



Nishma Research 2020 Post-Election Survey of the Orthodox Jewish Community

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VAST GAPS IN VALUES, MOTIVATIONS SEPARATE BIDEN AND TRUMP VOTERS AMONG ORTHODOX JEWS, SURVEY REVEALS.

A just-released post-election study among 449 Orthodox Jews (“Priorities of Trump Voters vs. Biden Voters in the Orthodox Jewish Community: A Post-Election Analysis”), conducted November 4-15, 2020, has uncovered striking differences between the two groups. Out of 35 issues that people considered when voting, there were less than a handful that both groups agreed were important, with surprisingly sharp differences on some major issues.

While Trump voters ranked Israel as their #1 issue (80% saying it was a critical factor), it ranked only 15th among Biden voters (29%). In contrast, Biden voters ranked the coronavirus pandemic as their #1 issue (78% saying it was a critical factor), while it ranked only 26th among Trump voters (12%). A few other examples: 41% of Biden voters cited climate change as critical, compared to a bare 1% of Trump voters; and 49% of Biden voters cited “how decisions at the top are made,” compared to 16% of Trump voters.

According to Mark Trencher, president of Nishma and the study’s lead researcher, “not only was there a lot of disagreement between the two groups, in many cases their views were diametrically opposed. In recent years there have been ideological and halachic differences within Orthodoxy and we’ve had a sense that there were some growing political differences as well, but now we see the extent of it, and it’s both surprising in its scope and worrisome. This goes beyond the differences between Orthodox and non-Orthodox; it really affects the Orthodox community internally.”

Trencher held out hope, though, noting “the reasons given for selecting a candidate might not be equivalent to people’s underlying motivations. We see from a lot of the write-in comments that both sets of voters were to some extent parroting campaign messages often heard from their favored candidate and reflecting their extremely different personalities and ideologies. This may be a piece of good news, because core, underlying priorities might not be as far apart as these data – taken at a uniquely tendentious time – seem to suggest.

“Perhaps the data will spur the Orthodox community to take a step back and create deeper and more nuanced understanding and dialogue around its core priorities and how they can be jointly advanced.”

The report is available at <http://nishmaresearch.com/social-research.html>.