



BS"D

Our Views

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## The Kingpin

by: Moshe Feiglin

Founder and President, Manhigut Yehudit  
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**T**he people in Israel do not really determine the direction that the country will take. It doesn't make much of a difference how you vote. You don't determine the country's priorities and neither do its elected officials. It won't matter much if you go to demonstrate or not, whether Olmert resigns or not, or whether he manages to outmaneuver all his opponents or not. A strange mechanism has been formed in this country. The outside is a wheel -- modern Western society, ostensibly free and democratic. 97% of us exist on this outer wheel that technically, affords us all of our privileges and rights. We can shout, protest, strike, vote, laugh at our elected officials and even try them in court. There is nothing to complain about -- we have a democracy to be proud of.

But the truth is that the control is in the hands of the inner axle -- the kingpin. It rotates freely around itself and goes in whatever direction it pleases, pulling the outer wheel after it. The analysis of how this situation was created is beyond the scope of this article. But what is clear is that more and more, the general public is internalizing the fact that Israeli democracy is really just a façade. It is expressed in the low voter turnout in general elections. Everyone knows that if you vote for the Left you get the Left, and if you vote for the Right -- you get even more Left. So why bother? It is expressed in the tribal culture that is developing here. If you cannot really influence your society, all that is left is to take care of your closer and more pressing interests. It is also expressed in the fact that the protest in the Rose Garden calling for Olmert and Co. to resign has not really taken off. Why not? Because the public understands that even if the demonstration is successful and all the demands of the protesters are met -- the root of the problem will not be solved by the resignation of certain government or military officials. It also understands that no Commission of Inquiry can truly access the problem and solve it.

Israel's defeat in this war was not just technical. It was not simply a failure of the decision making process of our current leaders or of their management of the crisis. This defeat expressed something much deeper. It was a fundamental failure of our values. It is impossible to hide the fact that this war did not break out to defend Haifa from the Hizbollah rockets. Just the opposite is true -- the war brought the rockets to Haifa. As soon as we stopped fighting, the rockets stopped as well.

In other words, this was not a defensive war. It was a War of Principles -- a war that was fought to defend the

principle according to which Israel can retreat to the Green Line and defend itself from there. The abduction of the soldiers drew a large question mark over this principle -- Olmert's ticket to power. And so, unlike Israel's reaction to previous attacks, this time Olmert hurried to go to war.

The problem is that in a war, it is almost impossible to win without conquering territory. But conquering territory contradicts the very principle for which Olmert was fighting. And so, armed with various illusory post -- modernistic principles, the IDF tried to defeat the Hizbollah. It fought but not to win, conquered territory and immediately retreated, performed army maneuvers but determined no clear goals. And as usual, the price of the war was paid by the courageous and dedicated fighters.

No matter how we look at it, the roots of the fiasco will not be found within the parameters that will be investigated. They can only be found in the basic principles in the name of which Israel initiated this war. These principles were forced upon the State of Israel with religious fervor by the 3% that populates the kingpin. The kingpin will not be investigated. On the contrary; the reserve soldiers calling for a Commission of Inquiry demand that the strongest man on the kingpin -- Chief Justice Aharon Barak -- will head the Commission.

A true and penetrating investigation would discover that in order to change direction and save Israel, we have to thoroughly examine our basic principles. For that reason, the first essential area that must be dealt with is not the military. It is education. We must educate ourselves to love the Land of Israel, to love the People of Israel and its Torah -- with no coercion on the personal level. We must nurture the feeling that our cause is just. The entire arsenal of IDF shells was wasted on empty terrain, while the Hizbollah watched and laughed. The problem is not outdated topographical maps. The problem is outdated values. The State and the army were not armed with the basic sense of justice of our cause. Nasrallah seemed to believe much more in the justice of his cause. And deep down, many Israelis admired him more than they did their own leaders. That is exactly how we will lose the next war, as well.

The Commission of Inquiry must nurture our lost family values. It must emphasize the connection between our approach to settlement and the Land of Israel and the loss of our ability to defend it. The Commission of Inquiry must show how the courts that approved the expulsion of thousands of our most loyal citizens and the destruction of their homes, but prevented the same fate from terrorist murderers and their families turned our entire value system upside down. They paved the way to the defeat that we suffered and to the defeats that we will continue to suffer -- if we don't restore the State to the people and its values.

### Manhigut Yehudit / The Jewish Leadership Movement

PO Box 21, Ginot Shomron 44853, ISRAEL Tel: 09-792-9046 Fax: 09-792-0570  
PO Box 241, Cedarhurst, NY 11516, USA Tel: 516-295-3222 Fax: 516-295-9599

[www.JewishIsrael.org](http://www.JewishIsrael.org)

[office@JewishIsrael.org](mailto:office@JewishIsrael.org)