

# THE Jewish Home

February 29, 2024

Distributed weekly in the Five Towns, Long Island, Queens & Brooklyn

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Family Newspaper

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Smashing Success



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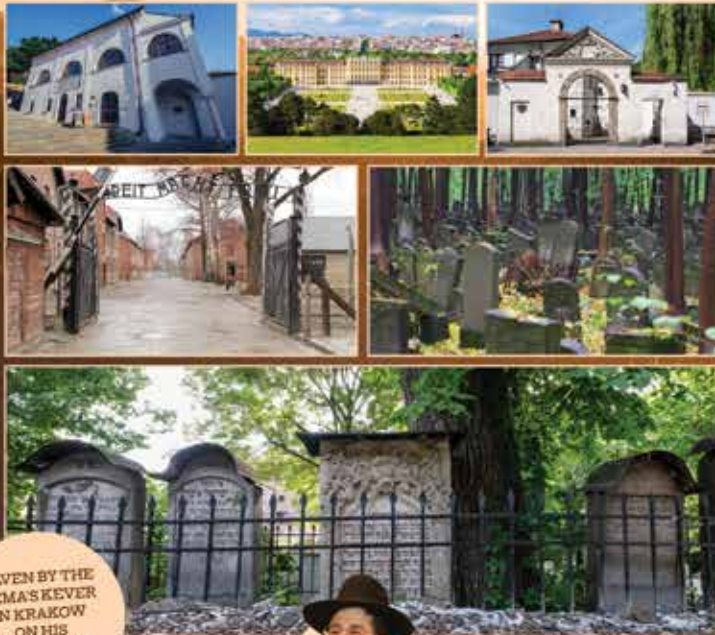




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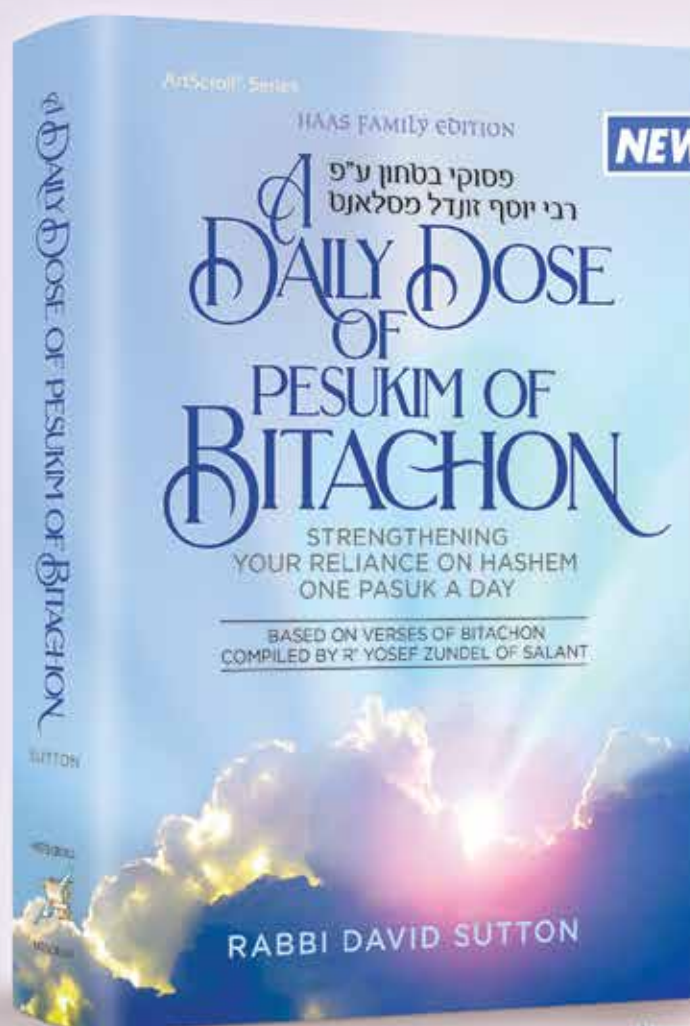
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# Dear Readers,

**"I** was proud today to walk in and pull a Democratic ballot and vote Uncommitted. We must protect our democracy. We must make sure that our government is about us, about the people."

Take it from Rashida Tlaib, a member of the "Squad," who has used her pulpit in Congress to decry the suffering of her people in "Palestine."

And our President, with an eye on the Michigan primaries and the upcoming elections, has been heeding her call. Slowly but surely, President Biden has been condemning the "settlements" in Israel, sanctioning "settlers," calling for a ceasefire despite 134 hostages being held by Hamas, and urging for a two-state solution that he says is the only path towards peace.

All for a few votes.

Well, maybe it's more than a few votes. In this week's primary in Michigan, more than 100,000 people voted "Uncommitted" on their ballots in protest of the war in Gaza. The "Uncommitted candidate" actually earned 2 delegates in the Democrat primary. It seems that there's strong support for being uncommitted (which sounds pretty contradictory, if you think about it). By far surpassing their goal of 10,000 Uncommitted votes in the Michigan primary, the movement handily made their point to the Democrat Party.

"Today's results and our delegation represent a historic inflection point for creating a Democratic Party that aligns with the majority of its voters who want a ceasefire and end to unrestricted weapons funding for Israel's war and occupation against the Palestinian people," said Layla Elabed, the lead organizer of the Uncommitted campaign and Tlaib's sister.

Despite the 100,000 votes being wasted at the polls this week, is there concern for Biden that this pro-Hamas, anti-Israel consortium will send his opponent in November to the White House instead of him? Biden barely faced opposition in the primaries, but when the presidency hinges on just a few states and by just a few votes, will these people really want Donald Trump in the Oval Office instead of the current commander-in-chief?

Biden is going to be working really hard the next few months to make sure that doesn't happen. If that means that Israel, America's only true ally in the Middle East, is going to be thrown under the bus time and time again, it may be worth it for him just so he can earn that coveted second term.

The Muslim population in Michigan is a loud and vocal voting bloc. They're so loud that the President of the United States has reversed U.S. policy just to try to earn their votes. With an estimated 240,000 Muslims in the state, Biden needs their votes – especially since he only managed to win there in 2020 by 150,000 votes.

But what about the pro-Israel citizens living in the United States? Did you know that there are more than 2 million Jews living in New York State? What about if we made our voices heard? What about if we, as a group, showed our concern for Israel at the ballot box? There are messages we can deliver when it comes to voting, and those messages will be heard loud and clear.

We have the power to show our politicians that we are committed to the right for Israel to defend itself and bring its citizens home.

***Wishing you a wonderful week,  
Shoshana***

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### Weekly Weather | March 1 – March 7



### Shabbos Zemanim

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# Dear Editor,

**Dear Editor,**

I recently attended a dinner in the community where all of the attendees were frum Jews, and kosher food was served.

When the "Star Spangled Banner" played at the start of the program, I saw a lot of people on their cell phones and talking to the other guests at the event.

How disgraceful of these people!

It takes no more than 5 minutes of people's time to properly show respect for our country's national anthem – in complete silence, standing, with their hand on their heart. When we're blessed to live in one of the few nations which grants us religious liberty, it's only appropriate to take a few minutes to show respect and appreciation for our country and freedoms.

Even Rav Moshe Feinstein, Rav Pam, and Rav Avigdor Miller, zt"l, showed their appreciation to America by encouraging others to vote and displaying an American flag.

**Sincerely,**

**A proud Jewish American Citizen**

**Dear Editor,**

Many shuls are saying Avinu Malkeinu because of the war. Interestingly, the first Avinu Malkeinu we recite acknowledges that we are sinners. We say this to Avinu, our Father of Mercy, and to Malkeinu, our Father of Judgment. Logically, it makes sense to approach our G-d of Judgment with the notion that we are sinners and not worthy of making requests. But to our Father of Mercy, why would there be a necessity for an acknowledgement of sins?

When we look at the two middot of G-d the world, there is chesed, G-d's total

giving and benevolence, and *tzimtzum*, G-d's constriction. Chesed represents G-d's total benevolence of granting us everything. *Tzimtzum* represents G-d's judgment, which contracts the chesed from being infinite and without limits.

The G-d of chesed is the G-d of Rachamim, of mercy, who provides us with everything and gives us life to fulfill our missions.

The sin to the Father of Mercy, of chesed, could be that we don't return to Him with enough vigor for His benevolence to us. This is a "sin" of a failure to love and show gratitude.

This is an exciting venture to engage in, to thank the Creator more and more and cleave to Him out of experiencing beautiful lives.

**Steven Genack**

**Dear Editor,**

Tip O'Neill, a Speaker of the House of Representatives, once said: "Everyone is entitled to their own opinion, but not their own set of facts." There are many "opinions" regarding the news, but few facts. This is a fact: President Joseph Biden as Vice President "willfully held and disclosed classified information," but Special Counsel Robert Hur, appointed by Merrick Garland, President Biden's own Attorney General, declined to prosecute because he felt (opinion) a Washington, DC, jury would find President Biden a sympathetic old man and not convict him. It is also a fact that both President Biden misrepresented what President Trump stated at Charlottesville, Va., as did Adam Schiff in making up what was stated in the phone call between President Trump and President Zelensky regarding corruption in Ukraine. No one was ever

*Continued on page 8*

# Readers Poll

On a winter day, do you prefer a sunny but chilly or warmer but cloudy?

63%

Sunny but Chilly

37%

Warmer but Cloudy



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Continued from page 10

charged with “insurrection” for January 6, least of all President Trump who told the crowd: “to peacefully and patriotically” walk to the Capital. The House Republicans passed a standalone bill in November 2023 providing Israel with the over \$14 billion aid that was requested following the October 7 massacre, and Senator Schumer said he would not bring it up for a vote, despite his saying “Am Yisroel Chai” at the rally supporting Israel. Also, a critical fact about the 2024 Senate border bill is that it will not be taken up in the House, since it allows up to 5,000 illegal migrants per week to be given status in the U.S..

Most importantly, it is a fact that President Trump did more for Israel than any other President in American history from defunding the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (UNRRA), instituting the Taylor Force Act where U.S. aid cannot go to Palestinian terrorists or their families, recognizing Israel’s right to the Golan Heights, moving the U.S. Embassy to Jerusalem, and initiating the Abraham Accords. Key to President Trump’s efforts was to put Iran under severe economic sanctions resulting in their inability to sell their oil around the world. When President Biden did not enforce the Iranian sanctions put on by President Trump, Iran was able to make \$70 billion plus and bankroll their terrorist proxies Hamas, Hezbollah, and the Houthis. Under President Trump, Israel was not infiltrated leaving 1,200 Israelis killed in the most gruesome fashion with over 200 taken as hostages, including many Americans, into Gaza. President Biden continues to tell the Israelis how to conduct the war, sanctions only Jews in Judea and Samaria, and announces that a two-state solution is a must for the U.S. to continue to support Israel. This, despite the fact that the war is still rag-

ing as Hamas has not been defeated and the over 100 remaining hostages have not been released.

**Jan Henock  
Woodmere**

**Dear Editor,**

I found the article on Mendy Levy and the Lev Tahor cult to be extremely disturbing. If this “community” is still around today, I feel that it is incumbent upon every one of us to work to get these children – and their parents – out of this reign of terror. How can we sleep at night when small children are being whipped and abused, both physically and emotionally? Our Torah is sweet; it is a guide for life. How can we allow it to be warped in such a manner that it is turned into a nightmare for these people?

We must do something to help release these families from this horror.

**Rena Goldstein**

**Dear Editor,**

To Ariella, the wonderful girl in the dating column this week who has been dating for a while and hasn’t met the right one: I feel for you. Dating is hard work and can be very draining.

That being said, based on what you wrote – and how you wrote it – it may be a good idea for you to take a break for a month or two from dating. Clear your mind, spend time with yourself, focus on what you really want in a spouse. Ask yourself if you are ready to get married if you find someone with all those qualities.

Marriage is a big leap, and it could be that you need more time to get used to that idea.

A month or two to really search within yourself will help you come to the dating scene with a more refreshed mindset.

**Sincerely,  
Yael Heller**

## Make your voice heard!

Be part of TJH’s weekly poll.

Email the editor to be  
included in the weekly poll at  
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# The Week In News

## Global

### NEWS

## Success with a 4 Day Work Week



In 2022, sixty-one companies in the U.K. took part in a six-month trial to determine whether a four-day working week would have positive benefits on the productivity and mental health of employees. Autonomy, the research organization behind the study, published details of the trial's outcome last week.

Fifty-four (89%) of the companies

that participated in the trial announced that they have continued keeping the four-day working week, 31 of which (51%) have decided to permanently implement the new schedule.

Fifty-five percent of company leaders said that the experiment yielded "very positive" results, while 82% of participating firms noted that the schedule change positively affected workers. Half of the companies saw reduced staff turnover, and 32% reported increasing hiring rates.

The author of the report, Juliet Schor, a professor of sociology at Boston College, said that the one-year outcome was "excellent" and asserted that the results indicated that fewer hours of work have "real and lasting" effects on companies.

"Overall results have held and, in some cases, have even continued to improve," Schor stated. "Physical and mental health and work-life balance are significantly better than at six months. Burnout and life satisfaction improvements held steady. Job satisfaction and sleep problems nudged down a bit, but the bulk of the original improvement remains."

However, when a four-day working week is awarded to employees based

on certain conditions — such as having to accomplish certain tasks — negative results are often yielded, with workers feeling increased pressure, resentment towards others, and a sense of inequality.

With an extra day off during the week, workers have been able to spend more time engaging in hobbies, doing chores, and accomplishing other important tasks.

## Russians Seek Asylum in S. Korea



Russians are now the largest group seeking asylum in South Korea, with applications from the country surging five-fold last year.

A total of 5,750 Russian nationals sought asylum in South Korea in 2023, according to a report released earlier this month by the Korean Immigration Service. In contrast, in 2022, 1,038 Russians sought protection. 2023's numbers are more than the total number of asylum applications from Russians recorded between 1994 and 2019.

Last year also marked the highest number of overall asylum applications for at least the past eight years, according to the Immigration Service. After Russians, the largest groups of asylum seekers to South Korea came from Kazakhstan, China and Malaysia.

2024 is also seeing large groups attempting to flee Russia. Russians made up the biggest group seeking asylum in South Korea in January.

The most common reasons cited by asylum seekers were persecution based on religion, followed by political persecution. Other reasons included discrimination for being a member of a specific social group, race or nationality.

South Korea has notoriously strict immigration laws — including requests for asylum.

In the past three decades, just 4,052 people have been recognized as refugees in South Korea from more than

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103,000 asylum applications, according to the report.

Russian nationals seeking asylum globally have gained widespread attention since the Kremlin's invasion of Ukraine, with hundreds of thousands leaving Russia over the past two years – many of them fleeing military conscription.

In a famous case in 2022, five Russian men were stranded in South Korea's airport while trying to evade Moscow's military mobilization order for the war. The South Korean Justice Ministry refused their applications for refugee status, effectively leaving them in limbo at the airport. Too scared to return to Russia, they spent almost five months sleeping in the terminal and living on handout meals from the South Korean immigration department. In early 2023, two men were allowed to leave the airport. One of the men initially wanted to head to Kazakhstan, but he changed his mind when he heard the former Soviet republic was deporting fleeing Russians.

From October 2022 to February 2023, nearly 22,000 Russians tried to enter the U.S. through the country's southern border, according to data from U.S. Customs and Border Protection.

## Hungary: Sweden Can Join in NATO



Hungary's parliament voted Monday to accept Sweden as a new member of NATO, sealing a major shift in the balance of power between the West and Russia set off by war in Ukraine.

The vote allowed Sweden, which has long been nonaligned, to clear the final hurdle that had blocked its membership in NATO and held up the expansion of the military alliance.

Hungary's authoritarian prime minister, Viktor Orban, whose Fidesz party has a large majority in parliament, has maintained cordial relations with President Vladimir Putin of Russia despite the war in Ukraine and had stalled for 19 months on putting Sweden's NATO membership to a vote

in the 199-member legislature.

His decision to finally allow a vote followed a visit to Budapest, the Hungarian capital, on Friday by Swedish Prime Minister Ulf Kristersson. During the visit, it was announced that Sweden would provide Hungary with four Swedish-made Gripen jets in addition to the 14 its air force already uses, and that the maker of the jets, Saab, would open an artificial intelligence research center in Hungary.

The formal admission of Sweden to NATO still requires some procedural paperwork. Once finalized, it will, along with Finland's entry last year, give a significant boost to NATO's military strength in the Baltic Sea and reduce Russia's ability to dominate the waterway, which controls access to ports in St. Petersburg, Kaliningrad and Ust-Luga, an important transit point for Russian energy exports.

In a post on X, formerly known as Twitter, NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg welcomed Hungary's decision, saying that "Sweden's membership will make us all stronger and safer."

Sweden has already been providing weapons and other support to Ukraine, so its membership in NATO won't immediately change Ukraine's fortunes on the battlefield, but it delivers a grave blow to what Putin declared as one of his principal reasons for his full-scale invasion – keeping NATO away from Russia's borders.

The Hungarian parliament endorsed Sweden's admission to the alliance by a large majority, with only six members from a far-right party, Our Homeland Movement, voting against. The Fidesz party and mainstream opposition groups all voted in favor. (© *The New York Times*)

## Stampede for Rice



People were trampled to death on Friday as crowds surged around the Nigeria Customs Service's office in La-

gos to grab bags of rice.

The rice had been seized by custom officials and was on sale for residents in the country in which hunger is the waking call for many people each morning.

"Unforeseen challenges arose when we ran out of stock and announced the continuation of the exercise the following day, leading to a regrettable outcome," spokesperson for the service, Abdullahi Maiwada, said.

"The crowd became desperate and charged through our barricades in search of rice bags inside emptied containers. In the stampede that ensued, some fatalities and injuries were regrettably recorded," Maiwada added, announcing "the suspension of this exercise until we establish what transpired."

Thousands thronged the Lagos customs office – each struggling to grab a bag of the 25-kilogram (55-pound) rice selling at a discounted price of 10,000 naira (\$6.80) as the price of food continues to skyrocket in Africa's most populous country.

The cost of rice, a staple food in the West African country, has surged in recent months and is now priced at more than 70,000 naira (\$47.60) per 50-kilogram bag, compared to a range of 45,000 to 50,000 naira previously.

Inflation has rose in Nigeria almost 30%, the highest in 30 years. Its local currency has also plummeted, losing more than half its value to the U.S. dollar, further compounding the woes of the country's imports-driven economy.

Fresh protests broke out on Tuesday as labor unions mobilized for nationwide demonstrations to rail against the economic hardships. The hashtag #EndHungerProtest has also trended on social media.

Nigeria's President Bola Tinubu campaigned on a "Renewed Hope" manifesto that promised to grow the economy and "deliver food security and affordability." But one protester's placard said the country is now experiencing "Renewed hunger for the people."

More than 80 million Nigerians survive on less than \$2 a day, representing "the world's second-largest poor population after India," according to the World Bank.

Nigeria's finance ministry announced Monday it had resumed a cash transfer of 25,000 naira (\$15.88) to vulnerable citizens for the next three months to ease the hardship in the country.

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## Former Tunisian President Sentenced



In an ongoing effort to eliminate opponents of Tunisian President Kais Saied, former president Moncef Marzouki, who resides in Paris, has been sentenced to eight years in jail in absentia on charges of promoting “an attack designed to overthrow the government, inciting people to take up arms against each other and provoking disorder, murder and pillaging on Tunisian soil.”

Although the court that sentenced the ex-president did not refer to any specific statements that Marzouki made, it alleged that his criticism of Saied constituted incitement of violence against the government. Marzouki’s lawyer, Samir

Ben Amor, asserted that the sentence represents “the hardening of the political line taken by the government against opponents.”

“Is it normal in a democratic country for someone to be prosecuted simply for having expressed an opinion and point of view on his country’s politics?” Ben Amor asked rhetorically, following his client’s sentencing.

Marzouki became Tunisia’s first democratically elected leader in 2011, and he remained in office until 2014. His rise to power was prompted by the downfall of former president Zine El Abidine Ben Ali, who resigned and fled Tunisia in the wake of the country’s Arab Spring protests. Marzouki has been especially critical of Saied, accusing the president of abusing his power and altering the constitution that was established in the wake of the Arab Spring protests. The former president, claiming that Saied is a dictator, has frequently urged other countries to stop supporting Tunisia.

In December 2021, Marzouki was sentenced to four years in jail, with the court asserting that statements he issued on social media and during protests undermined state security.

In 2021, Saied began rewriting the Tunisian constitution and suspended parlia-

ment in an effort to consolidate power, following a vote – in which only a small percentage of citizens voted – approving his actions. Saied’s critics allege that his actions constitute an overthrow of government, but the president has rejected such assertions.

Saied’s administration has also launched criminal investigations into other “traitors to the nation,” including Rached Ghannouchi, a leader of the Ennahda movement; Nabil Karoui, a businessman and past presidential candidate; and Abri Moussi, the leader of the Free Destourian party and possible presidential candidate in the upcoming 2024 elections.

“All the achievements of the revolution have suffered setbacks due to [Saied’s] seizure of power,” proclaimed Imed Khemiri, a spokesperson for Ennahda. “Fundamental liberties have deteriorated, restrictions have been imposed on political party activities, opponents have been prosecuted and the independence of the judiciary has been called into question.”

til 2030 by the country’s highest electoral court for abusing his power and misusing public media during the 2022 election campaign.

After Bolsonaro lost the election by a narrow margin to leftist President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, his supporters rioted and broke into government buildings in Brasilia on January 8, 2023. Bolsonaro has denied inciting the violent attacks in the capital.

On Sunday, Bolsonaro said Parliament should offer “amnesty for those poor people who are imprisoned in Brasília,” in reference to the January 8 protesters.

Bolsonaro was also seen waving an Israeli flag during the rally Sunday in opposition to current President Lula da Silva, who has compared Israel’s offensive in Gaza to the Holocaust.

## A Sobering Number



Some 31,000 Ukrainian soldiers have been killed since Russia’s full-scale invasion began two years ago, President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said on Sunday, acknowledging for the first time in the war a concrete figure for Ukraine’s toll.

“This is a big loss for us,” Zelenskyy said at a news conference in Kyiv, the Ukrainian capital. But he declined to disclose the number of wounded or missing, saying that Russia could use the information to gauge the number of Ukraine’s active forces.

Zelenskyy’s tally could not be independently verified. It differs from estimates by U.S. officials, who last summer put the losses much higher, saying that close to 70,000 Ukrainians had been killed and 100,000 to 120,000 had been wounded. Russia’s military casualties, the officials said, were about twice as high.

By revealing Ukraine’s losses, Zelenskyy said he wanted to counter Russian propaganda and other estimates that have placed Ukrainian casualties at a much higher level. He said Russia had wrongly claimed that Ukraine had lost 60,000 soldiers.

## Thousands Rally for Bolsonaro



Throngs of supporters filled the streets of Sao Paulo on Sunday, wearing the green and gold colors of Brazil’s national flag and rallying for former Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro.

The former leader had called for the protest rally last week on social media platform X, calling it in “defense of the democratic rule of the law.” Thousands heeded his call.

Bolsonaro faces a Brazilian Federal Police investigation into an alleged attempted coup plot to keep him in power after he lost the 2022 presidential election. Several former ministers who served in Bolsonaro’s government are also being investigated and some of his aides have been arrested.

Bolsonaro on Sunday insisted he is being persecuted, without directly mentioning the institutions handling the investigation.

Last year, Bolsonaro was barred from running for political office un-



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Zelenskyy's unusual acknowledgment came as his country's armed forces have been on the defensive, running low on manpower and ammunition along most of the 600-mile front line, with Russian troops pressing attacks in the east and south. A week ago, Moscow captured the city of Avdiivka, a Ukrainian stronghold in the east.

Zelenskyy's announcement came at the end of a weekend marking the second anniversary of Russia's invasion. On Saturday, he hosted the leaders of Canada, Belgium and Italy, as well as the head of the European Union, Ursula von der Leyen, among others who traveled to Kyiv in a show of solidarity.

On Sunday, his ministers and other senior officials attended a day-long conference to present their plans for the future as Ukraine moves into a third year of full-scale war with Russia.

Zelenskyy said he was optimistic about continued U.S. support despite Congress' delay in passing a package that includes \$61 billion in military assistance for Ukraine.

He also said he had noticed a shift in attitudes in Europe in recent months as U.S. assistance has been held up and as Russian President Vladimir Putin has shown no sign in slowing his attacks.

"I think they understood Putin will continue this war," he said of the European leaders. "And that's why a lot of them began to increase supplies of artillery." (© *The New York Times*)

# Israel

## NEWS

### PA Govt Resigns



This week, Palestinian Authority Prime Minister Mohammed Shtayyeh and his government submitted their resignations.

"I would like to inform the honorable council and our great people that I

placed the government's resignation at the disposal of Mr. President Mahmoud Abbas, last Tuesday, and today I submit it in writing," Shtayyeh wrote on Facebook on Monday.

The Palestinian Authority was established in the mid-1990s as an interim government after the Palestine Liberation Organization signed the Oslo Accords with Israel. But it has since been seen as a corrupt body by many U.S. and Israeli politicians – and by Palestinians themselves.

It is headquartered in Ramallah in the West Bank and exercises nominal self-rule in parts of the territory.

The government, which is dominated by the Fatah political party, held administrative control over Gaza until 2007, when Hamas took over when the terrorist group won the 2006 legislative elections in Gaza and expelled it from the Strip.

The United States would like to see the PA control Gaza and the West Bank in its efforts to create a two-state solution. Israel does not believe that the PA should be in control.

Shtayyeh, who was appointed as prime minister in 2019, said in October that there can be no solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict without the United States, but added that the current U.S. administration doesn't have the political will to end the conflict. "They're managing it," he said.

The PA is also very unpopular among Palestinians, who see it as unable to provide security in the West Bank. A survey conducted by the Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research in December showed that more than 60% of Palestinians want the PA to be dissolved. Meanwhile, support for President Abbas, who has held the position since 2005, has collapsed. In the West Bank, 92% of respondents want him to resign, according to the poll.

The prime minister's post in the PA was set up in 2003, following the Second Palestinian Intifada after the U.S., the European Union and Israel called for reforms. It marked the first real move toward power-sharing by then President Yasser Arafat since the PA was established. At the time, Arafat named Abbas as prime minister. Abbas took over as president of the PA after Arafat died in 2004.

lement of Ma'ale Adumim, three Palestinian gunman shot and killed an Israeli man and injured eleven others who were sitting in traffic on the Route 1 highway. The terror attack took place last Thursday morning.

Matan Elmaliah, a 26-year-old from Ma'aleh Adumim, was murdered by the terrorists, and eleven others were treated by the Magen David Adom ambulance service. A 23-year-old pregnant woman was seriously injured, while four others sustained moderate wounds and five others had minor injuries. The victims were brought to hospitals in Jerusalem.



The pregnant woman had to undergo "significant surgery," said Dr. Alon Schwartz, the head of Shaare Zedek Medical Center's trauma department, adding that the woman is in stable condition, but it is "too early" to determine if the injuries would affect her unborn child in the future. However, as of now, the fetus appears to be well.

Security forces shot and killed two of the terrorists, while the third one ran away but was quickly "neutralized," officials said without specifying the gunman's current condition.

The three terrorists lived in the Bethlehem area of the West Bank and possessed assault rifles, submachine guns, and a grenade. They were named by the Shin Bet as 26-year-old Muhammad Zawahra, his 31-year-old brother Kathem Zawahra, and 31-year-old Ahmed Al-Wahsh. According to the Shin Bet, the elder Zawahra brother had been arrested for illegally entering Israel in the past.

Cars had nowhere to go due to heavy traffic in the area, and some of those stuck in traffic fled by foot.

According to Yisrael Adler, an eyewitness to the terrorist attack, a gunman moved toward the pregnant woman's car and began shooting at her. After she attempted to duck beneath the vehicle's dashboard, "the terrorist moved on."

"It could be that if there was no traffic jam there, [the attack] would not have happened," said Adler, with officials issuing similar statements.

"We have dozens of times alerted the security forces to the concern of terror attacks on that congested road," said Benny Kashriel, the mayor of Ma'ale Adumim.

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“[The] method of the attack this morning and the exploitation of the traffic jams in the checkpoint area is the nightmare of everyone who is facing the tunnel checkpoint,” Efrat Mayor Oded Ravivi said in reference to a similar tragedy that took place in November when a soldier was killed near another West Bank checkpoint.

Hamas hailed the terrorist shooting as a “natural response” to Israel’s military operations in Gaza.

## Biden Admin. is Anti-Settlements



In 1978, the U.S. State Department classified Israeli settlements in the West Bank as illegal. However, in 2019, under the Trump administration, Secretary of State Mike Pompeo ended that decades-long policy, instead determining that settlements are “not per se incon-

sistent with international law” in a move that demonstrated U.S. neutrality, or even support, for Israeli settlements in the West Bank.

However, the U.S.’s settlement policy has been changed once again, with Secretary of State Antony Blinken officially declaring settlements as illegal.

“It’s been longstanding U.S. policy under Republican and Democratic administrations alike that new settlements are counterproductive to reaching an enduring peace,” Blinken stated. “Our administration maintains firm opposition to settlement expansion and in our judgment, this only weakens — doesn’t strengthen — Israel’s security.”

Blinken’s statement was issued following the announcement of Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich’s plan to build over 3,000 more houses in the West Bank. Smotrich’s announcement was made after three terrorists killed an Israeli man and injured eleven people, including a pregnant woman, who were stuck in a traffic jam on their way to Jerusalem on Thursday.

Smotrich’s plans, which he crafted together with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, Defense Minister Yoav Gallant, and Strategic Affairs Minister Ron Dermer, include the construction of 2,350

new homes in Ma’ale Adumim, 694 houses in Efrat, and 300 in Keidar.

Following Blinken’s rejection of the “Pompeo doctrine” — the pro-settlement policy implemented by Mike Pompeo — U.S. House Speaker Mike Johnson condemned the Biden administration.

“The Jewish people have a historic and legal right to live in the land of Israel including in Judea and Samaria — the Biblical heartland,” Johnson posted on the X social media platform.

“It is an absolute disgrace the Biden administration would issue this decision, especially as Israel fights terrorists on multiple fronts that seek Israel’s destruction and as more than 130 hostages remain in Gaza,” the house speaker added. “The Biden Administration must stop undermining Israel and facilitating efforts to delegitimize Israel. It is misguided and unconscionable.”

## National NEWS

### \$1B to Einstein Med School



Dr. Ruth Gottesman, 93, is making a lot of med students happy. The widow of a Wall Street financier donated \$1 billion to Albert Einstein College of Medicine, with instructions that the gift be used to cover tuition for all students going forward.

Dr. Gottesman is a former professor at Einstein, where she studied learning disabilities, developed a screening test, and ran literacy programs. Ruth’s husband, Sandy, was a protégé of Warren Buffett and had made an early investment in Buffett’s Berkshire Hathaway. Sandy ran an investment firm, First Manhattan. Ruth began working at Einstein in 1968, when she took a job as director of psychoeducational services. She has long been on Einstein’s board of trustees and is currently the chair.

Dr. Gottesman became close with Dr. Philip Ozuah, the pediatrician who oversees the medical college and its affiliated hospital, Montefiore Medical Center, as the chief executive officer of the health system.

The two of them met on a plane in early 2020. When corona hit, Dr. Ozuah would visit Dr. Gottesman and her husband when they both became sick with the virus.

About three years ago, Dr. Ozuah asked Dr. Gottesman to head the medical school’s board of trustees.

Dr. Gottesman’s husband died in 2022 at age 96.

“He left me, unbeknownst to me, a whole portfolio of Berkshire Hathaway stock,” Dr. Gottesman recalled. The instructions were simple: “Do whatever you think is right with it.”

She thought about what she wanted to do. “I wanted to fund students at Einstein so that they would receive free tuition,” she said. There was enough money to do that in perpetuity, she said.

Tuition at the medical school is more than \$59,000 a year.

“We have terrific medical students, but this will open it up for many other students whose economic status is such that they wouldn’t even think about going to medical school,” she said.

“That’s what makes me very happy about this gift,” she added. “I have the opportunity not just to help Phil, but to help Montefiore and Einstein in a transformative way — and I’m just so proud and so humbled — both — that I could do it.”

## A Cure for Food Allergies?



A drug that has been used for decades to treat allergic asthma and hives significantly reduced the risk of life-threatening reactions in children with severe food allergies who were exposed to trace amounts of peanuts, cashews, milk and eggs, researchers reported on Sunday.

The drug, Xolair, has been approved by the Food and Drug Administration for adults and children older than the age of 1 with food allergies. It is the first treatment that drastically cuts the risk of serious reactions — such as anaphylaxis, a life-threatening allergic reaction that causes the body to go into shock — after accidental exposures to various food allergens.

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The results of the researchers' study on children and adolescents, presented at the annual conference of the American Academy of Allergy, Asthma and Immunology in Washington, were published in *The New England Journal of Medicine*.

"For a certain population of food allergy patients, this medication will be life-changing," said Dr. Robert A. Wood, the paper's first author and director of the Eudowood Division of Pediatric Allergy,

Immunology and Rheumatology at Johns Hopkins Children's Center.

Food allergies have been increasing in prevalence over the past 20 years, though it is not clear why. Some 5.5 million children and 13.6 million U.S. adults have food allergies, and many are allergic to more than one food.

Nearly half of people with food allergies have experienced a severe, life-threatening reaction. Food allergies are the cause of an estimated 30,000

emergency department visits a year.

But while some hailed Xolair's approval as a breakthrough, experts cautioned that it was far from a perfect solution. The drug lowers the risk of a reaction to trace amounts of an allergen, but life-threatening episodes are still possible. Patients still must scrupulously avoid foods likely to trigger a reaction.

The drug is not easy to take, administered by injection every two to four weeks. And in order for Xolair to be

effective, patients must take it regularly. The study of Xolair, funded in large part by the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, was of the kind considered the gold standard in medicine: a double-blind, randomized, placebo-controlled clinical trial.

It was carried out at 10 medical centers across the United States and included 177 children and adolescents ages 1 to 17, all of whom were allergic to peanuts and at least two other foods including cashew, milk, egg, walnut, wheat and hazelnut. (© *The New York Times*)

## U.S. On the Moon Again



The successful landing of Intuitive Machines' IM-1 lander, which was nicknamed Odysseus or "Odie," marks the first time a commercial spacecraft has soft-landed on the moon and the United States' first return to the moon in over fifty years.

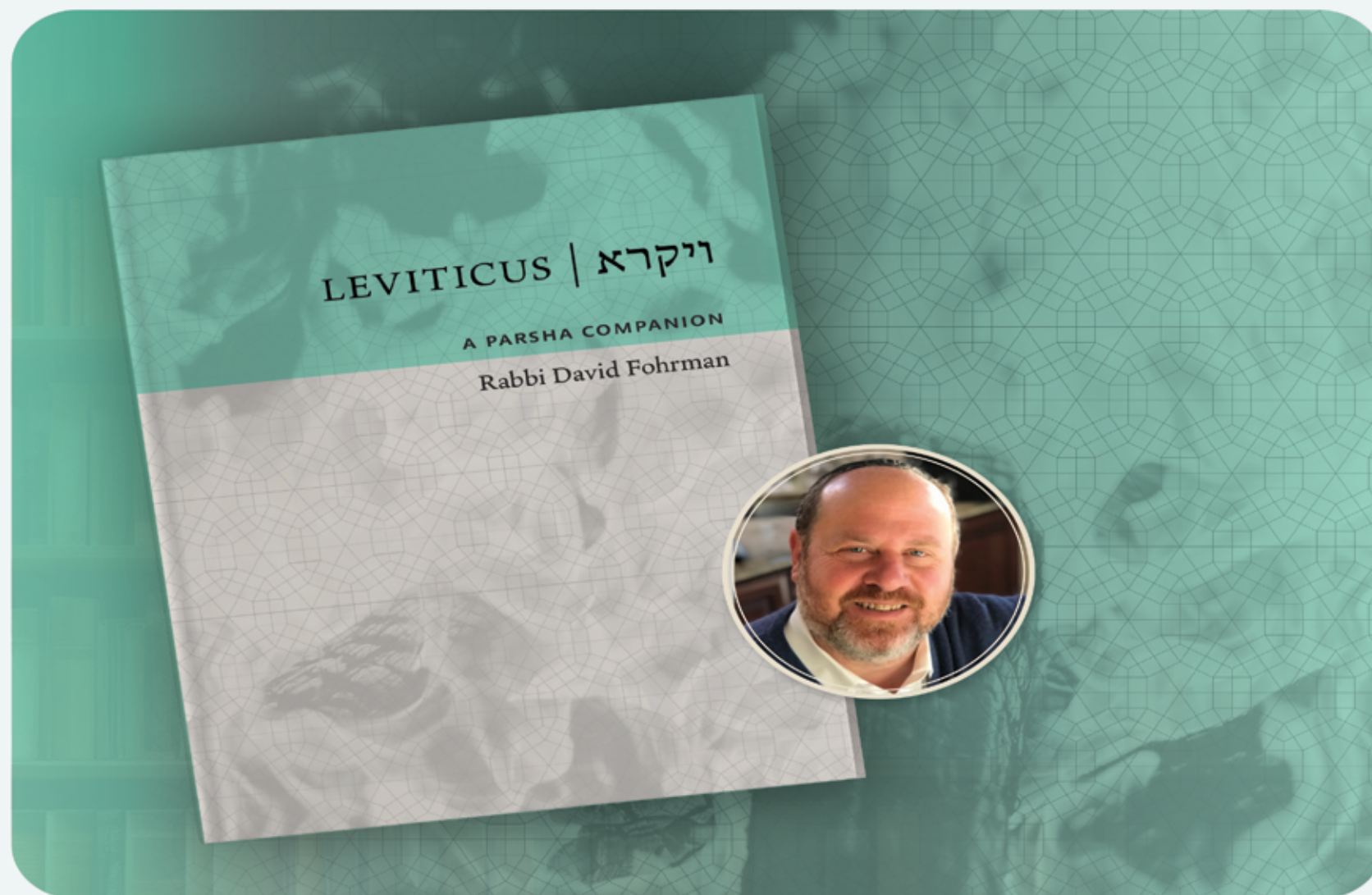
The uncrewed spacecraft landed on the lunar surface after experiencing navigation issues that seriously threatened the success of the mission. However, thanks to Intuitive Machines' partnership with NASA, the lander was able to use the space agency's experimental lidar technology to successfully land Odysseus.

"We continue to learn more about the vehicle's specific information (Lat/Lon), overall health, and attitude (orientation)," the company announced on Friday, confirming that the lander is "alive and well" and functioning properly, with data from the lunar surface transmitting to scientists.

"Today, for the first time in more than a half-century, the U.S. has returned to the moon," said Bill Nelson, the administrator of NASA, on Thursday, the day of the craft's landing. "Today is a day that shows the power and promise of NASA's commercial partnerships. Congratulations to everyone involved in this great and daring quest."

The craft reached the lunar surface at 6:23 pm ET on Thursday. Nearing the mission's end, the lander experienced a malfunction in its navigation sensors, leading many to fear that the craft wouldn't be able to land successfully.





## Leviticus: A Parsha Companion by Rabbi David Fohrman

Leviticus is not an easy book to read. It presents topics that seem arcane to the ear, including the laws of animal offerings, the baffling purification ritual for tzara'at, and an origin story for the holiday of Yom Kippur that treats forgiveness almost as an afterthought. In these pages, Rabbi Fohrman shows that an important key to understanding Leviticus lies in the previous books of Genesis and Exodus. In the process, he makes this book accessible and its study deeply meaningful.

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"Intuitive Machines made the decision to reassign the primary navigation sensors from Odysseus ... to use the sensors on NASA's Navigation Doppler Lidar (or NDL)," officials said.

Although NASA didn't intend for the lidar technology to be used functionally, the instrument, at the last second, saved the mission.

Odie, the size of a phone booth, floated through space for 620,370 miles before beginning to orbit the moon on Wednesday morning.

Now that it's on the moon, the lander will conduct tests and gather scientific data with six scientific instruments provided by NASA as part of the agency's \$118 million deal with Intuitive Machines.

"The NASA payloads will focus on demonstrating communication, navigation, and precision landing technologies, and gathering scientific data about rocket plume and lunar surface interactions, as well as space weather and lunar surface interactions affecting radio astronomy," said NASA.

Odysseus will likely function for seven days on the moon, after which it will have to go into sleep mode to tolerate the upcoming lunar night. Insulation material created by Columbia Sportswear will help protect the craft from the frigid nights. A

camera, known as EagleCam, created by Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University students, is expected to take a selfie of the lander, although it is currently unclear when or if such an image would be published.

"We're going 1,000 times further (into space) than the International Space Station," said Steve Altemus, the CEO of Intuitive Machines. "Then we're flying to an orbiting body that has no atmosphere to slow down (the spacecraft).... It all has to be done with a propulsion system. And we're doing it autonomously or robotically with no intervention from humans."

This historic achievement marks a significant milestone in the U.S.'s space competition with China and other rivals.

## 2023 Was a Big Walkout Year

According to the Labor Department, there were thirty-three significant strikes in 2023, up 43% from a year prior, with 2023 having the most walkouts in over two decades.

According to a report released by the Bureau of Labor Statistics, at one point last year, 462,000 employees went on strike, with the workforce losing approx-

imately 16.7 million days of work in all. In contrast, in 2022, just 127,000 people took part in walkouts, with only 2.2 million days of work lost. The last instance of higher strike activity occurred in 2000, with 39 significant walkouts taking place and 20.4 million days of work lost. The average number of significant strikes each year for the past two decades has been 16.7.



However, the data released by the Labor Department only includes strikes that involved over 1,000 employees. According to statistics published by Cornell University's School of Industrial and Labor Relations, 451 strikes, in total, took place in 2023.

SAG-AFTRA, a union for actors and performers, saw the most strikers in 2023, with 160,000 members walking out for around four months.

Contracts generally last for sever-

al years, and thus, unions that reached deals last year will not go on strike again in 2024. However, other companies may see walkouts this year.

Anheuser-Busch, a brewing company, will likely see some strikes soon. The Teamsters union announced that 5,000 of its members are ready to go on strike on March 1, as no new contract has been reached. On Tuesday, February 20, the union asserted that a walkout "appears unavoidable," but an official from Anheuser-Busch said that they expect to reach a deal.

In 2023, the Writers Guild and SAG-AFTRA went on strike, and in 2024, IASTE, a union of 60,000 non-performers at Hollywood studios, may walk out as well. The union, whose members work as artisans, craftspeople, and technicians for Hollywood studios, will see its contract expire on July 31. IATSE's last contract was approved in 2021 by a very narrow majority.

Boeing may also experience a year of strikes, as the aerospace company has lost \$26 billion over the past five years and its union is demanding significant pay raises. Airline workers from the Association of Professional Flight Attendants and other unions may also stage walkouts this year.



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## AT&T Outages



Last Thursday, AT&T experienced a major 12-hour outage, impacting hundreds of thousands of users. Verizon, T-Mobile, and other telecommunications companies, however, did not experience the outages.

The issue started Thursday morning, with thousands of AT&T users reporting trouble making calls, texting, and gaining access to the internet. A few hours later, the company began resolving the issue, and service was fully restored at around 3 pm ET. Although an AT&T spokesperson said that their FirstNet network, which is specifically used by police officers, firefighters, and other officials, was undisturbed, officials from the New York Police Department reported a loss of service on Thursday morning. Telecommunications experts have warned that AT&T may be fined since, in cases of emergency, cus-

tomers were unable to call 9-11 during the 12-hour disruption.

"Based on our initial review, we believe that today's outage was caused by the application and execution of an incorrect process used as we were expanding our network, not a cyberattack. We are continuing our assessment of today's outage to ensure we keep delivering the service that our customers deserve," AT&T announced.

The Federal Communications Commission (FCC), Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), and Department of Homeland Security have launched investigations into the issue.

"We are aware of the reported wireless outages, and our Public Safety and Homeland Security Bureau is actively investigating," the FCC announced on Thursday afternoon. "We are in touch with AT&T and public safety authorities, including FirstNet, as well as other providers."

In a similar statement, the FBI announced that they are in communication with AT&T and "will respond accordingly" if they "learn of any malicious activity." Thus far, federal agencies have yet to indicate that the issue was caused by a cyberattack.

"The bottom line is we don't have all

the answers to that," said White House National Security spokesperson John Kirby. "And so, we're working very hard to see if we can get to the ground truth of exactly what happened."

The company took "immediate action" in reinstating access to three-fourths of its systems by late morning.

"We sincerely apologize... Keeping our customers connected remains our top priority, and we are taking steps to ensure our customers do not experience this again in the future," said AT&T, announcing that its customers will receive \$5 in billing credit for the inconvenience.

The company's stock price decreased by over 2% on the day of the outages.

## Michigan Arabs Against Biden



Many Arabs and Muslims from areas of Michigan are beginning to distance themselves from President Joe Biden, whom they condemn for supporting Israel in its war against the Hamas terror group. Many of these people, who previously voted for Biden, have claimed that they would prefer the incumbent's main competitor, Donald Trump.

Samra'a Luqman, a leader of the "Abandon Biden" group, has alleged that Biden is responsible for the deaths of civilians in the Gaza Strip who have died since October 7, the day when Hamas invaded southern Israel, killing over 1,200 Israelis and kidnapping more than 250 people, around 130 of whom have yet to return home. Luqman has asserted that Israel's military actions in Gaza constitute genocide, and thus, Biden, whose government has been supporting the Jewish state, is in effect "committing the genocide."

Luqman has been encouraging voters to vote "uncommitted" or to write "Free Palestine" on the ballot for Michigan's Democratic primary this week.

Although Trump, while in office, implemented a controversial temporary travel ban on citizens from Arab countries and subscribes to pro-Israel ideologies, many Arabs have insisted that they would prefer the former commander-in-chief over Biden.

"I've survived a Muslim ban, but those kids in Gaza have not survived Joe Biden," said Luqman. "My intention is not to vote in an Islamophobe, another genocidal maniac... The only way I would vote for Biden is if he resurrected" the deceased Gazans.

Biden has been attempting to win the approval of Muslim voters by voicing his dismay with decisions made by Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. But the president's insistence on the creation of a Palestinian state — and his condemnation of Israeli "settlers" — has seemingly failed to win back his former Arab supporters, who condemn Biden for supporting and supplying weapons and aid to Israel.

In the 2020 presidential election, Biden won Michigan, a key swing state, by only 150,000 votes.

## Trump Wins SC Primary



On Saturday, Nikki Haley lost the Republican presidential primary of her home state, South Carolina, which she led as governor for two terms. Although she has yet to win a single state's primary, Haley has maintained that she will stay in the race until Super Tuesday.

While former president and current presidential candidate Donald Trump has started focusing his attention on his likely rematch with President Joe Biden, Haley continues with her long-shot campaign.

"There are huge numbers of voters in our Republican primaries who are saying they want an alternative," Haley stated. "I said earlier this week that no matter what happens in South Carolina, I would continue to run for president. I'm a woman of my word."

Trump's South Carolina victory was to be expected. Before the primary, polls indicated that the former president would win by 25 to 30 points. In an exit poll conducted by CNN of those who voted in the primary, over 4 in 10 said they associate with "MAGA" and about 8 in 10 said they were conservative. Just one-third of poll participants said they believed that Biden genuinely won the 2020 election.

While some states award all delegates

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to the winner, South Carolina awards delegates based on the number of congressional districts won. Of the state's seven districts, Haley won the 1st district along with its three delegates. However, her minor victory will likely have little effect on her chances of securing the nomination.

Of the 1,215 delegates required to secure the nomination, 56% will be awarded by March 12.

"In the next 10 days, another 21 states and territories will speak. They have the right to a real choice, not a Soviet-style election with only one candidate," said Haley, conceding South Carolina to Trump.

Based on his overwhelming victories in the Republican primaries thus far, Trump has proven to the world that he holds a great deal of influence over the Republican Party.

What the future holds for Haley is thus far unclear – whether she has any chance of securing the Republican presidential nomination remains to be seen.

"South Carolina is Trump country," declared Sen. Tim Scott following Trump's victory in the state. Scott, who may be trying to become Trump's vice presidential pick, has positioned himself as a staunch supporter of the former president. The senator has urged Haley,

who selected him as senator while she was governor, to withdraw from the primary.

Trump, at a Friday night rally, said that Scott is "the greatest surrogate I've ever seen" and went on to declare the South Carolina senator "a much better representative for me than he is a representative for himself."

## Yale: SATs are Needed



Officials from Yale University announced last week that they will begin requiring students to submit SAT or ACT scores, following four years of widespread test-optional policies largely brought about by the Covid-19 pandemic. A few other colleges, including Dartmouth and

MIT, have followed suit, but most other colleges, including Harvard and Columbia, are keeping their test-optional policies for the time being. Other colleges, such as those from the California university system (UCLA, UC Berkeley, etc.), have implemented a "test-blind" policy and as such do not consider any standardized test scores.

Yale's testing requirement will apply to those seeking admission for the fall of 2025. Justifying their decision, university officials said that test-optional policies may have negatively impacted lower-income students who opted not to submit their scores despite the possibility that their scores might have increased their chances of getting into Yale.

The Ivy League institution will instead implement a "test flexible" policy, allowing applicants to submit Advanced Placement (AP) or International Baccalaureate (IB) exam scores in place of traditional standardized test scores.

According to FairTest, an organization that has campaigned against standardized testing, for this coming fall, over 80% of four-year undergraduate institutions – 1,825 colleges or more – have kept their test-optional policies.

Currently, there is a debate over whether standardized testing requirements help or harm students from lower-income families. Others question whether standardized test scores correlate with a student's future academic success.

According to Yale undergraduate admissions dean Jeremiah Quinlan, "Students with higher scores have been more likely to have higher Yale GPAs, and test scores are the single greatest predictor of a student's performance in Yale courses in every model we have constructed."

"For students attending well-resourced high schools, substitutes for standardized tests are relatively easy to find: Transcripts brim with advanced courses, teachers are accustomed to praising students' unique classroom contributions, and activities lists are full of enrichment opportunities. Increased emphasis on these elements, we found, has the effect of advantaging the advantaged," Quinlan added.

This fall, more than 57,000 students applied to Yale, an institution that boasts a 4% acceptance rate. In recent years, more students, especially those who got lower scores on standardized tests, have decided to apply to Yale under the assumption that the test-optional policy will make it easier to gain admission into the college.

"I think it's safe to say we will see some decrease [of the number of appli-

cants] moving forward," said Quinlan. "We don't want more applications. We want the right applications."

## \$80M Settlement for Fire



Utility giant Southern California Edison has agreed to pay \$80 million to settle the U.S. Forest Service's claims relating to the 2017 Thomas Fire. At the time, the blaze was the largest wildfire in California's modern history.

The federal government had sued the company in 2020 on the forest service's behalf, alleging the utility's power lines ignited the blaze, which, according to state fire officials, burned more than 280,000 acres across Ventura and Santa Barbara counties, killed two people, and destroyed more than 1,000 structures.

The lawsuit sought to recover the forest service's costs in fighting the fire and for damages it caused to Los Padres National Forest. In the settlement, which was finalized on Friday, the utility company agreed to pay the \$80 million without admitting wrongdoing or fault, prosecutors said.

Of the more than 280,000 acres burned, more than 150,000 acres were National Forest System land.

In 2018, the utility said that its equipment might have sparked the Thomas Fire.

Though the Thomas Fire at the time was California's largest wildfire by acres burned since recordkeeping began in 1932, it has since dropped to eighth on the list, according to the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection.

Utilities have been involved in other multimillion-dollar settlements and penalty payments related to destructive wildfires in recent years. In 2019, Southern California Edison agreed to pay \$360 million to settle claims with cities and counties impacted by three wildfires, including \$210 million for costs associated with the 2018 Woolsey Fire, which state fire officials said burned more than 96,000 acres across Ventura and Los Angeles counties, destroyed more than 1,600 structures,

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and killed three people.

The Pacific Gas and Electric utility will pay \$45 million in penalties for its role in the 2021 Dixie Fire – currently the second-largest wildfire in California’s history – which started after a tree fell and hit the company’s equipment in 2021, state regulators said in January. PG&E also was fined \$125 million for its role in the 2019 Kincade Fire in Sonoma County as part of a settlement with the California Public Utilities Commission.

## NY Mourns an Owl



Pjetar Nikac has been the superintendent at 267 W. 89th St., an eight-story apartment building near Riverside Drive, for 30 years. What happened there Friday made it a day he wouldn’t forget.

Nikac was returning from a trip to the store when he noticed an object on the ground in the building’s courtyard space.

“I thought it was a rock,” he said. “I came closer, and I saw: owl.”

Nikac knew immediately that it was not just any owl, but Flaco, the Eurasian eagle-owl who just three weeks ago passed the one-year mark of living in the relative wilds of Manhattan after leaving the Central Park Zoo. Someone had cut open the mesh on his enclosure in an act of vandalism that remains unsolved.

Now, Flaco had apparently crashed into the building. Although he was still alive when Nikac found him, Flaco was soon pronounced dead. He was taken to the Bronx Zoo for a necropsy that will determine why he died.

So ended an improbable adventure for a bird who captured the public’s attention in New York and beyond by showing he could thrive on his own, at least for a time, despite having lived nearly his entire life in captivity.

Flaco would have turned 14 next month. And while the hazards presented by the urban environment almost guaranteed an early death, his life as a free bird inspired a passionate following that was obvious in the widespread grief that greeted news of his demise.

In Central Park’s North Woods section Saturday, mourners walked back

and forth among some of Flaco’s favorite oak trees, searching for just the right spot to pay tribute.

Offerings left beneath trees near the park’s East Drive included a furry owl doll, an owl carved from a block of wood, a pencil portrait of Flaco, letters and flowers. One letter bid Flaco farewell to “eternal flight.” Another thanked him for bringing “joy to the hearts of everyone who got to witness your magical journey.”

Ruben Giron, 73, a registered nurse who lives on 112th Street, said he had wept Saturday morning when he heard the news.

“He’s a symbol of just enjoying being out and letting the sun hit you,” he said. “It’s a heart-opening experience of what it means to be free.”

He added: “We’re all figuring out how to live life. That’s what we’re doing, and he did it.” (© *The New York Times*)

## That’s Odd

N E W S

### Graduating at 106



Fred Allen Smalls is doing big things. The 106-year-old recently received an honorary diploma from Georgetown High School in South Carolina.

More than 100 people attended the graduation ceremony in the school’s auditorium over the weekend.

Smalls’ granddaughter, Birdella Kinney, worked hard for more than a year to put it all together.

Smalls was born on February 5, 1918, in the Plantersville area of Georgetown County. He was raised by his grandmother and his aunt, to whom he attributes his success in life and longevity.

“He attended school in Plantersville in a building in the woods without a name. He was able to complete grades 1-5 under the instruction of Mr. Jim Skinner who taught all students in the same classroom,” Kinney shared.

Smalls then moved to Mullins to work in the tobacco industry and to join his mother, father, and siblings. He completed eighth grade in Mullins before moving to Washington, D.C. He worked as a janitor for several years and retired in the 1960s when John F. Kennedy was Pres-

ident of the United States.

Since that time, he enjoyed his family and a quiet retirement with Kinney and their dog, Bella. Smalls enjoys watching football, boxing, westerns, and eating good food.

He was also awarded an honorary high school diploma from Joel Elias Spingarn Senior High School in November 2023.

Never too old to stop learning.

## Act Your Age



Speaking of getting old, you’re never too old to work out. Well, that’s what Tim Minnick would tell you. At 81 years old, he’s the world’s oldest active fitness trainer. The fitness guru is a trainer in Austin, Texas, and his clients are generally at least 60 years old.

Think it’s too late to start working out? Think again. Minnick began his fitness journey just a few years ago, back in 2007, when his wife died. He earned his personal trainer certification in 2015 when he was 73. But when he applied for jobs as a trainer at gyms, most of them turned him down because of his age.

Finally, Gold’s Gym in Cedar Park saw that Minnick was serious.

Most of his clients now are older than 60, and Minnick can understand them and their struggles. “Aging is a very interesting process,” Minnick says. “Some day, you’ll see that your body changes; you can do different things but, at the same time, you have some limitations.”

Since becoming a trainer, Minnick has added to his certifications. He is also a member of the Functional Aging Institute and has worked with people who have had heart transplants, cancer, stroke, and Parkinson’s disease.

Minnick spends at least four times a week working out on his own. He can deadlift 300 pounds.

“I’m in such a habit and nature of (training),” Minnick says. “I don’t feel right if I’m not active every day.”

His current fitness goals include working on building muscle throughout his body as well as achieving a high-intensity exercise, which he aims to complete in the next six months.

“I’ve done part of [the exercise], but I haven’t done the whole thing yet because

I’m not in good enough shape to do it,” Minnick says. “But I’ll get there; it’s just a question of time.”

He wants to continue to be a trainer for at least five more years.

“Most people automatically think as they get older, they can’t do this or that and truthfully, that might be the case for some people [with injuries],” Minnick says. “But they could still do way more than they think they can.”

Time for me to get off the couch.

## Florida Man Games



Strange things happen in Florida, and the Florida Man Games in St. Augustine on Saturday were just proof of that fact.

The event was a conglomerate of a games that spoofed what “normally” happens in the Sunshine State.

One event showcased a speed eating contest in which contestants scarfed down plates of barbecue pork and sausage. James Gordon won that race.

“I’ve lived in Florida my whole life,” Gordon said. “They’re calling these ‘events.’ I’m calling this ... Tuesday afternoon.”

One event had contenders dueling in muddy water in an inflatable pool, pummeling each other with weapons made from pool noodles and duct tape. Another was a theft-simulation relay in which competitors raced while toting a pair of bicycles, copper pipes and catalytic converters.

Other events involved contenders wrestling sumo-style while holding pitchers of beer or running from actual sheriff’s deputies while jumping fences and avoiding obstacles. Others faced a scramble to grab cash flying in simulated hurricane winds.

The crowd was enthused by the competitions. Spectators paid at least \$45 a ticket to watch the games.

Organizer Pete Melfi said, “We kind of give a person an opportunity to live a day in the life of ‘Florida Man’ without ending up in a cop car,” said Melfi, who runs the St. Augustine media outlet The 904 Now.

You know what they say: what happens in Florida, stays in Florida, right?





# MAZEL TOV HAFTR!

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# Around the Community

## YCQ's 83rd Anniversary Scholarship Dinner



L-R: Mr. Israel Glaser, YCQ Chairman of the Board; Dr. Joel Wein, YCQ President; Rabbi Mark Landsman, YCQ Principal; Rabbi Ophie Nat; Distinguished Educator Honoree; Mrs. Malka Fishman, YCQ Executive Director



Efrahem and Vered Basalel were honored as the Parents of the Year and in loving memory of Mrs. Fariha Besalel a"h. Vered is pictured next to the YCQ administration, Mrs. Aliza Peled and Mrs. Valarie Olsen Dinner Co-Chairs. Efrahem unfortunately is not pictured due to the shloshim period for his mother.



The honorees alongside David Weprin, New York State Assembly Member, and Josh Simanowitz, District Director for Assembly Member Sam Berger



Zishy and Esther Rachel Barth were recognized as the esteemed Guests of Honor. Esther Rachel is not pictured due to the birth of a grandchild.

Over 750 guests attended YCQ's annual dinner. It was a night of achdut, of "k'ish echad b'lev echad," YCQ at its finest.

The 83rd Anniversary Scholarship Dinner took place on Sunday, February 25, 2024, at Old Westbury Hebrew Congregation. Zishy and Esther Rachel Barth were the esteemed Guests of Honor, Efrahem and Vered Basalel were honored as Parents of the Year, and Rabbi Ophie Nat received the distinguished Educator Award.

After a delicious buffet dinner, the program began with the Star-Spangled Banner and Hatikvah, followed by tefillot for Medinat Yisrael and the IDF, and the singing of "Acheinu." Mr. Israel Glaser, the Chairman of the Board, then led attendees in Tehillim.

In his welcoming message, Dr. Joel Wein, YCQ's president, acknowledged

the extremely difficult time period Am Yisrael is currently experiencing. "You can destroy, but we will build. You can lie, mislead and trick, but we will speak our truth, which is G-d's truth, the Torah. And we will teach that Torah to our children," he powerfully declared. "You can try to take away our Simchat Torah, but we will gather together to celebrate that Torah and the institutions that perpetuate it," he added.

The audience was then directed to view a tribute to Efrahem and Vered Basalel, the Parents of the Year. Their presentation also included a befitting dedication in loving memory of Efrahem's mother, Mrs. Fariha Besalel, a"h, who unfortunately passed away just a few short weeks ago.

"What I love the most about YCQ is that when you walk in, you sense the warmth. What's amazing about YCQ is

that it's able to teach each child, no matter what their strengths and weaknesses are, and turn them into super-stars," Mrs. Basalel remarked.

Rabbi Ophie Nat, who has been inspiring and educating students at YCQ for 20 years, was then honored with the Distinguished Educator Award. Students, parents, and administrators described his ability to simultaneously connect with his talmidim while providing the knowledge and tools to become true bnei Torah.

The program continued by recognizing the commitment of Zishy and Esther Rachel Barth, the distinguished Guests of Honor. The video celebrated their outstanding leadership, generosity, and unwavering dedication to YCQ.

Mrs. Malka Fishman, Executive Director, noted that Zishy truly works "yomam va'layla for YCQ." Rabbi Mark Landsman, principal, added how "he helps in

any way to make our yeshiva an even more wonderful and exceptional place."

The final presentation showcased the remarkable achievements and milestones of Yeshiva of Central Queens, underscoring its impact on its students and the broader community.

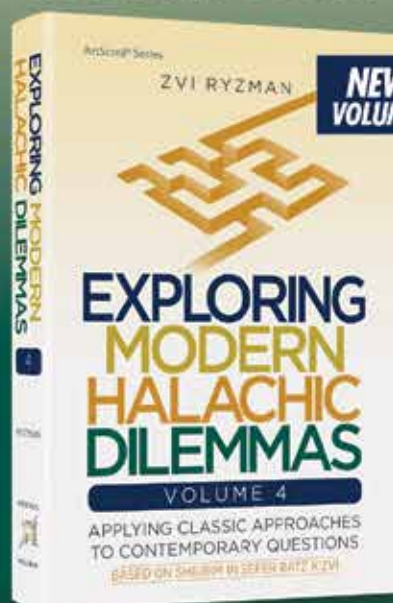
The magnificent evening concluded with a parade of desserts and the drawing of the grand raffle prize for one year's free tuition, which was followed by a raffle organized by the Parent-Teacher Organization. They worked tirelessly to get sponsors and vendors to participate in their auction which featured a variety of exciting prizes.

A tremendous amount of hakarat hatov must be given to everyone who made this evening the resounding success it was.



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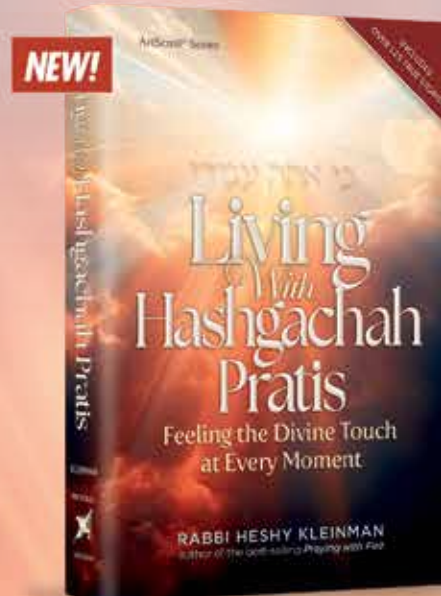
## CLASSIC APPROACHES TO FASCINATING CONTEMPORARY QUESTIONS!



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by ZVI RYZMAN

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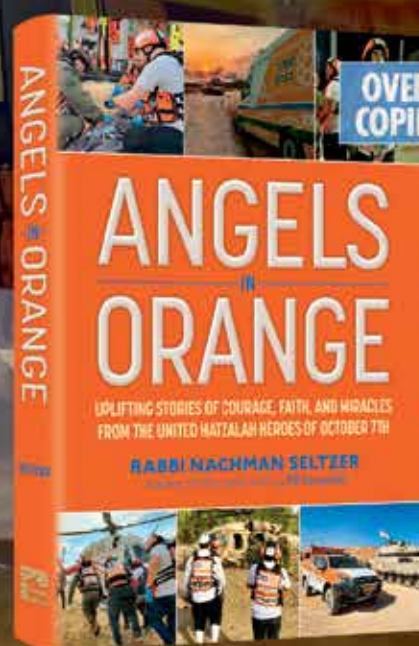
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## HAFTR Packs Supplies for Israeli Soldiers



**T**his past Thursday, students from HAFTR Lower and Middle School united in a remarkable display of chesed, or kindness, as they dedicated an entire day to packing essential supplies for Israeli soldiers through the Boots for Israel program.

Under the guidance of Yakir Wachstock, HAFTR alumnus and Founder/Director of Boots for Israel, students were first briefed on the critical importance of the initiative through a compelling video presentation. Motivated and inspired, they eagerly dove into action, packing boots, snacks, and heartfelt letters expressing gratitude and wishes for the safety and peace of the soldiers.

Throughout the day, teachers and volunteers provided unwavering support, fostering an environment of collaboration and enthusiasm. As duffel bags filled with supplies piled up, so did the students' determination to contribute to the noble cause.

The students received encouragement from Nassau County Executive Bruce Blakeman, who commended their efforts, affirming that they were indeed making a meaningful difference and encouraging them to continue their support for Israel with pride.

After nearly eight hours of dedicated packing, the students loaded 111 duffel bags onto a truck bound for JFK Airport, where they would be shipped directly to Israel. Yakir Wachstock estimated that the turnaround time from packing to soldiers receiving the boots would be less



than 30 hours, highlighting the efficiency and urgency of the operation.

Each duffel bag contained 12 to 15 pairs of boots along with supplemental protein and energy drinks, ensuring that the soldiers would be physically and emotionally equipped for their duties. The inclusion of heartfelt notes from kindergarteners further emphasized the solidarity and support of the community.

Reflecting on their accomplishments, the students stood proud, knowing that their hands-on chesed opportunity had made a tangible impact in supporting the land they deeply cherish. This experience not only strengthened their bond with Israel but also instilled in them a deeper sense of pride and responsibility as supporters of the nation.

## Names, Not Numbers at HALB



**I**nterviews have begun for Names, Not Numbers at HALB. Eighth grade students spent the beginning of the year learning interview skills and videography and put them to use last week



when they began their interviews with Holocaust survivors. Next, they will be compiling these interviews and will put together their very own documentary of Holocaust survivors telling their stories.

## NYBC Dazzles at YOSS Motzei Shabbos Learning Program



**T**his past Motzei Shabbos, to celebrate 28 years of its Motzei Shabbos Learning Program, Yeshiva of South Shore hosted the New York Boys

Choir. Under the direction of Rabbi Yitzzy Bald, the choir wowed the audience of over 200 boys and fathers with a high energy, spirited performance.



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Lamb Blade Chops	12.99 LB
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Chicken in 1/8's	12.69 LB
Chicken Cutlets (Family Pack)	5.99 LB
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Chicken Shawarma	7.99 LB
Dark Turkey Shawarma	7.99 LB
Beef Kebab (Moroccan & Mild)	7.99 LB
Lamb Kebab (Moroccan & Mild)	8.99 LB
Crispy Chicken Legs, Skinless	3.99 LB
Crispy Chicken Lollypop	6.99 LB
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## Seeing is Believing at TAG

On Thursday morning, February 15, Torah Academy for Girls talmidos in the Elementary Division had an opportunity to bolster the concept of emunah, through the “Vehu Keili” program that is ongoing in TAG. The classes sat in circles and watched as Mrs. Batsheva Berkovits went around the huge auditorium, bouncing a ball. When Mrs. Sori Tyner called upon three witnesses, they all agreed that this is what they, as well as the auditorium full of girls, witnessed: their Assistant Limudei Kodesh Principal, bouncing a ball. Mrs. Sima Greer then explained to the girls that when a huge group witnesses something, you can believe it truly happened. Since the entire Klal Yisrael, as well as all

of our neshamos, were at Har Sinai, we saw and heard and processed as Hashem gave us the gift of the Torah, and we can have total confidence that this is true.

The girls then put on their “Silent dancing” headphones to experience the feeling of being not only part of the 600,000 huge nation at Har Sinai but hearing the Torah given on a personal level as well. Using this hands-on presentation, this major concept in emunah and mesorah was absorbed and internalized.

The silent dancing portion of the program, where the girls “heard” the music via headsets, had everyone on their feet dancing with enthusiasm about our precious Torah and what it means in our lives today.

Many thanks to Morah Menucha Levin, Morah Batsheva Berkovits, Mrs. Sima Greer, and Mrs. Sori Tyner and the Moros who helped make this lesson literally come alive.



## Spring Semester Courses Promote Positive Student Growth at Central

The spring semester is officially in full swing at the Yeshiva University High School for Girls (Central). And while Central’s robust extra-curricular life often takes center stage, there is always a story unfolding in any YUHSG classroom. In Ms. Chevi Friedman’s freshman English class, that story is, quite literally, a recent unit on storytelling and how humans learn from narrative. Students put the unit into practice by telling stories about themselves, crafting their own identity poems after reading the long-time classroom favorite “Where I’m From” by poet George Ella Lyon. Meanwhile, the seniors of Ms. Lisa Rothstein’s AP English Literature course are discussing different poetic forms.

“After discussing the cyclical nature of the villanelle, the sestina’s need for a non-linear story, and the terza rima’s religious origins, a student observed that the iterative nature of the line weaving in the pantoum would work best with subjects that are annoying, since the lines don’t leave us alone,” Ms. Rothstein said. “We’re thinking of writing ‘Stomach Acid Pantoum.’” Central’s English students also consider the real-world applications of stories in addition to their historical and literary context. Ms. Kayla Whitaker’s senior English students concluded their media literacy unit by writing their own op-eds, the subjects of which have ranged from the importance of mental health awareness to why fans should be

allowed to compete on Dancing with the Stars.

The collaboration between classes continues in other parts of the building, and sometimes in unexpected ways. Ms. Naida Gonzalez’s gym classes are coordinating with Mrs. Ruth Fried’s freshman biology course to execute a lab which will monitor the influence of fatigue on muscle contractions. Under the direction of Central’s lab coordinator and Biology lab instructor, Mrs. Shulamith Biderman, the lab, “Making Connections,” will challenge students to observe whether they can open and close a clothespin more times after resting, or immediately after exercise. “The upperclassmen are serving as control groups for the experiment,” Ms. Gonzalez said. “It’s nice to see all grade levels coming together to help the freshmen with their projects.”

Shifting the story from STEM to studio art, the juniors of Mr. Joel Golombeck’s Art III course are working on collaborative narrative projects in which they will tell a story through a minimum of four images. “We’ve done a



lot of research on Pixar and their storytelling methods to understand ways of building character and emotional connection quickly and powerfully,” he said. The story of student work – and student progress – is the Central narrative. ““Mr. Golombeck’s art class gave me insight into the world of animation and how illustrators choose character’s emotions based on the audience they are targeting,” said junior Miriam Siegman. “It’s opened up a new world of art for me – I’ve really enjoyed it.”



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## 100th Day of School



**H**ALB and Lev Chana celebrated the 100th day of school with fun activities based on the number 100 and dressing up. Lev Chana teachers had their own 100th day celebration in the evening where they relaxed with some yoga and enjoyed a delicious dinner.



## Misha Yomi Siyum at HAFTR



**L**ast Friday, marked a momentous occasion at HAFTR as approximately 50 students from grades 4 through 8 gathered to celebrate a significant milestone: the completion of Seder Moed in their Mishna Yomi learning journey. The 50 students, combined with their parents, grandparents, and HAFTR staff, make the entire Mishna Yomi Community around 400 strong. This Mishna Yomi Community therefore all together completed approximately 45,000 Mishnayos.

For nearly a year, starting from March 2023, these dedicated students, under the guidance of Nursery - 8th Grade Mashgiach Ruchani, Rabbi Asher Klein, embarked on a daily learning endeavor. With unwavering commitment, they learned two Mishnayos a day, including weekends and school breaks,

covering topics ranging from holidays to Shabbos and other fundamental aspects of Jewish life.

The Mishna Yomi program not only facilitated daily learning but also fostered a sense of camaraderie and community among students and staff. Each day, Mishnayos were shared by members of the HAFTR administrative and rebbeim teams, enriching the educational experience.

At the grand siyum celebration, the students were honored and celebrated by their peers and instructors. The event, made possible by the generosity of the Wallach Family in memory of Lee Wallach, z"l, was graced by the presence of esteemed rabbis from local congregations. Rabbi Yechezkel Freundlich of Congregation Beth Sholom and Rabbi Yaakov Trump of Young Israel of



Lawrence-Cedarhurst offered prayers for those in captivity and those serving in Israel, while Rabbi Shay Schachter of Young Israel of Woodmere imparted words of encouragement to the students, emphasizing the significance of their learning to themselves and the broader Jewish community.

Principal Josh Gold reiterated the importance of consistent learning, echoing Rabbi Klein's sentiments that the daily commitment to just two Mishnayos can yield remarkable results, which was visible and tangible to the students who reached this milestone.

The siyum reached its climax with Rabbi Ira Wallach, Rosh Yeshiva of HAFTR High School, reciting the final two mishnayot of Seder Moed. The culmination of this long journey was met with cheers and congratulations from all pres-

ent.

Rabbi Klein and Principal Gold then unveiled a banner to commemorate the students' achievements, which will be prominently displayed in the school gymnasium, serving as a testament to their dedication and perseverance.

The Mishna Hawks, as they affectionately became known, have not only deepened their knowledge of Torah but have also brought immense pride to the entire HAFTR community. The event underscored the school's commitment to nurturing a love for Torah learning and the values it instills. Special thanks were extended to the Wallach family for their generous support and to the HAFTR administration, teachers, rebbeim, morot, and Rabbi Asher Klein for their unwavering dedication to the students' growth and education.



# Just Life ONE BABY CHAI FUND!

Unfortunately, towns in the South on the Gaza border and in the North near Lebanon, have been evacuated. Among the evacuees are many hundreds of expecting moms. These brave "expecting" women were "expecting" to give birth at a nearby hospital, overseen by a familiar obstetrician with a supporting husband, family and friends nearby.

## Those moms have given birth elsewhere.

Rising to the challenge is **JUST ONE LIFE**, with cases coming from Jerusalem's Sha'are Zedek, from Tel Aviv Eilat & Beersheva Soroka Hospitals over the years. Just One Life has helped over 20,200 pregnant women facing serious challenges deliver healthy and happy babies over 34 years.

Now, during the war, another 400 babies were born over last 4 months that were referred to Just One Life from families of evacuees. But consider the plight of an expecting mother just displaced from Sderot or Nahariya. How will she face new expenses for their family? Where husbands are not earning pay. Where they have experience social stress.

Also, most young expectant moms are married to young expectant fathers who have been called up to defend Israel and are not home to help. And if the wife is pregnant and the family is in crisis

### Who is going to help them?

**Just One Life Is & Can! JOL is giving Financial and Social Services and trauma support to evacuees in hotels.**

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Just One Life has been providing social services and aid to 400 babies born in 4 months from mothers that evacuated and are living in hotels.



## MTA's Annual Family Melave Malka

**T**his past Motzei Shabbos, MTA held its annual MTA Family Melave Malka, featuring Eitan Katz! This event is always a special time for families to come together to sing, dance, eat a delicious melave malka, and enjoy time together. The gym was packed with talmidim and families who had an incredible time.

In addition to current MTA families, MTA invited eighth grade prospective families to experience the unique reach of MTA and have the opportunity to speak to administrators and rebbeim. The parents heard from Rabbi Schenker, MTA Menahel, Rabbi Konigsberg, MTA principal, and Rabbi Dr. Ari Berman, the president of Yeshiva University, who

addressed the new exciting partnership between MTA and Yeshiva University

Eitan Katz did a fantastic job of getting talmidim and families involved in



the singing and dancing. The dancing was exhilarating, and the slow kumzitz in the dark was inspiring. He even debuted a new song, which was beautiful!

Eitan Katz's music is always powerful and the talmidim felt the energy in the room. We look forward to many more exciting events coming up this year!



## Assemblywoman Pheffer Amato Puts Up Posters of Israeli Hostages In State Capitol Building

**N**ew York State Assemblywoman Stacey Pheffer Amato put up posters of the Israeli hostages at her Albany office, including one of New York State resident Omer Nuetra. With her office location in the State Capitol, anyone who walks down the hallway will see these posters.

"I believe it is important to constantly talk about this and bring attention to the

horror these families are currently living. These posters will stay here until all of those innocent people are home with their families," said Assemblywoman Pheffer Amato.

The Assemblywoman has also consistently worn a "Bring Them Home" necklace and continues to call for the hostages' immediate release.



## The Five Towns Premier Awarded Accreditation from The Joint Commission

**T**he Five Towns Premier Rehab and Nursing Center has been awarded accreditation from The Joint Commission, earning the Gold Seal of Approval for Nursing Care Center Accreditation by demonstrating continuous compliance with its performance standards. The Gold Seal is a symbol of quality that reflects a healthcare organization's commitment to providing safe and quality patient care.

The Five Towns Premier underwent a rigorous, onsite review. During the visit, a team of Joint Commission reviewers evaluated compliance with Nursing Care Center standards spanning several areas, including emergency management, environment of care, infection prevention and control, leadership, medication management, and rights and responsi-

bilities of the individual.

The Joint Commission's standards are developed in consultation with healthcare experts and providers, measurement experts, and patients. They are informed by scientific literature and expert consensus to help healthcare organizations measure, assess, and improve performance. The surveyors also conducted onsite observations and interviews.

"As a healthcare accreditor, The Joint Commission works with healthcare organizations across care settings to inspire safer and higher quality of care that is more equitable and compassionate," says Ken Grubbs, DNP, MBA, RN, Executive Vice President of Accreditation and Certification Operations and Chief Nursing Officer, The Joint Commission. "Through

collaborating on innovative solutions and evidence-based resources and tools, The Joint Commission helps drive improvement while maintaining accountability through our leading survey methods and standards. We commend The Five Towns Premier Rehab and Nursing Center for its commitment to advance safety, quality, equity, and compassion for all patients."

"It's an honor and a privilege to work in a facility that is second to none in

terms of quality and compassionate care. The people we care for are our number one priority and it shows each and every day," says Joseph Benden, Administrator at The Five Towns Premier.

*For more information about the Five Towns Premier Rehab and Nursing Center, please call 374-9300, extension 1060.*

### Did you know?

Krispy Kreme served fresh doughnuts to attendees who gathered to witness the launch of Apollo 11 in 1969.



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## MTA Seniors Meet with Dr. Michael Berenbaum

**R**ecently, students in Mrs. Djavaheri's Holocaust Studies elective were treated to a special Zoom presentation by one of the most prominent scholars of the Holocaust in the world today. Dr. Michael Berenbaum is the former President and CEO of the Spielberg's Shoah Foundation, the Project Director of the US Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington when it was created, author, professor, advisor on Holocaust Museums worldwide, recipient of Emmy Awards, and consultant to Academy Award winning Holocaust films.

He spoke with the students from his home in L.A. about how he got involved in these various projects related to memorializing the Holocaust. He also

shared some of the important messages and mindsets that he feels are most urgent to spread in today's world. The students had the privilege of showing Dr. Berenbaum the drafts of their own Holocaust memorial projects and hearing his feedback, which was incorporated into the presentations they gave in class the following day. The students walked away with a greater appreciation for the value of Memorialization, some poignant sayings, and even a few great jokes!

Thank you, Dr. Berenbaum!

We thank Tova Rosenberg and Names, Not Numbers® for arranging for Dr. Michael Berenbaum for his presentation to our class.



## Botley Robots at HANC

**W**hile scientific exploration is already an important component of the curriculum in HANC's Early Childhood Center in West Hempstead, the young students are being introduced to technology in fun and creative ways. Working with Morah Naomi Fredman, HANC's Director of Technology, each class was introduced to its newest member, a Botley robot. As a group, they decided on a name for their robot and created a home for it in the classroom.

"The goal of the STEAM program in the ECC," Ms. Fredman explained, "is to promote cognitive skills, fine motor skills and social skills through the use and exploration of technology."

The children learned how to code via

a remote control, recognizing the directions the arrows pointed and directing the robot to go forward, backward, and turn right or left. After learning the basic commands, the children worked together to program the robot to perform tasks such as helping Botley collect balls in his playground and place them in a goal, or stack cubes that the robot would then collect. The students also learned to integrate Hebrew when naming the various colors of Botley's playground equipment. The children were captivated by this experience, and in the upcoming weeks, students will have the exciting opportunity to interact with these robots, delving deeper into understanding how they respond to various commands.

Coupled with the skills learned in

coding for the robot, the children also learned coding skills utilizing iPads. During Center Time, the young children work together on interactive, age-appropriate applications to augment the math, language, science and social studies curriculum. Working as partners provided them with opportunities to collaborate with others, to develop patience in waiting for their turn, and to be open to the ideas of others. Some of their favorite

applications include: ABCya, Daisy the Dinosaur, and Moose Math.

Throughout all of these programs, the children are developing important skills that will prepare them for the fast-moving technological world that they are already learning to navigate. Morah Trudy Rubinstein added, "At HANC ECC, we always want to educate the children in the latest technology."



*Did you know?*

The American flag the Apollo 11 astronauts planted on the moon in 1969 was manufactured by Sears.

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## Melava Malka at Mesivta Chaim Shlomo

Photos by CB



*Rav Mordechai Respler, Rosh Yeshiva of the Mesivta of Long Beach, was the guest speaker at Mesivta Chaim Shlomo's melave malka.*



*Talmidim dancing at the melave malka*

## Yeshiva Inclusion at Kulanu

**T**his week, Torah L'Kulanu conducted its annual Presidents' Week Yeshiva Inclusion Program. This program allows Jewish public school students with special needs to attend a yeshiva during their February school break. Participants benefit socially by engaging with Yeshiva students, as well as academically by studying Limudei Kodosh concepts. We would like to thank HAFTR, Lev Chana, SKA and DRS for coordinating the program with us and welcoming these students into their classrooms. Participants made wonderful connections with yeshiva students and spent their week engaged meaningfully with Yiddishkeit!



*HALB students dressed up for Purim Katan, with different themes for different grades, including crazy hat day and neon day*

## Yad Batya L'Kallah Auction

**Y**ad Batya L'Kallah's auction this year is in memory of Rebbetzin Sara Zakheim, a"h. Savta was the beloved grandmother of Batya a"h.

Rebbetzin Zakheim was born in Eretz Yisroel, and her heart remained with her beloved homeland. She once described that before leaving for America, she walked down the streets and whispered to every tree, bush and rock, "I am leaving now. But I promise I will return!" And return she did, taking the opportunity to visit Eretz Yisroel whenever she could.

She was an unbelievably dedicated wife to Rabbi Yaakov Zakheim, taking all responsibility for finances so he could completely dedicate himself to his learning, community and talmidim. Together, they were the irreplaceable link in the

mesorah that connected us to previous generations. When Batya, a"h, was nifters tragically at a young age, Rabbi and Rebbetzin Zakheim stood strong in their unwavering emunah, demonstrating how to accept Hashem's decree without questions.

In her role as Rebbetzin, Rebbetzin Zakheim was incredibly organized, overseeing the smooth running of the shul for decades. She was warm and caring, celebrating each congregant's simcha, knitting white sweaters for new additions with a label, "Made for you by Savta Zakheim," and making sure that the Shabbos Mevarchim kugels were ready and piping hot. She was so dignified as she stood in front of the Ezras Nashim in her regal manner, a living example of

what it means to stand before the King in tefillah.

She treasured her role as a grandmother and expressed tremendous joy at each new addition. She would quip when hearing that a child was on the way, "I love it already!" She emphasized the importance of family, both immediate and extended, joining to celebrate Chanukah and simchos with her siblings and their descendants, conveying the joy and pride of being a member of the illustrious Sochoczewsky family.

Her example of nobility and strength of character continues to be an inspiration to her family and community.

May our event this year serve as a tremendous aliya for Savta, as her first yahrtzeit nears on Vav Nissan. L'zecher



*nishmas Chaya Sara Elka bas R' Azriel, a"h.*

The auction will be held on March 5, at the Kingsway Jewish Center, 902 Kings Highway, Brooklyn, NY.



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# Around the Community



*The older boys Sunday program at the Special Children's Center went on a special bowling and pizza trip*



*At the Purim Katan singalong in the Ganger Early Childhood Center at TAG*



*Councilmember Lynn Schulman joined JCRC's solidarity mission to Israel with a delegation of New York elected officials*



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# Mesivta Shaarei Chaim Masmid Melava Malka



Last week, grateful parents of Mesivta Shaarei Chaim eagerly participated in the Masmid Melava Malka. The concurrent programs – a learning *seder* for the men and a guest speaker for the women – kicked off the evening with passion and warmth. As one room pulsed with a *Kol Torah*, another room echoed with awe as the mothers were inspired and amazed by Ms. Batya Feigenbaum, whose message of faith, courage and resilience resonated with everyone.

All participants then joined to celebrate the *siyum* of a *bochur* who unbelievably completed *Kiddushin* for the eighth time! A celebratory crowd erupted in singing and dancing, acknowledging what makes us all truly proud. The delectable meal that followed was infused with *divrei Bracha* from Rabbi Dovid Kresch, the unofficial “Zaidah” of the yeshiva, as his guidance helped establish Mesivta Shaarei Chaim from its founding stage. Rabbi Yerachmiel Scheiner, Rosh

HaYeshiva, addressed the crowd and then acknowledged the steadfast dedication of R’ Dovid Plotkin, *askan* extraordinaire, who makes it a priority that the yeshiva has what it needs so the *Magidei Shiurim* can do what they do best – guide, teach, and inspire the bochurim. Two video presentations underscored the mission of Mesivta Shaarei Chaim and showcased dozens of young men expressing their appreciation for their rabbeim and the yeshiva. The program concluded with a heartfelt *kumzitz* led by Eitan Katz.

It is no wonder that Mesivta Shaarei Chaim’s reputation is unparalleled. A crown jewel in the Far Rockaway/Five Towns community, Rabbi Scheiner, Rabbi Zupnik and the team of *rabbeim* invest heart and soul to guide the boys to achieve the highest goals in learning, *middos* and *yiras Shamayim*.

Everyone left the Masmid Melava Malka with a renewed appreciation for being part of this *makom Torah*.

*Did you know?*

The moon is 238,855 miles away from Earth.





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## Am Yisrael Chai-zaq! - Chazaq Celebrates 18 Years of Inspiration and Strength

**A**t just 15 years old, Yaniv Meirov looked around his community and saw a troubling reality: a generation adrift, disconnected from their heritage, their identity, and each other. The lack of accessible Jewish education left a void, a gaping hole in the fabric of their lives.

Undeterred by the enormity of the challenge, Yaniv embarked on a mission to bridge the gap, to breathe life into the dormant souls of his peers. Armed with nothing but a stack of parsha sheets and an unwavering determination, he laid the cornerstone for what would become CHAZAQ. And now, 18 years later, this organization has quietly transformed lives, igniting sparks of inspiration and unity in the most unexpected places.

As a young Rabbi Yaniv began his journey, his older brother Rabbi Ilan saw his ambition and decided to give him a helping hand. Within a year after beginning to pass out weekly parsha sheets to shuls, Chazaq held its first lecture. The room buzzed with anticipation as over 500 people gathered, drawn by a shared thirst for knowledge, for connection, for something more. In that moment, Rabbi Yaniv saw the potential – the potential for CHAZAQ to become a catalyst for change, a beacon of hope in a world thirsty for inspiration.

As CHAZAQ began to grow, so did its impact. With each passing year, the organization's reach extended further, touching the lives of countless individuals and families. But it was not enough to simply exist; CHAZAQ recognized that with growth came responsibility – the responsibility to address the ever-evolving needs of the community.

With each pressing need of the community that they noticed, they launched transformative initiatives designed to meet those needs head-on. The Jwave teens division provides a lifeline to high school kids in public school by keeping them off the streets and bringing them to a safe and educational environment on a daily basis, while the Shaping Lives Sunday School Program offers a sanctuary for young minds eager to explore their heritage.



Today, these two programs have over 25 locations throughout the United States!

But CHAZAQ's journey for public school outreach did not end there. In 2017, they launched the Public School to Yeshiva Division, where a team of dedicated staff reach out to parents and offer guidance from A to Z when it comes to transferring public school students to Yeshiva. Since then well over 1,500 students have been transferred to Yeshiva.

That same year, the CHAZAQ Bais Medrash program also opened, and today CHAZAQ has three such locations.

And just when it seemed that their journey had reached its peak, CHAZAQ took another bold step forward this past year, opening the CHAZAQ Youth Center for public school youth and launching the groundbreaking Chazaq Connections Shidduch Initiative, further solidifying their commitment to empowering individuals and strengthening communities.

As CHAZAQ celebrates its 18th anniversary, the organization looks back on its journey with gratitude and humility, but also with a renewed sense of purpose. For in every challenge, in every obstacle, they see an opportunity – an opportunity to make a difference, to change lives, to inspire hope.

Now is everyone's opportunity to join CHAZAQ, not only by celebrating their accomplishments of the past, but to build towards the future too. CHAZAQ is looking to strengthen their public school divisions while tackling new initiatives to inspire the community at large. But to do so they need every one's support.

Visit [GiveChazaq.com](http://GiveChazaq.com) to be part of CHAZAQ's urgent charity campaign. Am Yisrael Chai-zaq!

## Aleph Beis Learning at Gan Chamesh

**C**hildren at Gan Chamesh are exposed to the Aleph-Beis in a fun, multisensory interactive and meaningful way. Through developmentally age-appropriate activities, the children are involved in learning by touching, feeling, acting, building, writing, tracing and so much more. Activities like these will pave the way for a love of learning and success in future reading and writing.



## Letters of Support at HANC

**S**ince the beginning of the war in Israel, the staff at HANC's Elementary School in West Hempstead has been instilling in their students the importance of prayer and achdut with Am Yisrael. Morah Elana Jacobs, a fourth grade Limudei Kodesh teacher, searched for a way to connect her students with the brave chayalim who are fighting each day to protect the State of Israel and to forge a deeper connection to them and to Hashem. In a conversation with her sister, Melissa Goldwag, who lives in Modiin and davens in Kehillat Shaarei Yonah Menachem, she discovered that many people from her sister's shul were called up to serve. Together they created a plan: Melissa would gather the Hebrew names of the community's soldiers, and Elana would then give each name to one of HANC's fourth through sixth graders. Their goal was to read Birkat Hamazon and to daven with extra kavanah to help ensure the success and safe return of the soldiers to their homes. Each child received a card with their soldier's name, and before beginning davening, they would read the name of their soldier and daven on their behalf. Morah Jacobs even filmed a video of the students bentsching with kavanah and sent it to her sister to share with the Modiin community members.

But this was only the beginning. After davening for them for months, the children each wrote a personal letter to their chayal. One student wrote, "I have been davening for you since the beginning of the war. I hope you are safe and I hope to meet you one day." Included in each letter was an American chocolate bar, to provide a sweet treat from a young friend in America who davens daily for them and cares so much about them. Once re-



ceived in Modiin, Melissa got very busy contacting the families of all of the chayalim to inform them that a letter arrived and made arrangements to get the letters to each chayal. Miraculously, one fourth grader discovered that the person he was davening for is actually a cousin of his in Israel!

What happened next was truly heartwarming. The chayalim were so moved by this kind gesture that they began sending photos and videos thanking the children for their heartfelt letters of support and for the delicious chocolate treat. One soldier wrote, "Thank you very much for your lovely letter. In these days of war, your prayers keep us safe, your activity makes us happy and greatly encourages us. G-d willing, we will reach the days of *Hashem yivorach es amo b'shalom*, (Hashem will bless his Nation of Israel with peace)."

As Rabbi Hazan, Head of HANC West Hempstead Campuses, reflected, "Our students lit up when they saw their soldier reading their letters and enjoying the chocolate. This connection added so much meaning to an already powerful program and should only add to the feelings of unity in Am Yisrael."





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DECEMBER 2022  
LAUNCH OF THE CHAZAQ  
NIGHT KOLLEL



DECEMBER 2023  
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- SHIDDUCH INITIATIVE



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PAPER



MARCH 2007  
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TEENS DIVISION



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LAUNCH OF SHAPING LIVES  
SUNDAY SCHOOL DIVISION



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AUGUST 2023  
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YOUTH CENTER





## Shulamith Annual Dinner: Uniting Our Homes

**A**n unbelievable turnout packed the Seawane Country Club this past Motzei Shabbos for the Annual Shulamith Dinner. The theme of the evening, Uniting Our Homes, acknowledged the strong bond between all our Divisions, our exceptional parent partnership, and our unwavering support for Eretz Yisrael. Our parents enjoyed a delicious dairy event accompanied by a live musical performance by Eli Levin. The atmosphere was vibrant and full of energy which was felt by all.

The program began with our Executive Director, Rabbi Moshe Monczyk, welcoming the guests and thanking our outstanding principals, faculty, and sup-

port staff all of whom are instrumental in the success of our School. A tremendous emphasis was placed on the selfless dedication of our very active Board, specifically, the work involved in the recent historic purchase of the Elementary School Building in Cedarhurst.

Our tribute to our Guests of Honor, Dr. Ari and Mrs. Ruchi Turner, highlighted the one-of-a-kind impact and involvement the Turners have on our school, their shul, and the community at large. We are so proud of the three Turner girls in our ECC, Elementary and High School! We wish the Turners mazal tov and thank them for accepting this well-deserved honor.

Our Educator of the Year, and Shulamith High School Rebbe, Rabbi Heshy Blumstein accepted this honor with his trademark smile and simcha. Rabbi Blumstein infuses the Shulamith High School building with tremendous love for Hashem, and we are so fortunate to have such a role model for our students. As Rabbi Blumstein said so beautifully, "Shulamith represents healthy, confident Yiddishkeit. Shulamith represents it all! Learning on the highest level, learning with simcha, learning with confidence, learning that you're going to be a future leader of Am Yisrael, thank you Hashem for Shulamith!" As much as we try to thank Rabbi Blumstein, he just keeps

thanking Hashem and Shulamith!

A highlight of the Dinner was our "Unlocking the Door" Campaign, spearheaded by Mrs. Ruby Goldstein. Mazal tov to Mark and Shavy Schlossberg on winning the \$10,000 tuition giveaway!

We want to thank everyone who made the Dinner such a success including Rabbi Moshe Monczyk and the Business Office, the Parent Dinner Committee, and most importantly our parents, grandparents and donors. We are looking forward to continuing our growth and success at Shulamith School for Girls, our home away from home.

### Did you know?

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## STEMsational Happenings at Shulamith Middle School



**8**th graders enriched their biology curriculum with an invention convention worthy of mention.

Each of the eighth grade Shulamith students thought of a problem related to biomedical engineering to solve with a groundbreaking invention and prototype that would improve quality of life. Students presented their ingenious inventions to middle school students, their parents and official judges. Students and

parents were wowed by the girls' impressive accomplishments in the biomedical field. Collaborative groups worked together to follow the Engineering Design process, producing great enrichment, enlightenment and excitement.

Congratulations to our winners: 1st place: Bathing Kit for the Blind; 2nd place: Ripoff Bandaid Spray; 3rd place: The Recyclebot; and Honorable Mentions: TOY JOY and Colla Candy.



Scenes from the Shulamith Annual Dinner

*Thank you for your participation at the Shulamith Annual Dinner.  
Your support made the night a most successful event!*





## Just One Life Helps the New Generation of Sderot



**T**hese women all gave birth after Simchat Torah while being evacuated and are all returning home to Sderot this week. Just One Life had the privilege of giving 400 affected families

the Project Chai funds as well as more than 1,000 pieces of beautiful new baby clothes. Here is the new generation of Sderot. Am Yisrael Chai!

## SKA Color War 2024



**T**he theme of Mi Kiamcha Yisroel took on a profound significance in SKA Color War, in recognition of the strength and unity that has emerged among Am Yisroel during these challenging times. The team names, Chessed, Tefillah, Torah and Emunah, reflected our reaction as a people, to the horrific events of October 7. Achdut and excitement permeated throughout the halls of SKA, with girls from all grades working together to write an alma-mater, paint a banner, excel at the bracha bee, and choreograph a stomp. A highlight of the finale was a

new art project. Each of the four teams was given a quadrant of Eretz Yisroel to depict. Once combined, each part formed the map of Israel, signifying that when we come together, as a school, a community and as a nation the sum is greater than the individual parts.

As team Yellow/Chessed was announced as the winner, the whole school erupted into song, singing, "Am Yisrael chai." Everyone at SKA was a winner in this incredible showing of *Mi ke'amcha Yisroel!*



*Village of Lawrence Deputy Mayor Paris Popack announced her campaign for mayor this week. She is seeking to replace Mayor Alex Edelman, as he will not be pursuing another term as mayor due to term limits policy.*



*The Skulener Rebbe from Williamsburg attended the Purim Katan seudah at Khal Sasregen-Sokolov*



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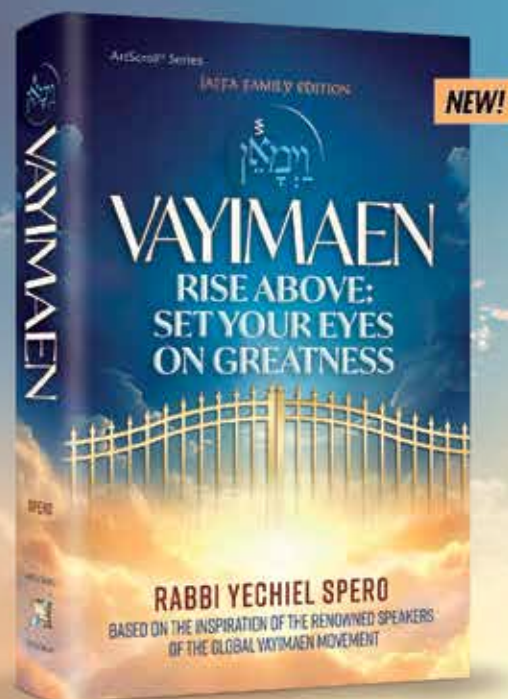
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SHABBOS	SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
2 כב 3	3 כג 4	4 כד 5	5 ה 6	6 ו 7	7 ז 8	8 ח 9
Terumos 60	Terumos 61	Terumos 62	Terumos 63	Terumos 64	Terumos 65	Terumos 66

THIS WEEK'S MISHNAH YOMI SCHEDULE:						
SHABBOS	SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
2 כב 3	3 כג 4	4 כד 5	5 ה 6	6 ו 7	7 ז 8	8 ח 9
Nedarim 4:2-3	Nedarim 4:4-5	Nedarim 4:6-7	Nedarim 4:8-5:1	Nedarim 5:2-3	Nedarim 5:4-5	Nedarim 5:6-6:1

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## Chemical Changes in Yeshiva of South Shore

**A**re magic potions real? Mrs. Kas-triner's fifth grade students at YOSS learned about the alchemists, a historic group that used potions to transform materials. "Test Like an Alchemist" was an activity where students tested liquids to see which ones would clean several objects and react with one another. They discussed chemical changes vs. physical changes by examining shark teeth which were submerged in both baking soda and vinegar. As a follow-up activity, the students will be soaking the teeth in soda to observe color and surface changes to the tooth enamel. Without giving away the answer, I bet students will start to brush their teeth better!



## SHS Sophomores in the Snow



**S**HS sophomores hit the tubing slopes this Tuesday, on an unseasonably warm, albeit non-sunny February morning, which we quickly learned makes the trails icier, slicker, and much more fun. The tenth grade set out early for our designated time slot at

Campgaw Mountain and raced up and down the trails for hours. When they finally ran out of steam, a hot lunch awaited them in the lodge. On the way home, a surprise stop and game topped off the day.

## Purim Katan at Siach Yitzchok

**S**een here are scenes from the Purim Katan Seudah at Siach Yitzchok. A special thank you goes out to Reb Yosef Newcomb, a proud parent and alumnus of Siach Yitzchok, for entertaining the junior high school, and to Yechail Tzvi Frenkel, our proud eighth grade talmid, for arranging a phenomenal Purim *shpeil*.



## Cheder Ohel Davens for the Safety of Our Soldiers



**C**heder Ohel, a local Chabad boys school located in Valley stream, NY, for Grades Pre1A to eighth grade, offers a warm and holistic educational experience for students in the greater Long Island area.

In response to the horrific events of October 7, Cheder Ohel has been organizing rallies and programs for the safety of the IDF soldiers and the safe return of the hostages. Recognizing the power of children's prayers, the school initiated a special program pairing each student

with a soldier, providing them with a special card bearing the soldier's name for daily Tehillim. The students proudly display name tags on their desks, fostering empathy for the brave individuals risking their lives to protect the Jewish nation.

Cheder Ohel's initiative instills valuable lessons of compassion, unity, and the power of children reciting Tehillim.

May we witness only good news and celebrate the safe return of the hostages and our soldiers in good health.



## Rav Yaakov Bender Headlines Nassau Rockaway Misaskim Appreciation Melaveh Malkah



By Shabsie Saphirstein, Misaskim volunteer

**M**isaskim of Nassau and Rockaway and their initiative for *yesomim* and *almanos*, Project Yedid, held a gala *Melaveh Malkah* last Motza'ei Shabbos Parshas Tetzaveh showing appreciation to its solid base of devoted volunteers. The lavish event, held at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Chaim Schulhof, featured *divrei Torah* from master *mechanech* HaRav Yaakov Bender, *shlit"i*, and a mentalist experience by the great David Blatt. Rabbi Moshe Hamel, Coordinator, delivered remarks and messages of thanks and appreciation to three standout members: Aaron Shlomo Appelbaum, Menachem Jacobson, and Bentzion Kaminetzky. A delicious buffet including milkshakes provided by Partini Events was topped off by the melodies of kumzitz. Throughout the evening, Rabbi Bender offered brachos to those present and spent time greeting the volunteers and guests. Select community members joined as well including Rabbi Boruch Bender, CEO and founder of Achiezer, and Pesach Osina, Jewish Liaison to NYC Council Speaker Adrienne Adams.

Misaskim volunteers operate under the radar. The busiest days like erev and Motza'ei Pesach might be overwhelming for some, but for Misaskim volunteers,

time is found. "No call goes unanswered," was the motto of Reb Yankie Meyer, z"l, and his legacy continues very much in the same fashion. Those *zocheh* to see Reb Yankie in action, and those who have joined since his petirah in September 2022, have heard of his vast impact and push forward as a *z'chus* for an *ilui neshamah* for Reb Yaakov Michael ben Yisrael. Misaskim of Nassau and Rockaway, founded three years ago this month, was one of Reb Yankie's many visions. His hands-on approach to get the branch moving on its current path at a Far Rockaway get-together leaves an indelible memory on those present.

Brooklyn volunteers covered the area in years past, and Queens Misaskim volunteers like me and Shaya Llyod, amongst others, would chip in when the need arose. But it was clear that a new division was required. Yankie Meyer tasked Eli Kreindler, a Queens Chaverim Coordinator, and Moshe Vatch, Queens Misaskim Founder, to find a regional coordinator for the formation of a branch to cover the 5 Towns, Long Island, and Far Rockaway call volume. They successfully secured Rabbi Hamel to lead the division, giving the Boro Park headquarters a sense of relief.

Rabbi Hamel has since grown the outlet into a vibrant and driven team of 35 volunteers that stop at nothing to ease the lives of those in bereavement. Their



touch leaves an everlasting fingerprint on the lives of those they have aided. It is a milestone marker that never fades. In the last year, the group has set up over 200 shivah homes for 1,020 *aveilim*, bringing *sifrei Torah* to 108 of those families, and 3,680 folding chairs for those who came to pay respects.

These volunteers include a handful from Queens Misaskim who often find themselves in Nassau and have taken on double duties. They include Elchanan Aronov, Dovid Bakst, Hillel Englard, Eli Kreindler, Mordechai Lapp, AZ Love, Eliyahu Love, and Avishai Shachar.

The Project Yedid branch of the group delivered 297 packages for school, camp and Yamim Tovim to *almanos* and orphans in their coverage area. This included an astounding 965 *g'bentched* bills as a special part of the Chanukah packages distributed to *yesomim* in the region. For Purim, 401 meals were brought to brighten and ease the holiday festivities for affected *mishpachos*.

Misaskim is known to go above and beyond for suffering a loss. The international division has as well been on call. Recently, a Sderot family who has yet to return home since the onslaught of the war against Hamas needed to sit shivah and desired to spend the time in the family home. Their residence lacked food as it had been vacant for some five months. Misaskim ensured meal deliveries for the

mourners. Next, I will highlight a story from Dallas, Texas where a gentleman passed away and was held by the Medical Examiner's Office because they were short-staffed. The family notified Misaskim, who would not stand for a five-day timeframe until the *niftar* could be released. Headquarters took the time to detail Jewish burial customs and procured the release for that erev Shabbos. However, a new problem arose when the chosen airline informed the family that they do not fly *meisim*. With no option, the family prepared to drive the niftar all Sunday for a *keverah* the following day. Misaskim saved the day, arranging for a private plane to transport the *aron* early Sunday, allowing for the *niftar* to be interred that very day. I will conclude with a final struggle faced by a local *almanah* who desired to have her *mezuzos* inspected. Seeing the efforts of Project Yedid to bring her *menuchah* for the *chagim*, she dialed Misaskim's hotline. A local volunteer was dispatched to her residence and arranged for a local *sofer* to check the parchments that were thankfully rendered kosher. That very day, the same volunteer reinstalled the *mezuzos*, giving this New York widow a small bit of respite.

Misaskim's work is not lifesaving, but it is critical, and it is fueled by the community's volunteers who always step up to the plate and ask for no appreciation in return.



## Mercaz Academy Says Goodbye to Visiting Students From Israel

**W**hen the war in Israel started on October 7, the administration, staff, and students at Mercaz Academy were determined to help. Funds were raised, supplies were donated and shipped, and Tehillim was (and still is) recited at every school gathering. When Israeli schools were closed, a Mercaz teacher invited Israeli students into her classroom via Zoom for an hour a week. Mercaz students wrote and sent videos to IDF soldiers, to injured Israeli children in ALYN hospital, and to U.S. politicians pleading for support for Israel.

However, one ramification of October 7 was brought home when Mercaz Academy's principal, Rabbi Kalman Fogel, received the first call from a family in Israel. No decisions had yet been made, the tearful caller explained, but might we have room for a student from Israel at Mercaz Academy, for however long the family needed to stay?

Rabbi Fogel and the lay leadership eagerly agreed to welcome the Israeli family escaping the war at home, for the nominal tuition of \$1.00.

It wasn't long before another family called, and another. Mercaz welcomed students into kindergarten through sixth grade classes for periods ranging from a

week to a few months. Some of the children spoke English, some didn't; some were familiar with religious observance, some weren't. The Consortium of Jewish Day Schools donated Ivrit b'Ivrit workbooks, iReady and GoMath provided services for the students free of charge, and BrainPop offered free access to the Hebrew version of their website. These children found new friends, a Jewish education, and much-needed support and stability during a difficult time in their lives—and so did their parents.

One parent wrote, "The amount of love we've been shown during these three weeks outside of Israel has changed us for the better, and will continue to inspire us to pay it forward at any opportunity we are given."

As the last of these students returned home to Israel last week, Mercaz staff and students joined in a special goodbye lunch featuring an Israeli flag cake and spontaneous dancing. Children hugged the departing students and exchanged contact information, and it was clear that the children who benefited the most from these visitors were the Mercaz Academy students themselves.

"The Israeli boy in my class didn't understand English, so he sat right next



to me and I translated for him," explained one fifth grade student. "It improved my Hebrew a lot, and we became really good friends."

Mercaz students and staff have been invited to visit all their new friends' homes in Israel, and the mother of the last two visiting Israeli students thanked the Mercaz Academy community for

"showing my boys what it means to be *Yehudi* in the world by demonstrating our strength in unity, love for one another, and faith in Hashem."

Administration, lay leaders, and staff agree: This was the lesson learned by the student body at Mercaz Academy as well.

## JSL Winter Recap: Week 7

It was another amazing day at JSL by FM Home Loans this past Sunday, marked by some great individual performances and incredible finishes.

### JSL Juniors

**K/P Hockey:** K/P Hockey was off this past Sunday.

**K/P Soccer:** Simcha Smith scored 5 goals and Yoey Sobel had some great saves as SWS beat Simcha Day Camp 6 to 1. Island Roofing continued their top tier defense, holding the high scoring offense of Graber Interior Design to just 1 goal while lighting the lamp 7 times on the other side in their victory Sunday.

**Football:** Shai Levine scored 3 touchdowns for Bright Futures in their exciting 8-6 win over PinIt Realty.

### Hockey

**1st:** 1st Hockey was off this past Sunday.

**2nd/3rd:** It was Hat Trick Sunday for 2nd/3rd hockey this past week. Charlie Rosenblatt recorded a hat trick, Morde-

chai Kirschner scored a gorgeous snipe from the corner, and Zev Safir played amazing defense to help lead Arielle Rosenblatt Interiors to a 6-2 win over CleverBee Academy. Ben Areman played fantastic defense and Dovid Gerson scored 2 goals for Built By Nate in their 2-0 victory against AdVenture Media. Shalom Kopelowitz and Chanoah Langer both recorded hat tricks for Target Exterminating in their 8-2 win versus Gourmet Glatt. Zecharya Kogel had a hat trick, including the dagger into the empty net and Yakov Zlotnick played well on both sides of the line to give SDF Architect an incredible victory against a formidable Marciano Pediatric Dentistry team.

**4th/5th:** Town Appliance played a great game all-around, defeating Extreme Vent Cleaning 6-1.

**6th/8th:** 925 Sterling scored 11 times, including a beautiful assist from Avraham Blumenkrantz to Yaakov Levine in their win over BayRock Insurance. JNT and Wieder Orthodontics faced off in an in-

credible game Sunday night. Both teams scored 2 goals in regulation time, forcing the game to head into shootouts. In shootouts, Yaakov Kopelwitz delivered, whizzing one right past the goaltender's shoulder to give Wieder the remarkable victory.

### Basketball

**3rd/4th:** Shaya Well of Home & Stone had some key rebounds and clutch steals to help lead his team to a thrilling 28-26 win over the #1 seeded Newman Dental. Netanel Teller of Team Maidenbaum had the play of the game with an amazing steal and fastbreak layup as Maidenbaum defeated I Am Your Chef 17 to 8.

**5th-7th:** David Cohen had a nice block shot and Ezra Fricker had an outstanding performance to help Island Roofing beat Weider Orthodontics 29 to 18.

**Game Of The Week:** PIP Printing and Home & Stone faced off in 1st/2nd Football and the game was incredible. Early on, it was back and forth. Then PIP



Printing went ahead by 2 scores and was looking to seal the deal, but Home & Stone did not give up. They scored twice to tie the game, and with 4 minutes remaining, Aryeh Wechter scored his 2nd touchdown and ultimately the game-winner as Home & Stone won 8-7.



## Extracurriculars at Ezra

**E**zra Academy has long believed that a student's growth and development must extend far beyond the classroom. Parents entrust a high school not just to educate their children in science, math and English, but to develop skills and tools that will help them succeed in life. Extracurricular activities are a great way to gauge a student's involvement and growth beyond the classroom, often correlated with how happy a child is in school. For this reason, Ezra has committed itself to continuously add extracurricular activities based on their students' interests and was rewarded with the resounding success of their chess team, the Ezra Knights, this year.

After years of not having a chess team, Ezra Academy joined the Yeshiva Chess League this year and announced their presence by competing to a near tie against HAFTR, losing 8-6. Undeterred and led by Yehuda Nissani, Ethan Yohananov, Akiva Katayev, Joseph Pinhasov, and Ben Aranbayev, the Ezra Knights defeated HANC 8-6 and moved past HANC

in the overall standings. Priding itself on inclusion, the Ezra Knights also have two promising ninth graders on the team: Allan Yakubov and Jonathan Babszhanov. Their first year in the Yeshiva League and the Ezra Knights have already put the league on notice.

Not to be outdone, the Ezra Eagles, Ezra's basketball team and long considered the doormat of the league, has come storming out of the gates to a 2-2 record. After many excruciating seasons of zero wins or one win, the Ezra Eagles have demonstrated resiliency and teamwork. Led by the unflappable David Israilov and the scoring of Ben Aranbayev, Ezra even came roaring back from a 23-point deficit against the number one team in their division. In front of a crowded and rocking gym, Ezra trailed by only two points in the fourth quarter before their comeback ultimately fell just short.

The Knights and Eagles have brought back a pride and honor to Ezra Academy. The school is buzzing the next day as a result of all the team accomplishments,

and Ezra Academy couldn't be prouder of all their students; learning how to win, how to lose, how to cope, how to be

resilient, how to face adversity. An Ezra student is constantly growing inside and outside the classroom.



## On the Same Page

### *New Kriah Program Takes Shape at Yeshiva Darchei Torah*

**P**re-1A and first grade are two of the most important years in a boy's education. Yeshiva Darchei Torah's goal is to give the talmidim an excitement and passion for learning – as well as the skills they will need to succeed as future b'nei Torah.

One of the major components in the curriculum of these early grades is kriah, the foundation of davening, learning, and so much more. Knowing the critical importance of the talmidim being able to read with confidence and proficiency, there has always been a tremendous emphasis on kriah in these formative, pivotal years. This year, to raise the bar in kriah, and to ensure that not a single child falls behind, Yeshiva Darchei Torah launched an exciting new kriah program in pre-1A and first grade, led by Mrs. Jill Kay and Rabbi Eliezer Braun.

Mrs. Kay, the director of the Rabenstein Learning Center, explains that it is not uncommon for children to struggle with kriah. "This new program, Kriah Ne'imah, is research-based and systematic in its approach," she says, "giving us the ability to closely monitor each boy's

progress and then target any weaknesses."

The kriah team is there to support each child on his kriah journey. Whether it's small group work or individualized assessments, each boy is given the support he needs.

Rabbi Shmuel Strickman, menahel in the elementary school, says the goal of this program is to ensure that no child slips through the cracks. "There's a huge amount of individualized instruction," he explains. "And in the few months since we've launched this program, I've seen tremendous results, both in terms of accuracy and speed. The boys I've tested just this week are reading 70 syllables per minute. That's a very impressive statistic for this early in the school year."

Rabbi Braun is working closely with Mrs. Kay, helping to bring all the pieces together. He is constantly putting together new activities, props, and manipulatives to help bring the concepts to life in a hands-on way. "Correlating to the research and lesson-plans, I prepare multi-sensory activities to support the learning and take it to the next level,"

he relates. "This week we're using custom-made puzzles that form the shapes of the individual letters. We also used some fun tubs that contain letters and objects to be matched together."

Mrs. Tzipi Fisher, the new assistant preschool director with responsibility for pre-1A, shares that "the classrooms are alive. There is a palpable energy – and the

smiling faces are testimony to that."

The Yeshiva is confident that the professionalism of the kriah staff, the enthusiasm of the rebbeim and moros, and the support of the hanhala will all help raise the level of kriah in the school and empower the children to develop into readers who will open their siddurim and Chumashim with rightful confidence.







*Rabbi Gavriel Sanders, noted speaker and author, addressed the YOSS eighth grade talmidim on his unbelievable journey to Yiddishkeit*

*Photo by Naftoli Goldgrab*



*At Yeshiva Darchei Torah's Third Grade Rashi-Mishnayos production on Sunday*

## Annual Yeshiva League Model Congress



**T**his past Sunday, HAFTR High School proudly welcomed 190 students from 18 schools for the Annual Yeshiva League Model Congress. The event provided a platform for students to engage in democratic processes while refining essential skills in public speaking, argumentation, debate, and critical thinking. Amidst spirited discussions and camaraderie, participants delved into pressing societal issues, gaining invaluable experiences that will shape them as future leaders.

The event commenced with inspiring opening ceremonies, featuring addresses from esteemed speakers. Yeshiva League Model Congress co-presidents, Michal Mari and Dasi Well, set the tone by emphasizing the significance of the program for Jewish high school youth. Michal extended gratitude to Mr. Alex Libkind, HAFTR's outstanding speech and debate

coach, for his efforts on behalf of the Model Congress. Ms. Naomi Lippman, HAFTR's Head of School, urged students to seize the day's opportunities and encouraged them to recognize their roles as future leaders of the American Jewish community. Keynote speaker Mrs. Lizzy Savetsky, a prominent advocate for Israel, shared her personal journey and encouraged students to leverage their voices to effect positive change. Her impassioned plea resonated deeply with the audience, igniting a sense of purpose and empowerment.

Following the opening ceremonies, students immersed themselves in committee sessions, addressing a diverse array of topics ranging from environmental concerns to veterans affairs. With meticulous preparation, participants researched proposed bills, presented arguments, and engaged in rigorous debate,



adhering to congressional standards of discourse. Each contribution was evaluated based on speech delivery, style, and the quality of questions posed, ensuring a fair and enriching experience for all.

As the day progressed, excitement mounted, culminating in the eagerly anticipated closing ceremonies. Columbia student and National Debate Champion, Parker De Dekér, delivered an impactful keynote speech, emphasizing the importance of advocacy and honing one's skills to champion causes, particularly within the context of Jewish faith.

The awards ceremony that followed was met with fervent applause as students celebrated the outstanding achievements of their peers. Katz and Rambam secured top honors by weighted results, with North Shore closely trailing and HAFTR making the podium with third place. By the number of awards,

Rambam and North Shore emerged victorious, closely followed by Katz and a tie between HAFTR and SKA for third.

Reflecting on the eventful day, students departed with a renewed sense of optimism and purpose. They expressed gratitude for the opportunity to hone their skills and engage in meaningful discourse, recognizing their potential as future leaders of the Jewish American community.

The Annual Yeshiva League Model Congress at HAFTR not only fosters leadership and advocacy but also cultivates a spirit of unity and collaboration among students from diverse backgrounds. As participants depart inspired and empowered, the legacy of this enriching experience continues to resonate within the halls of their respective yeshivas and beyond.





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Around the Community

## Educators From Local Schools Join Hidden Sparks Day of Learning



**T**he emotional wellbeing of our children is a hot button issue in local day schools and yeshivas. Hidden Sparks, a nonprofit focusing on training teachers and providing them with the tools to support struggling students in mainstream Jewish day schools, recently convened a day of learning to address this concern. Eighty Jewish educators, including participants from HAFTR, HALB, HANC, Shulamith, and TAL Academy, came together to collaborate on developing their skills and toolboxes for creating a positive and supportive environment for their students.

Aliza Scharf, Kriah Coordinator at Shulamith School for Girls, has been active in Hidden Sparks programs for years and comes to the learning retreat annually. “The yearly Hidden Sparks retreat is more than just professional development. It is a day of connecting with a room full of likeminded adults who care deeply about making a difference in the lives of the children we work with.”

She and her colleague, Shoshana Gross, particularly value the collaboration that takes place during the day, “The collaboration of many school principals, support staff, school psychologists, classroom teachers and assistants, gives us a unique opportunity to learn from each other, share ideas,

struggles and successes. These relationships and our learning together reignites our shared passion and commitment. This one day of connection leads to big changes in each of our individual schools.”

Debbie Niderberg, Executive Director of Hidden Sparks, has been hosting this retreat for over a decade.

“This year’s theme about the interconnectedness of emotion and learning was especially powerful given October 7, the war in Israel, the rise in antisemitism in the U.S., and all of the emotions that teachers and students are experiencing. The retreat gave us the language for exploring emotions in our classrooms and talking with students, a deeper understanding of how anxiety manifests at different ages, how schools can foster a culture of belonging and support, and how to apply all of the day’s take-a-ways to teacher’s practice. Above all, it was an inspiring day full of deep learning, large and small strategies, and an opportunity to celebrate our extraordinary teachers.”

Nechama Landau, Coordinator Judaic Studies at HAFTR, echoed the resonance of the theme. “It’s so important to be reminded of the roles emotions play in our students’ lives. The speakers and panel gave practical advice that I look forward to sharing with my team at HAFTR.”





*The Yeshiva Kol Torah bochurim enjoyed their ice skating trip following the Yeshiva in-Shabbos last week*

## YOSS Students Use Escape Rooms to Apply Math Lessons

In a thrilling twist to traditional classroom learning, the 6th and 8th grade math classes at the Abraham and Sara Silber Middle School at the Yeshiva of South Shore have embarked on an exciting journey to unravel the world of expressions and equations through unconventional methods like murder mysteries and an innovative use of escape rooms.

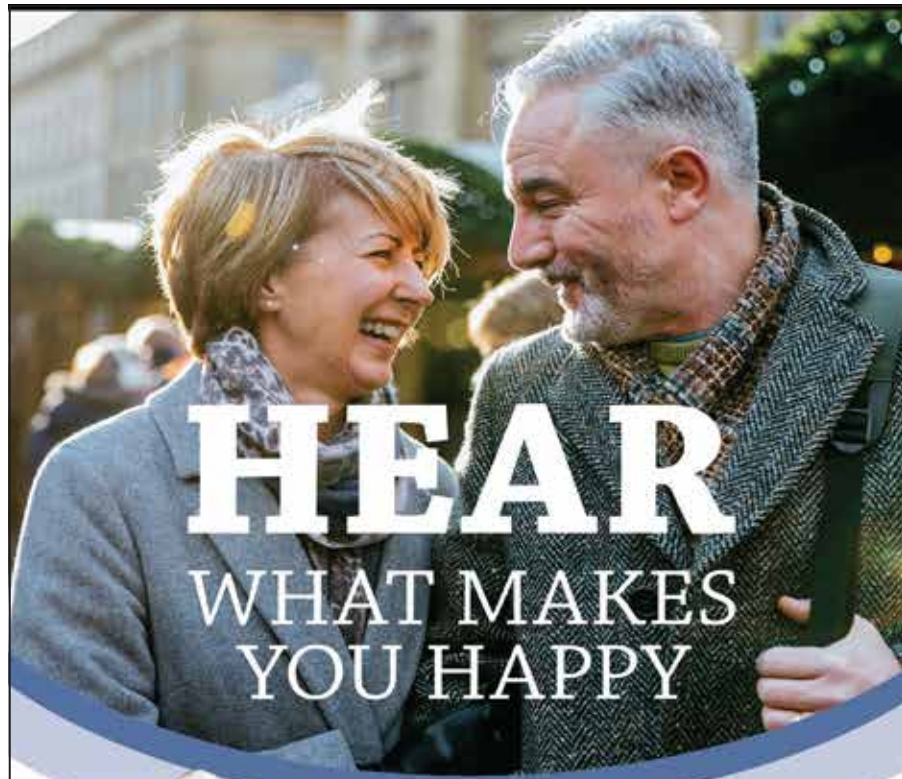
Imagine a classroom where students transform into detectives, piecing together mathematical clues to solve gripping murder mysteries. Ms. Feldman has creatively incorporated these scenarios to make learning expressions and equations not only educational but also incredibly fun. Through carefully crafted murder mysteries, students are challenged to apply their knowledge of algebraic expressions and equations to decipher clues, identify suspects, and ultimately solve the crime. The approach not only enhances critical thinking but also fosters a collaborative environment where students work together to crack the code.

In an era where escape rooms have become synonymous with adventure and problem-solving, the 6th and 8th grade math classes have harnessed this excitement to teach expressions and equations. Students find themselves trapped in mathematical puzzles that can only be



solved by applying the concepts they've learned in class. These interactive escape room activities not only provide a real-world context for mathematical problems but also cultivate a sense of urgency and teamwork among the students. As they collaborate to unlock each challenge, they simultaneously reinforce their understanding of expressions and equations. The integration of murder mysteries and escape rooms have proven to be a successful formula for making math more accessible and enjoyable for students. The hands-on and immersive experiences not only improve mathematical proficiency but also instill a love for problem-solving and critical thinking.

As education continues to evolve, innovative teaching methods like these are crucial for engaging students and preparing them for the challenges of a dynamic world.



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# A Daily Dose of Pesukim of Bitachon

**"Bitachon-Builders": A Conversation with Rabbi David Sutton**

**A** life lived with tranquility and confidence. Success in business. Protection in times of danger. And, greatest of all, a way to strengthen our connection to Hashem. Yes, the blessings of *bitachon* are immeasurable. But how do we truly incorporate such trust in Hashem into our hearts?

The Talmud Yerushalmi, the Zohar, the Maharal and many other sources offer us a time-tested and effective means for embedding *bitachon* firmly within us. The Maharal even states that this technique is a *segulah* for success in business and protection in times of war.

What is this ultra-powerful technique? *Pesukim of bitachon*.

That's right. *Pesukim*, brief verses from *Tanach*.

Reciting specific verses, these sources tell us, is an extremely powerful way of incorporating *bitachon* – and all its blessings – into every aspect of our lives. Indeed, when we internalize these *pesukim*, we transform our very essence.

Rav Yosef Zundel of Salant, the teacher of Rav Yisrael Salanter, listed specific *pesukim* that strengthen our trust in G-d's providence, faith, and salvation. In this groundbreaking work, Rabbi David Sutton examines each of those *pesukim* and gives us a greater understanding of the many lessons we can learn from them. Through stories and insights, he shows us how to use the *pesukim* to strengthen our *bitachon*. Each *pasuk* is followed by a brief "recap" that helps us review the power of the *pasuk* and a section with practical takeaways.

Designed to be used as a daily reader,

with one *pasuk* every day, in *A Daily Dose of Pesukim of Bitachon* we will discover the amazing power of just a few words to transform our lives and lead us to the *simcha*, the joy, that comes from living a life defined by *bitachon*.

We spoke to Rabbi Sutton about his transformative new book.

\*\*

**"Pesukim of Bitachon" – what an intriguing title. Please tell our readers what the book is about and what it can accomplish for its readers.**

**Rabbi David Sutton:** "*Pesukim of Bitachon*" is a compilation of *pesukim* from *Tanach*, primarily *Tehillim*, which discuss our reliance on Hashem, the trust we have in His goodness and that he cares for us. When these *pesukim* are recited and understood, they can bring great salvation and protection.

**The Maharal talks about a segulah of saying pesukim of bitachon and that it is especially timely in view of today's difficult situation. Can you please share his words with readers?**

**RDS:** The Maharal's words are quoted in *Mishpat Tzedek* (214) and in the early work *Taharas Hakodesh* by Rav Binyomin Wolf (p. 30). The Maharal recommends that a person recite *pesukim* that speak about *bitachon*. Reciting these *pesukim* every day, he explains, strengthens a person's trust in Hashem, which is one of the most fundamental precepts of Judaism. After reciting these *pesukim*, he adds, a person should pray to Hashem for help in acquiring the great

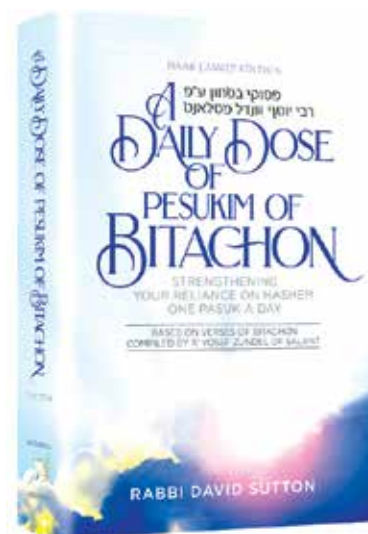
quality of *bitachon*.

Besides the spiritual benefits of saying these *bitachon*-building verses, the Maharal points out tremendous benefits in this world, as described by earlier sages and transmitted to him through the generations. These benefits include annulling harsh decrees. In fact, the Maharal writes, it has been tested and proven that reciting these *pesukim* protects soldiers going to war, and even helps businessmen when they travel for business or before they begin their workday. Certainly, these are benefits that we can all hope and pray for today.

**You chose to focus on pesukim of bitachon chosen by Rav Yosef Zundel of Salant. Please tell us a little about him.**

**RDS:** Rav Yosef Zundel of Salant was a *talmid* of Rav Chaim of Volozhin and the *rebbe* of Rav Yisrael Salanter. A great *tzaddik*, he was particularly known for his immense *bitachon*.

**In the book, you explain and illustrate these pesukim with**



**Torah insights and stories. How did you find such appropriate and powerful material, which enhances our understanding of bitachon and brings the pesukim to life?**

**RDS:** I gave a daily *shiur* in these *pesukim*, using the basic commentaries. And of course, the rest was up to Hashem.



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# TJH CenterFold

## Rejected Dr. SeUSS Books

*Which book is actually a title of one of Dr. Seuss's books?*

"Horton Hears a Hipster: A Whimsical Tale of Organic Jungle Cafés"

"Oh, the Thinks You Can Think! But Shouldn't: A Cautionary Tale"

"If I Ran the IRS: Tax Tips for Whimsical Wretches"

"Did I Ever Tell You How Lucky You Aren't? A Guide to Murphy's Law"

"Flutterby Flaptrap: A Butterfly's Big Blunder"

"Fox in Socks: A Tale of Misunderstood Fashion"

"Twizzle Twazzle Toodle: The Topsy-Turvy Tale of Twiddling Tools"

"Sizzle Suzzle Snoop: The Sassy Search for the Missing Sauce"

"The Butter Battle Continues: Margarine Mayhem"

"Thidwick the Big-Hearted Moose Goes Vegan"

"The Cat in the Hazmat Suit: A Tale of Covid Lifers"

"Green Eggs and Spam: A Tale of Junk Mail Madness"

"Oh, the Places You'll Go... Oops! I Forgot the Map!"

"The Grinch Who Stole My Wi-Fi Password"

"Hop on Pop But Not Too Hard, He Got New Glasses"

"The Lorax Goes Digital: Trees vs. Tweets"

"The Fox In Detox: No Whisky on Rocks"

"There's a Wocket in My Pocket"

.....

**Answer:**  
The only one that makes no sense, of course:  
There's a Wocket in My Pocket



## You Gotta be Kidding Me!

Yankel is having some problems with hip pain and goes to the top specialist who works wonders on him.

When the doctor tells him of his \$4,000 fee, Yankel screams, "That's highway robbery!"

"OK," the doctor replies, "I'll give you a discount and make it \$3,000."

"3,000? That's still meshugah," replies Yankel.

"Well, can you afford \$1,000?" asks the kind doctor.

"A thousand dollars? Who has that kind of money?"

Frustrated, the doctor says, "Just give me \$800, and we'll be done with it."

"I can give you \$300," says the man. "Take it or leave it."

"I don't understand you," says the doctor. "Why did you come to one of the most expensive doctors in New York City if you didn't have any money?"

"Listen, Doctor," says Yankel. "When it comes to my health, nothing is too expensive!"



# Dr. Seuss Trivia

In honor of Dr. Seuss's 120th birthday on March 2, let's see how much you know about this man who swung the bat by making a book about a cat

- How many times was Dr. Seuss's first book "And to Think That I Saw It on Mulberry Street," rejected before finally being published?
  - 9
  - 14
  - 21
  - 27
- Why was Dr. Seuss fired as the editor of Dartmouth college's humor magazine?
  - Because he plagiarized
  - He had alcohol at a party in his dorm room and it was during Prohibition
  - He made up too many words
  - He offended red cats
- Why did Dr. Seuss go by a pen name?
  - He didn't think that kids would read books written by "Theodore Geisel," which was his real name.
  - He had a mythical hero named Seuss Seussman
  - He wanted to maintain his privacy
  - He wanted to continue writing for Dartmouth's humor magazine so he figured a way to work around the ban—by submitting under a fake name
  - Bumpy Didyduumpy
- Which book did Dr. Seuss write

with only 50 unique words, after a friend bet him \$50 that he would not be able to do it?

- Cat in the Hat
- Green Eggs and Ham
- Fifty Bucks of Hucks
- The Lorax

- What was Dr. Seuss's occupation before becoming a full-time writer?

- Engineer
- Doctor
- Teacher
- Lawyer

- What word, that is first written in If I Ran the Zoo, is Dr. Seuss credited with creating?

- Grinch
- Nerd
- Thump
- Squid

- Why did Dr. Seuss start writing children's books?

- Because he thought it would make good money
- Because it was one of the only creative things he was not

prohibited from doing by his employment contract with an advertising agency

- Because he believed them to be much easier customers than adults
- Because he was a teacher for many years

## Answers:

- 1-D
- 2-B
- 3-D
- 4-B
- 5-D
- 6-B
- 7-B

## Wisdom key:

6-7 correct: You are smarter than a moose and smarter than a goose, but it kind of stops there because if you had such a good head, why would you read books about cats that are red?

2-5 correct:

When you wake in the boker, do you look in the mirror and say, "Wow! Another day of being mediocre!"

0-1 correct:

Dumb ditty dumb... Someone's dumb dumb dumb!





# TorahThought

## Parshas Ki Sisa



By Rabbi Berel Wein

Even after millennia of analysis, commentary and sagacious insights, the story of the Jewish people creating and worshipping the Golden Calf, as recorded for us in this week's Torah reading, remains an enigma and a mystery. After all of the miracles of Egypt and the splitting of Yam Suf, manna from heaven and the revelation at Sinai, how is such a thing possible?

The fact that our great sainted priest Aharon, the most beloved of all Jews and the symbol of Jewish brotherhood and service to G-d and man, is not only involved but is described as being the catalyst for the actual creation of the Golden Calf, simply

boggles our minds. One is almost forced to say that there is no logical or even psychological explanation as to how and why this event occurred.

The Torah tells us the story in relatively dry narrative prose. Apparently, it comes to teach us that there is no limit to the freedom of thought and behavior of human beings, to act righteously or in an evil fashion as they wish. No logic, no series of miracles, no Divine revelations can limit the freedom of choice that the L-rd granted to humans.

The assumption of Western man and his civilization and society was and is that there is a logic and rationale for everything that occurs. This assumption is



flawed and false. History is basically the story of the follies, mistakes and irrational behavior of individuals and nations. This week's Torah reading is merely a prime illustration of this human trait. Our freedom of choice is so absolute that we are able to destroy ourselves without compunction, thought or regret.

Nevertheless, I cannot resist making a point about what led up to Israel's tragic error in creating and worshipping the Golden Calf. The Torah emphasizes that

Successful nation building is always dependent upon wise, patient, strong and demanding leadership. The leader has to be able not only to blaze the trail ahead for his people, but he also must be able to stand up to his people in a manner that may be temporarily unpopular. The failures of both Aharon, as recorded for us in this week's Torah reading, and of King Saul as described for us in the Book of Samuel, are attributed to their inability to withstand the popular pressure of the moment.

---

*Moshe, the paragon for all Jewish leadership throughout the ages, is cognizant of the wishes and wants of the people but he does not succumb to that pressure.*

---

perhaps the prime cause for the building of the Golden Calf by Jewish society then was the absence of Moshe. While Moshe is up in heaven, freed of all human and bodily needs and restraints, the Jewish people are in effect leaderless. It is true that Aharon and Chur and the seventy elders are there in the midst of the encampment, but they do not have the qualities of leadership that can guide and govern an otherwise unruly, stiff-necked people.

Moshe, the paragon for all Jewish leadership throughout the ages, is cognizant of the wishes and wants of the people but he does not succumb to that pressure. The Torah describes Moshe as one whose "eye never dimmed." He always sees past the present with a penetrating view and vision of the future. The absence of such a person, and leader, can easily lead to the creation and worshipping of a Golden Calf.

Shabbat shalom.









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# From the Fire

## Parshas Ki Sisa

# Keeping Up with the Times



By Rav Moshe Weinberger

*Adapted for publication by Binyomin Wolf*



**T**his week's parsha has a unique feature that requires an explanation. Most parshios are divided into seven roughly equal aliyos. Parshas Ki Sisa, however, is quite lopsided, with 90 pesukim in the Kohen and Levi aliyos and only 43 pesukim in the other five aliyos. Why is this?

The Magen Avraham (Orach Chaim 428:8) answers that Chazal did this in order to make sure that the story of the Golden Calf is read within the first two aliyos by someone from the tribe of Levi since the ancestors of members of Shevet Levi did not sin by worshiping the Golden Calf, while the members of the other Shevatim did sin. Chazal wanted to avoid embarrassing those from other tribes by calling them up to an aliyah which would have reminded them of their great-great-grandparents' sin.

The Magen Avraham's reasoning is very difficult to understand. Why would someone be embarrassed by reading about a sin committed by his great-great-grandparents perhaps a hundred generations and 3,300 years ago? Rav Yaakov Galinsky, zt"l, one of the last

great magidim, quotes this Magen Avraham and asks whether one would transgress the prohibition against hurting another Jew's feelings if he reminded a Jew that his great-grandfather had remained silent while other Jews worshiped the Golden Calf. He answers that he would not violate this prohibition because no normal person would be embarrassed about this. It was a very long time ago and he never knew that great-great-grandfather, and so he would not be embarrassed. Yet for some reason, Chazal felt that it is very important not to embarrass any Jewish person, so they made sure that only people from Shevet Levi read the story of the Golden Calf.

Interestingly, we see a similar concern with regard to the simultaneous translation during the reading of the Torah in shul in the time of the Mishnah. At that time, the simple people could not understand Hebrew, so an official translator in each shul would translate the Torah reading into Aramaic so that everyone would understand. The Mishnah (Megila 4:10) discusses various sections of the Torah and whether they are translated.

The Mishnah says, "The first recounting of the story of the Golden Calf is read and translated." The Gemara questions why this law is necessary. We do not hide the words of the Torah. It is obvious that it should be translated! But the Gemara answers that it was necessary to teach that the story of the Golden calf should be translated because "I would have thought that we would [not translate the story of the Golden Calf] because we are worried about the honor of the Jewish people. Therefore, the Mishnah teaches us [that we nevertheless translate that section of the Torah]."

And what of the embarrassment experienced by the simple Jews when they hear the story of the Golden Calf? The Gemara says, "It is good for them to hear it because [the embarrassment] will provide an atonement for them." We see that even simple Jews in the time of the Mishnah, who did not even understand Hebrew, were so sensitive that their ears turned red with embarrassment when they pictured how the members of their tribe acted at the time of the sin of the Golden Calf.

According to the Ramban and the Chareidim, one of the 613 mitzvos of the Torah is remembering the sins we committed in the desert, including the sin of the Golden Calf, as the Torah (Devarim 9:7) says, "Remember, do not forget how you angered Hashem your G-d in the desert." The Magen Avraham (Orach Chaim 60:2) asks why, if remembering the sin of the Golden Calf is a mitzvah, do we not have a special Shabbos to fulfill this mitzvah like we do next Shabbos with the mitzvah of remembering the mitzvah of the Para Adumah, the red heifer, or the mitzvah to remember what Amalek did to us Parshas Zachor, the Shabbos before Purim. The Magen Avraham answers that we do not have a special Shabbos set aside to remember the sin of the Golden Calf because it would constitute a denigration of the Jewish people.

How, then, do we fulfill the mitzvah to remember this incident? He answers that according to the opinion that remembering the mitzvah of the red heifer is a biblical commandment, and because Chazal teach that the mitzvah of the red heifer was given in order to rectify the sin



of the Golden Calf, Chazal intended that we fulfill the mitzvah to remember the sin of the Golden Calf by remembering the rectification of that sin through the red heifer on Parshas Para. This is the extent of Chazal's concern that the memory of our ancestors' sin not embarrass us.

All of this begs our earlier question, which was why Chazal were so concerned about not embarrassing us with the memory of our distant ancestors' sins. Rav Galinsky answers that we see from these teachings how a Jew is supposed to read the parsha. We should read every parsha as if we are actually there, watching the events unfold and the mitzvos reveal themselves.


Rav Galinsky quotes an apocryphal story he heard as a child in Europe. According to the story, they were reading Parshas Vayeshev, the story of Yosef and his brothers, in shul. When the baal koreh read how Yaakov told Yosef to go check on his brothers, a voice rang out in the shul. Everyone looked, startled, toward the women's section, which was the source of the alarm. A woman stood up and screamed, "No! No! Yosef, don't go! They hate you! They are jealous of you! They only want to make problems for you! Listen to me and just don't go!" But

unfortunately, Yosef didn't listen to her. He was too concerned with the mitzvah of honoring his father, and his brothers trapped him just as she had warned him. Before Yosef's brothers could kill him, however, the same woman got up again and called out, "Please, Hashem, save him!" Hashem listened to her prayer, and

quiet. Her neighbor in shul, however, heard her muttering to herself, "Last time, I warned you, and you didn't listen. You saw what happened to you. Now you do what you want. You're a big boy, and you can take care of yourself!"

While this story is told in jest, it also evokes a deep truth. If we truly listened to

rah, the pasuk in this week's parsha says (Shemos 31:18), "When He finished speaking with him on Har Sinai, He gave him the two stone tablets of the testimony written with the finger of G-d." Rashi explains that the Hebrew word for "when He finished speaking with him" is written as if it were spelled "like His bride," in order to teach "that the Torah was given as a bride is given to the groom." In marriage, a husband and wife should always view their relationship as fresh, as if they just stood under the chuppah. So, too, we must receive the Torah every day with freshness, with the attitude that the events in the Torah are happening right now.

May we merit to experience the freshness and novelty of the Torah every time we learn it, and may we experience the eternal freshness of our relationship with Hashem with the coming of Moshiach soon in our days in order to see the fulfillment of the pasuk (Eichah 5:21), "Return us to You Hashem, and we shall return, renew our days as of old." 

*Rav Moshe Weinberger, shlita, is the founding Morah d'Asrah of Congregation Aish Kodesh in Woodmere, NY, and serves as leader of the new mechina Emek HaMelech.*

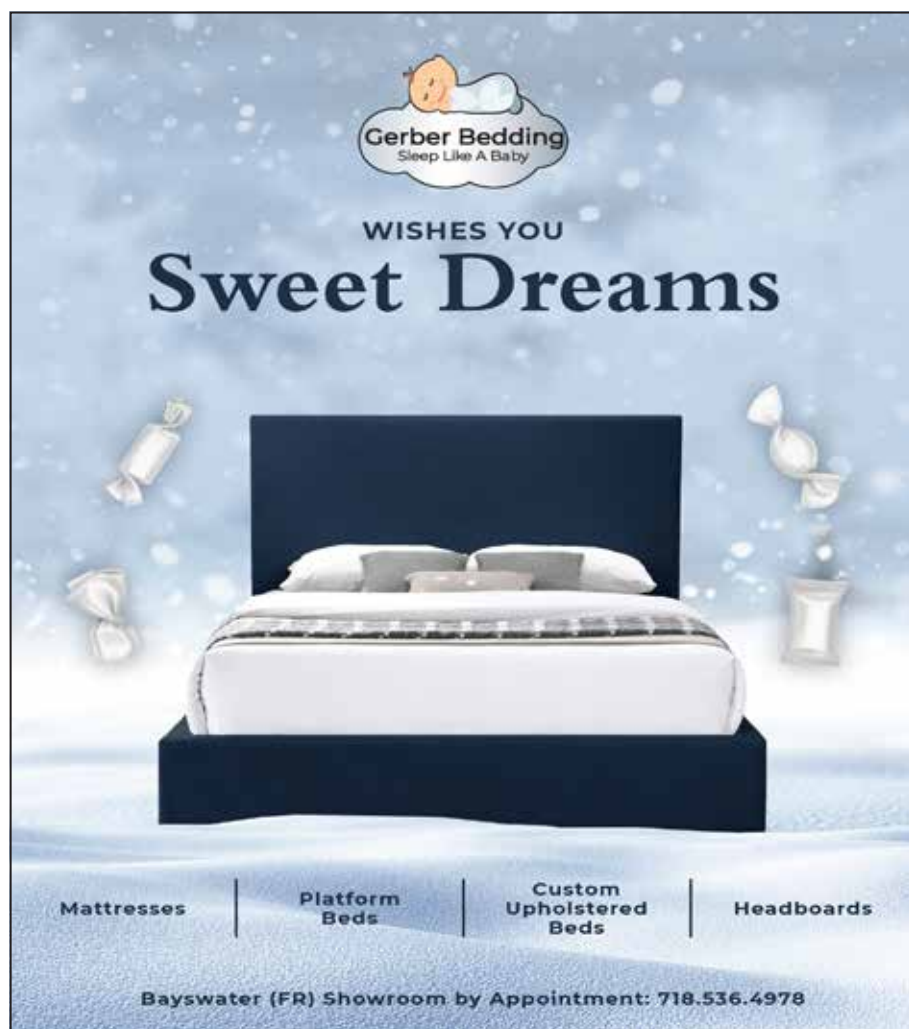
***We must receive the Torah every day with freshness, with the attitude that the events in the Torah are happening right now.***

Reuven rescued him from death. But he was then sold into slavery, and the woman was heard muttering out loud, "Oy vey! What's going to be now? If only he had listened to me!"

According to the story, the next year on Parshas Vayeshev, everyone was sitting on pins and needles, waiting to hear what the woman would scream this year as the events of the sale of Yosef occurred again, but to everyone's surprise, she remained

the parshios of the exodus, the parshios of Shemos, Va'eira, Bo, etc., as if we were experiencing them, then we would actually experience redemption from slavery, cross the sea, receive the Torah, feel embarrassment at the sin of the Golden Calf, and build a Mishkan where Hashem would dwell among us. Instead, we fail to even feel embarrassment for our own sins, much less the sin of the Golden Calf!

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Think. Feel. Grow.

# What Made Moshe's Prophecy Unique?

## Part II



By Rabbi Shmuel Reichman



In our previous article, we began exploring the uniqueness of Moshe's prophecy. To review, the Rambam famously formulates thirteen principles of faith that he believes to be the absolute foundational pillars of Jewish belief, emphasizing that every Jew must believe in these principles. The sixth principle states that all the words of the *Neviim* (prophets) are true. The seventh principle specifies that the prophecy of Moshe Rabbeinu is true and that he was greatest *Navi* of all time, greater than both those that came before him and those that came after (Rambam, commentary on Sanhedrin, perek Chelek.). The sixth principle is obviously crucial; the seventh seems redundant. If all of the *Neviim*'s words were true, of course Moshe's were true as well. What is so fundamentally important about the superiority of Moshe's prophecy that the Rambam deemed it necessary to state it as a separate principle of faith? And more broadly, what does it mean that Moshe was the greatest prophet to ever live?

The first unique characteristic of Moshe's prophecy was his level of clarity. (See Rambam's introduction to perek Chelek to see the Rambam's description of the Moshe's unique characteristics that are mentioned in this article. See also Mishneh Torah, Yesodei HaTorah 7:6.) The Gemara explains that while all other prophets saw through a clouded lens, Moshe saw through a clear lens. (Yevamos 49b. Another way of formulating this distinction is as follows: While all other *Neviim* received their prophecy through an angel (intermediary), Moshe received prophecy directly from Hashem. See Shemos 33:11 and Bamidbar 12:8.)

### The Glow on Moshe's Face

The uniqueness of Moshe's prophecy and connection with Hashem manifested in other ways as well. When Moshe descended from Har Sinai, his face glowed, to the extent that he had to cover it when interacting with the rest of Klal Yisrael.

As physical beings, our bodies are opaque; they do not reflect or reveal our spiritual souls. All we see are each other's physical exterior and no more. Moshe, however, uplifted himself and his physical body to such a level of spirituality that his face and body reflected his spiritual core. The Midrash explains that Moshe attained the same exalted level that Adam possessed before he ate from the *Eitz HaDaas*. However, this was too much for Klal Yisrael to handle, and Moshe was forced to hide his face so as not to overwhelm them. (It was the spiritual equivalent of not being able to look at the sun.)

In Shaar HaGemul of Toras Ha'Adam, the Ramban explains that Moshe completely overcame his physical drives and became fully spiritual. As a result, he no longer saw with physical eyes but with spiritual vision. This means that Moshe no longer saw the physical world but saw everything as a reflection and manifestation of spirituality. His very perception was fundamentally al-

tered. This is related to the opinion of the Meshech Chochmah (in his introduction to Sefer Shemos), who explains that Moshe completely overcame his free will and became a *malach* living in this world.

### Awake vs. Sleeping

The difference between Moshe's and other *Neviim*'s prophecy was also expressed in the different times that they received *nevuah*. While all other *Neviim* received their prophecy at night while sleeping, Moshe received his *nevuah* while awake and standing (Bamidbar 7:89). If another prophet received his prophecy while awake, he would immediately collapse and lose consciousness, receiving the prophecy in a trance-like state. This is why the Gemara states that a dream is a taste of prophecy (Berachos 57b). Both occur while you are asleep when the mind transcends the physical limitations of the body. (This explains why people sometimes experience prophetic elements in their dreams; in a



dream, one enters a state of consciousness that transcends the boundaries and rules of space and time. This also sheds light on the concept of *déjà vu*.) *Nevuah* is, in a sense, an immensely more elevated form of dreaming.

The reason prophecy cannot occur while one is awake is simple. *Nevuah* is such a completely spiritual experience that the physical, conscious body cannot contain or sustain it. The *Navi* therefore needs to let go of his physical senses if he wishes to experience this spiritual dimension. Moshe's body, however, was so pure and spiritual that it was able to sustain a direct experience with the spiritual world. This is how he was able to go forty days and nights atop Har Sinai without eating and drinking; his physical body was able to exist in the spiritual world almost as if he were an angel. The *Ramchal* compares Moshe to Eliyahu HaNavi and Chanoch, both of whom were able to depart directly to the spiritual world without having to die and leave their physical bodies – because their bodies themselves became completely spiritual.

### Voluntary and Constant

While other *Neviim* had to wait to be called upon by Hashem, Moshe was able to call upon Hashem and initiate his prophecy at any point in time he wanted. In Parshas Beha'alosecha, when a group of men asked Moshe about their missing out on the Korban Pesach, he simply told them to wait while he asks Hashem (Bamidbar 9:8). He does the same in the case of the B'nos Tzelafchad, accessing his *nevuah* at will (*Bamidbar* 27:5). Moshe was able to speak with Hashem whenever he wanted; he was able to tap into the highest of spiritual levels with complete ease.

This is connected to another key characteristic of Moshe's *nevuah*, namely, that it was constant. As a matter of fact, since Moshe would receive *nevuah* at any point in the day, he separated from his wife, Tziporah, so that he could remain *tahor* at all times (Rashi, *Bamidbar* 12:1).

### The Content

Interestingly, while other *Neviim* saw only that which Hashem chose to reveal to them, Moshe was allowed to experience whatever he wanted to see in the spiritual realm. When Moshe asks Hashem to reveal His "Goodness," Hashem agrees (Shemos 33:19). The *Ramchal* (Daas Tevunos 156) and the *Rambam* (Moreh Nevuchim 1:54) explain that Moshe wished to understand the nature and depth of all that exists in the created world. While there were still limits to Moshe's *nevuah*, in that he could not see

Hashem "Himself" (the "front" of Hashem's head), Hashem allowed Moshe to see His full expression into the physical world (the "back" of Hashem's head). In other words, Hashem allowed Moshe to see as much as a human being could possibly comprehend.

### Moshe's Speech Impediment

This sheds new light on an oft-misunderstood topic. Moshe served as the leader of the Jewish People, yet he had a seemingly ironic flaw: a speech impediment. How can the leader of a nation, a person called upon to represent and guide them, possibly have a speech impediment? Some, like the *Rashbam* (Shemos 4:11), suggest that Moshe did not have a speech

impediment because he lived in a dimension of such absolute clarity and truth. He simply could not bring such lofty and transcendent concepts down into the finite and limited dimensions of this physical world. His speech defect was actually a revelation of his perfection — a reflection of the lofty spiritual state he existed in perpetually.

This is the paradox of the Torah. Hashem took the infinite truth of reality, something far beyond words, and miraculously constricted that endless wisdom into the finite words of Torah, words that we have written in our own *Sifrei Torah*. Nevertheless, although the words of the Torah are finite and written down, they still loyally and completely reflect their eternal and

## His speech defect was actually a revelation of his perfection — a reflection of the lofty spiritual state he existed in perpetually.

impediment but was limited in his speech simply because he had forgotten the Egyptian language. The *Ran* on the other hand suggests that while Moshe did indeed speak with a speech impediment, this was to make it clear that Klal Yisrael accepted the Torah for its innate truth and not because Moshe swayed them with inspiring, persuasive speech (*Derashos HaRan* 3:6–10).

The *Maharal* suggests an even deeper explanation. He explains that Moshe's speech impediment was not a defect; rather, it was a reflection of his perfection (*Gevuros Hashem* 28:1). Speech is the concretization of the infinite into finite packages of words and sentences. Speech takes that which is beyond words, that which is infinite, and limits it to the finite. Silence reflects the notion that something cannot be formulated or constricted into mere words. When you experience something truly deep and powerful, it is difficult to formulate it into concrete thoughts or words. This is because your mind experiences the idea as it is, in its pure, root state, while words only reveal a limited expression of that original perfection and clarity. (Silence is also powerful in that it allows you to process your learning, think, and absorb ideas.)

For mathematics, logic, and technical thinking, such as learning *Gemara*, if one can't formulate his thoughts in words, he doesn't understand it. For post-rational, deep spiritual wisdom, it is when one thinks that he *can* express it in words that he doesn't understand it. Moshe could not

infinite truth. And amazingly, once Hashem did this, expressing the eternal truths of Torah in finite form, Moshe gained the ability to speak as well. Why? Because Moshe was the voice of Torah, the *shaliach* (messenger) of Hashem. When Hashem committed the Torah to words, through the mechanism of speech, Moshe gained the ability to speak as well – to fully express the infinite within the confines and constructs of speech without betraying the root source that transcends those words. *Sefer Devarim* begins with the words, "*Eileh ha'davarim asher diber Moshe...*" (*Devarim* 1:1). Moshe now gained the ability to speak, i.e., to faithfully express the infinite within the finite.

### A Pillar of Faith

We can now explain why the *Rambam* separates between the sixth and seventh *ikarim* of *emunah*. The sixth *ikar* is our belief in *nevuah* itself – that *nevuah* is a message of spiritual truth from Hashem. Moshe's *nevuah*, however, was not only true but of a fundamentally different category: a revelation of *absolute* truth. One could have easily mistaken Moshe's *nevuah* as being no different from any other *Navi's*. As a result, if a *Navi* claimed to receive a new Torah, perhaps he would be right, and we should replace Moshe's Torah. The *Rambam* is therefore clarifying that Moshe didn't just receive prophecy; he received the highest level of prophecy possible. This level of prophecy is Torah. Every other *Navi* is

on a lower level. Therefore, if a *Navi* contradicts Moshe's Torah, we know he is a *Navi sheker* (false prophet). This sheds new light onto why Korach's rebellion was so severe. By challenging Moshe, Korach attempted to uproot the entire foundation of Torah!

To many, Moshe may not serve as a classic role model. He wasn't great – he was perfect; he didn't accomplish a lot – he accomplished everything. He was as perfect as a human being could possibly become. To some, this may be more overwhelming than inspiring, more daunting than encouraging. But I believe that we can all connect to Moshe in a very deep way. Moshe Rabbeinu shows us what humanity is capable of. Sometimes, you need to see an example of human perfection before you can personalize that ideal to your unique mission in life. True, you can't be as great as Moshe, but that's not your job; your job is to be the greatest version of *you* possible. But perhaps Moshe can inspire us to challenge ourselves a bit more, to add one more layer to our self-expectations, to question our own limits, and to genuinely ask ourselves if we're giving it everything we have.

Moshe was a complicated figure; when he separated from his wife, Miriam and Aharon didn't understand or even agree with it. He was not a man of this world. But that was not his role; he serves as an eternal model of transcendent perfection, a star in the night sky guiding each of us on our own unique journey through life. In moments of self-doubt, in moments of opportunity, in moments of fear, just think of Moshe and remember that in a very deep way, the sky is the limit...or is it? ▲

*Rabbi Shmuel Reichman is the author of the bestselling book, "The Journey to Your Ultimate Self," which serves as an inspiring gateway into deeper Jewish thought. He is an educator and speaker who has lectured internationally on topics of Torah thought, Jewish medical ethics, psychology, and leadership. He is also the founder and CEO of Self-Mastery Academy, the transformative online self-development course based on the principles of high-performance psychology and Torah.*

*After obtaining his BA from Yeshiva University, he received Semicha from Yeshiva University's RIETS, a master's degree in education from Azrieli Graduate School, and a master's degree in Jewish Thought from Bernard Revel Graduate School. He then spent a year studying at Harvard as an Ivy Plus Scholar. He currently lives in Chicago with his wife and son where he is pursuing a PhD at the University of Chicago.*

*To invite Rabbi Reichman to speak in your community or to enjoy more of his deep and inspiring content, visit his website: [ShmuelReichman.com](http://ShmuelReichman.com).*



# Delving into the Daf

## Gold Overboard

By Rabbi Avrohom Sebrow

**Y**ehuda and Tzvi are traveling together on a ship. Unfortunately, they hit turbulent weather and stormy seas. Yehuda is forced to throw his gold bars into the sea to lighten the boat's load. (See Bava Kama 116b)

Yehuda: Ahoy Tzvi! I really took a huge loss by throwing some of my gold bars overboard. However, we are all in the same boat. Please compensate me for some of my loss, since you also benefited.

Tzvi: I suffered a loss as well. I threw my copper bars overboard.

Yehuda: But those aren't worth nearly as much! The Gemara discusses a case where a marauding group of bandits attacked a caravan. They paid off the bandits. The halacha is they all split the cost of the payment to the bandits evenly! The loss of my cargo should be shared by everyone.

Tzvi: You must be fresh off the boat. My Gemara says that they split the payment according to the amount of money each traveler has. A wealthy traveler will pay more. Here, too, with your expensive cargo, it makes sense you should lose more.

Yehuda: Yes, the Gemara does say that a wealthy traveler will pay more. However, that is clearly discussing a situation where the bandits are primarily intent on robbing the members of the caravan. If they intended to kill, then the bribe to convince them to leave the caravan alone is split evenly among all the travelers. Everyone has the same pure neshama. Therefore, every traveler will contribute the same amount. Here, too, the boat is in danger of sinking; our lives are in danger. It's all hands on deck. We each must contribute evenly to the rescue effort to save our lives.

Tzvi: Sorry to rock your boat, but it is split evenly, just not the way you are imagining. Everyone must throw off the boat the same amount of weight to make it more buoyant. Rashi cites this exact ex-

ample. One man will throw off 100 lbs. of copper bars and another man will throw off 100 lbs. of gold bars.

*There is then an announcement over the loudspeaker: "Everyone must throw another 100 lbs. of weight overboard."*

Yehuda: This is ridiculous. Please throw 200 lbs. of your copper bars overboard, 100 lbs. for you and 100 lbs. for me, and I will reimburse you.

Tzvi: Sure, just pay me the value of 50 lbs. of gold. It is still a good deal for you.

Yehuda: That is a rip-off! 100 lbs. of your copper isn't even worth one pound of gold! There is a well-known dictum, *Kofin al middas Sedom*. We can force someone who is being selfish like the people of Sedom to act appropriately.

Tzvi: I think you missed the boat. Tosfos says that is only post-facto. You can't charge a person for something that he took

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***We can force someone who is being selfish like the people of Sedom to act appropriately.***

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or used that should have been free. However, you can't initially force me to relinquish my rights to my copper bars. If you don't agree to my terms, throw your gold bars overboard.

Yehuda: Wrong! The Rema writes that if someone's expensive honey is leaking, he can empty out his neighbor's wine bottles without permission and use them to store his honey. He must pay restitution, however. I will throw your copper bars overboard and pay restitution. This way, I can save my expensive gold.

Tzvi: It seems like you don't know the ropes. Not everyone agrees to the Rema.

Yehuda: Yes, because some say a person has a special affection for his own wine that he produced. You can't put a value on that. But your copper bars are just a commodity. Everyone says I can throw them overboard.

Tzvi: OK, but there is a major difference. The Rema is discussing a situation where the neighbor is not around. We can assume the neighbor would be agreeable to help and would gladly empty out his bottles. However, I am here, and I am

declaring that I forbid you to throw my copper bars overboard. Everyone agrees in this situation you can't force me to.

Yehuda: That is false. In fact, the Aruch HaShulchan discusses our exact scenario and states that I can force you to throw your copper bars overboard. It is a special *takanas chachamim* that allows me to do so.

Tzvi: Well, I'll batten down the hatches. My copper isn't going overboard.

Faced with no alternative, Yehuda agrees to Tzvi's terms. Tzvi throws 200lbs of copper bars overboard and Yehuda gives him 50lbs of gold. They are all saved.



Meanwhile, Yehuda sits down to do the daf. He is learning about a situation where one needs to evacuate from a dangerous situation. The person is running and comes to a river. There is a ferry there. However, the ferry captain refuses to take the evacuee across unless he pays an exorbitant sum. The evacuee can promise to pay an unearthly sum and then go back on his word once he is across. Since the ferry operator is acting cruelly and unjustly, this is permitted.

Happily, Yehuda approaches Tzvi and asks for his 50 lbs. of gold back. "You were acting selfishly and cruelly. You were taking advantage of me. I only agreed to pay the 50 lbs. of gold under duress. I am allowed to go back on my word! So kindly return the gold!"

Tzvi: I'm sorry but that ship has already sailed. The Beis Yosef indeed says that a person acting under duress can refuse to pay. However, the Beis Yosef makes clear that in this case, since you already paid me, you are not entitled to a refund. Just be happy you are alive, and the rest of your money was saved.

Tzvi has thoughts of teshuva and says, "I will go the extra nautical mile and return your gold."

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# yaeli

Mishloach Manos





# Headlines & Halacha

## 12 Gemara-Based Ideas of How to Protect Yerushalayim

By Rabbi Yair Hoffman

**T**he recent tragic terrorist acts on Highway One outside of Maleh Adumim are viewed by Mishteret Yisrael and the IDF as a game-changer. Traffic, something that Israel is known for, is now being considered a major security threat. The terrorism is particularly disturbing because the weapons that the terrorists used were not home-made guns like in the past. Rather, they were military grade weapons.

Certainly, all efforts to post security personnel at heavy traffic sites should be made. But what else can be done?

Perhaps we can all further help alleviate the terror situation by looking into why and how Yerushalayim fell in the first place – long ago – under the Romans. If we can rectify those areas, then we can perhaps go a long way in alleviating the terror situation.

Below is a list of ten reasons why Yerushalayim first fell in the time of Bayis Sheini. It follows that improvement in these areas will give us zechusim for further safety. (The reasons listed below follow the order of what is found in the Gemara in Shabbos 119b and then other Gemaras and then Midrashim.)

### 1) Abayeh's Reason – Shabbos

The pasuk in Yirmiyahu 17:27 states: “And if you do not heed Me to sanctify the day of Shabbos, and to refrain from carrying burdens and come to the gates of Jerusalem on the day of Shabbos, and I will light a fire in its gates and it will consume the palaces of Jerusalem and it will not be extinguished.” The Gemara asks: What is the meaning of “And it will not be extinguished?” Rav Nachman bar Yitzchak said: Fire will break out at a time when people are not found to extinguish it. Abaye said: Jerusalem was destroyed only because people desecrated the Shabbos in it, as it is stated: “And from My Shabbosos they averted their eyes, and I was profaned



among them” (Yechezkel 22:26). [see Shabbos 119b]

### 2) Rabbi Abahu's Reason – Lack of Krias Shma and Excessive Drinking

Rabbi Abahu said: Jerusalem was destroyed only because [its citizens] intentionally omitted recitation of *Shema* morning and evening, as it is stated: “Woe to those who rise early in the morning and pursue the drink and are aflame from wine until late in the evening” (Yishayahu 5:11). And it is written [in the continuation of that passage]: “And their drinking parties have lyre and lute, drum and flute and wine, and they do not look upon the actions of Hashem, and they do not see His Hands' creations” (Yishayahu 5:12). This means that in the morning and evening, when the Jews should have been reciting *Shema*, they were drinking wine and alcohol. And it is written in that passage: “Therefore My nation is being exiled for its ignorance; its honor will die of hunger

and its multitudes will be parched with thirst” (Yishayahu 5:13).

### 3) Rav Hamnunah's Reason – Children Not Studying Torah

Rav Hamnunah said: Jerusalem was destroyed only because schoolchildren there were interrupted [from studying Torah], as it is stated: “And I am filled with the wrath of Hashem, I cannot contain it, pour it onto the infants in the street and onto the gathering of youths together, for men and women alike will be captured, the elderly along with those of advanced years” (Yirmiyahu 6:11). Rav Hamnunah explains: What is the reason that the wrath is poured? It is because infants are outside in the streets and are not studying Torah.

The Gemara later states more regarding this reason: Rav Yehuda said that Rav said: What is the meaning of that which is written, “Do not touch My anointed ones and do My prophets no harm” (I Divrei haYamim 16:22)? “Do not touch My anointed ones,” these are

the schoolchildren, who are as precious and important as kings and priests (see Maharsha); “and do not harm My prophets,” these are Torah scholars.

Reish Lakish said in the name of Rabbi Yehuda Nesia: The world only exists because of the breath, i.e., reciting Torah, of schoolchildren. Rav Pappa said to Abaye: My Torah study and yours, what is its status? Why is the Torah study of adults worth less? He said to him: The breath of adults, which is tainted by sin, is not similar to the breath of children, which is not tainted by sin. And Reish Lakish said in the name of Rabbi Yehuda Nesia: One may not interrupt schoolchildren from studying Torah, even in order to build the Temple.

### 4) Ullah's Reason – Lack of Shame

Ullha said: Jerusalem was destroyed only because people had no shame before each other, as it is stated: “They acted shamefully; they have performed abominations, yet they neither were ashamed nor did they know humiliation. Therefore, they will fall among the fallen, they will fail at the time that I punish them, said Hashem” (Yirmiyahu 6:15).

### 5) Rabbi Yitzchok's Reason – Not Holding Great Leaders in High Esteem

Rabbi Yitzchak said: Jerusalem was destroyed only because its small and the great citizens were equated. They did not properly value the prominent leaders of their generation, as it is stated: “And the common people were like the priest, the slave like his master, the maidservant like her mistress, the buyer like the seller, the lender like the borrower, the creditor like the one indebted to him” (Yishayahu 24:2). And it is written afterward: “The land shall be utterly desolate and completely plundered, for Hashem has said this” (Yishayahu 24:3).



## 6) Rabbi Chaninah's Reason – No Tochachah

Rav Amram, son of Rabbi Shimon bar Abba, said that Rabbi Shimon bar Abba said that Rabbi Chanina said: Jerusalem was destroyed only because the people did not rebuke one another, as it is stated: "Her ministers were like stags that found no pasture, and they walked without strength before their pursuer" (Lamentations 1:6). Just as this stag turns its head toward the other's tail when it grazes, and each one feeds on its own, so, too, the Jewish people in that generation lowered their faces to the ground and did not rebuke one another.

## 7) Rabbi Yehuda's Reason – Disparaging Torah Scholars

Rabbi Yehuda said: Jerusalem was destroyed only because they disparaged the Torah scholars in it, as it is stated: "And they mocked the messengers of Hashem and disdained His words and taunted His prophets, until the wrath of Hashem arose against His people, until it could not be healed" (Divrei HaYamim 36:16). What is the meaning of "until it could not be healed"? Rav Yehuda said that Rav said: It means that anyone who disparages Torah scholars cannot be healed from his wound.

## 8) Raish Lakish's Reason – No Torah Schools for Children in All the Cities

And Reish Lakish said to Rabbi Yehuda Nesia: I have received from my ancestors, and some say that he said to him: I have received from your ancestors as follows: Any city in which there are no schoolchildren studying Torah, they destroy it. Ravina said: They leave it desolate.

## 9) Rava's Reason – No More Honest People

And Rava said: Jerusalem was destroyed only because there were no more trustworthy people there, as it is stated: "Roam about the streets of Jerusalem and see, and search its plazas, if you can find a person, who acts justly, who seeks integrity, that I should forgive it" (Yirmiyahu 5:1). The Gemara asks: Is that so? Didn't Rav Ketina say: Even at the time of Jerusalem's failure, trustworthy people did not cease there, as it is stated: "For a man will grab his brother of his father's house and say: You have a garment. Come be a chief over us and let this ruin be under your care" (Yishayahu 3:6)? Things that people used to cover up like a garment, secrets, are in your hands

and you know about them. Therefore, you should be a leader of the community.

## 10) The Holy Ger Rav Yochanan Ben Torta's Reason – Sinas Chinam

The Gemara in Yoma 9b cites Rav Yochanan Ben Torta: However, considering that the people during the Second Temple period were engaged in Torah study, observance of mitzvot, and acts of kindness, and they did not perform the sinful acts that were performed in the First Temple, why was the Second Temple destroyed? It was destroyed due to the fact that there was wanton hatred during that period. This comes to teach you that the sin of wanton hatred is equivalent to the three severe transgressions: idol worship, forbidden relations and bloodshed.


## 11) Rabbi Yochanan's Reason – Not Going Beyond the Letter of the Law

The Gemara in Bava Metziah 30b states: Rabbi Yochanan says: Jerusalem was destroyed only for the fact that they judged cases on the basis of absolute Torah law in the city. The Gemara asks: Rather, what else should they have done? Should they rather have adjudicated cases

on the basis of arbitrary decisions? Rather, say: That they established their rulings on the basis of Torah law and did not go beyond the letter of the law.

## 12) Rav Tanchum's Reason – Corruption of Justice

In Midrash Tanchuma (Mishpatim 2), the Midrash states that the reason Yerushalayim was destroyed was on account of corruption of justice.

**So what we can all do**, according to the Gemara is: Observe and uphold Shabbos, be more careful in Krias Shema, make sure our children study Torah, develop our sense of shame, uphold our leaders in high esteem, learn to rebuke properly with love, not to disparage Torah scholars, ensure that every neighborhood has Torah schools for children, practice honesty, stop any sinas chinam, go beyond the letter of the law, and ensure fairness in judgement. May this be a yeshuah for us all. 

*This article should be viewed as a halachic discussion and not practical advice. The author can be reached at yairhoffman2@gmail.com.*

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# Torah Study at the Purim Seudah

## *Every Person's Table Can Be Mechaper*

BY RABBI DANIEL GLATSTEIN

The Rema writes that it is proper to engage in the study of Torah prior to starting the Purim seudah. An allusion to this custom can be found in the Megillah, which states, “*LYehudim ha'aisah orah v'simcha*, The Jews had light and gladness” (Esther 8:16). Chazal tell us, “*Orah zo Torah*”; that is, the word *orah* in this *pasuk* is referring to Torah. The Rema expounds this *pasuk* as referring to the practice of kindling the light of Torah before celebrating the *simcha* of a festive meal.

In *Darchei Moshe*, the Rema elaborates on the reason for the custom, writing that engaging in the study of Torah before the seudah provides spiritual protection. It ensures that nothing inappropriate or unseemly will transpire during the meal.

The Rema's source for this custom is somewhat curious. The *pasuk* does seem to imply that one should study the Torah on Purim. But how does the Rema glean from these words the fact that Torah study should take place immediately before enjoying the seudah? As all *minhagei Yisrael* are founded upon the holiest of bases, let us try to uncover additional meaning in the custom of beginning the Purim seudah with *divrei Torah*.

### The Signature Feature of a Jewish Meal

The Megillah states, “On the seventh day, when the heart of the king was merry with wine” (Esther 1:10). Maseches Megillah asks why Achashveirosh's drinking is mentioned only on day seven of the party. He most assuredly had been imbibing all along, so why does the Megillah mention it specifically at this point?

The Gemara explains that the seventh day mentioned here does not refer to the seventh day of the party but to Shabbos, the seventh day of the week. It is the day on which Klal Yisrael sit down to enjoy their *seudas Shabbos*, whereupon they begin to recite *divrei Torah* and

sing *zemiros* to Hashem. Contrast this with how the non-Jews often spend their time, indulging in food and drink and participating in uncouth conversations.

This was, in fact, what transpired at Achashveirosh's party. The Gemara relates that the attendees were inebriated, and they began discussing which region of the world produced the most beautiful women. Achashveirosh put an end to the discussion when he offered to demonstrate the beauty of his wife Vashti, of Chaldean descent, and commanded that she parade unclothed before all those in attendance. Her refusal to comply led to her execution, which paved the way for Esther's entry to the palace.

Why does the Gemara's description of Achashveirosh's party begin with a comment about how Yidden comport themselves at their meal? The Gemara could have described Achashveirosh's party without this seemingly irrelevant fact. Why is the fact that a Shabbos seudah includes *divrei Torah* and *zemiros* relevant to how the discussion at Achashveirosh's party ultimately led to Vashti's demise?

### Everyone's Personal Table Can Be Mechaper

Maseches Berachos teaches a fundamental idea that should empower us to approach our meals as more than just a time to enjoy gustatory pleasure.

As long as the Beis HaMikdash was standing, the offerings on the *Mizbei'ach*, Altar, served to atone for the sins of Klal Yisrael. One could receive *kapparah* by bringing *korbanos*. To our dismay, we no longer have a *Mizbei'ach* upon which to offer *korbanos*. The Gemara teaches that although we are lacking the Beis HaMikdash and the *Mizbei'ach*, we still have a means by which to be granted *kapparah*: Every person's *shulchan*, table, can provide atonement. Every home's table can effect *kapparah*.

The Gemara explains that *aniyim*, paupers, are fed around the table. When we invite the needy into our homes, seat them around our table, and provide for the hungry, that is the source of the table's capability to provide atonement.

The Shevilei Pinchas writes that there are practical implications of the fact that our tables are considered a *mizbei'ach*.

The Rema advises that it is a mitzvah to always have salt on the table prior to starting a meal. The *shulchan* is likened to a *mizbei'ach*, and therefore the food upon it to a *korban*. Every *korban* requires salt; as the Torah states, “On your every offering shall you offer salt” (Vayikra 2:13). Eating at a table literally elevates the table to the status of a *mizbei'ach* and the consumption of the meal to the level of bringing a *korban*. Salt is therefore a necessary substance.

The Panim Yafos explains how consuming a meal can be considered bringing a *korban* to Hashem. Food contains both physical and spiritual components. It provides physical sustenance for the person consuming it. And yet there is a spiritual component to food as well. The Gemara tells us that the manna, eaten by Bnei Yisrael throughout their sojourn in the Midbar, was *lechem abirim*, bread of the mighty. It was called thus because the angels, the *malachei hashareis*, also enjoyed it.

Animals can actually achieve a higher spiritual level if they are consumed by a human being than if they were brought as *korbanos* on the *Mizbei'ach*! The ultimate destination for a plant (*tzome'ach*) or animal (*chai*) is to be consumed by a human being. The food transcends any spiritual level it could otherwise ever possibly aspire to attain, as it achieves the status of a *medaber* when consumed by humans.

If food is consumed with proper *kavanah*, which is





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to strengthen its consumer in his service of Hashem, then the food rises to the level of a speaking human being, who has the ability to learn Torah and praise Hashem. However, if the proper thought and intent are lacking, the spiritual attainments achieved through the food are not accessed, and the food is denigrated.

Eating a meal, then, can actually serve to elevate the food to a higher and loftier level than it could have on the *Mizbei'ach* in the Mishkan or Mikdash.

Shlomo HaMelech says, “*Mi zos ha'nishkafa k'mo shachar yaffa k'levana bara k'chama eimah ka'nidgalos*, Who is this that gazes down like dawn, beautiful as the moon, brilliant as the sun, awesome as the bannered hosts?” (Shir HaShirim 6:10).

The Bnei Yissaschar writes that Klal Yisrael's secret to success is hinted at by the word *shulchan*, which is an acronym for the four entities listed in this *pasuk*: *shachar, levana, chama, nidgalos*. This *pasuk* that attests to the beauty of Klal Yisrael and to the strength of Hashem's love for us hints to the word *shulchan* to demonstrate the high regard that Hashem has for us because of our *shulchan*.

### The Spices of the Ketores

Rav Tzvi Hirsch of Zhiditchov discovers an astounding *remez* to the word *shulchan*. The *ketores*, the fragrant incense that was offered in the Beis HaMikdash, contained eleven spices. Maseches Kreisus elaborates on how we arrive at the number eleven. The Torah states: “*V'yomer Hashem el Moshe, kach lecha samim nataf u'shecheles v'chelbina samim u'levona zaka bad b'bad yehiyeh*, Hashem said to Moshe: Take for yourself spices — stacte, onycha, and galbanum — spices and pure frankincense: These shall all be of equal weight” (Shemos 30:34).

The command begins, “Take for yourself spices.” The use of the plural *samim*, spices, indicates that two spices (at least) must be taken. The *pasuk* then names three spices: *nataf, u'shecheles v'chelbina*. Adding these to the two *samim* gives a total of five spices.

The Torah then repeats the word *samim* to indicate that we double the number of spices listed thus far. This gives a total of ten spices. Finally, the *pasuk* mentions *u'levona zaka*, and pure frankincense, the eleventh spice.

Of all eleven spices, though, the Torah names only four: *shecheles, levona, chelbina, nataf*. There is great significance in the four species of spices the Torah specifically names. The *roshei teivos* of these four spices spell the word *shulchan*, table.

The Torah alludes to the idea that our table, our *shulchan*, is a *mizbei'ach*. The *ketores*, which was burned on the *Mizbei'ach HaZahav* (Golden Altar), hints to the word *shulchan*. This is because our tables can be likened to the *Mizbei'ach*.

The Vilna Gaon advances the same idea. He writes that since the destruction of the Beis HaMikdash, our private tables have assumed the role that had previously belonged to the *Mizbei'ach*. Our tables are *mechaper* in the same sense that the *Mizbei'ach* formerly did. The Torah alludes to this idea by explicitly naming only four of the spices that are offered on the *Mizbei'ach*: the four whose acronym spells the word *shulchan*.

### To Which Mizbei'ach is the Shulchan Compared?

The *remez* advanced by Rav Tzvi Hirsch of Zhiditchov and the Vilna Gaon indicates that the *mizbei'ach* our tables are facsimiles of is the *Mizbei'ach HaKetores*. As the *roshei teivos* of the four ingredients delineated in the production of the *Ketores* are an acronym for *shulchan*, clearly our *shulchan* is symbolic of the golden Incense Altar located in the *Heichal*. This would seem to be at odds with the way we presented the significance of the *shulchan* earlier. The Rema codifies the importance of placing salt on the table, commemorating the salt used for *korbanos*. The salt placed on *korbanos* was utilized only on the *Mizbei'ach HaNechoshes*, Copper Altar, that was situated in the *Chatzer*, Courtyard. No *korbanos*, and therefore no salt, were placed on the *Mizbei'ach HaKetores*. Clearly, the Rema's view is that our *shulchan* is symbolic of the *Mizbei'ach HaNechoshes*. Likewise, the idea that eating can elevate the life form that is being consumed, much like a *korban* that is consumed by the fiery *maarachah*, also is likening our tables to the *Mizbei'ach HaNechoshes*. To which

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*The divrei Torah that are spoken  
at the table, like the ketores,  
serve to atone for lashon hara that  
was also spoken at the shulchan.*

---

*Mizbei'ach*, then, are our tables likened, the *Mizbei'ach HaKetores* or the *Mizbei'ach HaNechoshes*?

The Ben Ish Chai postulates that our *shulchan* actually comprises attributes of both the *Mizbei'ach HaChitzon*, the copper Outer Altar upon which *korbanos* were brought, and the *Mizbei'ach HaPenimi*, the golden Inner Altar, upon which *ketores* was offered. Our table needs to be symbolic of both *Mizbechos* in the Beis HaMikdash. Therefore, at the table, one should engage in learning the *parsha* of the *ketores* and the *perek Eizehu Mekoman*. In this way, the *shulchan* can embody the nature of each of the two Altars.

The Ben Ish Chai then advises us what to do in a practical sense to elevate our physical table to the level of each of the Altars that stood in the Beis HaMikdash. He encourages the study of Torah at the table, as well as seating and feeding needy guests and attending to their needs. The Ben Ish Chai seems to be addressing how to access both attributes of the *Mizbei'ach* that are symbolized by our tables.

By studying Torah, we tap into our table's ability to symbolize the *Mizbei'ach HaKetores*, and by feeding the needy, we activate our table's power of representing the *Mizbei'ach HaNechoshes*.

Let us try to uncover how learning Torah at the table is symbolic of the incense that was brought on the Incense Altar. But first, let us study and appreciate the

importance and power of saying *divrei Torah* at the table in general.

### Why Is Learning at the Table So Important?

The Mishnah teaches:

*R' Shimon said: If three have eaten at the same table and have not spoken words of Torah there, it is as if they had eaten of offerings to dead idols, as it is said, "For all tables are full of vomit and filth, without the Omnipresent" (Yeshayahu 28:8). But if three have eaten at the same table and have spoken words of Torah there, it is as if they had eaten from the table of the Omnipresent, as it is said, "And He said to me, "This is the table that is before Hashem" (Yechezkel 41:22).*

The critical importance of discussing Torah at the table is clearly evident from this Mishnah. Not engaging in discussions of Torah denigrates the meal, rendering it akin to idol worship. Speaking *divrei Torah* at the table, on the other hand, elevates the meal to the status of eating directly from the table of the Ribbono shel Olam.

Earlier in Pirkei Avos, we are taught about the *kavanos*, intentions, we should have as we pursue our everyday, mundane, and routine activities. “R' Yose says: Let your fellow's money be as dear unto you as your own; apply yourself to study Torah, for it is not yours by inheritance; and let all your deeds be for the sake of Heaven.”

Every activity we engage in, whether it is going to sleep, eating a meal, exercising, or going to work, should be done with the intention of serving Hashem. Eating a meal in this manner, with the intent that the food and drink will provide strength, energy, and clarity of mind to serve Hashem properly, elevates the meal and makes it a holy endeavor. Why must we also engage in the study of Torah at the same time?

One answer to this question can be found in the writings of Rav Moshe ben Machir, in his *sefer Seder HaYom*. Discussing Torah at the table is the precise method by which one displays that he is eating a meal *l'shem Shamayim*! Merely thinking thus does not suffice. Someone who enjoys an entire meal yet does not voice any Torah thoughts shows that he is, in fact, eating to merely satisfy his hunger or his craving for delicious food.

Another approach can be found in the *sefer Mizmor LAsaf*. As mentioned, eating a meal with the *kavanah* to elevate the food can be likened to the bringing of a *korban* in the Beis HaMikdash.

When a *korban* was brought, it was accompanied by *shirah*, song. Songs were sung at the time of the *Avodah*, and the *shiros* were an inherent part of the offerings. The Torah is likened to song, as the *pasuk* states, “Even by night a song to Him is with me” (Tehillim 42:9).

Thus, the *divrei Torah* at the table provide the musical accompaniment that is required for every *korban*.

### Torah as the Ketores

We would like to present a new approach for the importance of *divrei Torah* at the table and how it allows our table to specifically symbolize the *Mizbei'ach HaKetores*.

The *Shevilei Pinchas* explains the connection between *divrei Torah* at a meal and the *ketores* based



upon a *sugya* in *Maseches Yoma*. The Torah states: “Aharon took as Moshe had spoken and ran to the midst of the congregation, and behold! the plague had begun among the people. He placed the incense and provided atonement for the people” (Bamidbar 17:12).

Clearly, the *ketores* provided atonement. The Gemara asks for which sin the *ketores* provided atonement and answers that the *ketores* atoned for the *aveirah* of speaking *lashon hara*.

Amazingly, *Maseches Arachin* teaches that another method whereby one can atone for the sin of speaking *lashon hara* is to learn Torah! The *pasuk* states, “*Marpeh lashon eitz chaim*, A soothing tongue is a tree of life” (Mishlei 15:4).

The word *lashon* is a reference to *lashon hara*, as the *pasuk* states, “Their tongue is like a drawn arrow” (Yirmiyahu 9:7). The *eitz chaim* in the *pasuk* quoted above refers to the Torah, as an earlier *pasuk* states, “*Eitz chaim hi la’machazikim bah*, It is a tree of life to those who grasp it” (Mishlei 3:18).

Thus, “*Marpeh lashon eitz chai*” can be understood to read that the *refuah*, the cure, for *lashon hara* is Torah study.

*Ketores* and Torah study both can atone for *lashon hara*. No wonder, then, that the *divrei Torah* at our *shulchan* elevate it to the status of the *Mizbei’ach HaKetores*, with the words of Torah considered to be actual *ketores*.

### Why Is There a Need for Torah at the Table?

We have demonstrated the importance of *divrei Torah* and that they can atone for *lashon hara* just as the *ketores* did. But why must it happen during a meal?

There is a mitzvah of *talmud Torah*, to study Torah every single day and every available moment. This study of Torah can very well serve to provide *kapparah* for *lashon hara*, as one can fulfill his mitzvah of *talmud Torah* at any time during the day. Why, then, must one engage in the study of Torah specifically at a meal?

The *Shevilei Pinchas* explains that the Torah’s prohibition against speaking *lashon hara* stems from the *pasuk*, “*Lo seilech rachil b’amecha*, You shall not be a gossipmonger among your people” (Vayikra 19:16). *Targum Onkelos* translates this *pasuk* as “*Lah sichul kurtzin*.” Rashi explains the *Targum*. The use of the word *kurtzin*, says Rashi, is akin to its use in two other places: *Some Chaldean men came forth and defamed the Jews* (Daniel 3:8) and *[That man] went to inform the king* (Berachos 58a).

Rashi explains that there was a custom to eat a portion of food in the home of the person to whom one would present slanderous words. This served as confirmation that the *lashon hara* he was spreading was true. His eating there demonstrated that he could be trusted to report accurate slander, and that he was

not fabricating lies regarding the people of whom he was speaking ill. The *Targum* is referring to this snack, which was called *kurtzin*. The word *kurtzin* is derived from the *pasuk* “*koreitz b’einav*, he winks with his eyes” (Mishlei 6:13). It is a term applicable to someone who slanders others by spreading *lashon hara*, since those who disparage others will often wink or gesture in some manner, conveying the slanderous message with mere gesticulation.

Apparently, *lashon hara* was accompanied by food. The person speaking *lashon hara* would partake of food at the table of those who listened to the *lashon hara*.

We can now understand why the discussions of Torah that atone for *lashon hara* must take place at a meal. The rectification for the sin that occurred at one’s table must take place in the same setting.

## Speaking *divrei Torah* at the table, on the other hand, elevates the meal to the status of eating directly from the table of the Ribbono shel Olam.

We can now gain a new appreciation for how speaking Torah at the table elevates the level of the *shulchan* to that of the *Mizbei’ach HaKetores*. The *divrei Torah* that are spoken at the table, like the *ketores*, serve to atone for *lashon hara* that was also spoken at the *shulchan*.

### Klal Yisrael Was Saved by the Divrei Torah

The sin that Klal Yisrael committed at the time of Purim was that they enjoyed the party given by Achashveirosh. They should not have participated in the festivities, since the very essence of the party was to celebrate what Achashveirosh believed: that the Beis HaMikdash would never be rebuilt.

Incredibly, at the very moment the Jews were sinning, while they were eating, drinking, and enjoying a party celebrating *Churban Beis HaMikdash*, Hashem was setting the stage for their salvation! Achashveirosh commanded Vashti to appear before the revelers, and her refusal to comply led to her execution. This enabled Esther to enter the palace as her replacement, where she was able to orchestrate the events that led to Haman’s downfall.

At the very time and place that the *aveirah* was being committed, at that very party where the Jews of

Shushan were sinning, Hashem was planting the seeds of redemption. How did Klal Yisrael merit such remarkable Divine intervention if they were in the midst of grave sin at that very moment? The Ben Yehoyada explains that the merit for their salvation is found in the *divrei Torah* and *zemiros* with which the *Yidden* elevated their Shabbos meals.

The Gemara includes this seemingly extemporaneous fact in its discussion about Vashti’s demise to advise us that this was the basis for the *yeshuah*. Klal Yisrael merited salvation specifically because of the *divrei Torah* that are shared at the Shabbos table. Relating *divrei Torah* at the *seudas Shabbos* elevated their *shulchan* to the level of the *Mizbei’ach*, which was in turn *mechaper* for their *aveiros*. They would then be worthy to be saved from Haman’s evil decree.


The Ksav Sofer takes a similar approach in explaining why the festival of Purim was established to specifically be celebrated with *mishteh* and *simchah*, with festive food and drink. It was the *zechus* of the *divrei Torah* and *zemiros* that Klal Yisrael brought to their Shabbos tables that allowed their salvation to begin at the very party where their sins were being committed. We commemorate this by celebrating with a festive meal, with a *seudah* replete with delicacies. Klal Yisrael was saved because of the *divrei Torah* repeated at the *seudah*, and we honor this by enjoying a *seudah* prefaced by *divrei Torah* as well.

We can now understand the depth of the custom codified by the Rema. There is a profound connection between the recitation of *divrei Torah* and *seudas Purim*. We need to engage in the study of Torah prior to enjoying the *seudah* on Purim because the *yeshuah* came about only because of the *divrei Torah* that were repeated at the *seudah*! Our Purim *seudah* is a commemoration of this fact, and therefore must begin with *divrei Torah*!

### A Remez to Mordechai

With this new understanding, we can now more fully appreciate the Torah’s *remez* to Mordechai that is brought in the Gemara. The Gemara states that the *remez* to Mordechai in the Torah is in the *pasuk*, “*Vatah kach lecha besamim rosh mar d’ror*, Now you, take for yourself choice spices” (Shemos 30:23). The *Targum* on the words *mar d’ror* is *mirah dachyah*, an allusion to Mordechai.

This *remez* is appropriately placed in the discussion of the fragrant *besamim*, since the salvation came about because of the *divrei Torah* that were discussed at the *seudas Shabbos* at the time of Purim. The *divrei Torah* were the *ketores* that served to elevate their *shulchan* to the level of the *Mizbei’ach HaKetores*, which was *mechaper*, ultimately leading to the *geulah*.

May we too be *zocheh* to elevate our *shulchan* to the level of both *Mizbechos*, and, in doing so, merit the ultimate salvation of the *Geulah Sheleimah bimheirah v’yameinu, amen*. 



This article was excerpted with permission from *The Concealed and the Revealed* by Rabbi Daniel Glatstein, ArtScroll Publications.

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# S.A.H.I.

## The Gift of Giving



By Rafi Sackville



Avraham Hayon, co-founder of SAHI



Elad, Re'ut and Adi

The streetlights along Eliezer Kashani street in Armon Hanatziv, Yerushalayim, shed a patchwork of intermittent halos of illumination that partially hide our destination. It's an unusually balmy February night, and I judge the distance from the community center by the increasingly loud sounds of rollicking teenage laughter. On our right, stairs suddenly appear. I have arrived.

Years ago, these sounds might have been considered an aberration in a neighborhood like this, but not today. The source of laughter emanates from a group of kids ranging from 13 till their mid-twenties. The center is one of the many homes of S.A.H.I., a non-profit organization whose motto is "the greatest thing in the world is to do good for someone" and whose logo roughly translates to "special chesed unit." On the one hand, the good these youngsters are about to do this evening is quite extraordinary; on the other hand, what might seem extraordinary in our eyes has become commonplace for them.

What are they doing? Having collected basic food staples from supermarkets and donors, they'll bag and deliver them to needy families. They'll knock on their doors before running away in order not

to be seen, for this is their understanding of *matan b'seser*, which is receiving a gift from someone without their knowing who the giver is. What is ironic is that many of these youngsters come from families whose socio-economic background qualifies them for just this kind of assistance.

From the community center, a total of 60 bags will find their way across the neighborhood this evening. Around the same time across Israel, S.A.H.I. will deliver approximately 2,500 bags of food; on major holidays, the number can grow to around 7,000.

From where does the concept of developing such a program emanate? What individuals have the willpower to transform the darkened streets of poor neighborhoods and fill them with laughter and light? What type of people are driven enough to show young people that it is a privilege to be able to come to the aid of others?

Avraham Hayon, the co-founder of S.A.H.I., came to a revelation of sorts on the last day of his military service in 1999. He had been deployed in Lebanon and found himself walking with a friend down towards Bezet Beach from Rosh Hanikra.

"After what we have accomplished in Lebanon, our mothers are going to sleep

better for the next three years," Avraham's friend said in passing. That feeling of just having given so much to the country gave Avraham a meaning and feeling of purpose he hadn't experienced before.

For the next few years, he searched in vain to re-experience that feeling of altruistic purpose. He dabbled in all kinds of work. He was almost content enough to continue working as an event organizer when his father fell sick. Avraham was struck by the frailty of life, knowing that what he wanted to do most was to give to others. When his father passed away, he prayed for guidance. His prayers bore fruit.

A friend insisted he meet Oded Weiss. Weiss had been working with youth for many years. He had come to the conclusion that what worked best with them was getting them to give to others. He wanted to take this simple idea to the streets of Israel because he had seen how his micro efforts had led to greater unity among disparate groups.

At the time, Avraham and Oded were both living near Kiryat Gat, some 35 miles south of Tel Aviv. They decided to go to the poorest, most neglected neighborhood they could find. Like trackers in the bush, they drove around looking for signs of youth activity. They located a park which

was strewn with empty alcohol bottles and cigarette stubs. That night, they began a bonfire not far from where they'd found the detritus of lost childhoods.

What they didn't do was approach or encroach on the kids' territory. They waited from 7 to 11 p.m., when there began a slow drift of kids in their direction. At first, they thought Avraham and Oded were policemen or detectives.

"We asked them if they knew any poor families in the area because we wanted to help them out," Avraham recalled. "We told them we were looking for partners to help us locate people whom even the welfare department wouldn't be able to find. We said all of this with 100 shekels in our pockets."

The kids instinctively trusted Avraham and Oded and began listing all the families they knew were in dire straits.

"And these kids...it's as if they had been waiting for just this kind of moment for someone to extract the good in them. And very early on, I noticed how they thrived when doing good for others. You could see how it affected them for the good. They came away with a positive high. After years in this field, I'm used to hearing some of them say they've become 'addicted to doing good.'"

He added, "We tell the kids who are



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distributing packages that they are part of a special neighborhood chesed unit, and that their mission is simple: there shouldn't be one hungry child or one lonely old person in their neighborhood.

"For example, what inevitably happens is a kid might tell us that he knows of a boy who has no father and whose mother is poor. He's about to become bar mitzvah. We'll organize the celebration for the family. Or we might ask if any of them have seen people looking for food in the garbage. 'Of course,' comes the reply. They start to see their own neighborhoods through different lenses."

It's a win-win situation; S.A.H.I. helps build the confidence of young people, and their communities benefit by not only being helped but also by the streets becoming safer.

S.A.H.I. is also partnered by the Ministry of Education and local councils, particularly with the councils' department of youth at risk.

Avraham mentions that some of the S.A.H.I. graduates were killed on the 7th of October.

"We have groups in Netivot, Sderot, Sdot HaNegev, Ashkelon, Be'er Sheva. Since that tragic day, our food packages have increased in number."

Today, there are 1,500 active S.A.H.I. members. Since October 7, they have added hundreds more young volunteers who were evacuated from both the north and south of the country.

I have met people who have been to places like the Dead Sea and Eilat, who have reported on the waywardness of young evacuees. They tell of terrible behavior. They tell of kids whose childhoods have been swept from under their feet. These are the children S.A.H.I. is at pains to help.

The unique operating model that works with neighborhood youth has proven itself in times of national crisis. During Covid, S.A.H.I. became an auxiliary force for many local authorities. The same is true now as the country is fighting the war in Gaza.

After October 7, basic needs were provided to communities in the south. Then S.A.H.I. began developing groups for evacuee youth in the centers they had been sent to.

S.A.H.I. is extremely effective in implementing a framework for these youngsters. The aim of the organization is to take these traumatized teenagers who have been left without regular schedules and change the narrative of their life from being victims to becoming givers.

As one of the evacuated youth told

Avraham, "Some people need help more than us. That's why I'm here."

**There are three** pillars to S.A.H.I.'s philosophy and to what they want to bestow upon their members. The first pillar leads a young person to find *Meaning* in their lives where none previously existed. The second pillar is to give them a sense of *Belonging* where they were previously connected to nothing other than their immediate groups of friends. Finally, S.A.H.I. helps give them a sense of *Control* over their destiny.

I had learnt all of this earlier that afternoon over a cup of coffee with Avraham in the middle of town. Three hours later,

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*"After years in this field, I'm used to hearing some of them say they've become 'addicted to doing good.'"*

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we were walking down the stairs in the direction of that wonderfully happy noise.

Opening the door to the community center was like awakening to the first spring day after a harsh winter. We felt bathed in warmth. Between the raucous sound of ping pong games, the clacking of pool balls, deafening music, and kids running from corner to corner in a game of chase, we sat with Re'ut, who is 25 years old and has been volunteering/working for S.A.H.I. for 11 years.

Re'ut exudes leadership, resolve, and positivity. Yet behind the radiant smile, her face cannot belie a lifetime of struggle and difficulty. Her eyes match the story she tells me of the hardships of her childhood.

"My parents have never been very healthy. My father suffers from diabetes. My mother is still recovering from two operations on her back. They were there when I was young, but with their issues, it was difficult for them to always be on hand. Our financial situation was a burden, and my father was always working. I have no memories of the two of us ever doing fun things together."

None of what she tells me is spoken with malice. Re'ut loves her parents. Growing up on the streets, she's learned to see the world in black and white; she accepts them for who they are. Today, she lives by herself but close enough to her parents to drop in whenever they need her help.

"I was at school, but I wasn't. I'd walk into class and the teacher would want to throw me out," she relates. "She would seat me next to her because she was expecting me to disrupt the class, and she thought she could stop me if I sat close by."

"I started hanging out on the streets. I'd roam them at night doing things I shouldn't have been doing. Some of them bordered on criminal. I don't even want to tell you some of things I got into."

One day, out of boredom, Re'ut joined a friend and came to S.A.H.I.

"I fell in love with it all," she says. "The same friends I made 11 years ago are still with me today. Some of them have kids, and they still come here."

For the first time in her life, Re'ut experienced what it meant to help others. It ignited a flame in her that is still alight today.

Re'ut served her army years close to her parents. She mentions that she completed her army service; many conscripts from difficult backgrounds oftentimes drop out and return to the streets. Those running S.A.H.I. understand the difficulty of conscripting kids from poor neighborhoods. There is a tendency for many to drop out quickly. There are no structures of support in place. S.A.H.I. fills this gap by guiding them through every conceivable intricacy of becoming a soldier.

This point shouldn't be lightly dismissed. As a homeroom teacher to 11th graders, I've accompanied students to the conscription office and helped them through what can be a difficult process.

Sitting with us on the couch were Adi and Elad, who echoed Re'ut's description of childhoods without hobbies or constructive things to do. S.A.H.I. has the know-how and astuteness to harness the almost tactile emptiness of their lives and direct them into discovering themselves – what they like, what they are good at, and how they should go about living a life of positivity.

Without being asked to, Yonatan, an eighth grader with abundant energy and whose misguided aim with a ping pong racket had earlier sent an orange missile

flying by my right ear, grabbed a blue bag and began filling it with food items. Soon the game tables were moved aside, and the room transmogrified into a sea of blue bags and tables stacked to the brim with flour, pasta and preserves. Within minutes, they were placed in the center of the room and the kids circled around them.

A game was played where each participant had to bestow either a blessing or a compliment on his or her neighbor. Re'ut explained how easy it is to give and receive blessings but always harder to accept a compliment. Kids who are raised without self-confidence find receiving compliments difficult.

Once the game was over, there was a change in atmosphere. Each person was asked in the name of whom they wanted these bags of food dedicated. The names of lost relatives and soldiers were recited alongside ill family members and friends. It was akin to sanctifying the bags of food with greater meaning than the sum of their contents, as if they were bestowing upon them a holiness of spirit and prayer, a *mitzvah* whose impact and significance they may not, still in their tender years, be fully conscious of.

Volunteer drivers appeared behind us. There was a clatter of activity. Bags were grabbed. The room suddenly cleared. The kids were off into the night, not to wander the streets, or to involve themselves in petty crime, drink and drugs: they were off to do good; to make others know they are cared for.

I walked to the top of the stairs and watched as the cars drove away. Eliezer Kashani street returned to its default state of quiet darkness. As the trees rustled themselves to rest in the light wind, I tried to imagine what this very street must have looked like before S.A.H.I. blew a fresh breeze along its winding route and into the lives of the teenagers I had met. I had trouble conjuring images of roaming gangs of kids searching in vain for the next thrill. All my mind's eye could elicit were the happy sounds of laughter and blue bags of food that S.A.H.I. had magically introduced into their lives. These images remain with me still. They signify hope and a new generation of youngsters who care not only about those around them but the country as a whole. ▲

*If you wish to learn more about SAHI, visit <https://sahi-israel.org/en/>*

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*Rafi Sackville, formerly from Cedarhurst, teaches in Yeshivat Horev in Yerushalayim.*





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# Showering the Soldiers With Love

## A Follow-Up Conversation With Sruly Lieber

***The last time we spoke, you and your friends had sent pizza to half the IDF, were working on doing the same for the IDF families in the Shomron, and started a mishloach manos initiative for all of them as well. How is that going?***

Sruly Lieber: Incredible! With the help of my friends, family, business associates, and with a large donation from an amazing Lawrence resident, we have been delivering thank you dinners to about 60% of the Shomron so far. We hope to not leave out any IDF families in the remaining yishuvim. I wish I could show your readers the videos they sent us, thanking us for the love and support – the moms and the kids. They are very touched that we thought of them from New York. It's really special.

***Amazing! What's this about showers, though? Sounds like a far cry from pizza!***

So, Hashem works in mysterious but sometimes very obvious ways. Not ready to go home, but on the way to the airport after my son's bar mitzvah, I struck up a conversation with the friendly taxi driver. He was curious about what we were doing in Israel and what we had done with our time there. We told him a little bit about the pizza initiative, and he was very moved. He then proceeded to tell us that he was the father of an IDF soldier, and that he was also actively working

on something, but doing it on the side, on his own, with just a few friends, all of them also fathers of IDF soldiers. They were keenly aware of how many weeks – in some cases, months – that many soldiers had gone without showers or the ability to wear clean clothes in the first few weeks and months of the war. The dirty clothes and body odor leads to low morale in the units and makes them feel...well, you can imagine.

***Yes, we can all imagine. And these are our heroes! So what can they do about this?***

In the beginning of the war, the fathers started working extra shifts at night to make enough money to build mobile showers on the back of trailers hooked up to their SUVs. They use hunting tents with zippers and just the soldiers' heads stuck out of the top of the tent. They bring them soap, shampoo, deodorant, fresh towels, new undergarments, new socks, plus snacks and drinks for eating on the long lines for those waiting their turn. They connect a showerhead to a hose and a heater for hot water! They drive to the border just inside Gaza where many units and platoons come to meet them. Can you imagine – hot showers in Gaza all coordinated with the IDF!

It's very different than pizza, though. The logistics are much harder, as is the coordination. The IDF has called numerous times over the last few months and

then canceled at the last minute because of missions.

I will tell you, though, that these IDF fathers don't get discouraged. They stay ready and waiting at all times to be called upon.

***What's your involvement with the initiative?***

Simple – I asked who else was helping him besides for his three friends, and he said, "Nobody!"

I jumped at the obvious hashgacha pratis of being in his cab, asked him for his number and told him I'd be in touch. He definitely did not understand what that meant.

***What happened next?***

You think Jews who donate pizza to soldiers and IDF families for \$18 per pie wouldn't want to sponsor a hot shower, soap, shampoo, new socks and underwear, a fresh towel, deodorant, toothpaste and snacks all for \$15 per soldier?! My WhatsApp status started blowing up, of course! Donations from my awesome friends (and their families), my extended family, and incredible customers and colleagues just started rolling in. One of my friends from North Woodmere collected donations through his mom who collected from her friends in New Jersey where he grew up. A Lawrence mom put the initiative on her friends chat and



they all donated immediately. I've had to turn away donations because these fathers have been completely overwhelmed by the generosity.

### ***That's truly amazing. But is the project now on hold?***

No. We've provided showers and these items to a few hundred chayalim so far, but at the moment, I'm just waiting for them to finish using the last few thousand dollars we sent them before they will accept replenishment. In the interim, we have stopped them from working night shifts to pay for this on their own, which is really great. They send us pictures and videos of the operation and clear all purchases and uses of funds with me. I ask local rabbonim *shailahs* when they pop up about using the donor funds for certain things along the way. They are being extremely intelligent and thoughtful with the donations. For example,

**"I've had to turn away donations because these fathers have been completely overwhelmed by the generosity."**

some soldiers eating the snacks on the wait-line asked if we could get them cigarettes the next time we come. I asked the rabbonim and was told to pass on using donor funds for those items. But when they asked if they could each take multiple deodorants back into Gaza after showering...we loaded them up!

### ***Well, the readers can't see the videos the soldiers sent to you, so tell us how the chayalim react when they arrive from the battlefield and receive this huge chessed.***

It's indescribable. They literally...sing in the shower! They have this moment where they begin to feel human again. They enjoy it immensely! They use the items, they take some extras with them, they feel refreshed, and they give endless thanks. It's a beautiful thing. I'm honored and humbled to even have a tiny role in it. A beautiful bonus to the operation was that chayalim borrowed the phones of the fathers running the operation so they could call home for a few minutes each – many for the first time in weeks since the war broke out. Many phone batteries were drained in the process.

### ***It really sounds like a spectacular chessed. So is there any growth possible here – can others still get involved?***

Well, first off, we have already tried to "build a better mousetrap." With the help and endless support of

Electric & Beyond, we fabricated (at fabricators' cost) a portable aluminum shower-stall as a prototype. The wind was affecting the shower-tents and so we built this and tested it. It's better, it allows better stability and better privacy, but it's cumbersome. You need more people to help with it. We are still testing and tweaking it. The soldiers, however, didn't care. They were so thrilled with the new setup they started writing thank you notes on the booth with Sharpies!

### ***What's going on currently with the project? How are things changing?***

In recent weeks, there has been a big turnover with many units and brigades being pulled out of Gaza. Some go to bases which have showers, and many were sent home, to their own showers, baruch Hashem! But they are getting replaced with fresh troops all the time that were in training and so this will still unfortunately be needed in certain areas and appreciated for a while longer. We clearly see it will take time to fully defeat this evil. There is also an escalating potential for war in other areas, as we all know. In fact, my sources in the IDF tell me they were already given a date for the next draft, so the next phase of the war is clearly being planned as we speak. Also, the IDF has begun installing showers on bases that didn't have any or didn't have enough. They are now prioritizing needs that they couldn't focus on at the beginning of the war. But that's on bases; this initiative is mobile, for those that don't get to go to bases or go home for longer periods. As far as further donations and growth of this initiative, I'm happy to discuss it with anyone who wants to email me. I can't do any of this without support.

### ***Anything else you'd like to add?***

Yes, I just want to tell all the people from the Five Towns that have been sending gear, boots, tzitzis, tefillin, beef jerky, thermals, helmets, drones, and duffles inside of duffles that have duffles stuffed with duffles, organizing warehouses and raising money for Israeli causes for four months plus – that they are incredible and inspire me to keep going and not stop working on these initiatives. I want them to know that what they are doing is truly needed and appreciated by everyone in Israel and all of klal Yisrael. I saw a sign someone wrote: "One day, your children will ask you what you did for Israel after October 7. I hope you are proud of the answer." We are all part of this story, all in our own way, all still very connected right now to our brothers and sisters in the Holy Land, but we can't stop helping on our end while they continue fighting. Even if we are the ones feeling fatigued, they need us. Together is how we win. Go send them mishloach manos and shower them with love.

*B'yachad n'natzeach! Am Yisrael chai!* ▲

*To discuss the showers initiative, pizza to soldiers or IDF families in the Shomron, or Matanos L'evyonim to families in Sderot, Netivot, Ofakim and Ashkelon, contact Sruely Lieber at [slieber7@gmail.com](mailto:slieber7@gmail.com).*

*Mishloach Manos: [PizzaIDF.org/Purim](http://PizzaIDF.org/Purim)*





# School of Thought

## Bring Them Home Now

By Barbara Deutsch

The attacks began October 7 in Israel; it was early morning. Two hundred fifty three hostages were taken, and as of now, there may or not be 132 babies, children, women and men remaining captive.

It's almost five months of daily agony and pain for each and every one of their friends and family. I have learned the hard lesson with experience as a teacher that when talking to people in pain, the words have to be carefully chosen. It is never a good idea to personalize in situations where one thankfully and luckily has no firsthand knowledge.

A person can exhibit empathy or sympathy but not understanding of the horrors of a terrible experience.

A popular tribute that forges connection to the hostage journey is the wearing of metal tags with many of them messaging "Bring Them Home." On our most recent trip to Israel, we bought about 10 tags from a small shop on Ben Yehudah. I kept one for myself and gave the rest to friends and colleagues.

The tags are among a plethora of symbols and posters that serve as reminders that the hostages are still missing and not home.

Since the war began, every week, there are shul, school and informally formed groups of people who go to Israel to volunteer and witness. They pay shiva calls, pick fruit, pack sandwiches, and visit the horrible landscape that was once the site of the music festival. The ravaged villages are left intact; they still look the way they did when they were destroyed on October 7. This is a day of infamy.

The village landscape is filled with red and brown bloodstains, scarred bullet-ridden walls and broken everything. Discarded toys, dishes, thrown about furniture, torn pictures and more; these artifacts of destruction fill the ghostly rooms and fields. A colleague on one of the recent missions described fields filled with roaming cats. The images, too painful to view, forced her back onto the bus.

Every year, our school plans months in

advance for the Salute to Israel Parade; this year is of particular significance. More than ever, everyone who can needs to show up. Israel is becoming more and more isolated in its "war until all of the hostages are returned" position. When we march as a school, everyone wears matching t-shirts and carries banners proclaiming our love for Israel, our beloved homeland.

This year, we thought that as an enhancement to the t-shirts, the marchers would wear the dog tags; we speculated that we would need about 300 of them. A flaw in the plan but a bonus and a potential fabulous outcome would be that ALL of the hostages would be released and home. There would be no need for the tags.

We needed a Plan B.

We are going to the bar mitzvah of our grandson Yosef (of the hat) in early April. If at that time there would still be a need to wear the tags, we could replenish our stockpile. For now, we would sell them to raise *tzedakah*; all of the proceeds could go to support the hostage families.

My dear friend Dasi was going to Israel for a wedding and to volunteer. She had noticed me wearing my hostage tag and wanted to get one for herself; the tag has some heft and the message is clear, "Bring Them Home." Because I knew she was planning to get one for herself, I asked if she would mind purchasing tags for HANC.

I described the store and the proprietor – a thin, kippah-wearing Sefardi with a scruffy beard – the block, along the left side of Ben Yehudah, a store filled with bric-a-brac and Israeli souvenirs. Yes, it sounds like a bunch of other stores along the strip, and that's why my friend wandered lost up and down the block.

One of the random storekeepers from a store called Danny Boy approached her offering to help. My friend explained what she was looking for hostage dog tags; he immediately understood what she wanted and told her that he had them for sale in his store.

"Lady, since the war I have no *parnas*-sa. We are struggling to put food on the

table. Please, lady, buy it from me."

My soft-hearted friend agreed to get the tags from Danny Boy; he gave her an unbeatable price: \$3.00 a tag for a total of \$1,000; we would fundraise the cost. "Dasi, how do we get the money to pay for them to you?"

We never found out a payment method as the remarkable Dasi donated the entire 300 tags to HANC.

The package came in two shifts. Dasi brought 60 home and the rest were shipped and in our hands within the week. We decided to sell them for \$5.00 each with a soft initial sale. A few of our colleagues would wear them, the HANC Student Council would sell them in the Student Snack Shack, and we would gift them to the security guards and our beloved Santiago, Head Custodian.

Someone even posted a picture on Facebook of Santiago wearing it proudly.

The tags are selling briskly; everyone wants one and most order five – for my husband, my kids, my friend, my aunt! Every penny will be given to hostage families.

The purpose of this reflection is not to tell a story about a small business venture and tags. When someone is lost and broken, you must keep saying their name, or the man, woman, child or baby will disappear from memory.

Days, weeks, and now months are going by, and reminders that were in the forefront and in the daily headlines are slowly fading. The posters on the store windows are worn, and there are no longer daily mentions of confrontation when they are torn down. Walking down the runway path into Israel, you are jolted by the series of the beautiful smiling faces that greet you. Most of those hostages are still awaiting rescue.

Every tag we sell is a reminder that loved ones are waiting. Wearing a tag tells the world that the hostages are not on the backburner but front and center for anyone to see.

I am someone who believes that the world is a big puzzle in which we all are a part. At a *shiva* call to a West Hempstead



family with whom we have a long history dating back to bungalow days, we found out that the oldest daughter who had been a former student at HANC just got engaged – joy amid sorrow. Ironically, this daughter was named after her paternal grandmother, Batsheva, born two days after the grandmother passed away.

Before Batsheva was born, the parents played the usual guessing game: Is it a boy? Girl?

The mom and dad even had a name picked out; everyone was so positive it would be a boy.

Batsheva's *chattan* is named Eitan, the name that had been chosen for her had the pundits been right.

Hashem had it all figured out.

We pray that the coming days bring freedom for all who are enslaved, peace and opportunities to dance on the cat-free fields with the Batshevas and Eitans in our magnificent community.

The *mitzvah* promoted by Dasi looking for the tag, buying it from a hungry storekeeper, donating the money to pay for it and thereby setting the stage for more tags to be sold, and hostages to be remembered – all of these acts of *chesed* bring together our Jewish family in a united plea to bring them home!

*Mrs. Barbara Deutsch is currently the associate principal at HANC 609 and a longtime reflective educator, parent, grandparent, and new great-grandparent. Even after all these years, she still loves what she does and looks forward to working with kids every single day.*



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# "I Love the Village, and I Really Care"

## Why Deputy Mayor Paris Popack is running for mayor of the Village of Lawrence

BY SUSAN SCHWAMM

This week, Deputy Mayor of Lawrence Paris Popack announced her candidacy to run for mayor of Lawrence in the upcoming election. We spoke with Deputy Mayor Popack about her accomplishments on the board of the Village of Lawrence and her vision for the future of Lawrence.

***Deputy Mayor Popack, you've been deputy mayor for one year. How long have you been on the Village Board?***

I've been on the board for four years – one of them as deputy mayor. Elections are going to be held in June, and I am excited to pursue my candidacy for mayor of Lawrence. Mayor Edelman is "termed out" in June due to term limits. As deputy mayor, I believe that I am the best person to take over as mayor of Lawrence.

You know, so many times, people walk up to me and say, "Oh, we want you to be the next mayor." They're counting on it. They want it. They're going to support it. From that standpoint, it's encouraging.

***Being on the board was not your first foray into public service.***

I've always been a "doer." My community service started way back when, helping Chabad with their dinners and luncheons. I am still doing that, and I'm so happy to volunteer and help Chabad.

My husband and I have lived here for 29 years and have raised our four children here. When my kids were young, I would help Ellen Basch with all the musical productions at their school, Shulamith. She was the director, and I was her sidekick. That was volunteer, but that was a "nine-month job" because we spent the summers rewriting her plays. I did that for six years.

I became very involved with the tennis club. I was president of the women's tennis club – I used to go to the monthly park commission meetings and represent tennis, advocating for the needs of the people in that club. I didn't just stop at tennis. I spoke up about golf because my father was an avid golfer. My whole life, he was an athlete, and golf was one of the things he did, so I had an understanding and appreciation of the sport. I spoke up several times at the meetings about golf. I don't think Howard Siskind at the time was used to that, and he pulled me aside afterwards. He said, "You

really care. Do you want to be a park commissioner?" He recommended me to the mayor at the time to appoint me as a park commissioner. That was my next step into "politics," and that was really exciting.

As a park commissioner, I worked to keep the membership happy and made sure things were running smoothly. Back then, the chairman was Howard Siskind; now, it's Dr. Sheldon Genack. I was on the park commission for at least three years.

During that time, I worked with Play for PINK, which is an organization that helps people who have breast cancer. I believe that almost all of the money raised goes to research. I raised money to put up banners around the tennis courts and sold banners on the court to raise money for them. I organized a women's competition and a men's tournament to raise money. I sponsored it, and we had swag bags and designed t-shirts every year. At one of the luncheons that I organized, people from the Village of Lawrence approached me and asked me, "Would you consider reviving the Lawrence Association?"

***I remember those mailings you used to send out.***

Yes, those were great! We called the Lawrence Association mailings "The Watchdog," and we sent it out every month. I was head of the Lawrence Association for four years. I really revived it.

The Lawrence Association is the watchdog for the community. You're there for the residents, for them to know everything about what is going on in the Village. We had meetings every month, sometimes every other month. We would bring down the police and the fire department and other speakers, and we would address local issues, like flooding in the area.

***As president of the Lawrence Association, you say you were representing the residents. Were you at odds with the mayor and***





*At the Play for Pink Men's Tennis Tournament that Paris organized*



*Riding in a car at the Memorial Day Parade*



*Paris, right, posing with Henya Storch and Gad Elbaz at the Memorial Day Parade*

### ***the trustees at that point as the community "watchdog"?***

It could be. I pushed them to fight overdevelopment, so that may have been a time when I was possibly at odds with the trustees and the mayor. I was very vocal about stopping the "Sixth Town." I felt – and still do – that it is so important to keep the Five Towns a suburban area.

I believe that the newsletter that I sent out every month was really important to let people know what was going on in the village. I would love for the Village itself to put out this type of information – although they can't be the watchdog of themselves – but to have something online where people can get information on what is going on in the Village. That's something I will be working on as mayor.

### ***I know you're also involved with running the Memorial Day Parade.***

I am a patriot, and I used to take my children to the parade every year. And every year, I noticed that no one was there. I felt ashamed inside. Why wasn't anyone there to honor the fallen heroes who lost their lives so we could live in this beautiful country? As leader of the Lawrence Association, I stepped in, and I started working with Lawrence-Cedarhurst Fire Department on improving the parade. And by the second year of me being involved, we had doubled, tripled the attendance.

I got the schools involved. I personally went with the fire chief to all of the schools and brought them binders to show how they could be involved. We got Chabad to be involved. I hired different acts, mariachi bands, the tall guy, the veterans in their cars... My husband and I put our own money into this because I was so passionate about improving the parade.

The Village of Cedarhurst also is very involved – especially JoMarie Capone – but I worked to make it more "festive." Henya Storch worked with me on the parade; she's wonderful.

### ***Let's go back to four years ago, when you were approached to run as trustee of the Village of Lawrence.***

When they approached me, I told them that I like what I'm doing for the Lawrence Association. I like doing my newsletter. I like that I'm representing the residents in a way that feels really good and productive. I was an activist. And I felt like, "Well, if I become a trustee, can I be an activist?" Because I'm really an activist, I think, first. And as trustee, I've worked on that balance – being a trustee for the Village and also being an "activist" at the same time.

Take, for example, the Sixth Town. I always say that we're suburban, not urban. We all work hard, we work hard for our families, but what are we leaving them if this becomes an urban community? I'm not against development per se, but in our neighborhood, the overdevelopment is the problem. It's not responsible development. I'm against people being able to buy whatever they want and putting up whatever they want.

At the time, four years ago, I was told that, as a trustee, I could really make more of a difference. And I see that that has been true. There's voting power. We can get things done; we can implement policy. We have access to elected officials. There's a lot that we do.

### ***What are accomplishments that you're most proud of over the past few years as trustee and deputy mayor?***

I am really proud of my efforts in stopping overdevelopment by the Woodmere Club and now over the tracks. I worked with this with Rena Safra, and we were very vocal about this. We got officials to take notice. Hundreds of residents showed up to our meetings. We organized the largest meeting ever in the Town of Hempstead with Supervisor Don Clavin; it was standing room only and some people had to see the meeting on screens outside because there was no room. It definitely got his attention, and they put out a moratorium.

It doesn't matter if you live in Lawrence or in Woodburgh. This will all affect everyone living in the Five Towns. There have been some compromises on what is going to be developed now over there, although I can't really reveal what is being done.

I am also really proud of what we did in Zion Park. It's a great park now for kids. There's a champion's track for kids. And we are putting in even more swings for the kids; that should be up before the summer. I know that it's not perfect, but for now, there are porta-potties, and we are working on putting in bathrooms next year. We would also like to put in a gazebo and a police respite area for the police officers. The park is a great place for kids to play and families to enjoy a beautiful day.

As a Board, we worked really hard and got the state to help pay for fixing some of the flooding problems in many of the areas that had major flooding issues. Some of the worst flooding issues were fixed through the NY Rising project, which was a huge remedy for our residents.

We also put in a much-needed sprinkler system in the Lawrence Yacht and Country Club. The Lawrence Yacht Country Club – whether you golf or play tennis or don't – is the jewel of the neighborhood, and it's our green space. We have to make sure that we take care of it for the residents. We also hired a new general manager for the club. Residents of Lawrence get better pricing on membership in the club. I encourage our residents to look into the Country Club and to join.

By the way, this year is going to be the centennial year for the Lawrence Yacht and Country Club – it was inaugurated in 1924. We are going to have a small parade to honor that on July 4 of this year, which is going to be exciting. And we are going to have special programs to honor that occasion as well.

I'm very proud that we did a proclamation for Israel recently, saying that the Village of Lawrence stands with the State of Israel and its right to exist and defend itself against Hamas. In that vein, we are ordering Israeli and American flags to put up along the Business District in





Paris, second from left, with Mayor Alex Edelman at a meeting on safety in the neighborhood



Paris, third from right, at the grand re-opening of Zion Park in Lawrence

Lawrence on Central Avenue. I'm very excited about that. It's to support Israel, the soldiers, and the hostages.

***That will be really beautiful. The number one concern of residents is probably safety and security. What is the Village of Lawrence doing about safety to make sure that residents are safe?***

Security is always our first priority. Through a partial grant from the County, we have installed security cameras at specific locations in the Village. All trustees care about security, and Trustee Eli Kutner emphasized exploring the idea of live monitoring. As a result, we currently have live monitoring. When they see something concerning, they notify the Village administration and the police as necessary. The administration is notified when they start their shift and when they leave. During the day, Village of Lawrence staff monitors the cameras. Through the night, we have a service that is in direct contact with Village administrators.

Our police department is very active here. They come to many of our meetings. They patrol the Village; there is also an undercover patrol. At night, I have noticed that they patrol with their lights flashing, so we know that they're there. It's very reassuring.

Let's talk about responsibility. Everybody is responsible for their own safety as well because the police is not our private security detail. They're not going to sit in front of my house all night. You have to lock your doors; you have to set your alarm. Lock your cars. Don't leave your keys in your cars. Have ample lighting around your house. Look at your plantings around your house and make sure that people can't hide there. We have to be smart citizens.

Speaking about safety, speeding has been an issue for years. We want to put up speed bumps in certain areas, maybe traffic signs, but we are hiring a traffic expert to guide us to take care of the residents and their traffic and safety concerns.

***What do you say to people who complain that it takes the Village a long time to act?***

Well, then you got the wrong girl. I'm a doer. I get things done. I sit down with the residents, hear their concerns, and make sure things happen. That's who I always was, and that's who I am today. I was asked to be involved because I care and am capable.

I'm not afraid to take a stand; I'm not afraid to do what's right. I roll up my sleeves and make sure things get done.

***"I sit down with the residents, hear their concerns, and make sure things happen."***

***Do you feel that, as mayor, you'll be able to get things accomplished more quickly?***

As mayor, you can put things on the agenda or bring things up in the executive session, so I believe that I would be able to get things done faster. But remember, as a board, you have to have the agreement of at least three people. It's a board of five; you have to have the majority to get things done.

That's being said, I am the type of person who can bring people together. I am not divisive, and I am able to compromise, if the situation warrants it. I want to work together in harmony as much as possible. We need to respect each other and get things done in a positive, productive manner.

I went into this because I want to help people. I love Lawrence and care about the Village, and I want to keep it beautiful for the next generation.

***What are three things that you want to start working on after you are elected mayor in June?***

I want to continue to fix the lighting in the Village. We have started on it and have put up different lumens, but we are waiting for the bulbs that have a warm cast to them; they are less sharp on the eyes.

Speaking of lighting, it's so important for people to have clear, lit-up home addresses and addresses on the docks. That's really important and actually is really about safety, too.

I'm going to continue with "suburban, not urban" and stopping overdevelopment in the community.

I want to do social media with the residents. I think it's very important to communicate with them. I want to let them know what's going on. We send out emails to residents, but not everyone has signed up yet with their emails. They should sign up on our website and get our emails.

I want to fix the litter on the streets. It's become so terrible. It's not just on Central Avenue; it's on Rock Hall Road, other streets. You see people who just throw garbage out of the cars onto the road. As mayor, you will see me walk the Business District every morning to get this place cleaned up. I'll be knocking on doors and fixing this problem. I keep a box of gloves in my car. If I see litter on the street, I stop and pick it up. It bothers me so much.

I want people to have "Lawrence pride." I want them to express it and treat their Village with care.

I have worked so hard for the Village, and I am looking forward to doing more for the Village and the Village of Lawrence residents when I am elected mayor in June.







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# Dr. Yehudah Pryce

## Discovering Judaism in Jail

BY ELIYAHU ROSENBERG

**I**magine two pictures side by side. On the left, you see an intimidating, muscular man; his torso and arms covered in tattoos, and his forehead, wrapped in a bandana. Etched upon his face lies a mixture of anger and melancholic emptiness. Although he sports a macho persona, behind his brown eyes is a world of deep loneliness.

On the right side, stands the same man – his arms now hidden behind the

sleeves of a black suit jacket; his torso concealed beneath a white shirt. On his head sits a black hat, and on his face, a full beard. But far more important than the man's new attire is his big, warm smile.

Although the two men are the same, the person to the left was known as Omar Pryce, while the person to the right is named Yehudah. The person to the left was an imprisoned gang member who had

little regard for the world. The person to the right is a goodhearted Jew who wants to help humanity. Without a doubt, Dr. Yehudah Pryce is the living embodiment of transformation.

While conversions to Judaism are largely discouraged, *geirim* are some of the most inspirational people in the world because their stories often offer incredible lessons in emunah. This story, however, offers an account like no other.

From jail to Judaism – this is the story of how Dr. Yehudah Pryce discovered Hashem while incarcerated in a maximum-security prison.

\* \* \*

The teenager craved a sense of belonging that, at the time, felt out of reach. He felt alone in the world, surrounded only by those who disliked him for who he was. There was no father figure to guide him, no friends to confide in, and no role models to whom he could relate. Instead, his father had abandoned him, and he was unimportant in the eyes of his peers. Growing up in a state of loneliness, Yehudah, or Omar, as he was originally known, decided to pursue alternative methods of attaining the sense of belonging that he was searching for.

"I was looking to connect to who I was. When I adopted the stereotypes of a Black, macho man, with bravado and gangsterisms, I sensed that people started respecting me," Dr. Pryce recalled. "I felt important; I felt like I had some power."

With time, he found himself playing the part of a gangster, adopting a criminal persona in which he held guns, robbed people, and sold drugs. And not too long

after that, his loneliness disappeared, as he found a community that he felt he "belonged" to: the gangs. Omar felt himself gravitating towards the criminal life, and he soon discovered that he was highly skilled in breaking the law.

In fact, he was so good at committing crimes that, at the young age of sixteen, prominent gang leaders started noticing him. They took the impressive young gangster under their wing, mentoring him in the criminal underworld. For the first time in Omar's life, he felt like he had a purpose.

For the next three years of Omar's life, he would find himself in and out of juvenile hall. The police would often raid Omar's home looking for him. Yet, he derived an irresistible satisfaction from the criminal lifestyle he was living.

But in 2002, at age nineteen, his life, in a way, came to an end after he was arrested for the last time; this time, for a non-violent robbery.

His family cried bitterly after the judge read out the ruling: *twenty-four years in prison...*

Riding upstate to Pelican Bay State Prison, a maximum-security facility, Omar felt a surge of emotions brewing deep within. There was confusion: how do you conceptualize twenty-four years when you haven't even lived that long? There was some pride, as well, considering his gangster persona. And of course, there was also a great deal of fear, as he had a deep concern that he wouldn't make it out alive.

Pelican Bay State Prison, where some of the worst criminals and gangs in the United States are held, was the scene of

### In His Words...

“The mitzvah I connect with most, I would say, is tefillin. A lot of times, you don't see Hashem. He's the Source of all beings, the Master of the universe. It's all very abstract, but tefillin gives me something concrete I could do. It's such a sacred act, but it's also a physical act.”

“Any advice that separates you from Hashem, from the Creator, from your purpose in life, I think is horrible advice. Even if it makes you feel good, even if it makes you deal with some insecurities and whatever troubles you're going through. If it takes you away from Hashem, it's just bad advice.”

“You are put on this Earth for a reason. There's always an opportunity to do more and to elevate yourself. I was able to change my life around, and a lot of people don't get that opportunity. If you have that opportunity, you could affect your family, your friends, and so many other people. Why not live a life for that, if not for anything else?”



an intense racial war, with Blacks, White supremacists, and Mexican mafia members battling it out.

"I remember hearing my skinhead neighbors – the White supremacists – sharpening up knives in the cell next to me," Dr. Pryce recalled. "These were some big guys – like 6'3", 6'4", weighing a lot more than me – and I was thinking: 'Even if I use a knife, I could get struck out and get life in prison. If I don't use a knife, I might die. But even if I use the knife, these guys will still probably take me down. And we also have the correctional officers with Mini 14s, and I could get shot.' That was the sort of situation I was in."

It is, of course, typical for inmates to use religion as a crutch for surviving prison, but Omar, from the outset, was adamant to not go down that route. His interest in religion was more or less an academic pursuit, not a search for truth. And so, in an attempt to gain knowledge, he studied Catholicism, Buddhism, and Islam, but each faith that Omar learned of seemed illogical to him. And thus, confrontationally, the inmate positioned himself as an aggressive debater, challenging the religious beliefs of others until they were silent in the face of his arguments.

One day, Omar's friend informed him that the prison had hired a Reform rabbi to host Jewish services – perhaps another religious person he could challenge. Thus, Omar decided to attend the services and, in his usual manner, began hurling arguments at the rabbi. And yet, unlike all other chaplains and religious volunteers he had challenged previously, this rabbi wasn't interested in arguing. Rather, the chaplain made two assertions: 1) We don't want to convert anyone. We just want you to be a good person; and 2) Judaism, for thousands of years, has worked for the Jews.

Omar analyzed the latter statement

and realized he couldn't deny its validity. The Jews, who have faced thousands of years of persecution and suffering, are still here.

Intrigued, Omar wanted to learn more about Judaism, and thus, the Reform rabbi gave him "To Be a Jew," an Orthodox Jewish thought book.

"I began reading a book every day or two, and then, I just quickly fell in love," explained Yehudah Pryce. "How do you describe something logically that's really an intuitive feeling?"

At the same time as he began discovering Judaism, Omar realized that he no longer found crime attractive. Before going to jail, he found novelty in criminal exploits, but once incarcerated and immersed in a criminal environment, the idea of crime lost its attractiveness. He discovered that criminals were, in his words, "just a bunch of losers" who "were participating in [their] own destruction and blaming others."

It was at that point that he realized that the only positive thing he could do was work on himself. While he couldn't, at the time, advance his career or education, he had the power to become a better person. And that's where Judaism came into play in his life: the religion, unlike Christianity and other abstract faiths, gave him a list of concrete steps that he could take to become closer to Hashem.

"As Dovid Hamelech said, '*Shiviti Hashem l'negdi tamid*, I keep Hashem before me always.' And to me, that just resonated because it showed me that with everything I do – even if I'm in a jail cell – Hashem's there. Cut off from my family, my friends, my dreams, my hopes, my aspirations, but Hashem's still there," Dr. Pryce noted.

Eventually, Omar got transferred to a lower security prison facility, where he was able to use a smartphone. Connected to the internet, he was able to do more research on Judaism and communicate

with others in the outside world. Although he was still behind bars, his life started turning around. He met his future wife and stepdaughter through social media, and he soon became the Jewish chapel clerk, taught himself Hebrew, and began wearing a yarmulke and donning tallis and tefillin in his cell.

Committed to Orthodox Judaism, Yehudah started making plans for his life after prison. He went on to contact a rabbi from Orange County, California, a Jewish community where he wished to reside, sending in a fourteen-page essay about his journey "from juvenile delinquency to Judaism." The rabbi responded positively, informing Yehudah that the community would love to have him after his release.

In 2018, Yehudah had a parole board hearing in which he outlined his post-prison plans, which included: converting to Orthodox Judaism, finishing college, becoming a social worker, and living in a frum community in Orange

County. On October 22, 2018, Yehudah was released from prison. A month later, he submitted a conversion application to the Beis Din of the Rabbinical Council of California. Eventually, Yehudah became a full-fledged Jew.

Yehudah went on to complete his bachelor's degree, after which he got his master's and doctorate in social work. Today, Dr. Pryce works as a senior director at Defy Ventures. Yehudah sees his work as a means of doing teshuva for his past, as he now has the opportunity to help those who face the challenges that he struggled with in his youth.

"You are put on this Earth for a reason. There's always an opportunity to do more and to elevate yourself," concluded Dr. Yehudah Pryce. "I was able to change my life around, and a lot of people don't get that opportunity. If you have that opportunity, you could affect your family, your friends, and so many other people. Why not live a life for that, if not for anything else?" ▲



This article is based on a podcast, "Inspiration For the Nation," hosted by Yaakov Langer. To catch more of this conversation, you can watch it on [LivingLchaim.com](http://LivingLchaim.com) or [YouTube.com/LivingLchaim](https://www.youtube.com/LivingLchaim) or listen wherever you listen to podcasts (just search for "Inspiration For The Nation") or call our free hotline: 605-477-2100.

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# What Would You Do If...

Moderated by Jennifer Mann, LCSW of The Navidaters



*Dear Navidaters,*

I appreciate reading your column this week. I especially enjoy hearing the different insights from your panelists.

I have a question that I'd like to pose to the panelists.

I have been redt a few times to a certain boy, Avi (not his real name). I have heard wonderful things about him. There is one thing that has prevented me from going out with him. We have heard a few times, from different people, that his mother is not an easy person to get along with. It seems that she has a very strong personality and is not shy about vocalizing her opinions. This has made me not want to pursue the shidduch, since I know that people sometimes have a hard time getting along with their mothers-in-law – and that's when they're not known to be difficult.

I am now 23 years old and have been dating for almost three years. Avi has come up a few times in the past few years. Am I wrong to be concerned about this family dynamic? I don't want to put myself into a tough situation. At the same time, am I passing over a great guy who could potentially be a great spouse – but with a really difficult mother?

What are your thoughts? And if I do pursue going out with Avi, do you have any advice about how to manage the MIL situation?

Thanks so much,  
Shira\*

Disclaimer: This column is not intended to diagnose or otherwise conclude resolutions to any questions. Our intention is not to offer any definitive conclusions to any particular question, rather offer areas of exploration for the author and reader. Due to the nature of the column receiving only a short snapshot of an issue, without the benefit of an actual discussion, the panel's role is to offer a range of possibilities. We hope to open up meaningful dialogue and individual exploration.



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# The Panel

## The Rebbetzin

**Rebbetzin Faigie Horowitz, M.S.**

**S**hira, use this opportunity to go out with Avi as an opportunity to face your fears, develop your confidence, and address the pitfalls of interacting with difficult people at work and in a family. I have read some of the good books around on this subject. Prepare for life by reading some of these books and practicing some responses, then decide what you want to do about this particular shidduch. You may feel you want to go into short-term therapy or not. But clearly you will be empowered as a result of this process.

And you don't need to worry about a potential mother-in-law until you really like the guy. If you do like the fellow and

he is aware of his mother's communication/personality issues, he will seek to protect someone he holds dear. But you are not there yet. First explore your own skills and emotions.

## The Shadchan

**Michelle Mond**

**H**i Shira, thanks for taking the time to compliment our column and send in your question.

Life is all about taking risks, and the realm of shidduchim is one of them. It is not easy to go on a date with someone who you know from the outset will have a difficult mother. I ask you, however, how do you know a different boy won't have a difficult father? Or a passive ag-

gressive mother who comes across as sweet to everybody else? In shidduchim, you always have to keep in mind that your alternatives will never be picture perfect. The image of perfection keeps many singles in the dating world for many more years than they should actually be.

My advice is to go out with this young man and see if the two of you are even *shayach*. If you like everything about him and it turns out that you think he is your bashert, you will have to discuss his relationship with his mother, as well as setting good boundaries so that her attitude does not negatively impact your life.

It is also important that you work on your own self esteem so that you can take her words and attitude with a grain of salt, knowing not to take things personally. This is a lot harder to do than it is to say, but if you master the art of laughing things off, you'll be a much happier person! This advice can work as well when you are dealing with anybody who is known to be difficult. When a person walks into a zoo, they are not intimidated by the lion because they know what to expect, how far back to stand, and what not to throw in the lion's cage. When a person prepares his/herself for what to expect, things will go much smoother. But again, you have not even dated this boy – who knows if he is even *shayach* for you? Go out and see what happens.

Hatzlacha!

## The Single

**Tzipora Grodtko**

**P**oor Avi – that his prospects are being eliminated for a lifestyle he didn't choose.

I'm confused by the attitude that's been indoctrinated stating "everything needs to seem picture perfect" in order for someone to be a "suitable match." On the contrary, it's the people who go through challenges and adversity that evolve into the most incredible leaders,

The image of perfection keeps many singles in the dating world for many more years than they should actually be.

life partners, and friends.

You are not marrying his mom. Let alone, you don't even KNOW if you're marrying him.

I'm confused by the question. If he might be your soul mate, then it doesn't matter what his background is or what extra "colors" come with his package. He's the one! Can we please give more people a chance and remember that G-d is taking care of everyone? Giving them exactly what they need? Our expectation of what society tells us is "suitable" vs. the reality and beauty of life needs to be upholstered and refurbished.

## The Zaidy

**Dr. Jeffrey Galler**

**S**hira, you have two different issues here:

**Issue #1 – The potential boyfriend**

Please agree to date the young man.

You do not want to go through the rest of your life wondering if you made a mistake, and missed the opportunity of a lifetime, by not accepting a date with "Avi."

After you agree to a date, who knows what might happen? Perhaps he will say, "No, thank you." Perhaps you will go out and not like each other. Or, perhaps you will go out, fall in love, and have a wonderful life together.

There is nothing sadder than hearing

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# Beyond Simple Reading

By Sara Rayvych, MEd



**A**fter discussing the benefits of games, we naturally transition to the joy of reading. Sadly, too many individuals think of reading as a chore. Good reading material is anything but boring, and we too quickly discount the many learning options available to us and our children.

There are many obvious benefits to reading as it's both an excellent way to relax or spend a few quiet moments. Beyond this are many advantages that we may fail to notice. Reading can be an enjoyable way to acquire various skills or important information. Children, too, can learn through the written word.

When reading, children naturally absorb those pages. It's my humble opinion that children can retain more from an enjoyable book than from lectures or other means. The more they're involved, the better they learn.

While there are many wonderful books beyond the Jewish section, I will mostly be focusing on Jewish books even though most of what is written here will apply to both. Before giving a child any book – religious or secular – it behooves the parents to first ensure it will be ap-

propriate for their child. Some of the topics can contain content too mature for their particular child, while other youngsters are naturally more sensitive.

Reading can be a wonderful way to bond with your child. While we associate read-alouds as only for the youngest of children, experience has shown that even some older children can enjoy it. Additionally, many parents have found they can bond with their child by reading the same book alongside their child and discussing it together. This creates a unique shared experience.

## Relaxation

Adults need time to unwind, and children are no different. Yes, they play and run around, but they also need opportunities to relax beyond their usual schedule.

Often, adults joke, "What do kids have to do? We pay all their bills." But children today are exposed to far more stress than adults may realize. School is important, and a good education is crucial to their development now and their success in the future. Despite the essential role of education, learning can be

stressful. They have due dates for projects, frequent tests and nightly homework. All this follows a full day in class. Many children have the extra challenge of being unable to sit for the designated time or they have a learning disability.

Children can also face stress from peer interactions. Unfortunately, kids can be cruel to each other. Teasing can be painful, and bullying can be very harmful to a child emotionally. A child can be excluded or feel left out for any reason – or none at all. While adults may think a young child's arguments are petty, to that child, they are serious. The teenage years are marked by increased feelings of being self-conscious and concern for what their peers think.

In an ever increasingly technological world, reading offers a wholesome way to calm down. Children, too, need time to relax. Whether or not we recognize it, screens can be overly stimulating for the young (and not so young) brain. There is much literature and research available documenting the many concerns surrounding these devices. While this issue will not be the focus of this article, I will mention that there have been potential

links between screen time and obesity, irregular sleep, behavioral problems, impaired academic performance, violence and less time for play.

Reading provides children with a convenient and portable means of relaxation. They can choose from the numerous genres available, and a new world instantly opens up to them. Maybe they like the suspense of a good mystery or the inspiration from a biography. Whatever they pick, there is a unique peace that comes with curling up on a couch and enjoying a new read.

## Torah Treats

We are fortunate to have a continuously growing selection of Jewish books. Children can now choose from hundreds of options. Besides being a nice way to spend their time, there is so much children can learn from these books.

Parsha books are very popular, and children can quickly feel like parsha experts. Many parents associate parsha as limited to the classroom or Shabbos table, but children can enjoy the weekly *sedra* on their own time. Even without understanding all the details in the



Chumash, they can grasp the general storyline, which can help them when they do learn more in depth. The stories, pictures and medrashim all add to make these books enjoyable. It's worth mentioning they may start to confuse which details are included in the Torah from those in the medrash or another source. This may not bother many families, but for those that have this concern, it can help to point out the differences as they occur.

Children can learn more than just parsha. They can similarly learn a host of other subjects, including the stories of the *nevi'im*, halacha and yomim tovim. It's surprising how many challenging topics can be brought down to the level a child can understand. While I'm not expecting to see a child's version of the Zohar, there are books on hilchos lashon hara, kavod of a shul and *kibbud av v'eim*. Some of these books are so well written and illustrated that many adults can benefit, too.

Through real-life examples, biographies can teach children about good middos and living a Torah lifestyle as seen through the lens of our great leaders. Rather than dry facts, these books often include many fascinating stories

that illustrate their sensitivity to others and devotion to Torah. While biographies used to be limited to well-known Torah personalities, there are now books on many righteous individuals that have contributed to Klal Yisroel. For example, both boys and girls can be inspired by the chessed, ahavas Yisroel and emunah of Rebbetzin Henny Machlis.

what our grandparents went through in Europe. Children can see the dedication their ancestors had to Torah and mitzvos. The same can be said regarding the holy Persian (and other Middle Eastern) forebears, in addition to the many who risked persecution behind the Iron Curtain. Please take into account your child's age and sensitivity before exposing them

understanding ADHD. For many adults, this can be a more comfortable way to bring up these topics with their children and guide them in the discussion.

There are many options geared to the frum family. As an example, a free workbook on body safety that is geared to the frum child (ages 4-10) just became available. The author is a long-time elementary school teacher. She can be contacted at Chavie613@gmail.com to request a copy.

I find it incredible that so many of the books we enjoyed as children are still popular with today's children. These books have stood the test of time and can appeal to multiple generations. Kids get so excited – and a bit surprised – when they discover that we read their favorite book when we were young. The written word offers so much. Along with our children, we should take advantage of those quiet moments to relax and learn. ▲

Sara Rayvych, MEd, has her master's in general and special education. She has been homeschooling for over 10 years in Far Rockaway. She can be contacted at RayvychHomeschool@gmail.com.

## Reading provides children with a convenient and portable means of relaxation.

Many neglect history, considering it irrelevant, but understanding the past can be very helpful. The more children learn of the challenges our nation has faced (in an age-appropriate fashion), the greater their appreciation for the mesiras nefesh of the previous generations. There are numerous historical fictions that enlighten as the storyline unfolds. This can be a gentler way to introduce a child to these complicated topics. While words will never suffice, it's well known

to material that may frighten them or make them become too emotional.

### Sensitive Topics

While it would be ideal if every parent was comfortable sitting down with their child, thoughtfully and sensitively discussing with them the many sensitive topics that arise as they grow, many parents will squirm or avoid it. We are fortunate to have a number of books that cover everything from personal safety to

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# School of Thought

## The Midwinter Blues

By Etti Siegel



**A**nother month to Purim? Teachers and students alike are feeling burnt out. The year seems like it is never going to end. In a month from now, everyone is going to be exclaiming how fast the year is going and how the school year is almost over...but right now, that is too far in the future to contemplate.

"Etti, my students are so tired of school!"

"Etti, I am so tired of school!"

It happens every year about one to two months before Purim, mid-February. It is that draggy time of year when the winter is still here, and everyone is longing for the sun and summer.

Perhaps it is cliché to state "Change Your Attitude and It Will Change the Way You See the World," but it is a cliché because it is true!

Pick something exciting to do with your class. It needs to be exciting for you, too. Watch how the anticipation revives the mood and picks up everyone's lagging spirits.

When I was a fifth grade teacher at Yeshiva Tiferes Moshe, Hurricane Sandy struck with tremendous force. My students were more interested in the subject of weather than ever, so we began to focus on the weather and weather patterns. We read stories about the weather, and our spelling and vocabulary words became weather-based. I even tried to make math tie into the theme. But as winter set in, I decided to infuse some excitement into what was becoming dreary, despite all my enthusiasm. With permission from my administration, I announced a Sandy Fair. Each week, the boys knew that we had to get done the required curriculum, and then leftover time was devoted to preparing. We made committees, and the boys began to work. Some solicited donations from stores (and I helped them hone their script and eye contact skills), and some went around to classes announcing the upcoming fair and giving out flyers asking for lightly used toys, books, and games. The last group worked on the booths. Finally, the day arrived. We were on track with our work and were able to devote the day to raising money for the victims of Hurricane Sandy. The culmination of having Rabbi Boruch Ber Bender of Achiezer come down to YTM to receive a check and have the presentation written up in the local paper was fun. And

it sure kept us from getting down into the winter blues!

So, as burnout starts to affect you and your class at this time of year, I ask you: What is your "Sandy Fair"?

Some of the ideas I have used to beat the winter blues and I have worked with teachers to implement in their schools over the years are:

*Perform a play:* A General Studies teacher I coach has a play in her literature book. They just read the play in class. Now, she is dividing her class into three groups, and each will practice the play and then perform for another class who will be invited to their room. The class is so excited!

*Put on a choir:* Many teachers use songs to teach. Add motions, practice when you can as an incentive, and then perform! I once asked permission to perform during lunch. My third grade class was so excited to stand on their benches and sing and use the motions as the whole lunchroom quietly finished eating.

*Read with a flashlight:* I saw this in Mrs. Daniella Rosenberg's fourth grade classroom, and it was awesome! The lights were shut, and the boys took out their individual books, got a flashlight from their teacher, and found a spot in the room to read by flashlight.

*Special book reports:* Whether it is Book in a Box, Cereal Box Report, Bloom Balls, or so many other creative ideas (look them up, they are so much fun), books come alive when the children have a chance to actually and figuratively "think outside the box!"

*Build a Bulletin Board:* There are so many examples... here is one. Teaching brachos doesn't have to be boring. I divided a bulletin board into sections and labeled each section with a bracha. My class began to collect wrappers at recess, and then after recess, we spent five minutes as a class discussing what bracha would be said on that food, and then we stapled it onto the correct section. The whole school began coming to look at the bulletin board to look

**Watch how the anticipation revives the mood and picks up everyone's lagging spirits.**

up what bracha should be said on their snack. What other interactive bulletin boards can you think of? (Reach out if you want some more ideas...)

Round Robin activities are loads of fun for all involved. Each class chooses what they are doing within the theme chosen. The third grades in Bais Yaakov of Queens used to do this for Eretz Yisrael. Each class took a day to turn into a place, and the other classes took turns visiting on that day. Passports were stamped, activities were enjoyed, and there was always food.

Bnos Menachem Girls School in Crown Heights invited an organization to drop off everything required to pack *mishloach manos* for their organization. It needs to be done in

advance, and now is a great time to reach out to organizations you know!

There are Escape the Room activities already created for different novel studies and different educational units – I worked with one teacher on setting up an escape room for *Animal Farm* and another escape room for Ancient Greece!

Some schools are choosing to have their color war activities now, while some teachers are turning their lessons into color war to make it more fun.

There are so many more ideas. Network and get ideas from other teachers.

Be sure the activity you are choosing will not stress you out and that you are excited to do it with your class. If you like working with other teachers, try to get others on board. Be clear; when expectations and instructions are clear, and everything is planned out, the event tends to be what you envisioned. Mistakes will happen, and things might go wrong, but roll with it, and remember why you chose to do the activity in the first place!

Most importantly, remember that the end of the year is right around the corner. Enjoy the last few months of school and make the most out of every moment!

- Etti

Mrs. Etti Siegel holds an MS in Teaching and Learning/Educational Leadership and brings sound teaching advice to her audiences culled from her over 35 years of teaching and administrative experience. She is an Adjunct at the College of Mount Saint Vincent/Sara Shenirer. She is a coach and educational consultant for Catapult Learning, is a sought-after mentor and workshop presenter around the country, and a popular presenter for Sayan (a teacher-mentoring program), Hidden Sparks, and the Consortium of Jewish Day Schools. She is a frequent contributor to Hamechanech Magazine and The Journal for Jewish Day School leaders. She will be answering your education-based questions and writing articles weekly for The Jewish Home. Mrs. Siegel can be reached at [ettisiegel@gmail.com](mailto:ettisiegel@gmail.com).





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# Health & Fitness

## Our Windows To The World *How Our Diet Can Affect Our Vision*

By Tehila Levine-Soskel, RDN, CDN

Our eyes surely are our windows to the world that allow us to experience its true beauty and all it has to offer. Although you may think regular check-ups with an optometrist is all there is to do, maintaining good vision requires more. As you already may know of the endless roles and benefits our nutrition plays in our health, it is no different when it comes to our vision. Nutrition plays an essential role in supporting eye health and to help prevent conditions like dry eyes, cataracts, and age-related macular degeneration (AMD). A variety of vitamins and nutrients are needed to help our eyes function properly. While many factors can contribute to eye-related health conditions, nutrition may have a positive influence on many of them. Read on to understand which nutrients can help promote optimal eye health and how incorporating them into your day-to-day life can help preserve and protect your vision.

### Antioxidants

Antioxidants help protect our cells against free radicals, which can unfortunately play a role in many diseases like heart disease and cancer. Antioxidants play an essential role in eye health by helping to reduce the risk of serious eye conditions like age-related macular degeneration and cataracts. Our body makes them naturally, although you may also get them from food. Here are some foods that contain antioxidants that you can include in your diet: broccoli, spinach, carrots, blueberries, strawberries, kale, avocado, artichokes, red cabbage, and spinach. Consuming a diet



rich in antioxidants can help reduce the risk of eye-related conditions.

### Vitamin A

Vitamin A plays an essential role in eye health for various reasons. Firstly, vitamin A helps maintain a clear cornea. A deficiency of vitamin A, called xerophthalmia, is not so common, although symptoms include dry eyes, night blindness and other conditions. More so, vitamin A may help protect eye conditions and may help reduce risk of cataracts. An excellent source of vitamin A is sweet potatoes, in addition to bell peppers, pumpkins, and leafy green vegetables.

### Vitamin E

Vitamin E, a vital antioxidant, helps protect your cells – and your eye cells as well. Vitamin E can help protect against the damages from free radicals. A study in which participants had age-related macular

degeneration (AMD) and took higher doses of vitamin E and other daily supplements showed that the vitamin E helped reduce the risk of the disease progressing. According to further studies, diets high in vitamin E may also help prevent AMD. Including foods with adequate vitamin E, such as salmon, avocado, nuts and seeds, can help to maintain proper eye health.

### Vitamin C

Vitamin C, like vitamin E, is a powerful antioxidant that can help protect your eyes against free radical damage. Vitamin C is essential for collagen production, which gives structure to your eyes. Citrus fruits, bell peppers, broccoli, and kale provide high amounts of vitamin C – adding them to your diet may help boost your daily vitamin C intake.

### Lutein and Zeaxanthin

As part of the carotenoid family, lutein and zeaxanthin are beneficial compounds acting as antioxidants. These are usually found in plants, fruits and vegetables with bright yellow, orange, and red colors. Carotenoid foods include yams, spinach, cantaloupe, watermelon, tomatoes, carrots, and mangoes, and must be consumed through your diet.

### Omega-3 Fatty Acids

Omega-3 fatty acids are associated

with numerous health benefits. From helping to promote better brain health to heart health, omega-3 fatty acids may help to protect against many conditions. Omega-3 fatty acids contain anti-inflammatory properties which may help prevent diabetic retinopathy, a condition in those who have diabetes that can cause vision loss and blindness. Individuals who suffer from dry eye disease may benefit from omega-3 fatty acids. Rich sources of omega-3 fatty acids include flaxseeds, chia seeds, nuts and olive oil.

### Thiamine

Vitamin B1, or thiamine, plays an essential role in our bodies in helping to convert food into energy. More so, studies have suggested that diets high in thiamine may help reduce the risk of developing cataracts. Thiamine food sources include whole grains, fish, and meat. It's often added to breads and breakfast cereals.

### Hydration

Hydration is crucial to maintain proper eye health from keeping your eyes moist to removing bacteria. Dehydration can lead to dryer and itchy eyes. Make sure to stay well hydrated throughout the day. Including foods with high water contents such as watermelon, lettuce, and cucumbers are an easy way to help you stay extra hydrated.

These vitamins and nutrients may help slow the progression or prevent many different eye conditions. Focusing on a balanced diet including whole grains, protein, fruits, vegetables, and healthy fats will help contribute to all the essential nutrients you need for your overall health and your eyes. Nourishing your body from the inside reflects on your physical health. ▲

*Tehila Soskel is a registered dietitian nutritionist with a private practice in the Five Towns. She sees clients for weight loss, diabetes, and other various diseases. Appointments can be made for in-person or virtual sessions: 516-457-8558, tehilasoskelrd@gmail.com, tehilasoskelnutrition.com.*

### Eye-Boosting Smoothies Green Smoothie

- 2/3 cup spinach
  - 2/3 cup kale
  - 1 frozen banana
  - 5 frozen strawberries
  - 1 cup almond milk
- Blend all ingredients and serve.

### Flaxseed Smoothie

- 3/4 cup frozen blueberries
  - 1 cup frozen peaches
  - 1/2 cup almond milk
  - 1/2 cup plain Greek yogurt
  - 1 TBS ground flaxseeds
  - 2 TBS honey
- Blend all ingredients and serve.



# Was Tolstoy Right?

By Rebbetzin Faigie Horowitz



I don't know and I am not going to pontificate on his famous opening line in *Anna Karenina*. "All happy families are alike; each unhappy family is unhappy in its own way." I will add my own comments about the habits of happy families, however.

Happy families stay connected. Happy families exert great effort to stay connected. Happy connected families have a sense of rootedness. Happy connected families provide emotional support for individual family members who may be faced with a challenge or two or three. A network of people connected by blood and by values can help carry members during their struggles.

My mother and her siblings maintained their connections to their relatives far and near. Remote relatives and relatives who lived in remote locations were brought close. The Eichenstein siblings saw their parents and grandparents be there for family members. The latter came to this country in the early twenties, way before their relatives from Galicia. And they sent dollars and affidavits during the pogroms and then later during the Holocaust. And the cousins, great aunts, and their progeny descended on our family in Chicago for weddings, traveling by train, bus, and plane, and stayed for the ensuing festivities. One of the youngest of the first generation remembers her grandmother repeating in Yiddish, "*Cousins zennen azovy brider in shvester*." Cousins are like brothers and sisters.

As the Eichenstein sisters discussed family, life, and sometimes confounding circumstances in their marathon sessions around our breakfast room table over comfort food and coffee, they verbalized these comments and added to them. One of the many universal truths that resonated from one *tanta* is that your kids should marry into good families so that when the struggles occur, they have people to render emotional support.

Families must remain connected, however, for that to happen. And strong happy families maintain connection in many ways. Jewish families, of course,

have the chagim when families gather to perform the age-old mitzvos. How lucky are we Yidden whose Torah ensures our families' strengths through mitzvos that are done en famille like *sippur yetzias Mitzrayim*, remembering personal Churban on Tisha B'Av, and brachos from the older generation to the younger members erev Yom Kippur.

We are fortunate, as well, to live during a period when keeping families close is so much easier. With technology, easy transportation, and multiple channels of communication, we can talk, text, WhatsApp, zoom, and meet our relations with ease. Some families have chats. Some do quality time with family Shabbosim in rented houses in other locales. Others vacation together. Others hold official reunions every few years. It takes time, effort, and resources.

It's work to plan, pull together, coordinate, and manage so many people of different ages at one time and in one place. Some are just too busy keeping up with jobs, kids, and life to manage extras. These are usually the younger folks.

It's up to us older ones to take the initiative to maintain family connections. No matter your style, your means, and your personality, if you care enough, you

do the work to make it happen.

My fourteen-year-old great niece made this observation a few weeks ago one Friday night. She was part of the Cousins Connections Shabbaton that I had arranged for 23 teenage girls and granddaughters. My husband's siblings' high school age granddaughters were treated to a first-time experience in our home in Lawrence along with the opportunity to get acquainted with their second cousins. That insightful young girl noticed the effort put into the planning, the place settings, the gift bags, the program, and the room assignments (by lottery, per age group).

And that was before we had lovely seudos with my husband telling the girls about his father whom none of them had known. As hashgacha would have it, my father-in-law's thirtieth yahrzeit was later that week, and they learned about his early life in Rumania, the loss of his mother, the Auschwitz period, and his yeshiva attendance in the displaced persons camps. Chapter two, the postwar years, was recounted the next morning. Each seudah had zemirots led by the two eldest girls followed by games and activities.


I channeled my inner head counselor in sandwiching outdoor and indoor ac-

tivities (walk to the shore, davening kabbalas Shabbos in shul, Friday night oneig in the basement where they could stay up as late as they wanted) as well as some unstructured time. Motzei Shabbos they did a low tech craft before the requisite pizza and ice cream.

They came with a great attitude and simple clothes. They brought Cousins Connection hoodies, drawings, and lots of nosh. They rose to the occasion, as well, with creativity and initiative, playing games of their own, composing great shots for the music video they planned, and figuring out when they could meet next.

I didn't think beyond sparking some family connections for my own granddaughters. But, suddenly, I became a heroine in the family. My adult nieces and nephews are telling me how they connected more with members of their generation through making the arrangements and the girls' developing bonds. One niece said, you reversed a forty-year trend.

And the trend continues. The girls found so many nearby relatives with whom they have so much in common. One set of girls recently visited a set of second cousins in their own community together with their grandmother, and the relationships grew further. The ninth graders living in Boro Park gathered in one home on a recent Shabbos afternoon and partied and played and planned for seven hours.

So do expand on Tolstoy, Jewish men and women of wisdom. Expounding is not necessary. Do invest in strengthening your family bonds with the extended family. You and your generations will benefit no matter which way you do it. Whether you have the merch or not from the family confab, you've got shared memories and reinforced commitment to each other. 

*JWOW! is a community for midlife Jewish women which can be accessed at [www.jewishwomanofwisdom.org](http://www.jewishwomanofwisdom.org) for conversation, articles, Zoom events, and more.*



# In The Kitchen



By Naomi Nachman

I am sharing three fabulous cocktails from my book *Perfect Flavors* which are perfect for Purim. It is always so fun to have some creative drinks at your Purim seudah.



Photo by Miriam (Pascal) Cohen

## Chocolate Martini

**Dairy or Pareve / Yields 1 serving**

*I learned how to make chocolate martinis when I demo'd cocktails with their in-house mixologist at the VIP RAM Pesach program.*

### Ingredients

- 1 ounce vanilla vodka
- 1½ ounces espresso liqueur
- 1½ ounces dark chocolate liqueur
- 1½ ounces whole milk or almond milk
- Ice
- Corn syrup or honey, optional garnish
- Colorful sprinkles, optional garnish

### Preparation

Place alcohols and milk into a metal cocktail shaker with the strainer attachment.

Top with ice, cover, and shake vigorously for 20 seconds.

Strain into a martini glass; drink cold.

Optional garnish: To decorate the rim, dip the rim of the glass lightly into corn syrup, then into sprinkles. Dry upside down before filling the glass.

## Grapefruit Sage Cucumber Gin and Tonic

**Pareve / Yields 1 serving**

*Dovid Statman, the food scientist and blogger hobbyist, helped me develop this refreshing, summery but year-round unusual twist on gin and tonic.*

### Ingredients

- 2 ounces gin
- 6 sage leaves
- 4-6 thin slices English cucumber
- 2 ounces grapefruit juice
- Ice
- 5 ounces cold tonic water

### Preparation

Combine a splash of gin – about a tablespoon – sage leaves, and cucumber in a cocktail shaker. Muddle (crush together) with a blunt tool to release the oils and flavors. I used a wooden spoon.

Add remaining gin, grapefruit juice, and ice to shaker. Shake vigorously for 8-10 seconds.

Strain mixture into a glass of ice. Top with cold tonic water.

## Rose Sangria

**Pareve / Yields 4 servings**

*Yesterday's fruit platter is today's sangria. Pour a glass and relax.*

### Ingredients

- 1 (750 ml) bottle rose wine
- 1 green apple, diced
- 6 sliced strawberries
- ½ orange, cut into wedges
- 1 cup diced pineapple
- ¼ cup triple sec

### Preparation

Combine all ingredients in a large pitcher.

Refrigerate overnight, allowing flavors to combine and develop.

Serve chilled.

*Recipes shared with permission from Artscroll.*

Naomi Nachman, the owner of *The Aussie Gourmet*, caters weekly and Shabbat/ Yom Tov meals for families and individuals within The Five Towns and neighboring communities, with a specialty in Pesach catering. Naomi is a contributing editor to this paper and also produces and hosts her own weekly radio show on the Nachum Segal Network stream called "A Table for Two with Naomi Nachman." Naomi gives cooking presentations for organizations and private groups throughout the New York/New Jersey Metropolitan area. In addition, Naomi has been a guest host on the QVC TV network and has been featured in cookbooks, magazines as well as other media covering topics related to cuisine preparation and personal chefs. To obtain additional recipes, join *The Aussie Gourmet* on Facebook or visit Naomi's blog. Naomi can be reached through her website, [www.theaussiegourmet.com](http://www.theaussiegourmet.com) or at (516) 295-9669.





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Toldos	November 18	6:05	6:20
Vayeitzei	November 25	6:00	6:15
Vayishlach	December 2	6:00	6:15
Vayeishev	December 9	Chanukah 6:30 @ YOSS	
Mikeitz	December 16	6:00	6:15
Vayigash	December 23	6:00	6:15
Vayechi	December 30	6:05	6:20
Shemos	January 6	6:10	6:25
Va'eira	January 13	6:20	6:35
Bo	January 20	6:30	6:45
Beshalach	January 27	6:35	6:50
Yisro	February 3	6:45	7:00
Mishpatim	February 10	6:55	7:10
Terumah	February 17	7:00	7:15
Tetzaveh	February 24	7:10	7:25
Ki Sisa	March 2	7:20	7:35

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# Scaling Your Business

**T**his column features business insights from a recent “Mind Your Business with Yitzchok Saftlas” radio show. The weekly “Mind Your Business” show – broadcasting since 2015 – features interviews with Fortune 500 executives, business leaders and marketing gurus. Prominent guests include John Sculley, former CEO of Apple and Pepsi; Dick Schulze, founder and Chairman Emeritus of Best Buy; and Beth Comstock, former Vice Chair of GE; among over 400+ senior-level executives and business celebrities. Yitzchok Saftlas, president of Bottom Line Marketing Group, hosts the weekly “Mind Your Business” show, which airs at 10pm every Sunday night on 710 WOR and throughout America on the iHeartRadio Network.

**S**ince 2015, Yitzchok Saftlas has been speaking with leading industry experts on the “Mind Your Business” show, sharing insightful business and marketing strategies.

In this article, we’ve collected five of the very best tips for scaling and taking your business to the next level.

\* \* \*

## SCALE VS. GROWTH

**Ted Miller III,**  
*CEO of Training Mastery 3*



“Scale” and “growth” are two words that people typically use interchangeably. And while words change meaning all the time, there is a very specific

difference that should be understood here. Growth is more about short-term success. For example, let’s say you want more new sales to increase your top-of-line revenue and cash flow. So, you may want to go and recruit an army of top-producing sales superstars on pure commission. That’s a great strategy to achieve short-term growth. But scalability is different. Scalability is focused more on long-term success and sustainability. If you build an infrastructure and culture around only hiring world-class achievers, that will give you a quick boost, but what happens when you run out of those one-in-a-million salespeople? After a while, you won’t be able to grow anymore because they’re one-in-a-million to find.

If you want to scale your company, you could build a model that focuses on creating good standard operating procedures around the sales process. That model is scalable, because now, instead of hiring those few one-in-a-million producers, you could hire hundreds of good salespeople, allow them to grow and succeed with those operating procedures, and continue to scale your company over time. Otherwise, you’re going to get stuck and stagnant.

## GROWING IN CHAOS

**Jeanne Stafford,**  
*Leadership Advisor,  
Collaboration Specialist,  
Keynote Speaker, and Former  
New York Chapter President  
of the NSA (National Speakers  
Association)*



It’s important for leaders to be able to reinvent themselves on a regular basis. Chaos isn’t going anywhere.

It’s here to stay. When things start to break away from the “norm,” it’s no use waiting for them to go back to the way they were. What I’ve learned over 20 years in politics is that chaos is the presence of multiple orders. And when you are aware of your own strengths and your “Devotion Factor” (the principle, idea, or person for which you live), you can function, find the multiple orders, and move people forward through those orders to get things done. That is how you cross finish

lines and become the visionary that the people who are working for you and with you need. Those who know how to grow through chaos are still here. Those who don’t know how to grow through chaos are not here.

It would be highly unintelligent to try to design a company that can only move forward when things are good. It’s impossible to think that way and always remain productive. We have to learn how to be uncomfortable and still move forward. We have to learn how to function within timeframes and things going wrong to get things done. This happens with nonprofit boards. It happens with corporate teams.

There are a lot of opinions and agendas out there. People need to be directed toward what the common goals are. When people are directed toward a common goal, collaboration and growth are inevitable.

## LEARNING FROM FAILURE

**Jerel Benjamin,**  
*Founder and  
CEO of ProfitGOLD Group*



When scaling your company, everything comes down to one simple word: “systemization.” Scaling requires systems. The systems have to do the heavy lifting. Once you make that realization, you have to step outside of your box and outside of your comfort zone,

because now you need to consult people who have not only scaled, but scaled and failed. Failing is just as important here.

Personally, I’ve owned nine corporations over time. I always tell people when I speak to them, “Firstly, this is not a kumbaya story.” My first two companies failed miserably. And that had a lot to do with my own arrogance, being young and thinking I knew everything. I had to fall on my face twice to realize I didn’t. So, scaling requires people who have done it but have also failed at it. There’s an old sports analogy I always use, “You don’t know how to win until you know how to lose.” When you consult with people who have lost, then you know you’re in the right arena. They know what to look for.

Back when I first started out, I never thought that those very painful setbacks would be some of the stories and experiences that, to this day, I can still go back and use to resonate with my clients. I always tell them, “Whatever you’ve done, I’ve probably done worse. So, let’s just have that conversation. Let’s get it out on the table.” You’d be surprised at the comfort level that develops very quickly with my clients after that.

## UTILIZING TECHNOLOGY

**Sim Shain,**  
*Founder and CEO of ParaFlight  
Aviation*



The one thing we don’t have enough of is time, but technology is really moving forward every single



day, to help us maximize and save on our time. When you have a store or a business, there's something called "scalability." You want to be able to scale your business. With technology, you can scale so quickly and so far, because you don't have to build exactly where you are. You could build something that works around the world.

Technology is key. I love technology. Now, when I grew up, I knew nothing about technology, and even now, I don't really know that much about technology. But I utilize people who really understand it and are able to relay our message of what we want to do. People always say, "When opportunity knocks, open the door." But I believe, don't wait for opportunity, create it. That's what we can do with technology. We can create our own opportunities.

It's also very important to try to stay in your lane, to at least be in the business of what you do. For example, I'm in aviation. We can teeter a little bit to different parts of aviation, but I would avoid expanding into anything else. Focus on your business. You don't have to grab everything that's out there. Focus, stay in your lane, and you'll be able to grow and grow. You don't even have to

look at your competitors. Just focus on what you need to do.

## STAYING IN THE KNOW


**David Krengel,**  
**CEO of YD Wood Floors**



When scaling your business, it is still very important for you, as a leader, to remain involved with each client and project to

understand and to be a part of every little aspect of their project. So, when they call me, I need to be able to inform them right away about what's going on. That's why it's very important to be in the know on each project, every step of the way.

This is an important reason why focusing on developing strong systems is essential. We used to have so many jobs, but I wasn't in the know. I was constantly asking, "Who's going to be ready next? When are we going to need to go to him?" Now that we have a system in place, I am able to check all of this in advance and see what needs my attention so I'm only fo-

make sure that I have time for each client, so they feel that they are being serviced, taken care of, and getting David Krengel 100%. 

*Ready to take the next step in scaling your business? You can discover even more business tips and insights like these from leading experts in nearly every field at [BottomLineBrew.com](https://BottomLineBrew.com)!*

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some degree. When we go and confirm a sale with any client, customer, developer, contractor, or designer, they expect me to

cused on the projects that are important at the moment. I always keep space for the relationship aspect of every project, to

*It would be highly unintelligent to try to design a company that can only move forward when things are good.*

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# Notable Quotes

## "Say What?!"



Riley's death has once again put the spotlight on the dangers female runners face.

- The AP's spin on the brutal murder of nursing student Laken Riley last weekend in Georgia by an illegal immigrant; the AP failed to mention that the murderer just came into the country illegally from Venezuela

They should just go in there and be like, you know what? We want our hostages back. If we don't have them back, clock starts now. [In] 24 hours, we're going to start bombing ...and killing ... civilians, thirty- forty-thousand a ... time. So you civilians better ... go against Hamas. You ... go against them. We're not playing ... games with you.

- Kid Rock talking to Joe Rogan

What if that was your house? What if that was your house? Let's call your house Israel and your neighbors are Palestine. You got a family of four. They come over and ... take out two of them in the ... worst way. Are you really going to, like, worry about? Like what type of force you're using at your neighbors?

- Ibid.

I got indicted a second time and a third time and a fourth time and a lot of people said that that's why the Black people like me because they have been hurt so badly and discriminated against, and they actually viewed me as I'm being discriminated against.

- Donald Trump at a recent rally

We start losing muscle when we're 35 years old or so. Unless you act to keep that going, by the time you get to 75, you're not in good shape. It's just like buying an insurance policy, in my opinion – insurance against failing as you get older.

- Tim Minnick, 81, of Texas, who was certified by Guinness World Records as the world's oldest fitness instructor

The Jewish people have a historic and legal right to live in the land of Israel including in Judea and Samaria – the Biblical heartland.

- Speaker of the House Mike Johnson tweeting after the Biden administration changed the longstanding U.S. position on Judea and Samaria and will now consider neighborhoods such as Efrat as illegal settlements

It is an absolute disgrace the Biden administration would issue this decision, especially as Israel fights terrorists on multiple fronts that seek Israel's destruction and as more than 130 hostages remain in Gaza. The Biden Administration must stop undermining Israel and facilitating efforts to delegitimize Israel. It is misguided and unconscionable.

- Ibid.





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– Tweet by Palestinian activist Mohamed El Kurd

Remember when you could hijack planes? Those were the days.

– One of many tweets in response

I was just going to go rioting with some friends to block traffic and throw some Molotov cocktails and now I find out that's frowned upon.

– Ibid.

A beginner's guide to how terrorists play the victim.

– Ibid

He doesn't realize what a great favor he's doing me— half of my constituents are failed screenwriters. They're going to think, "He's just like us!"

– Rep. Adam Schiff (D-CA), who is running for the open California senate seat, in an interview with JNS, after Donald Trump referred to him as a "failed screenwriter"

I'm in a 100,000-square-foot house by myself.

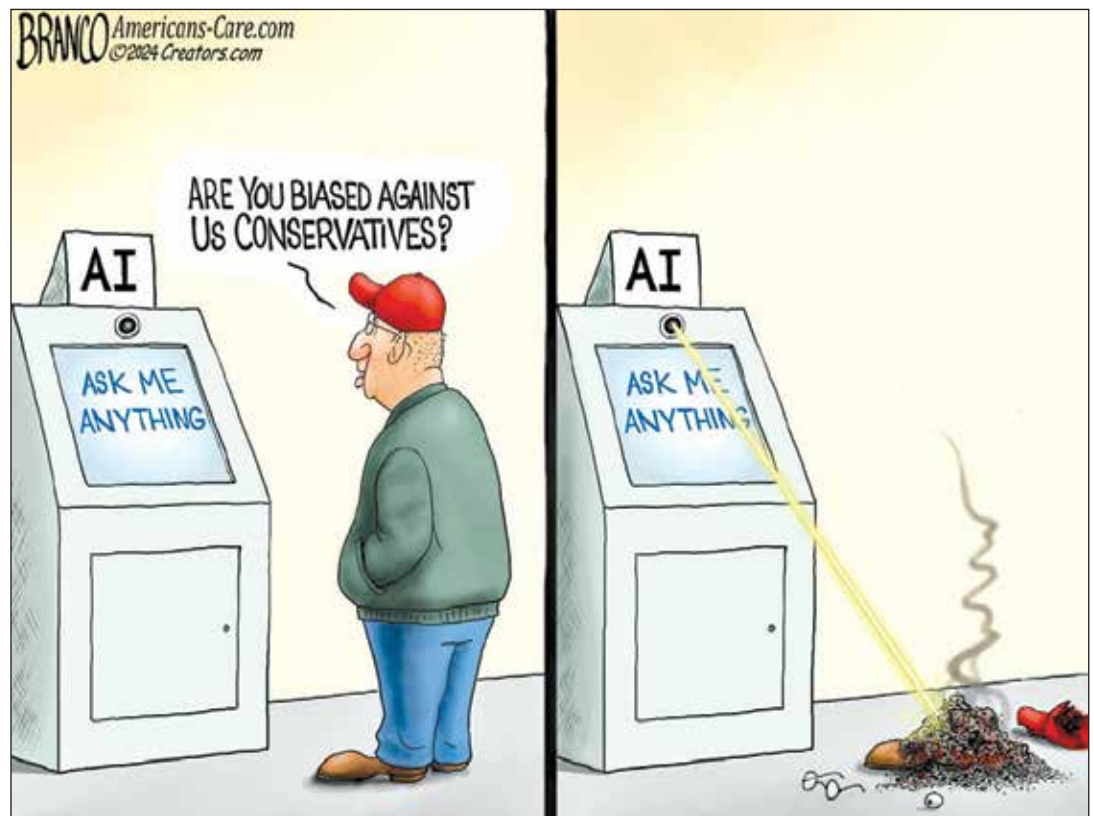
– NBA Hall of Famer Shaquille O'Neal on his podcast, bemoaning his party lifestyle that resulted in him losing his family

We should kill them all. Does that make you feel better? Everybody in Hamas.

– Rep. Andy Ogles (R-TN) when confronted by a Palestinian protester in the halls of the Capitol

30,000 citizens need to camp outside the Knesset in tents for three weeks, day and night [until] the country shuts down [and] Netanyahu realizes that his time is up.

– Radical left politician Ehud Barak in an interview with Army Radio



We have got to do Ukraine now. There are other issues, including border, which we should address, but not now.

– Sen. Majority Leader Chuck Schumer (D-NY) after a meeting in the Oval Office





Treating people differently on the basis of race, gender, etc. is flat-out illegal. This is confession of a crime.

- Elon Musk responding to a video of a Google AI executive stating at a conference that it is important to treat black and Hispanic employees better than white employees

New York Mayor Warns Migrants If they Keep Attacking NYPD Officers, They'll be Downgraded to 4-Star Hotels

- Babylon Bee

I've instructed my extradition attorneys not to agree to [extradite him]. We're gonna keep him here...and keep him in custody so that he cannot be out doing this to individuals either in our state, county or anywhere in the United States.

- Maricopa County Arizona District Attorney Rachel Mitchell explaining that she is refusing to extradite a criminal who is in Arizona for assault to New York to face murder charges because she is concerned that radical-left Manhattan DA Alvin Bragg would set him loose



We're all figuring out how to live life. That's what we're doing, and he did it.

- Ruben Giron, 73, to The New York Times, after an owl, who had escaped from the Central Park Zoo a year ago, hit its head on a building and died this week

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# Political Crossfire

## How Biden Can Avenge Navalny's Death

By Bret Stephens

President Joe Biden said last week that he was “looking at a whole number of options” to make good on his 2021 warning to Vladimir Putin that Russia would face “devastating” consequences if Alexei Navalny were to die in prison. Now that Putin has treated that warning with his customary contempt, Biden needs to act as a matter of moral clarity and personal credibility, and for the strategic imperative of

demonstrating to a dictator that American threats aren't hollow.

But how? Some analysts suggest that the administration, which last Tuesday vowed to impose tougher sanctions, will struggle to find ways to make them more effective and that the best single policy to hurt Putin is to continue supporting Ukraine militarily. They're right about the second point. As several close Russia watchers told me, however, there's much



more to be done about the first.

There are four broad approaches.

**Finances:** “The single most important thing we can do to hit back at Putin is to enact legislation to confiscate the \$300 billion of frozen Russian bank reserves for the defense and reconstruction of Ukraine,” Bill Browder,

investor and political activist, wrote me on Monday. Browder is best known as the moving force behind the Magnitsky Acts, which put sanctions on Russian officials implicated in corruption and other abuses.

Browder's suggestion isn't new. And it's been resisted by U.S. government



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officials who fear that it exceeds what American law allows and would encourage a flight from dollar assets. But as Harvard legal scholar Larry Tribe and a team of experts from the firm of Kaplan, Heckler & Fink noted last year in a report for the Renew Democracy Initiative, seizing Russia's assets is explicitly allowed as a "countermeasure," an act designed to compel an aggressor to come into compliance with international law. As for the flight-from-the-dollar argument, it might otherwise be persuasive if the need to save Ukraine and punish Russia weren't more urgent.

Seizing Russia's assets "would be like two fingers in the eyes from the West," Browder added. "Putin doesn't care how many soldiers are killed, but he cares profoundly about his money. To top it off, all countries should call this new legislation the Navalny Act."

**Recognition:** "Do not recognize Putin as the president of Russia after March 17 — that simple," Garry Kasparov, the legendary chess and human-rights champion, told me by phone from Berlin. "Do not recognize the regime as legitimate."

Kasparov was alluding to next month's sham presidential election, in

which Putin is running for a fifth term. But he's also nodding to a deeper point, which is that while Putin might be indifferent to questions of legality, he craves and is keenly attuned to the trappings of political legitimacy, particularly internationally, which bolster his claims to rule.

It's a point that was underscored to me by economist Konstantin Sonin, a professor at the University of Chicago who this month was arrested in absentia by a Russian court. "Putin and his henchmen should be recognized and treated as a gang whose hold on power in Russia is based on brute force rather than any kind of legitimacy," Sonin said. "It does not make sense to negotiate with Putin as any kind of agreement will have to be renegotiated when his regime falls."

**Dissidents:** When Natan Sharansky called me from Jerusalem, that great Soviet refusenik, who exchanged letters with Navalny last year, turned almost immediately to Vladimir Kara-Murza, another imprisoned dissident. Like Navalny, Kara-Murza, 42, also survived poisonings and comas. Like Navalny, he's being held in a "strict regime" penal colony on a 25-year-sentence for his opposition to Putin.

"If there are no changes" to Western policy, Sharansky said, Putin "could kill Kara-Murza tomorrow. The West needs to understand that these dissidents are the real friends of the free world, and they have to be seen as candidates for prisoner exchanges." Sharansky was particularly critical of the 2022 exchange of a Russian archfiend, Viktor Bout, for basketball star Brittney Griner, which surely enticed the Kremlin to arrest Evan Gershkovich, the *Wall Street Journal* reporter, last March. "America showed they are a bad bargainer," Sharansky lamented.

Sharansky is seconded by Reuel Marc Gerecht, a former CIA case officer and senior fellow at the Foundation for Defense of Democracies. "The great Soviet dissidents taught us that they were fortified by Western attention to their plight," Gerecht told me. "Today, we don't know what Russian dissident, what Russian on the cusp of going 'rogue,' might galvanize Russians who loathe the regime."

**Power:** One of my sources for this column asked not to be named because of the sensitivity of his current position, but he's a long-admired expert on energy markets. "America's liquefied natural gas is now part of NATO's arsenal against

Russia," he told me. Biden, he advised, could "restore U.S. credibility as an LNG exporter by lifting the administration's 'pause' on new LNG permits and thereby give Europe and Japan confidence to stop importing Russian LNG."

While Russia's oil and gas revenues have fallen steeply since the Ukraine war began, they still came to close to \$100 billion last year — enough to finance the Kremlin's war machine. What else could hurt? David Petraeus, the retired general and former CIA director, had a specific suggestion: "The White House should announce the provision of the Army Tactical Missile System to Ukraine, which would double the range to approximately 300 kilometers of the missiles provided by the U.S. to date."

Along with everyone I spoke with, Petraeus recognized that those missiles could be provided only if the \$60 billion in military aid to Ukraine that the Senate approved last week can overcome a wall of Republican opposition in the House. Every Republican with a memory of what their party once stood for has an obligation to vote for that bill, just as Biden has a duty to ensure that evil will not go unpunished and that Navalny did not die for nothing. (© *The New York Times*) ▲

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# Political Crossfire

## Ukraine Faces a Valley of Death *There's a Way Biden Can Help It Get Across*



By David Ignatius

The message at the Munich Security Conference last weekend couldn't have been clearer: Russia is advancing, Ukraine is struggling to survive, and the West needs to provide more military assistance now.

"Ukraine is headed for a morale gulch" unless its allies move quickly to bolster support, said Sen. Sheldon Whitehouse (D-R.I.), who led a bipartisan Senate delegation to the conference. "Russia is up, Ukraine is down," and the West needs to help Kyiv's brave soldiers find a way across "the valley of death" until Congress acts to send more weapons, Whitehouse said.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky signaled exactly what he needs – long-range ATACM-300 missiles – during a private meeting with a bipartisan congressional group. He brought out a map showing the Russian targets in occupied Crimea that could be hit by those ATACMS. The strikes wouldn't liberate Crimea, but they would rattle Russia's confidence and lift Ukrainian morale at a time when Russian President Vladimir Putin thinks he's in control.

President Biden has been reluctant to send the ATACMS, for good reason. The United States needs them for its own defense. And Biden doesn't want an escalatory spiral with Russia. But nothing is more important to U.S. security right now than helping Ukraine halt Russia's momentum on the battlefield. And Ukraine has shown that it will keep its promises not to fire U.S. weapons into Russian territory. Don't wait for legislation; send the missiles.

Two events last weekend underlined Putin's macabre momentum. The death of heroic dissident Alexei Navalny in a Siberian prison camp shows that Putin is conducting a "no limits" assault, as Russian mobsters like to say. Russia's capture of Avdiivka in eastern Ukraine showed that Putin will sacrifice tens of thousands of soldiers in his "meat assaults," as Zelensky described them.

Avdiivka matters not because of its strategic importance, but because Ukrainian troops there were running out of artillery ammunition and air defenses – a sign of their growing vulnerability. The shortage of air defenses is especially worrying: Russian planes could drop precision bombs on Avdiivka at will. If Ukraine doesn't get new air-defense supplies soon, that threat could extend to cities across the country.

Russian troops are grinding forward using their two great national resources – warm bodies and coldblooded patience. That's how Russia fights its wars, from Napoleon to Hitler to now. "They are crazy, they are raging ... tens of thousands of their soldiers. That's what they have," Zelensky told the conference. Ukraine, in contrast, was struggling to protect its troops, whom he described as "our main weapon."

"This war is going Russia's way now," warned a European ambassador who's one of the West's wisest observers of the Kremlin. He remembered cautioning U.S. officials when the war started that "it will take 500,000 dead before Russia stops." Their estimated casualties total more than 300,000 dead and wounded, according to

U.S. officials.

Putin can keep sending troops not just because of Russian stoicism, but because he has cleverly drawn his forces from the poorest and most disadvantaged areas of the country. Those dying are disproportionately ethnic minorities from backwaters such as Chechnya and Dagestan, U.S. analysts say. The pay for soldiers at the front is three times what they would normally earn, and the families of dead soldiers receive a bonus worth more than \$50,000, noted the European ambassador. "The war has brought a kind of prosperity for poor Russians," he said.

Navalny's death displayed Putin's calculus. He doesn't care about elite public opinion because it doesn't threaten his control. Demonstrators laying flowers or staging small marches don't faze him. "Anything below a million we can handle," a Kremlin official told the European ambassador several years ago. The message, the diplomat told me, was that "thousands of demonstrators are a drop in the ocean."

Yet even Putin knows he can't keep the killing machine operating indefinitely. That's why U.S. congressional support for continued military aid matters so much. It buys Ukraine time to consolidate its defenses and protect its territory from attack this year – so that maybe next year, it can relaunch an offensive. For Ukraine, sustaining the fight and blocking Russia is a kind of victory.

One sign that the Kremlin is nervous is that Russian officials continue their nuclear saber-rattling. Dmitry Medvedev, a former

Russian president, said on Telegram that if the West tried to force Russia back from the Ukrainian territory it has occupied to its "1991 border," then Russia would use its "nuclear triad" to attack targets including Kyiv, Berlin, London and Washington. Even for a Kremlin henchman, it was outrageous bullying.

This war is a character test for the West. Europe, to my surprise, is behaving with admirable fortitude, at least compared with the United States. Biden has been steadfast, but it's time for him to do more.

As for congressional Republicans ready to abandon Ukraine at the whim of former president Donald Trump, one can only feel sorrow – especially for someone who once knew better, such as Sen. Lindsey Graham (S.C.), who had been until this year a bedrock member of the Munich conference's consensus to resist Russian aggression. He has become a living sign of the corrosive effect of Trump's embrace.

One of the most poignant images I took away from Munich was shared by Sen. Brian Schatz (D-Hawaii). He described reports that Ukrainian soldiers at the front have been checking their cellphones to see what House Republicans will do about the military-aid package. What must those soldiers, huddling under Russian shells and bombs, think of the members of Congress who are ready to abandon them?

Let's hope that House Republicans find some backbone before the curtain of shame descends.

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# Brazil Abandons the Jews—Again

by Rafael Medoff

**B**razil's president has compared Israel to the Nazis and accused it of committing genocide in Gaza. But when the real Nazis were committing actual genocide, how did Brazil's leaders respond?

During the Hitler years, the regime of Brazilian president Getulio Vargas, driven by religious antisemitism and hostility to immigration, slammed the country's doors shut as Jews tried to flee the Nazis.

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees from Germany, James G. McDonald, visited Brazil in 1935 and begged Vargas and other Brazilian leaders to admit Jewish refugees.

McDonald pointed out that vast, underpopulated Brazil is larger than the contiguous United States (that is, without Alaska), yet its population in the 1930s was less than one third the size of America's. In other words, there was plenty of room for refugees. But McDonald's pleas ran into a wall of excuses.

The Minister of Labor, for example, told McDonald that no changes could be made to Brazil's quota for German immigrants. When McDonald suggested that Brazil take in Jews who were living in Germany but were citizens of other countries, the minister replied that his government previously had decided "to classify them as Germans, and any other way of figuring the matter would be too complicated."

A senior Foreign Ministry official bluntly told McDonald that his government was not interested in any group of refugees that was "predominantly Jewish." President Vargas was noncommittal, offering only that he would ask the Minister of Labor to appoint a committee to look into the matter. McDonald also met with the country's top Catholic Church official, Archbishop Sebastio Leme da Silveira Cintra, who expressed "complete sympathy" for the refugees. But when McDonald asked the archbishop to raise the issue with President Vargas, "this he said he could not do," because of "certain difficulties."

After nearly six weeks in Brazil, McDonald wrote in his diary that he was leaving the country "in very low spirits"



because of the "hostile personal attitude" of Brazil's leaders toward the Jews.

Only a trickle of Jewish immigrants were permitted to enter Brazil during the Nazi years. An average of between 2,000 and 3,000 were admitted annually during most of the 1930s. During the peak of the mass murder of the Jews, from 1942 to 1944, the Brazilian government opened its

away, Brazil became a popular haven for some of the most notorious Nazi war criminals. Josef Mengele, the "Angel of Death" who conducted hideous medical experiments on Jewish prisoners in Auschwitz, lived comfortably in Brazil for most of his post-World War II years. Franz Stangl, a commandant at both Sobibor and Treblinka, also enjoyed his Brazilian exile.

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***From 1942 to 1944, the Brazilian government opened its doors to a grand total of 108 Jews in 1942, eleven in 1943, and six in 1944.***

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doors to a grand total of 108 Jews in 1942, eleven in 1943, and six in 1944. As 12,000 Jews were being gassed in Auschwitz daily in the summer of 1944, Brazil granted haven to exactly six.

Only two Brazilians are listed among Yad Vashem's "Righteous Among the Nations." Both were consular officials in Europe who omitted the Jewish identity of refugees to whom they gave visas, in order to fool the Brazilian government into thinking they were not Jewish.


While Jewish refugees were turned

He was living there under his real name when Nazi-hunters located him in 1961, yet it took the Brazilian authorities six more years to arrest him. Stangl's deputy commander at Sobibor, Gustav Wagner, also lived openly in Brazil. He was publicly identified in 1978, yet the Brazilian government rejected extradition requests from five different countries. Herberts Cukurs, the notorious Butcher of Latvia, spent two relaxing decades in Brazil before he was assassinated.

Instead of showing remorse for his

country's abandonment of the Jews, Brazil's current president, Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva, has pointed an accusing finger at Israel, claiming that Israel's anti-terror campaign in Gaza is "genocide" and similar to "when Hitler decided to kill the Jews." In other words, with the Jews facing new genocidal assaults, Brazil has abandoned them again. How should world Jewry respond? Consider the example of Mexico.

When Mexico voted in favor of the "Zionism is racism" resolution at the United Nations in November 1975, numerous American Jewish organizations protested by canceling their tour programs to Mexico. In addition, the Mexican Travel Agents Association reported 68,000 individual cancellations at hotels in Acapulco, and another 60,000 in Mexico City, for the upcoming winter vacation season. A dozen Jewish conventions scheduled to take place in Mexico in the months following the UN vote were canceled, costing local vendors \$750,000. The Jewish Telegraphic Agency reported that the boycott "has taken a heavy toll on Mexico's all-important tourist industry, with severe repercussions on [the] country's economy." Mexico's leaders backtracked and pledged that they would not support anti-Israel resolutions at future international forums.

Brazil, too, supported the infamous Zionism-is-racism resolution. However, it was not the target of an organized boycott at the time, apparently because Mexico was a more frequent destination of Jewish travelers. Today, however, there is considerable Jewish tourism to Brazil, including kosher-for-Passover programs that are currently advertising in search of customers. It will be interesting to see if President Lula's anti-Israel slander results in the kind of Jewish response that Brazil managed to avoid years ago. 

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*Dr. Medoff is founding director of The David S. Wyman Institute for Holocaust Studies and author of more than 20 books about Jewish history and the Holocaust. His latest is America and the Holocaust: A Documentary History, published by the Jewish Publication Society & University of Nebraska Press.*



# Forgotten Heroes

## IAF Airstrikes

By Avi Heiligman



*Targets in the Gaza Strip being hit by Israeli airstrikes, October 9, 2023*



*The site of the nuclear reactor bombed in Operation Opera*

The Israeli Air Force has been operational since 1948 and has adapted to new types of warfare and missions since its sortie during the Israeli War of Independence. During that war, its main goal was to assist ground operations and counteract any enemy air missions against Israel. Air supremacy was a key objective in the early stages of the Six Day War, and they struggled against surface-to-air missiles in the first days of the Yom Kippur War. More recently, they have been bombing enemy targets with precision, and airstrikes against key positions have been used to great effect.

An airstrike or an air raid is performed by aircraft against enemy targets in an offensive operation. During World War I, Germany carried out an air raid on London with fifteen Zeppelins, and this action resulted in the invention of the air raid siren. World War II air raids were much larger and caused major devastation to civilian populations on both sides. After World War II, airstrikes were components of major conflicts like the Korean War, the Vietnam War and the War on Terror. The aircraft used in these missions shifted somewhat from strategic bombers and jets to drones but manned aircraft still play a vital part in these operations.

On multiple occasions, Israel has used airpower in preventative strikes. Most notable in 1967 was the strike against Arab airbases in the opening stage of the Six Day War and in 1981 to destroy the Iraqi Osirak nuclear reactor. Operation Focus

in June 1967 saw all but 12 of the 200 jets in the IAF attack Egyptian, Jordanian and Syrian airbases. Four hundred fifty Arab aircraft were destroyed, mostly on the ground, and eighteen airbases were put out of action. The Arab air forces had formidable planes and defenses along with the latest Russian technology and knocking them out in a matter of hours was the major factor in the Israeli victory.

In 1981, the IAF attacked the Iraqi nuclear facility and prevented them from creating the powerful atomic bomb. The mission, called Operation Opera, used eight newly delivered F-16 jets to bomb the reactor in a precision strike. They made the 1,200-mile roundtrip carrying bombs and external fuel tanks and flew 50 feet above the ground to avoid radar detection. The strike was timed so as to get the Iraqis in middle of the changing of the guard and so a message from the King of Jordan about the attack did not reach the Iraqis. The IAF pilots then prepared for the bombing run and hit the reactor squarely on the dome. Ten Iraqi soldiers and one French civilian worker were killed, and none of the surrounding building suffered any damage. The entire attack lasted about 80 seconds.

Rockets from Hamas and Hezbollah have created much unrest in Israeli communities, but the physical impact inside Israel due to these rockets has been reduced since the introduction of Iron Dome defense system. The ground invasion into Gaza did not start immediately after the October 7 attacks but rather

waited until all of the ground forces were ready to enter. This was due to the Iron Dome intercepting many of the rockets and most of the others landed in open areas. However, during this time and also during the ground invasion, the IDF was conducting air strikes and raids into Gaza and other terrorist strongholds. Many terrorist leaders, rocket launchers and other targets were annihilated by both manned aircraft and drones.

IAF aircraft have performed tens of thousands of airstrikes since October 7. A lot of coordination goes into every strike and can involve pilots, IDF ground units and intelligence units to avoid hitting civilians or friendly forces. These strikes can prove the difference for ground units engaged in heavy combat. At one point, soldiers from Battalion 551 were pinned down by anti-tank terrorists and Hamas snipers. An airstrike was called in and eliminated the terrorists while no IDF soldiers were harmed.

Many top commanders and wanted terrorists were the targets of airstrikes including senior Hezbollah commander of the Radwan Force, Wissam al-Tawil. He was wanted by Israel for a cross-border terrorist attack in 2006 in which two Israeli soldiers were kidnapped. On January 8 of this year, al-Tawil was killed by an Israeli airstrike while traveling in his SUV near his home in Lebanon.

Hamas commanders and leaders have been picked off in airstrikes by the IAF – whether they were hiding in Gaza or in neighboring countries. Hamas deputy po-

litical leader Saleh al-Arouri was killed in an airstrike on January 2 in Beirut. He was a founding member of the al Qassam Brigades and was close with the Iranian Revolutionary Guards. Several others were killed in the same strike, including two Hamas military commanders. IRGC General Razi Mousavi was killed by an Israeli airstrike south of Damascus, Syria, and was the most senior Iranian terrorist killed since the American airstrike that killed Qasem Soleimani in 2020.

Information from Shin Bet and other Israeli intelligence sources indicated that several members of the Northern Gaza Strip Brigade were hiding in a tunnel near a hospital in Gaza. These included commanders Ahmed Ehandor and Al Rajab and other battalion commanders. This one strike eliminated all these terrorists in one blow and significantly damaged the capabilities of the brigade.

The IAF operations in the war with Hamas have greatly reduced the capabilities of Hamas, Hezbollah and Iranian proxies that are operating against Israel. Other IAF operations have killed many more terrorist leaders and soldiers. The names of these pilots and drone operators probably won't be revealed for many years, but these heroes are a major part of the war effort to combat Hamas. ▲

*Avi Heiligman is a weekly contributor to The Jewish Home. He welcomes your comments and suggestions for future columns and can be reached at [aviheiligman@gmail.com](mailto:aviheiligman@gmail.com).*





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## HOUSES FOR SALE

### NORTH WOODMERE

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### WOODMERE

Charming Colonial on beautiful tree lined street in the heart of Old Woodmere. Home features 3 bedrooms, 1.5 baths, kitchen, dining area, living room, full basement. Relatively new heating system + hot water tank. Large & beautiful backyard. Great for entertaining. Close to all. Mark Lipner Associate Broker Berkshire Hathaway Laffey International 516-298-8457  
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### HEWLETT

Exquisite contemporary colonial residence boasts a prime location set back from the street, enhancing its striking curb appeal. With 5 bedrooms and 3 bathrooms, this move-in-ready home is bathed in natural light thanks to its four spacious skylights. Expansive formal dining room, full basement offers 8-foot ceilings. Stunning inground gunite pool and a beautifully designed patio in the well-landscaped yard. Located in school district 14 and conveniently close to all amenities, this property is a rare find that won't stay on the market for long! Mark Lipner Associate Broker Berkshire Hathaway Laffey International 516-298-8457

### WOODMERE

New to the market renovated 3 bedroom 2 full bathroom ranch home with a full finished basement in the heart of Woodmere, sd#15, on a lot size 90x118, gas heat, central air conditioning, garage, new windows, roof, siding, appliances, lighting, kitchen and bathrooms. Eat in kitchen with 2 sinks, 2 dishwashers, double oven, island, lots of cabinets and storage. Spacious renovated basement with lots of storage, washer dryer and utilities, minutes to the railroad, shopping and houses of worship. Open house Sunday, March 3  
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### NORTH WOODMERE

Meticulously maintained four-bedroom, two-bathroom home on an expansive corner. Main floor: entrance foyer, generously sized bedroom, a full bath, attached two-car garage. On the next level: sophisticated formal living room with cathedral ceilings, eat-in kitchen, formal dining room, sleek black banisters, hardwood floors. Third floor: master suite, two additional bedrooms, and another full bath. Lower level: cozy den with brick fireplace, laundry facilities, ample storage space, and utilities. New heating system, central air conditioning, custom closets throughout, inground sprinkler system. Conveniently located near parks, shopping centers, and houses of worship, and situated within SD#15 with low taxes. Mark Lipner Associate Broker Berkshire Hathaway Laffey International 516-298-8457  
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Welcome to this stunning residence situated on a tranquil residential street in Lawrence SD#15. This spacious and flawlessly maintained home boasts 4 to 5 bedrooms. Bright, airy living room with vaulted ceilings, skylights and wet bar. Central air conditioning, elegant quartz countertops, eat-in kitchen, formal dining room, main floor den with fireplace, master bedroom with bathroom and dressing room, Jacuzzi tub, three other bedrooms and two full bathrooms. Inground sprinklers, lush landscaping, alarm system. Spacious playroom. Two-car garage. Mark Lipner Associate Broker Berkshire Hathaway Laffey International 516-298-8457  
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## HOUSES FOR SALE

### HEWLETT-WOODMERE

School district. New to the market. 4 bedroom 3 full bathroom home features living room with a fireplace, formal dining room leading out to the deck, eat-in-kitchen with granite countertops, stainless steel appliances, 2 dishwashers, double oven, new microwave, primary bedroom with an en-suite bathroom, plus 3 additional bedrooms and 2 full bathrooms, large family room, central air conditioning, gas heat, in-ground sprinklers, hardwood floors, modern high hat lighting, custom window treatments, driveway has recently been done, 2 car garage, beautifully landscaped plus so much more.

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### WEST HEMPSTEAD

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Ample counter space and a well-designed layout. Wonderful dining area providing. Large glass doors, spacious patio. Luxurious master suite with a spacious bedroom, a lavish ensuite bathroom and a large walk-in closet. Additional bedrooms. High-end finishes, premium flooring, and custom details throughout. Call for pricing Mark Lipner Associate Broker Berkshire Hathaway Laffey International 516-298-8457  
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### WOODMERE

Spacious home within school district 14 with exquisite upgrades and central air conditioning, splendid kitchen with dual sinks, five bedrooms. Main level encompasses a spacious great room, office space, complementing the formal living and dining areas. Unfinished basement, detached garage. Expansive lot, measuring 80 x 100. Conveniently located near shopping, railroad, restaurants and places of worship.

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## HOUSES FOR SALE

### WOODMERE

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### WOODMERE

1st showing spacious bright and sunny 5 bedroom 3 full bathrooms in school district 15. Features an expanded gourmet kitchen with stainless steel appliances, 2 sinks, double oven, warming drawer, great counter space, central air conditioning, gas heat, 2 of the bathrooms are new, hardwood floors, recessed lighting, in ground sprinkler, gas line for the barbeque, 2 car garage and minutes to all.

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### WOODMERE

Introducing a stunning 14-side hall colonial home in the Hewlett Woodmere School District. Formal living room, formal dining room, den with a skylight. Eat in Kitchen, two sinks, a double oven, a warming draw and a microwave. First floor bedroom, a full bathroom and laundry room. Two-car garage. Upper level has four bedrooms, two full bathrooms. Finished basement with playroom, storage and utilities. Well-groomed exterior with porch adjoining the master bedroom. Hardwood floors and back patio. Central air conditioning, in-ground sprinkler system, alarm system. Close proximity to schools, shopping centers, restaurants, and transportation options.

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## APT./COOP/CONDO SALE

### LAWRENCE

359A Central Av Lawrence 1 bedroom apartment, elevator building, eat-in kitchen, full bath, hardwood floors, plenty of closet space. Ceiling fan in bedroom & kitchen, laundry room in the basement. Close to the railroad, shopping, and houses of worship. \$179k Mark Lipner Associate Broker Berkshire Hathaway Laffey International 516-298-8457  
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### LAWRENCE

New to the market 2 bedroom 2 full bathrooms top floor elevator building, 24 hr doorman, open concept, totally renovated kitchen, granite counter tops, stainless steel appliances, 2 dishwashers, island, 2 new bathrooms, terrace, central air conditioning, u/g parking, high hats throughout, custom closets minutes to shopping, railroad, park, and houses of worship Mark Lipner Associate Broker Berkshire Hathaway Laffey International 516-298-8457  
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## APT./COOP/CONDO SALE

### WOODMERE

New to the market studio co-op apartment, elevator building, high ceilings, low maintenance, laundry room on premises, minutes to the railroad, shopping, restaurants and houses of worship. \$130K Mark Lipner Associate Broker Berkshire Hathaway Laffey International 516-298-8457  
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### CEDARHURST



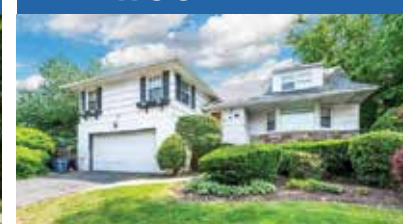
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Generously proportioned, first-floor apartment in an elevator-equipped building in the heart of Woodmere. This Co-op boasts three bedrooms, two full bathrooms. Lofty ceilings, spacious foyer, formal living area and dining space. Expansive kitchen with gas stove, microwave, dishwasher, washer-dryer. Hardwood floors provide an elegant touch, and the comfort of five air-conditioning units ensures year-round climate control. Three bedrooms, with the primary bedroom having en-suite full bathroom. Dedicated storage. Near shopping centers, railroad, dining and places of worship. Mark Lipner Associate Broker Berkshire Hathaway Laffey International 516-298-8457 mlipner@bhhsaffey.com

## APT./COOP/CONDO SALE

### LAWRENCE

New to the market spacious 1 bedroom 1.5 bathroom condo, elevator building, central air conditioning, garage parking, 24hr doorman, many closets, kitchen with granite countertops, generous counter space, washer/dryer, minutes from shopping, park, transportation and houses of worship Mark Lipner Associate Broker Berkshire Hathaway Laffey International 516-298-8457 mlipner@bhhsaffey.com

### LAWRENCE

New to the market 1 bedroom 1.5-bathroom condo apartment, elevator building, 24 hr doorman, central air conditioning, washer/dryer, u/g parking, terrace, many closets, social room, gym, library minutes to shopping, restaurants, transportation and houses of worship. Mark Lipner Associate Broker Berkshire Hathaway Laffey International 516-298-8457 mlipner@bhhsaffey.com

## APT./COOP/CONDO SALE

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## APT./COOP/CONDO SALE

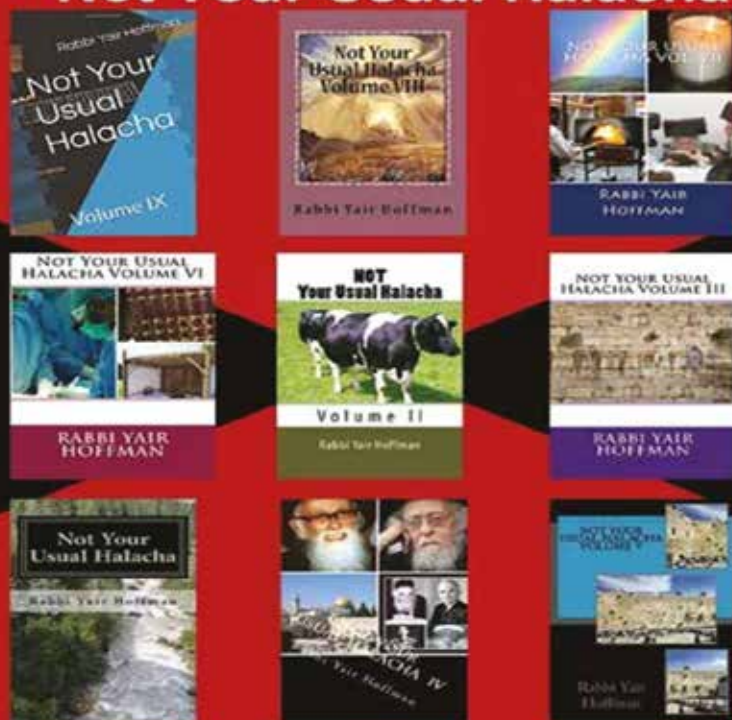
### LAWRENCE

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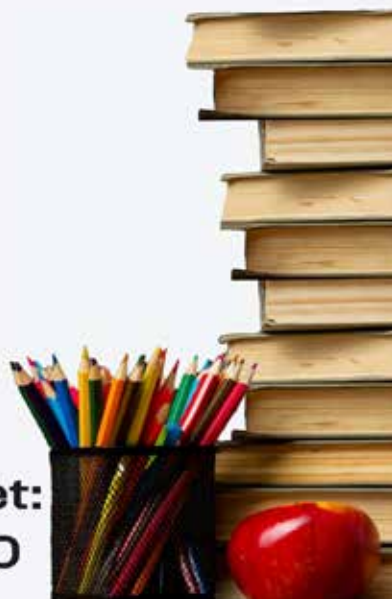
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# Magic Eight Ball Says . . .

By Allan Rolnick, CPA



**A**rtificial intelligence is quickly transforming the global economy, promising increased efficiency and productivity at the same time as it threatens millions of jobs. Of course, someday AI might decide it's smarter than the species that created it (not a high bar) and use it to wipe out human life. (But who cares if we're all

making money now, amirite?)

Plenty of lawyers are already working with AI's most famous tool, ChatGPT. This is a "multimodal large language model" that looks like what might happen if Google's autofill feature got bitten by a radioactive spider. Some of those early adopters have discovered it can be an unreliable partner. Just ask

Michael Cohen, Donald Trump's former "fixer," who used Google's version of the same technology to cite fake cases to a judge late last year. (We're still waiting on his ruling, but he probably won't be impressed.) Yet that hasn't stopped startups like Callidus, Spellbook, and Casetext from rolling out AI-based legal assistants to help lawyers practice more effectively. (Insert obligatory joke about why they call it "practicing.")

Naturally, tax professionals hoping to rescue wasted dollars for their clients who are hoping to harness AI's power, too. A startup company called Blue J has introduced two services for tax pros eager to hop on the AI bandwagon. Their diagramming tool helps planners create helpful illustrations for transactions like mergers and acquisitions, corporate spinoffs, and the like. And their more exciting "Ask Blue J" chatbot promises "research with confidence" to help planners research caselaw, clarify understanding, and expedite drafting.

Ask Blue J is already attracting attention for predicting Tax Court results, especially with one thorny employment tax question: whether a worker is an employee or an independent contractor. It may not be as entertaining as calling Super Bowl winners, but who wouldn't want to know how the Court will rule? Revenue Ruling 87-41 lays out a 20-factor test for the IRS to use to make that call. (Lawyers love 20-factor tests – billing endless hours to parse all those contingencies is why they can afford BMWs.) So, Ask Blue J has a "worker classification" module specifically dedicated to answering that question, using a database of cases dating back to 1927.

They report their tool is 97% effective, which can eliminate a lot of expensive uncertainty and guesswork.

What happens when someone decides to harness this superpower for evil, though? One math-minded Instagram user posted an intriguing assertion: "The IRS audits just .2% of tax returns. That gives you a 99.8% chance of successful tax fraud. The expected value is too good to ignore."

Of course, the IRS is boarding the AI train too, starting by using it to police large partnerships managing hedge funds, private equity, real estate, and law firms. But someone had to be the first to use a horseless carriage to flee a bank robbery. Someone had to be the first "cocaine cowboy" to fly drugs for some south-of-the-border cartel. Someone had to be the first hacker to use a computer to steal millions online. And so, inevitably, someone will be the first miscreant to use AI specifically to cheat the IRS or cover their tracks. Odds are good that it's already happened, and we just don't know about it.

The postmodern philosopher Yogi Berra once said, "It's difficult to make predictions, especially about the future." But we can tell you, with >97% certainty, that you'll pay less tax with planning than you will without. So let us put AI to work to help save you big time!



Allan J Rolnick is a CPA who has been in practice for over 30 years in Queens, NY. He welcomes your comments and can be reached at 718-896-8715 or at [allanjrcpa@aol.com](mailto:allanjrcpa@aol.com).

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"Maxi Biotic works wonders! The moment I start to feel a cold coming I take it every 4 hours and the cold never shows up!"  
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"Hi, in my house, everyone knows Maxi Biotic! Whenever we feel something coming on, we just take 2 capsules every few hours, and thankfully, we've seen great results! So far, we're having a healthy winter. Wishing health to everyone in the Klal Yisrael! Thank you."  
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