

Before Thursday Noon

Aryeh Leib Thorne Toren · Tuesday, 27 October 2026 · Election day for the 26th Knesset

Voting ends at 22:00 tonight. Within minutes the screens will fill with numbers, and half the country will decide it knows what happened. It doesn't yet. Tonight is the start of a count. The official answer comes later, and there is a reason for that.

I'm not taking a side here. This is how the count works, what the threshold math looks like, and why it's worth giving it until Thursday.

How the count works

Counting starts at each voting station once voting ends. The station committee, made up of party representatives, counts the ballots and sends the tally up the line. IDI · Arutz Sheva · Central Elections Committee

Some ballots are not opened at the station at all. Soldiers on bases, police on duty away from home, hospital patients, prisoners, diplomats abroad, voting-station staff and voters with limited mobility vote in a double envelope. This year, people evacuated from their homes for security reasons can also vote this way. Central Elections Committee · IDI

Those envelopes go under guard to the Central Elections Committee at the Knesset. There, every voter is checked against the rolls to catch anyone who voted twice. Duplicates are thrown out and referred to the police. Only then are the inner envelopes counted. Central Elections Committee · Ynet

That takes time, and it is not a small slice. In 2022 the committee received about 463,000 double envelopes, close to 10% of all votes. IDI · Ynet This year the committee's estimate is 600,000 to 650,000. Ynet · Arutz Sheva

The committee expects final results on Thursday, 29 October, at noon. By law it must publish them within eight days, by Wednesday, 4 November. Ynet · Arutz Sheva

The math

A list needs 3.25% of the valid votes to win any seats. Below that line it gets nothing. bechirof.fyi

Here is how that played out in the last election, from the committee's official 2022 results. CEC 2022 results · bechirof.fyi

- Valid votes: 4,764,742
- Threshold: $4,764,742 \times 3.25\% = 154,854.1$, so a list needed 154,855 votes
- Meretz got 150,793 votes (3.16%) and no seats
- $154,855 - 150,793 = 4,062$ votes short

On the morning after that election, reports put the gap at 4,124 votes. Arutz Sheva, Nov 2022 The final count put it at 4,062. Same story, different number, because the count was not done yet. That's why I say wait for Thursday.

What does a seat cost? About 417,400 votes, 8.8% of the total, went to lists that missed the line. CEC 2022 results · bechirof.fyi Seats are shared among the lists that crossed, so:

- $4,764,742 - 417,400 = 4,347,342$ votes behind the 120 seats
- $4,347,342 \div 120 \approx 36,228$ votes per seat, before surplus-vote agreements move the last seats around

Now set that next to the envelopes. Every 36,000 or so votes is about one seat. If 600,000 envelopes are still sealed when you go to sleep tonight, the picture on your screen is not final. And a list near 3.25% can cross the line, or fall below it, on a few thousand votes.

This year about 7.33 million Israelis are eligible to vote at some 12,000 voting stations, with 36 lists on the ballot. Central Elections Committee · Times of Israel The threshold moves with turnout: every million valid votes adds 32,500 to the line.

Waiting until evening

In this morning's Chumash, the angels reach Sodom only "in the evening." Rashi asks why they took so long from Hebron, and answers: "they were angels of mercy, and they were waiting, perhaps Abraham would succeed in his defense for them." Even Heaven did not close the file before its time.

The Rambam, in today's chapters, says that if you sell a man 100 nuts and hand him 101 or 99, "the extra or missing nut must be returned. This applies even if several years have passed." A count is a count. You get it right, even if it takes a while.

And the Hayom Yom for today: "alien or evil thoughts are caused by "emptiness of the head."" A long night of waiting with an empty head fills up with rumor. Screenshots, "leaks," and the cousin who knows someone at the committee. Don't forward what you can't source. That's Chafetz Chaim. It's also common sense.

What we don't know yet

- The results. Nobody knows them before the count is done, and this piece doesn't guess.
- How many double envelopes will arrive, and how many will be disqualified.
- The exact threshold for 2026. It depends on the final number of valid votes.

After the count

Today's mitzvah in the Sefer HaMitzvot is the ban on hurtful words. The Rambam rules that "Verbally abusing a person is more severe than taking unfair advantage of him financially. For the latter can be repaid, while the former can never be repaid." Some of us will be happy on Thursday and some will not. Either way, don't say anything about your neighbor that you can't take back. We still share one country, and we will need each other the day after.

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All glory to the Ribono shel Olam · Errors are mine