



Dear Friends,

With the whirlwind that is Israel having a moment of calm, I finally find some quiet time to write to all of you about this new government and its stunning connections to Shaharit's work and vision. It is a unique milestone in our work, and I feel compelled to share it with you all so that you can celebrate the moment with us.

The Common Good is a phrase that Shaharit consciously introduced to the political conversation just a few short years ago to articulate a politics that reaches across the aisle, finding meeting points between seeming opposites while leaving the culture wars between political enemies behind. Many have seen it as a naïve vision, as politics continues to descend to a zero-sum game where the other side is deeply mistaken at best, evil at worst. And yet, on the night that he received the mandate to form the new government, Yair Lapid, without a doubt this government's architect, spoke about his life's goal being to find the Common Good in Israeli society – to take Israel out of the culture wars, and to search together for common ground. In case someone thought it was accidental, he has repeated the phrase multiple times since.

Case in point – the new majority whip of the Knesset, the indomitable **Idit Silman** from PM Naftali Bennett's right-wing Yemina party, is a proud graduate of Shaharit's 120 political leadership program. She believes that her training at Shaharit led her to this moment and made her the perfect candidate to manage a coalition that strives for the Common Good across the ideological divides. Likewise, **Naama Lazimi** – formerly a city council member in Haifa, and now a newly appointed Member of Knesset from the Labour Party, also a graduate of 120, joins her friend Idit on the Knesset benches. And **Iman Khatib Yasin**, from Ra'am – the first Arab party to join an Israeli coalition still might be joining her 120 compatriots, as well. Imam also served in the previous Knesset, along with her close friend **Tehila Friedman**, from Blue and White, senior staff at Shaharit. While Tehila

chose not to compete this time for a seat in the Knesset, her inaugural speech in the last Knesset went viral. In many ways, her words set the stage for envisioning such a political possibility. And stating the obvious, there is something particularly moving and not at all inconsequential, that all four are women. They agree on much, while at the same time disagreeing on some fundamental issues about the future, but have a deep commitment to one another and creating solutions that are “good enough” for all.



But this is not all. **Ghaida Rinawie Zoabi**, who founded our new Arab Leadership Program, was also elected to this new Knesset as a member of Meretz. And her replacement running the leadership program, **Wissam Gnaiim**, a graduate of 120, is a senior advisor in Ra’am and the pioneering Mansour Abbas, heading the party. In addition, **Lili Haibi Menachem** from 120’s last cohort runs the legislative office of Gidon Sa’ar, head of the new right-wing party New Hope, and **Roni Tzubari** from 120’s first cohort runs the legislative office of Zeev Elkin, a government minister from New Hope. And the list goes one.

Not all is well, of course, in this ever-so tenuous government. The coalition skews towards the elites of the country, from the right, left, and center. It skews towards what has been called “the First Israel,” as opposed to the social and cultural periphery, which traditionally votes for the Likud, known as “the Second Israel.” This central faultline of Israeli politics is, if anything, accentuated by the present Common Good coalition. And it is hard at this point to tell whether the Haredim, whose autonomous existence was visible for all to see during this year of Corona, will move ever farther from the Israeli mainstream or find a way for the centripetal forces bringing people and politics together in this government to influence Haredi relations

with the rest of Israeli society, as well. Time will tell.

Nothing has changed, and everything has changed. This government, as we saw in a vote two days ago, could unravel in the coming weeks, and the next election could be around the corner. And at the same time, something has happened. A different conversation with different connections that surprised the very political actors who just a few short months ago would never talk about Naftali and Mansour, Gidon and Merav, Benny and Yair, even Avigdor and Nitzan. First names matter. There will already next week undoubtedly be far darker things to say, but it's worth pausing at this moment to take notice of where we are and celebrate what has been accomplished—a step forward for the Common Good.

With gratitude,  
Eilon

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