three fourths, of respondents maintained that the state shouldn't finance Ashkenazi Haredi institutions in which there are admissions quotas limiting enrollment of Sephardic students. Among those who hold that the state should stop financing those institutions in which Sephardim are discriminated against are: 92% of Kadima voters, 79% of Likud voters, 77% of Yisrael Beytenu voters, and 91% of undecided voters.

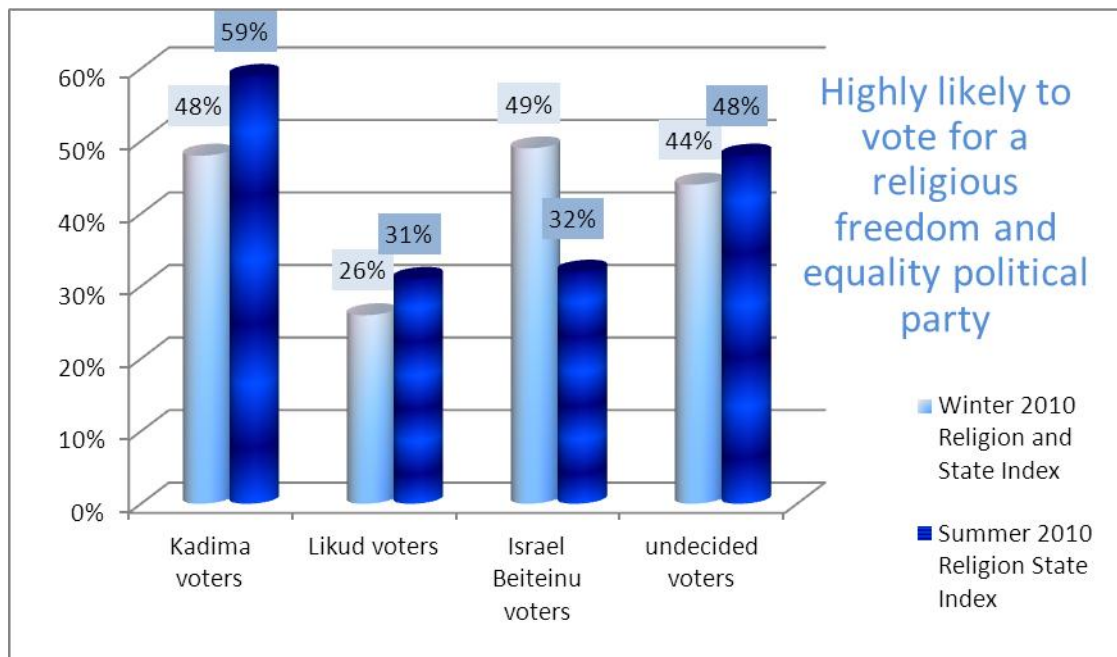


## The Political System

[Nikki – Since this was not pulicised in Israel yet, and there is enough political “beef” at this point without it, I feel we can withhold this item for the time being]

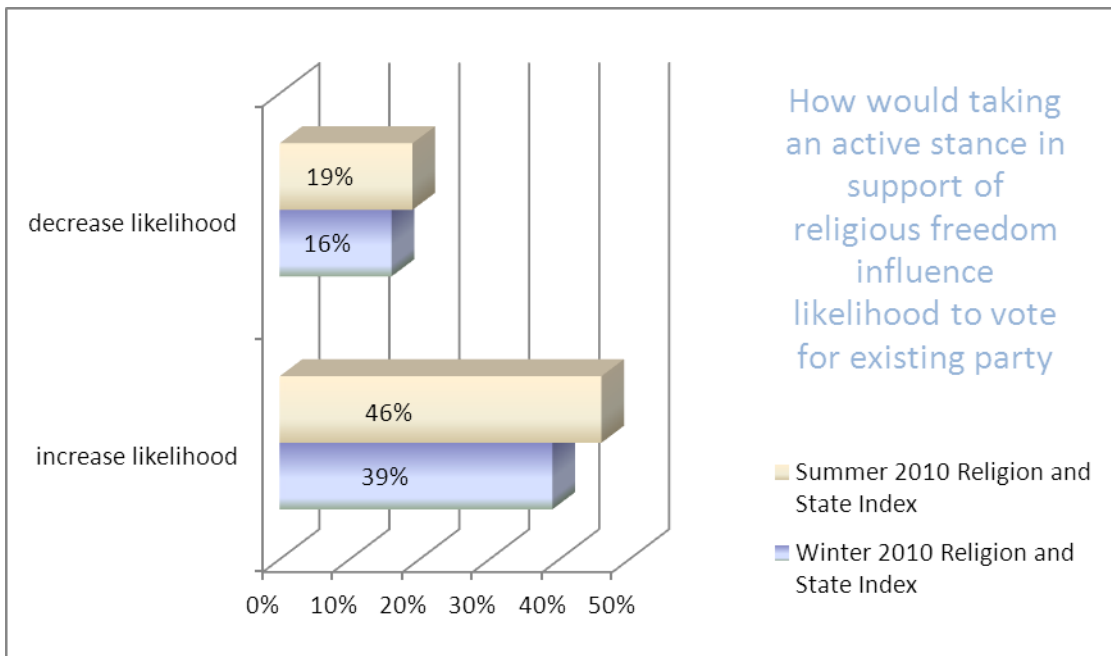
**One out of three is highly likely to vote for a new religious freedom party.**

35% of the public, more than one third, is highly likely to vote for a new party that would promote, as its main agenda, freedom of religion and equality in sharing of the national burden. This is a very high figure, consistent with the finding of the spring 2010 Index. It indicates an ongoing and stable high level of willingness to vote for a religious freedom party. In spite of this consistent figure, there have been changes in the make-up of those expressing intent to vote for a new religious freedom party. Among Kadima voters there has been an increase from 48% in the spring 2010 Index to 59% in fall 2010. Among Likud voters a rise from 26% to 31% has been registered. Among undecided voters there has been an increase from 44% to 48%. In contrast, among Yisrael Beytenu voters there has been a steep decline from 49% to 32%.



**Close to half of the public: A party that would promote religious freedom would increase the chance to get our vote.**

46% of the Jewish public said that action by an existing party to advance freedom of religion and conscience will increase the chance that they will vote for it. This is a significant increase of 7% compared with the spring Index. Then, only 39% said that actions of an existing party to advance freedom of religion and conscience would increase the likelihood that they would vote for it. The influence of action in favor of religious freedom is especially great among secular voters (69%) and immigrants (67%). Among Kadima voters there is an increase from 58% to 63%. This has particularly great importance in light of the fact that 59% of Kadima voters responded that they were highly likely to vote for a new religious freedom party. Among Yisrael Beytenu voters, the increase was from 58% to 74%. Among undecided there is an increase from 49% to 67% in the Fall Index(!). The number of respondents stating that activity by an existing party in favor of freedom of religion and conscience would decrease the likelihood that they would vote for it slightly increased from 16% in the spring 2010 Index to 19% in the fall 2010 Index. Thus it seems that issues relating to religion and state are becoming more central in public opinion and that opinions on these issues are polarizing in both directions.



## Additional Topics

### 70% oppose gender segregated bus lines; 3 of 4 Likud voters favor reducing or abolishing such gender separation practices

70% support abolishing or reducing the gender segregated public bus lines. 40% support complete abolishment of such bus lines, 30% are in favor of reducing their number and 22% support continuing the arrangement as is currently in existence. Only 8% of the public supports further expanding these gender separated transportation services. Among those supporting the abolition or decrease of separation are 75% of Likud voters, 76% of Yisrael Beytenu voters, and 88% of Kadima voters.

### The majority of religious people are in favor of removing ancient graves if required for new construction.

2/3 of respondents (67%) support the removal of ancient graves for construction purposes. A third (33%) hold that graves should not be removed, and that construction plans should instead be changed or cancelled. Among those who support removing the ancient graves: 83% of secular people, 65% of immigrants and 64% of traditional people. But there is no doubt that the most interesting piece of data in answer to this question is that 52% of religious people support moving ancient graves if required for construction.

