

# Megillah

מגילה      מגילת



**PUBLISHED BY THE MASHADI YOUTH COMMITTEE**  
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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Content	Contributor	Page
<i>Names of Hostages</i>	-	5
<i>Honor our Fallen Soldiers Project</i>	-	6
<i>Britain's Surrender to Islamist Rape Gangs</i>	Adam Etessami	7
<i>Being Welcomed by the Mashadi Community</i>	Andrew Mittelmann	8
<i>Mashadi Youth Committee (MYC) Elections</i>	Supervisory Council	9
<i>The Outgoing 2022 - 2024 Mashadi Youth Committee: Term in Review</i>	Maggie Banilevi	10
<i>Behind the scenes of the October 7th Memorial:</i>	Jessica Cohen and Jessica Hakimian	12
<i>MYC October 7 Exhibition &amp; Memorial Program Photos</i>	-	13
<i>Mashadi Youth Volunteer Trip to Israel</i>	Michael Sabzevari	15
<i>"AM ISRAEL CHAI": What does it mean?</i>	Farshad Kalaty	18
<i>How Has Your Own Jewish Identity and Relationship with Israel Changed Since October 7th?</i>	Gilad Elian	19
<i>Mashadi.IO</i>	-	20
<i>Recent Engagements</i>	-	23
<i>Fake Letters to the Fake Editor</i>	Fake Editor	25
<i>Pari's Corner</i>	Pari Hakimian	25
<i>A New Way to Transfer Real Estate Upon Passing: Transfer on Death Deeds - An Imperfect Tool</i>	Robert Bichoupan, Esq.	27
<i>Balancing Physical, Emotional, Social, Spiritual, and Cognitive Needs Enables Positive Mental Health</i>	Debra Ilberman	27
<i>The Vital Role of Exercise in Healthy Aging</i>	Gabriella Nassimiha	28
<i>MYC Israel Discovery Trip: 2024 - 5784 Trip Recap &amp; Highlights</i>	Shirel Kashimallak	29
<i>MYC Israel Discovery Trip: 2024 - 5784 Post Trip Interviews</i>	Zachary Zar, Jaden Livian & Ava Hakimian	30
<i>Bat Mitzvah Jamaati</i>	-	35
<i>Community Bar Mitzvah Trip Recap</i>	Elana Aminoff	36
<i>Community Bar Mitzvah in Jerusalem</i>	-	37
<i>2024 UMJCA Olympic Gold Medalists</i>	-	40
<i>MYC Summer Soirée</i>	-	41
<i>US General Election</i>	-	43
<i>Engagement Statistics</i>	Adam Etessami	44
<i>The Secret to Finding Your Soulmate</i>	Rabbi Yosef Bitton	46
<i>Mashadi Senior Club Annual Picnic</i>	-	47
<i>MYC Bring Your BibilBaba to Bingo</i>	-	48
<i>Our Sponsors</i>	-	49

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*Megillah asks you to pray for the well-being and speedy return of all hostages who have been brutally held in captivity since being kidnapped by islamist terrorists on October 7, 2023.*

אגם בת מירב	20	Agam bat Meirav (Berger)	מקסים בן טלה	36	Maxim ben Tella (Herkin)
סשה אלכסנדר בן ילנה	28	Sasha Alexander ben Yelena (Trufanov)	נעמה בת איילת	20	Na'ama bat Ayelet (Levy)
אלון בן עידית	23	Alon ben Idit (Ohel)	נמרוד בן ויקי	20	Nimrod ben Vicky (Cohen)
ארבל בת יעל	29	Arbel bat Yael (Yehud)	עודד בן בלהה	84	Oded ben Bilha (Lifshitz)
אריאל בן שירי	5	Ariel ben Shiri (Bibas)	עופר בן כוכבה	51	Ofer ben Kochava (Kalderon)
אריאל בן סילביה	27	Ariel ben Silvana (Konio)	אוהד בן אסתר	56	Ohad ben Esther (Ben-Ami)
אברהם בן אגנרש	37	Avraham ben Agranesh (Mengistu)	אוהד בן אסתר	50	Ohad ben Esther (Yahalomi)
אבינתן בן דיצה תרצה	31	Avinathan ben Ditzza Tirtza (Or)	עומר בן מלכה	22	Omer ben Malka (Shem Tov)
בר אברהם בן ג'וליה	22	Bar Avraham ben Julia (Kuperstein)	עומר בן ניבה	23	Omer ben Niva (Wenkert)
ביפין ג'ושי	24	Bipin Joshi	מרי בן ורוניקה אסתר	47	Omri ben Veronika Esther (Miran)
דניאלה בת אורלי	20	Daniela bat Orly (Gilboa)	אור בן גאולה	34	Or ben Geula (Levy)
דוד בן סילביה	34	David ben Silvana (Konio)	פינטה נטפונג	36	Pinta Nattapong
דורון בת שרה סימונה	31	Doron bat Sarah (Steinbrecher)	פונגסאק טהנה	37	Pongsak Tanna
עדן בן יעל	20	Edan ben Yael (Alexander)	רום בן תמר נועה	20	Rom ben Tamar Noa (Braslavski)
איתן אברהם בן אפרת	23	Eitan Avraham ben Efrat (Mor)	רומי בת מרב	24	(Romi bat Merav (Gonen
איתן בן רות אידית	38	Eitan ben Rut Idit (Horn)	שגיא בן נאמית	36	Sagui ben Naamit (Dekel-Chen
אליה בן סיגלית	28	Eliya ben Sigalit (Cohen)	סאסיוואן פנקונג		Sasiwan Pankong
אליהו בן חנה	52	Eliyahu ben Chana (Sharabi)	סטיאן סוונקאם	35	Sathian Suwankam
אלקנה בן רוחמה	35	Elkana ben Ruchama (Bohbot)	שגב בן גלית	26	Segev ben Galit (Kalfon)
אמילי תהילה בת אמנדה	28	Emily Tehila bat Amanda (Damari)	שירי בת מרגית	33	Shiri bat Margit (Bibas)
אביתר בן גילה	24	Evyatar ben Gila (David)	שלמה בן מרסיל	86	Shlomo ben Marcel (Mansour)
גדי משה בן שרה	80	Gadi Moshe ben Sara (Mosez)	סוראסאק לאמנאו	31	Surasak Lamnau
גלי בן טליה	27	Gali ben Talya (Berman)	קית' שמואל בן חוה	65	Keith Shmuel ben Chava (Siegel)
גיא בן מירב	23	Guy ben Meirav (Gilboa-Dalal)	טל בן ניצה	39	Tal ben Nitza (Shoham)
חמזה אלזיאדנה	24	Hamza Alziadna	תמיר בן חירות	20	Tamir ben Cherut (Nimrodi)
הישאם בן מנאל	37	Hisham ben Manal (al Sayed)	צחי בן דבורה	50	Tsachi ben Devorah (Idan)
יצחק בן חנה	70	Itzik ben Chana (Elgarat)	יר בן רות אידית	46	Yair ben Rut Idit (Horn)
קארינה בת אירב	20	Karina bat Ira (Ariev)	ירדן בן פנינה	35	Yarden ben Penina (Bibas)
כפיר בן שירי	1	Kfir ben Shiri (Bibas)	יוסף חיים בן מרים	25	Yosef Chaim ben Miriam (Ohana)
לירי בת שירה	19	Liri bat Shira (Elbag)	יوسف אלזיאדנה	54	Yusuf Alziadna





# Megillah invites you to participate in the Honor Our Fallen Soldiers Project

At the time of writing, the soldiers of the Israeli Defense Forces has fought for over a year, and continue to fight a multi-front war of grave importance, to protect our homeland, the State of Israel.

Since October 7, 2023: 816 soldiers have fallen.

The infamous Soviet leader, Josef Stalin, once said, "A single death is a tragedy; a million deaths are a statistic."

Let us not allow these 816 deaths to become a statistic. We must strive to treat each one as an individual tragedy, honoring their lives, their sacrifices, and the unique stories they leave behind, ensuring they are remembered not as numbers but as cherished individuals who gave everything for their people and country.

Amid the heartbreaking hostage situation that has captured much of the world's attention, the immense loss of our soldiers has often been overlooked. It is our duty to ensure that their sacrifices are not forgotten, that their memories are preserved, and that their families know the depth of our gratitude and respect for their loved ones.

To honor the heroism and tremendous sacrifice of these soldiers, their families, friends and loved ones, we'd like to ask you, the reader, to join *Megillah's Honor Our Fallen Soldiers Project*.

## How to Participate:

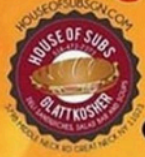
Via the below QR Code, you will be redirected to a Google Form, where you can sign up, and then be assigned a fallen soldier. Your task will then be to write a short obituary of your assigned soldier, detailing who they were as a person, their values, interests, and the impact they had on their community, family, and friends.



Your submission will be published in our upcoming Special issue of Megillah, and will be shared with the Israeli government for distribution to the families of fallen soldiers. Our hope is to show unwavering support to those grieving the loss of their loved ones and to preserve the memory of our fallen soldiers, ensuring that their sacrifices and stories remain an enduring source of inspiration and remembrance for generations to come.

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# Britain's Surrender to Islamist Rape Gangs: A Cautionary Tale on Why We Must Not Depend on Government

# EDITORIAL

Adam Etessami

An unprecedented and horrifying decades-old scandal has recently been given the spotlight thanks to Elon Musk and X – The **mass rape** of British girls by largely Muslim-Pakistani 'rape gangs,' which police and elected officials neglected, concealed, and were complicit in allowing to continue.

Since the 1990s and carrying on into the present day, these crimes have persisted, yet the true scale of this disaster remain unclear. Activists claim that up to **250,000** girls were victims of sexual abuse by these rape gangs over the last 30 years. While the UK Government estimates a much smaller figure of 10,000 - 19,000 over the same period, yet all evidence suggests that this figure is an embarrassing undercount and anti rape-gang activists are likely closer to the true number.

Below are just a few examples of the horrifying abuse these girls were subject to via direct quotes from investigative reports that have not received much press coverage until recently.

## **Disturbing & Graphic Excerpts Below:**

**"One child, aged 12, was raped by five different men in one night, after she had been soaked in petrol and threatened with being set alight."**

*(Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Exploitation in Rotherham, 1997–2013, Alexis Jay)*

**"Children were trafficked to different towns and cities, where they were raped by large groups of men, sometimes in pre-arranged 'parties.'"**

*(Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children Board, 2015)*

**"One victim was branded with an 'M' on her body to signify ownership by her abuser. Others were burned with cigarettes or scalded with boiling water as punishment."**

*(Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children Board, 2015)*

**"One victim was punched, kicked, and threatened with weapons when she tried to resist her abusers."**

*(Rochdale Borough Safeguarding Children Board, 2013)*

**"One victim spoke of being forced to watch her friend being raped by several men, who told her she was next."**

*(Manchester Safeguarding Partnership, 2013)*

**"Girls as young as 13 were repeatedly raped, often in disgusting and degrading ways, by groups of men who treated them as objects for their own pleasure."**

*(Rochdale Borough Safeguarding Children Board, 2013)*

Thousands more descriptions into the abuse suffered by these girls, many with more disturbing graphic detail are available online.

So as you're reading this, the questions you may have are... **How?** How were these rape gangs allowed to exploit thousands of young girls for decades all across Britain without being stopped?

Were the authorities aware of what was happening? If yes, why did they fail to act?

Isn't the United Kingdom, a modern and western country that cares about its girls, not some third world hellhole like Afghanistan where females are second class citizens?

Well, the answers to those questions is where this ugly story gets even worse.

**"Some senior officers admitted privately that they were hesitant to act decisively because the majority of offenders were from Pakistani communities, which could lead to accusations of Islamophobia."**

*(Rochdale Borough Safeguarding Children Board, 2013)*

**"Senior managers in the council and the police were informed about what was happening, yet they chose not to investigate these crimes or support victims, often citing fears of being perceived as racist."**

*(Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Exploitation in Rotherham, 1997–2013, Alexis Jay)*

**"Council staff admitted they were afraid of being labeled racist if they pursued the predominantly Pakistani gangs too aggressively. This fear contributed to years of inaction."**

*(Telford Child Sexual Exploitation Review, 2018)*

**"Social workers described being discouraged from highlighting the ethnic backgrounds of the perpetrators because it could harm 'community cohesion.'"**

*(Manchester Safeguarding Review, 2013)*

**"There was clear evidence that efforts to maintain 'community harmony' outweighed the urgency of investigating child abuse allegations."**

*(Telford Review, 2018)*

They knew what was going on! The police knew, the town councilors knew and the government knew! All of them knew what was going on, yet they sat there and let it continue!

Why? Because they feared being called racist or Islamophobic. They prioritized political correctness and leftist idiocy over protecting vulnerable girls, and preventing rape.



This shameful betrayal of these young British girls and their families by the UK Government and authorities must serve as a warning to all of us.

If this can happen in Great Britain, - the nation that founded common law, adopted the Magna Carta, invented parliamentary democracy and was the mother country of most of the free world, - it can happen anywhere.

Well in fact, something similar but a bit more isolated happened recently only three hundred miles south of Great Neck, in Loudoun County, Virginia.

In 2021, Loudoun County Schools Superintendent Scott Ziegler and the school board attempted to cover up a horrific incident in which a male student identifying as female sexually assaulted a ninth-grade girl in a girls' bathroom at Stone Bridge High School. Instead of addressing the assault, Ziegler transferred the offender to another school. However, this same transgender student went on to assault a second girl in October, again in the girls bathroom.

At a June school board meeting, Ziegler blatantly lied, claiming there were no records of assaults in school bathrooms. This deceit was part of an effort to push through a controversial policy allowing transgender students to use the bathroom of their choice.

The victim's father, the heroic Scott Smith, was arrested during the meeting for protesting the board's negligence and failure to protect students. The cover-up was only exposed after Smith's arrest went viral, sparking nationwide outrage and bringing attention to the school board's gross mishandling of the situation. Public pressure ultimately forced Ziegler's firing, revealing the extent to which he and the board were willing to prioritize their political agenda over the safety and well-being of students.

## Being Welcomed by the Mashadi Community

Andrew Mittelmann

Now we have two recent examples in the modern, western, secular world where authorities prioritized a leftist “woke” political agenda over the safety of children being abused—going so far as to cover up the abuse to protect their demented political preferences.

We must treat this issue as if it is on our doorstep. Protecting our children from abuse, harmful ideologies, and dangerous influences requires decisive action and community responsibility. We cannot rely on government leaders or institutions to safeguard our children, as leftist leadership in the UK and Loudoun County has demonstrated a disturbing willingness to sacrifice children’s safety to advance radical political and ideological agendas.

### *What I propose the Mashadi Community should do:*

Our community must implement educational programming for youth, especially as they enter middle school, to teach them how to identify inappropriate behavior, recognize abuse, and respond effectively. Children must learn what constitutes abuse, who to tell, and how to act if their concerns are ignored—regardless of the perpetrator’s religion, status, or authority.

They also need to be educated about harmful gender, transgender, sexual and other ridiculous leftist ideologies that may be pushed in schools. Our children must be empowered to recognize these influences, uphold traditional and religious values, and confidently speak out against harmful agendas, even if it involves challenging their teachers when necessary.

Additionally, children should know exactly who to turn to—whether parents, teachers, school administrators, rabbis, or community leaders—and feel confident reporting any unsafe or inappropriate behavior. Parents and community leaders must also remain vigilant, and take such claims seriously, and take immediate action to address these issues.

History has shown that complacency is not an option, and we cannot leave the safety of our children and the integrity of our community up to external institutions, government leaders, or ideological agendas that do not prioritize their well-being.

God willing, the Mashadi Community will remain steadfast in resisting these harmful influences and ensure that we never endure the devastating consequences of complacency.



After almost 10 years of being part of the Mashadi community in New York, I wanted to share my thoughts and experience.

The Mashadi community traces its roots back to the 17th century, when Jews began settling in the city of Mashhad. While they were initially living in relative harmony with their Muslim neighbors, tensions arose in the 19th and 20th centuries as anti-Jewish sentiment increased in Iran.

In 1839, a blood libel accusation against the Mashadi Jews led to the killing of several members of the community and the forced conversion of many in the community to Islam. Despite these challenges, the community continued to practice Judaism in secret for almost 100 years and eventually rebuilt the community with their Jewish identity intact.

During the 20th century, many Mashadi Jews emigrated from Iran due to persecution and economic hardship. Today, the Mashadi Jewish community is a vibrant and close-knit group with a strong connection to its customs and heritage. Despite facing challenges in Iran, the community flourished in other countries and continues to thrive as a proud and resilient community. Mashadi Jews are one of a few, if not the only, living and practicing “crypto” Jewish communities in the world today.

As the grandson of Holocaust survivors, I appreciate how tight-knit the community is and how each person is accountable to the next. Unlike many Jewish communities around the world, the Mashadi community currently doesn’t have an issue with young people of marriage age giving in to external pressures and temptations of intermarriage. In recent years, the rate of intermarriage among American Jews has been on the rise, with nearly 60% of Jews in America marrying outside of the faith. This is virtually the equivalent of a Holocaust occurring in front of our eyes. This trend is not impacting the Mashadi community, as the community has a strong sense of unity and accountability.

One major factor in intermarriage is the increase in secularism and assimilation in America, as many young Jews choose to prioritize personal values and compatibility over religious identity when selecting a partner. Additionally, as Jews become more integrated into mainstream American society, they are more likely to meet and form relationships with non-Jews.

The Jewish traditions we have are thousands of years old and could be wiped out with one decision. That is why I greatly value and appreciate the Takkanah and the bylaws set forth for the community in regard to intermarriage.

After marrying my beautiful wife, Monica, I was immediately embraced by her amazing family and friends around her. I can honestly say that this is truly a special community to be a part of. The Mashadi community today is like a well-run corporation. My kids are fully integrated and are fortunate to have access to so many extracurricular activities in addition to the religious and traditional practices they are building.

We look forward to growing and building a bright future with this amazing community.



# MASHADI YOUTH COMMITTEE (MYC) ELECTIONS

UMJCA Supervisory Council

379 community members voted for MYC elections, 22 of which were casted as absentee ballots, 1 ballot was disqualified.

## The Newly Elected Mashadi Youth Committee (MYC) 2024 - 2026 (Listed in Alphabetical Order)

Hannah Aziz  
Nicole Aziz  
Yael Bassali  
Aiden Dilmanian  
Deborah Etessami  
Emanuel Hakimi  
Jessica Hakimian  
Matin Hakimian  
Jacob Ijadi  
Mason Kalaty  
Kayla Kashinejad  
Coby Kohanim  
Michael Liuim  
Abigail Livian  
Giacobbe Nouriely

## 2024 - 2026 MYC Alternates (Listed in order of votes received)

Andrew (Tommy) Hakimian  
Andrew (Drew) Hakimian  
Maya Hakimian

## Internally Elected Officers:

President: Emanuel Hakimi  
Co-Vice President: Matin Hakimian  
Co-Vice President: Michael Liuim  
Co-Treasurer: Mason Kalaty  
Co-Treasurer: Coby Kohanim  
Co-Secretary: Yael Bassali  
Co-Secretary: Kayla Kashinejad



## Megillah thanks the outgoing Mashadi Youth Committee



The Editorial Staff of Megillah would like to formally acknowledge all of the outgoing MYC members for volunteering their time and energy to serve the Mashadi Community. It has been our pleasure to work with this MYC, and we are so pleased that **Megillah** has been able to document all the great and memorable programs you worked so hard to organize during these last two years.

*Thank You and job well done!*

## The Mashadi Youth Committee (MYC) 2022 - 2024

President: Nadav Hematian  
Vice President: David Hadjibay  
Senior Treasurer: Jacob Gorjian  
Junior Treasurer: Emanuel Hakimi  
Secretary: Kayla Ebrani

Aaron Aziz  
Maggie Banilevi  
David Hadjibay  
Lauren Hakimi  
Emma Hakimi  
Kayla Hakimian  
Matin Hakimian  
Maya Hakimian  
Coby Kohanim  
Caitlin Kohanim  
Sophia Kohanim  
Brooke Rahmanan  
Ryan Rahmanan

# THE OUTGOING 2022 - 2024 MASHADI YOUTH COMMITTEE:

## TERM IN REVIEW

*Maggie Banilevi*

Time is a funny thing, it flies so quickly yet one's progress sometimes remains the same. I'm sure many of you reading can resonate with that metaphor. MYC fortunately cannot. The past two years have demonstrated progress for our youth committee in totality.

For those of you who are unaware, let me fill you in. One of the greatest lessons I've learned and I'm sure many of you have too is that it is quite difficult to say no to Nadav Hematian, the president of this past MYC's board. I keep telling him he should teach his strategy as an artform, as it is truly applaudable. He managed to somehow convince a group of 17 very stubborn individuals to help him with a particular agenda. An agenda that has seen great success. Being on MYC has simply been one of the most rewarding things I have done in my career so far. There is no greater feeling than being able to give back even if it's a small dosage to our incredible community. Any small amount of help that I could've offered the past two years rendered nothing other than reward. Thankfully we were left in wonderful hands by our past boards that amazingly built a framework for us to follow. There is no MYC without the efforts made by everyone who's ever volunteered to do it, so thank you to those of you who guided us towards heading to a degree of perfection. If you've ever wondered what happens when a group of passionate, highly motivated individuals decide to "flip the scene," there is no reason to look any further than this past Mashadi Youth Committee board.

Over the past two years, we've been on a mission to claim the highest success rates and make community events desirable to attend. With the strongest board in decades, MYC was able to create a capsule of events that ranged from educational, to Chesed based, to Soiree's, to all you can eat events, and so much more. Every single one of these events brought in the highest turnout of Mashadi Youth Singles than ever. The great efforts of our team were seen through every single event in its entirety. Let's run through what we so greatly accomplished the past two years:

Beginning with our kick starter event in November of 2022 our Sushi and Sake event where we transformed Shaare Rachamim into an homage to Japan. Our all you can eat series became a hit after an even 200 of our youth members attended which was a shock to the system, a good one too. Next we had the opportunity of hosting a New Years Eve event for the first time in years, putting in great effort to host a warm welcome to 2023 with our New Years Eve party at The Glen Cove Mansion. The board's noticeable efforts only kept growing as there was a deeper effort to promote events that tackled not only fun, but education as well. Segwaying into our first shiur during the term. Of course using Doron as our weapon tactically for the bound and obvious high level turnout.



Finally reaching the highest number of attendees for any MYC winter trip, the term's first Swinter was simply the coldest, but best weekend ever as we spent 3 days at Greek Peak Mountain. Another turnout record: Purim 2023 with 209 sign ups, the board's efforts through and through to try and get everyone involved all across the board were seen through the success of the event. And with the commencement of our efforts, MYC partnered with The Maasar Fund to implement Matanot Levyim. The most heartwarming event as over 150 MYC members came together to make a change and we packaged more than 60 boxes of food & donations for families in need during the Purim holiday season.

MYC has had the opportunity of hosting a plethora of events, new and old. Of course there was great excitement in compiling newer events, sometimes there is great need to kick it back with the classics such as the annual: MYC White Luncheon. Beginning summer of 2023, we hosted our second AYCE event with special thanks to the Kamali family's warm hospitality. A beautiful Italian esq night filled with homemade pizza and wine was a perfect jump start to the warmer summer season. Then we followed up with an equally as beautiful event hosted by Suzie and Behrooz Hakimain for our first Summer Soiree. Everyone dressed up for a night filled with good food, music, and good vibes.

Closing off the end of summer, MYC headed to Camp Seneca Lake for the greatest sum of attendees for a getaway trip ever. The wonderful thing about MYC is that we look to scatter different kinds of events for different reasons. Following Seneca we had yet another beautiful shiur given by Rabbi & Rabbanit Bitton hosted by the best hosts, Violet & Moris Hajibai centering on ideas of Teshuba. We were also able to introduce an incredible program: The Mashadi Mentorship Program where we paired established and successful people in our community for guidance during one-on-one mentorships whether that required business advice, marriage advice, career advice, personal, and more.

As our first holiday season on the board swung around we tapped into acts of kindness again by hosting a Rosh Hashanah Event where we came together to put together baskets of Rosh Hashanah brachas to be gifted to grandparents. Another annual add in was our Shabbat Project Shabbat dinner. The sweetest shabbat dinner to date filled with good food, shabbat games, and walks too.

With the misfortune that took place on October 7th, we wanted to do anything we could to pray for the hostages as well as our homeland Israel. We worked fast to bring together our youth girls in a night where we braided challah and prayed that our soldiers and hostages got home safe and that we would soon turn to normality with the help of the female powerhouse: Charlene Aminoff, Dalia Loloi, and Maya Nadmar. Towards November, MYC did a collaboration with the Senior Center as we hosted "Bring your Bibi to Bingo". MYC grandkids brought the biggest smiles on their grandparents faces as they brought them for a day of bingo and fun. A special shout out to the Senior Center Committee for being the best helping hand in making this event possible.



Tomchei Shabbat has been a community Chesed connection for years. We dedicated one Wednesday night as a Tomchei x MYC evening where we organized cars for Tomchei deliveries followed by a huge group dinner in Queens. MYC headed back to Greek Peak for Swinter 3.0, and this year the conditions were just right for skiing. It was quite the scene to watch so many new & old make attempts to ski, skilled or not at all – I’m sure you can visualize. With 2023 being our intro to Matanot Levyim, the following year was an even greater hit. We had so many sign ups that we were able to double our budget and the number of families we packed and delivered items to. Additionally the outcome was so tremendous that time the volunteering took halved. It is truly heartwarming to see how much our community always chooses to show up for good causes no matter what. A change in setting was implemented as Purim 2024 for the first time in years was hosted at a new venue. Purim is notorious for being one of the best nights of the year, no less goes to say for this past Purim.

Topping off the Purim festivities we hosted our first all Girls Purim Seudah with the help of everyone's favorites: the Aziz sisters. While of course continuing the annual mens one too! As we jump to the end of Passover we of course had our annual white MYC luncheon, our biggest luncheon turn out to date. This was followed shortly by a collaboration MYC did with the Nova Festival Exhibit in NYC. A window of time dedicated for our youth members to gather together to go see the remarkable and devastating exhibition put together to commemorate one of the greatest sorrows in Israeli history.

As there tends to be a valley of downtime from Passover to Shavuot, we then had our annual Shavuot all nighter, which was really something that no one wanted to miss. With the board nearing to an end, there was a desire to leave the future board with so many items to tackle. We began with the introduction of one of the greatest things MYC has pulled together. The MYC Mitzvah Movement which launches a series of mitzvah related events for our youth members to attend as we noted the desire to help and to take action. Our first event was in collaboration with the Israel Chesed Center where we had the amazing opportunity of packing necessities to be sent to Israeli citizens in need. We packed a record for the Israel Chesed Center of 60 bags to provide shoes for 1200 displaced people in Israel. This kickstart to our series was an incredible launch and effort that we look forward to continuing in the future.

As we neared the warmer months of the season, we had another even more incredible than the last AYCE event. Hosted by the wonderful Livian family, we collaborated with NYC’s Akimori and Yaas Tea to bring forth an indulgent and beautiful evening. The live sushi chefs curated an insane spread that definitely has topped all of our AYCE events thus far, with a whopping 211 community members. Turning last year’s summer soiree into something of an annual event as we welcome it again, this year as a white out to cap off the summer. Thank you to Albert and Bitta Gorjian for allowing us to host the most lovely evening filled with sunsets, dancing, and Dennis.

As we approached the holiday season, we collaborated with insane pizza company Aqua E Grano again for a night of Selichot & Slices with special thanks to the Mayer family’s hospitality. Ending off our term on an extremely proud note, we had the honor of collaborating with the Central Board on a community wide event where we honored the memory of the heartbreaking events that horribly took place on October 7th. Somehow with the extraordinary efforts of so many youth members who dedicated time to curating such an amazing presentation did not go unnoticed as it was the perfect tribute. Shaare Shalom was transformed into the most moving walk through Memorial Museum, featuring immersive exhibits, and stories that honor the lives of those tragically lost. I don’t think anyone has ever seen Shaare Shalom packed so full to the brim, rightfully so as we were also joined by Nova survivor, Shir Zohar and special guests from Zaka: Yossi & Eli Landauas they shared their personal experiences.

MYC is one of the greatest, most rewarding programs our community has constructed over the past 44 years. There is so much to be done and so much that can be done. Our youth is so special and accomplished, as we’ve seen through this incredible review. Each event held has not only marked the passage of time, but also enriched the collective experience of the community as a whole. Every event was without doubt able to top the last. A special shout out to the most amazing board – congratulations on all of your accomplishments, thank you MYC for a spectacular two years!





# BEHIND THE SCENES OF THE OCTOBER 7TH MEMORIAL:

*How we got started, what went into it, and what we took from it...*

*Jessica Cohen and Jessica Hakimian*

Two girls who shared one thing in common aside from their names; a strong passion for Israel.

We all remember the exact moment, on the morning of Simcha Torah, when we heard the news from Israel on October 7th, 2023. What some of us thought was just one tragic day turned into over a year of war, brutality, and antisemitism across the world. Since then, our community has done so much to honor the lives lost and gave everything we could to support Israel. It was not only fitting, but necessary in our eyes to have an event to commemorate the tragedies of October 7th on its anniversary.

It started on Tisha B'av. On August 12th, 2024 The Sisterhood put together a movie night, screening the documentary "Supernova, The Music Festival Massacre." As soon as it was over, the lights came on and we saw each other from a distance, both teary eyed. We looked around the room and there were not more than five people from our youth in site. Jessica H. walked over to Jessica C. and said "Jess, why is none of the youth here? They should all see this." Jessica C. nodded in agreement at a loss of words that there were only a handful of people there representing the youth.

In early September, Jessica C. received a call from Jessica H. saying, "The anniversary of October 7th is coming up and I want to make sure the youth feels the significance of that day, can you help me?" Jessica C. was the youth representative in the Israel and Zionism Committee, and they were in the process of putting together a panel of people who went on solidarity mission trips that past year. We both agreed that it wouldn't draw our youth to attend the event, and it might be best to do a separate program.

One week later, we received a group text message saying, "Hi girls, this is Dina Kalaty. Hope you are both doing well... Regarding the 10/7 memorial and joining together as a community .. Would you be able to make time to chat briefly as I'd like to hear about your plans and vision so somehow we can bring it all together." The Zionism committee had heard of our plans and gave us the courage and support we needed to spearhead a community wide memorial. The most important thing to us was that the younger generations, the future of our community, felt something that day. From that point on it was clear to us both that we were going to put our heart and soul into this.



On Monday, September 18th, we scheduled a meeting with the Central Board and needed to come up with a convincing plan to win their support and faith. The night prior to our meeting, we met with the MYC President Nadav Hematian, and our good friends Mark Nassimian and Mason Kalaty, who helped us map out a plan. If they gave us the okay on the project, we were ready to go.

The following day, we stood up in front of our community leaders and shared our idea. There was a blank stare on everyone's faces. They were positive we were dreaming way too big. We were hearing things like; "How are you going to pull such an elaborate plan together in just 3 short weeks?" and "Are you aware that Rosh Hashanah falls in the middle of this?" However, there were a few who were in awe of the project and said "Let us know what we can do, and we'll be there to help." That support and faith, coupled with our great love for Israel is all we needed to get the ball rolling. We were confident that we could get it done.

The following nights were filled with brainstorming and hard work. We looked for inspiration in every direction we could, reflecting on our own experiences from what we've seen online and in Israel. Taking inspiration from The Nova Exhibition, which was set up in Manhattan. We decided to create a "museum," highlighting the different tragedies of what has become known as the Black Sabbath. We wanted it to be a dark room, only lit by candles and TV screens. We separated the exhibition into 4 parts. The lobby of Shaare Shalom, being both the entrance and exit of the exhibit, was titled "Stories of Soldiers and Survivors." The next section was a recreation of the aftermath of the Nova Festival Site. Followed by a representation of a destroyed Kibbutz. Then, a recreation of parts of Tel Aviv's "Hostage Square," which led you to a smaller-scale replication of a Hamas terror tunnel.

Over the two week span that we had to bring this event to life, volunteers of all different ages of our youth got together and split up into various roles and teams. There were different whatsapp groups created for the 4 parts of the exhibit, and groups for things like videos, sound, lighting, and posters. We set goals and deadlines for getting certain tasks done within every group. Each day, hour, and even minute leading to the event was spent gathering more props, furniture, printing out posters, and editing clips from hours of video. Before we knew it, the day of setup was sprung upon us, just a day after Rosh Hashanah. Cars stuffed to the brim, we were ready to transform the Kanissa into our own memorial venue. The 40 or so volunteers, in over 12 hours, made this event possible.

The night of the event, we printed a scroll with names of every life lost on October 7th, wrapped it around the entire main sanctuary, and it spanned to almost 100 feet long. Every life lost that day had a story, and we will remember them forever. The very first night we met with the Central Board, they estimated 300-400 attendees. As part of the program, we created bracelets each with a different name of someone who had fallen on 10/7. There were almost 900 bracelets handed out one by one that night, and there were hundreds of attendees who never received one. With people crowding outside, there was a 30 minute wait to get into the exhibition. No one has ever seen the main sanctuary of Shaare Shalom filled with as many people as it was that night.



We were honored to have two speakers join us to share their stories. A survivor of the Nova Festival, Shir Zohar, captivated the crowd with her miraculous story, strength and courage to move forward. She vowed to bring light into this world in the honor of the man who saved her and her friend. Ori Arad, age 22, a bartender at the Nova Festival lost his life when saving her.

We were then elated to have the honor to meet Eli Landau, the second speaker at the October 7th event, and his father Yossi Landau, the founder of the ZAKA Search and Rescue Organization. We were blown away by the fearlessness, commitment, and love that this father-son duo has for the Jewish people. Instantaneously connected to Eli, Mark Nassimian as well as two other families hosted him over Rosh Hashanah and Shabbat with open arms. Eli really connected to our community. He mentioned to us how multiple people made comments to him such as, "We wish we can do more for Eretz Israel" and "We feel so useless from so far away." Eli then shared with us that what we are doing is so significant. He shared photos and videos of our event with his friends and his team in Israel and told us that we have been of tremendous support. He left New York and headed back to Israel and reminded us that he "is Mashadi now."

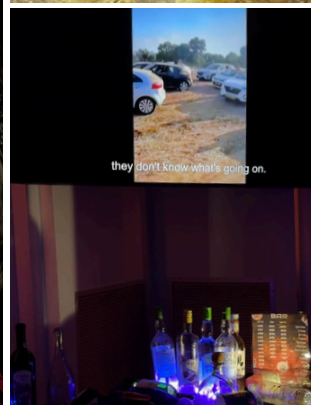
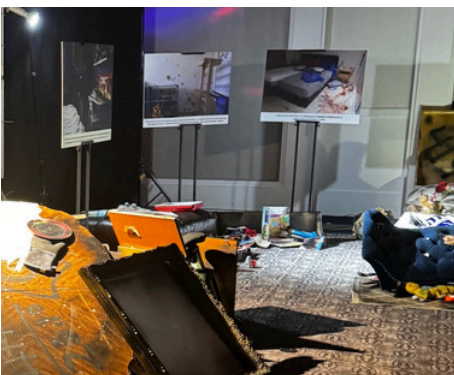
We saw a side of our community that was truly remarkable. The minute we needed something, there were multiple people volunteering to help. This event turned into something so much larger than we ever could have dreamed of. We dreamt big in our meeting 3 weeks leading up to the event, and created a night even bigger. Not only did it touch the youth, but it touched all ages, and showed us what the power of passion and uniting as a community can do.

Putting together the October 7th memorial was filled with love, respect, strength, laughter, and struggles, all emotions which define us as a community. From the start, we wanted to create something that would bring people together to celebrate Israel's strength and resilience, while showcasing the atrocities that happened on October 7th. It took a lot of planning—finding the right venue, organizing the details, and gathering an amazing group of volunteers to bring everything to life. It wasn't easy, but every bit of effort was worth it to make sure our passion was contagious for just one night.

Now, Am Israel Chai has a new significance to us. It not only embodies the effort that went into such a beautiful tribute, but it represents the strength and power that we have when we are one.

# MYC OCTOBER 7 EXHIBITION & MEMORIAL PROGRAM

October 7, 2024 - Tishrei 6, 5785  
Shaare Shalom









# Mashadi Youth Volunteer Trip to Israel

Michael Sabzevari

# ISRAEL AT WAR

## Participants:

Ronnie Aziz, Adam Bakhshi, Michaela Ben Yehuda, Eliyahu Ebrani, Ariella Ebrani, Jessica Cohen, Cody Hakimian, Maya Hakimian, Kevin Kashizadeh, Naomi Kashizadeh, Desiree Kashizadeh, David Karimzadeh, Monique Kamali, Melanie Namdar, Jessica Namdar, Nadine Namdar, Mark Nassimian, Rodney Nassimian, Michael Sabzevari, Emily Zar

As we all know, Israel has been caught in a severe war since October 7th, with countless casualties, kidnappings, and acts of terrorism. When we arrived on July 1st to show my support, people often asked if we were scared. We had our concerns at first, but once we were there, we felt safer than we do in New York, thanks to the strong protection from the Israeli government and increased security.

## Visiting a Hospital

Our journey started at the Shaare Zedek Medical Center, where we were given a tour of the labs and the oncology ward where cancer patients were kept. By day two, we had visited Sheba Hospital, known for its care of wounded soldiers. We had the chance to enjoy a meal of pizza with them and hear some of their stories. They are all in our thoughts and prayers.

## Warehouse Work

On the first two days, we found ourselves in a warehouse like Costco, where we packed 180 boxes of food for Holocaust survivors, patients, and families struggling to afford Shabbat meals. The warehouse was short on workers because of the war, so we stepped in to help. What seemed to be like a 6 a.m. call to help in the warehouse quickly transformed into an energetic event filled with music and a sense of purpose. We worked together as a team, with each person contributing to a larger mission. It was like Tomchei Shabbat, but we were the behind-the-scenes crew, united in our efforts.

We met Saar, the owner, who was not only full of energy and expertise but also a natural leader. He didn't just guide us; he led by example, turning what could have been chaos into an assembly line. His motivation made even the toughest tasks feel exciting. We all moved in unison, working together effortlessly, motivated by a common goal.

On the second day, we encountered a mountain of scattered shoes. Our job was to match as many pairs as possible and pack them into boxes. What seemed like an overwhelming task at first became an opportunity for teamwork and diligence. It felt like we had stepped into a modern-day sweatshop, but instead of mayhem, we brought energy and solidarity.



## Nova Festival

Visiting the Nova Festival, where much of the violence had occurred, was both saddening and mind-blowing. The festival grounds, where people used to rave, now stand as a dark testimony to the tragedy. The rave had been replaced by deep silence, and what we saw was much more powerful and emotional than anything shown on social media. This area carried a heavy weight of grief and loss. Being there in person offered a heartbreaking reminder of why we came.

We were near Gaza, and many fighter jets flew overhead. We could hear tanks and explosions from miles away. We then visited a bomb shelter by a bus stop, another reminder of terror. During the attack, many Jews hid in this bomb shelter, and Aner Shapiro protected his people from the outside, catching seven grenades before the eighth one killed him. Terrorists threw more grenades into the shelter, and no one survived.

We concluded our visit at a parking lot where all the cars were being held—vehicles and motorcycles with bullet holes. We were lucky to meet a young volunteer from Zaka; he's a young gentleman, deeply affected by the devastation. He struggled to keep his composure, and he was explaining the horrors he witnessed. Even now, he continues to search for and recover victims, haunted by the scenes he encounters every day.

## *Itamar Alus*

On our bus ride back from Nova, Itamar Alus, a police officer from Ofakim, joined us and shared his traumatic experience from October 7th. On his way to synagogue on Simchat Torah, he heard sirens and explosions like never before. He woke up his family and took them to a bomb shelter, thinking the danger would be over soon. However, the situation soared quickly.

As he decided to walk to synagogue alone, he was met with the shocking reality of the war. Just 40 meters from his home, he saw a father and daughter fleeing from terrorists who were chasing and shooting at them. Realizing the seriousness of the situation, Itamar understood he was in the middle of a full-blown war.

Wearing his Shabbat suit and holding a pistol, Itamar took cover behind a car. He drew the attention of the terrorists to himself and his fellow officer, Shai, to protect the civilians around them. Despite being under heavy fire, Itamar managed to help a wounded couple get to safety. He was hit multiple times but miraculously survived, still in shock that he was alive.

One dramatic moment involved a terrorist hiding behind a stone wall. The terrorist threw a grenade at him, which exploded immediately. Covered in sand, he managed to shoot the terrorist in the head. Throughout the day, I witnessed tragedy after tragedy but also saw moments of miraculous survival.

In a desperate attempt to help, he encountered another officer named Dennis, who was severely wounded and surrounded by civilians. Dennis, who was barely responsive, requested that they keep going despite the fuel tank being low. Itamar, worried about running out of fuel, pleaded with Dennis to stay strong. They made it to the hospital, where Dennis was rushed into surgery.

Back in his town of Ofakim, he found bodies of security guards, civilians, and terrorists. On the roof of a two-story building, he encountered a terrorist trying to surrender. The terrorist had an explosive device and was shot in the head by another IDF soldier. Despite his bravery, he doesn't see himself as a hero. He feels that true heroism is having no fear, and he was scared throughout the period. A few days later, Dennis, now recovering from his injuries, called Itamar to let him know he was alive. Itamar also received calls from people he had rescued, all expressing their gratitude. For those who didn't survive, we pray their memory will be a blessing.

## *Agriculture in Israel*

The war has had a severe impact on Israeli farmers. With many either fighting or being taken to Gaza, the remaining farmers have been overextended. During my visit, I met Uri Alon, an agronomist who had been working tirelessly despite the challenges. An agronomist is basically a scientist who studies crops and soil to help farmers grow more productive plants. Together, we rebuilt greenhouses, planted tomatoes, and harvested them. Uri explained that the water for his plants comes from sewage, while seawater is used for drinking.

Uri's greenhouse showed just how hard he worked and how much he cared. He allowed bees to roam freely inside to pollinate the plants and even had a playful side—he named his bees after famous figures, with the queen bee called "Beyonce" and the king bee called "Jay Z."

The situation for farmers like Uri is awful. While we sat around the camp, he shared a disturbing story. There was a terrifying incident when 15 terrorists breached their gate. Farmers, who were unarmed because their weapons had been stolen, had to flee to a nearby mosque. Miraculously, the terrorists retreated after confronting resistance. However, 30 terrorists arrived at the mosque with vehicles and motorcycles. The mosque was quickly secured with the help of women who used tanks from the Egypt border to run over enemy vehicles. Inside a kibbutz, a brave officer named Khiran made a difficult decision to eliminate terrorists holding 15 Israelis hostage, despite the moral challenges. He taught us that it's sometimes necessary to act decisively, even if it means taking difficult actions like bombing a home with terrorists and some Israeli soldiers inside, because those soldiers had chosen to put their lives at risk to protect civilians.



On our final day of volunteering, we visited a pepper farm and helped pick peppers for a Thai worker. Due to the war, many Thai farmers had returned to Thailand, leaving the farm short on hands. I want to close this story with a quote from Rabbi Eliyahu Ebrani, founder of Kosherist: "Just as we pull the peppers from the ground, may our hostages also get pulled from Gaza and be saved." Amen!

## *Barbecue at an Army Base*

On the last evening of our trip, we visited an army base for a barbecue with the soldiers. At first, we spent time talking to them, learning about their experiences and what they had been through. Everyone naturally splits up, having one-on-one conversations with different soldiers and really getting to know them and their stories.

Before we knew it, music started playing. The girls danced with the female soldiers, and the guys celebrated with the male soldiers. Soon, we were all together, sharing in the joy and wrapping up the day with a sense of unity. It was a moment to give thanks to those who protect us, and we left feeling inspired by their courage and devotedness.

May Hashem bless the IDF soldiers, protect Israel, bring our hostages home safely, and bless the ones we have lost. We send our heartfelt prayers to them and their families. May their memories be a blessing!







# “AM ISRAEL CHAI”

## What does it mean?

### Israel Solidarity Trip, April 2024

Farshad Kalaty

On October 8, 2023, the day after the war began, I felt a powerful urge—or more accurately, a responsibility—to go to Israel. I wanted to show my support physically, emotionally, spiritually, and even financially, to Israelis and to every IDF soldier I could. There is no need to review the horrors of October 7, as we all know what happened, but I knew that my Israeli brothers and sisters, our Israeli brothers and sisters, needed to know that they are not alone. A great majority of Jews around the world stood with them, and we all recognize that they are fighting for all Jews and even non-Jews. I just had to go!

Six months later, in April, together with three friends, we made plans and “off we were” straight into a war zone. Believe me, my wife was not happy. Even my son, who himself had already gone on a solidarity trip a few weeks earlier, was uncomfortable with me going as the rhetoric with Iran was peaking. Just a week after we came back, Iran shot over 300 projectiles at Israel. I didn’t give it much thought; I just had to go!

I could spend hours going over our experience in detail: all the places we visited, the people we met, and the emotions we went through. We visited decimated Kibbutzim and the Nova Music Festival site, where the memory of the massacre was palpable. We provided a warm meal, with music and dancing, to a unit that had just returned from a tour in Gaza. We cooked and served a grand BBQ for an entire commando unit of almost 200 soldiers, reminiscent of a “Fauda” unit. We attended the funeral of a unit commander with thousands of Jews who came to pay their respects. We treated wounded soldiers to a Kabbalat Shabbat concert, and we hosted a Shabbat on the beach in Tel Aviv for a unit commander and his family—a Shabbat together they hadn’t had in months. We even treated Israeli Marine commandos to a night out in Tel Aviv, visited severely wounded IDF soldiers at Tel Hashomer Hospital, listened to their war stories and hopes, and shared comforting hugs. We sat with Maya Regev, a former hostage, and listened to the harrowing details of her 51 days in captivity.

A couple of the sites we visited, very close to the Gaza border, were hit by Hamas rockets shortly after we left. That didn’t stop us. I knew I had to be there! What I really want to talk about is “Am Israel Chai.” What does Am Israel Chai mean? For different people, it may hold different meanings. According to Google Translate, the literal translation is “Israel lives.” It could mean, “The nation or people of Israel live on.” Maybe it’s become the battle cry of this war: “Israel will live on” in defiance of all our enemies. Perhaps it’s the mantra of resistance against antisemitism worldwide: “Israel isn’t going anywhere.” Or, it could be a call to duty for Jews around the world: “People of Israel, look alive,” get involved; silence is no longer an option. Or maybe it’s all of the above.

# ISRAEL AT WAR

After our incredibly emotional trip, “Am Israel Chai” has taken on a new meaning for me. First and foremost, how do we explain all the solidarity trips we encountered? Diverse groups of all ages from around the world were flying into an active war zone to show solidarity with the people of Israel. I cannot be sure, but I would be surprised if another conflict in history saw non-combatants flying in. Wars typically lead to civilians leaving the area, fleeing for their lives. Over 5.8 million refugees have been displaced in Ukraine in the last two years, and 6.49 million Syrians have sought refuge in neighboring countries. It’s true that some Israelis have been displaced—mostly to the center of the country, though still not outside the war zone. Yet, we have solidarity groups actually coming into Israel and visiting areas right by the Gaza border. Why are Jews different?

What really impacted me on this trip was how every Israeli we encountered seemed to have Am Israel Chai written on their faces. The countless IDF soldiers we ran into—whether on army bases, in town, at the shuk, by restaurants, or just walking on the street—each one, whether a “Fauda”-style commando on a dangerous mission or a Border Guard technician monitoring border cameras in grueling 4-hour shifts, held this unyielding spirit. Taxi drivers, shop owners, waiters, waitresses—they all had it too.

Like 22-year-old Shaked, a Givati unit commander, whose unit was one of the first to enter Gaza on October 7th. After three weeks of fighting, he was shot by a sniper in the stomach and leg, ultimately losing his leg and still in the hospital six months later. Meanwhile, the rest of his unit had stayed in Gaza with only one 14-hour break, just inside Israeli borders. Even with his life-altering injury, Shaked’s message to us was, “We are winning. Don’t be afraid to put on a kippah or a mezuzah on your door. Even injured, we are strong.” And, of course, “Am Israel Chai.” His story is shared on Instagram @israelandzionism\_umjca.

Or the IDF tank operators stationed near the Gaza border, waiting for new coordinates to fire. They were not angry, worried, or scared. They knew what they had to do and were glad to do it, smiling and singing with us, “Am Israel Chai.” Then, the Haredi Chayalim in the Netzach Yehudah unit, who had just returned from weeks of intense combat in Gaza. Immediately after arriving back at base, they set aside the intensity and dangers of the past weeks and embraced their fellow soldiers—and us—while celebrating with the Israeli flag.

Not one of the IDF soldiers we met, nor the civilians who had mobilized to support them, nor any Israeli who had someone they loved in the conflict or had lost someone, was bitter. In this six-month-long ordeal, each of them had every right to be angry, sad, or show some form of PTSD. But not the Israelis. They were determined and hopeful.

I returned from my visit with a renewed sense of Zionism and an even greater love for the State of Israel, more respect for the citizens of Israel, and more admiration for the IDF soldiers defending our beautiful land. And most definitely, more “Am Israel Chai!”

**Megillah** dedicates this section to **Mr. Nadav Hematian, our former MYC President (2022–2024)**, in recognition of his exceptional leadership, unwavering dedication, and the lasting impact he has made on our community's youth. Thank you Nadav!



# *How Has Your Own Jewish Identity and Relationship with Israel Changed Since October 7th?*

*Gilad Elian*

“Therefore, be on your guard against the Jews... Wherever they have their synagogues, nothing is found but a den of devils. They are nothing but thieves and robbers who daily eat no morsel and wear no thread of clothing that they have not stolen and pilfered from us.”

This is an excerpt from “On the Jews and Their Lies,” published in 1543 by German Reformation leader Martin Luther (1483–1546).

Close to 500 years later, I read these anti-Semitic statements with new eyes and a broken heart. On October 6th, I would have dismissed them as archaic and foreign; after all, I was born in the 21st century, and I’m a New Yorker born and bred. My hometown of Great Neck, LI, an area of 9.6 square miles, boasts kosher supermarkets and restaurants, several Jewish day schools, and over 20 synagogues. My religion was never something I had to think about. The Holocaust, as recent as 80 years ago, fit into a list of Jewish tragedies from the past that could never happen again. Many times throughout my life, I had even heard Jews say, “We Jews should stop thinking about the Holocaust already; it’s time to move on from our victimhood.”

All this was before the Simchat Torah Massacre, now known as the “Black Shabbat.”

This attack, 13 times more deadly than Kristallnacht, has unleashed a rabid hatred of Jews worldwide that shocks and scares me. Even bastions of tolerance and inclusivity such as Australia, Canada, Sweden, and Great Britain have become hotbeds of aggression against Jews.

Domestically, intimidation of Jews is increasingly commonplace, and Jewish students no longer feel safe in universities, even Ivy Leagues. With graduation looming, my friends and I have had a hard time figuring out which universities will ensure safe campuses for us in the fall; the list gets smaller every week. Spending a gap year in Israel, which was so popular among day-school graduates, has become an intense subject. Paradoxically, many here in the US are declaring that Israel is now the safest place for Jews.

I was born on Pesach, the Jewish holiday of freedom. This April, as I turn 18 and enact the Seder with my family, I will be reflecting on the new shape of my Jewish identity. American Jews are being marginalized as “you people” and made to collectively defend ourselves from a modern-day blood libel, with “baby killers, apartheid supporters, genocide lovers, colonizers, occupiers of stolen land” and other outrageous criticisms being hurled at us by academics, celebrities, legislators, and even former friends.

My maternal great-grandmother was born in Jerusalem in 1940, and my cousin from my father’s side was killed in combat in Gaza in 2023. He was only 20 years old. Jews worldwide are all mourning the loss of those brutally slaughtered on October 7th, feeling the anguish of the hostages and their families, and sharing the pain of losing sons and brothers fighting a war we tried to avoid but are being blamed for. America may be where I was born, but Israel is the home of the whole Jewish nation.

While the world gaslights us, we are no longer victims. We are stronger, braver, and more united. We have the truth on our side, and our connection with our land has become unshakable.

Am Yisrael Chai!

## BAR MITZVAH LESSONS BY JOEL MORDEKHAI



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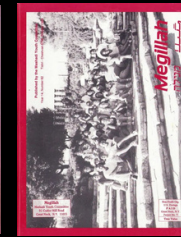
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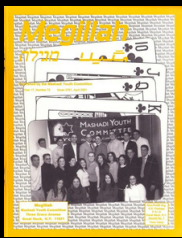
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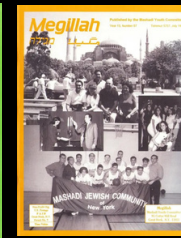
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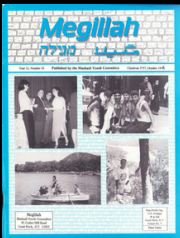
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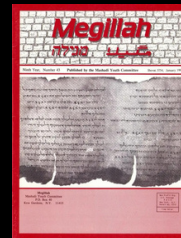
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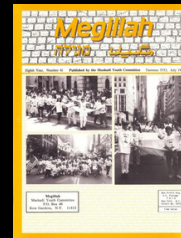
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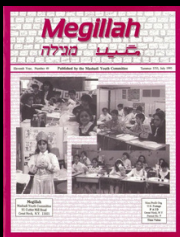
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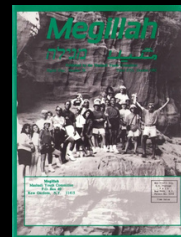
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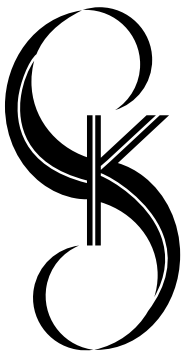


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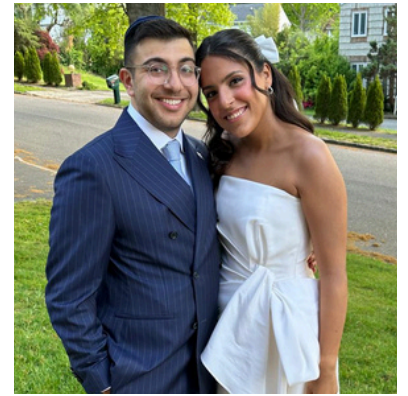
Simon Aghalarian &  
Jennifer Nitzani



Josh Girnun &  
Rachel Soleimani



Edan Soleimanian &  
Shauna Tavazo



Adam Etessami &  
Daniela Kashi



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Sahar Darvish



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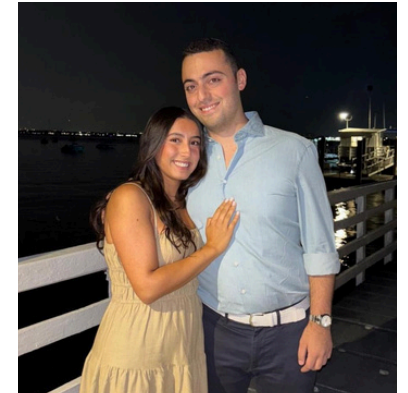
Jonathan Rahimi &  
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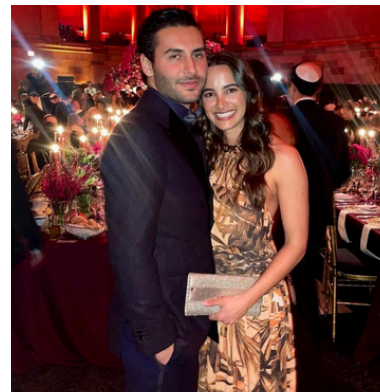
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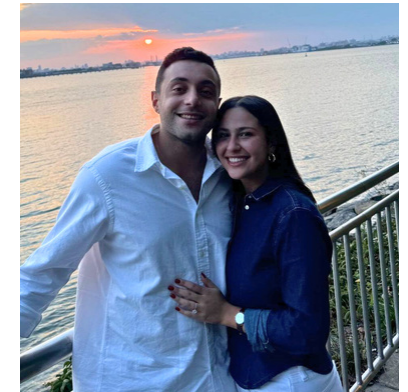
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Shellie Hematian



Brian Nabavian &  
Luli Gamburd

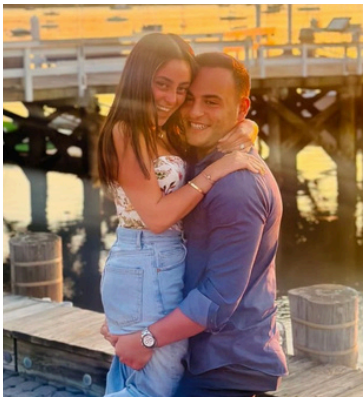


Emanuel Kamali &  
Shirel Ben David



Arie Nourliely &  
Emma Hematian





Ariel Kamali & Claudia Namdar



Aaron Aziz & Ella Hakimian



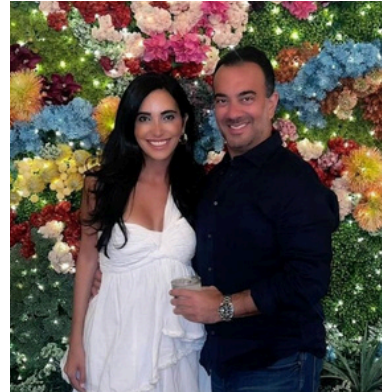
Shimon Herzog & Cindy Rahmanan



Jordan Gorjian & Nadine Dilmanian



Isaac Merkin & Dalia Etesami



Seth Weiser & Nicole Hakimian



Shmuel Bitton & Roni Denti



David Aziz & Avigail Zar



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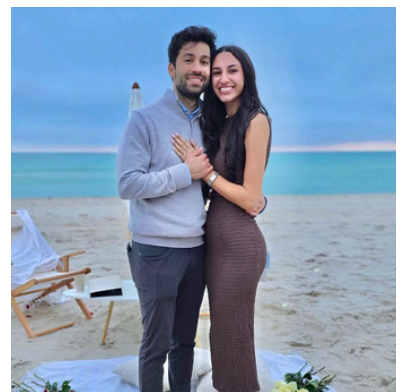
Michael Cohen & Tiffany Etesami



Elyahoo Hekmati & Na'ama Yacobi



Joshua Aziz & Odelia Siouni



Tanner Zar & Evie Hakimian



# FAKE LETTERS TO THE FAKE EDITOR

**\*Special Note**

Do to a complication with confidentiality restrictions, the following engagement has been blurred, and is included here and not in the 'Recent Engagements' section.

The **Megillah** Editorial Staff would like to formally congratulate the Fake Editor on his recent engagement to Future Mrs. Fake Editor.

**Letter to the Fake Editor:**

Dear Fake Editor,

Congratulations on your recent engagement! I wish you and Future Mrs. Fake Editor all the best, and a long life of health and happiness together. My girlfriend and I have a rumor that has recently come out via a widely shared WhatsApp list (that I suspect her Mom made) yet however we both think it is best that we just become public and get engaged soon. I'm nervous about this whole proposal, engagement and marriage process and was wondering, could you give us some advice to help us get through this time?

**Reply from the Fake Editor:**

Dear Reader,

The Fake Editor is currently out of the Fake Office and is on a very real honeymoon with Mrs. Fake Editor. Therefore, do not expect a reply to your fake letter.

Cheers!



Fake Editor &  
Future Mrs. Fake Editor



## PARI'S CORNER

I'd like to thank **Megillah** for giving me my own corner. My Dad, Martin Hakimian, has had a corner for a long time so this really means a lot to me.

Basically, my friends and I always argue about random stuff. I've gotten mad tired of hearing all these opinions so I decided to poll a bunch of my friends, colleagues, family members and group chat buddies to put together groundbreaking data that will end all of this chaos. You're welcome.

Favorite Pixar Movies			Favorite Kids Nickelodeon & Disney TV Shows (2000s-2010s Era)			Favorite Kids Cartoons (2000s-2010s Era)			Favorite Adult TV Shows (2010s-2020s Era)		
Rank	Choices	Average	Rank	Choices	Average	Rank	Choices	Average	Rank	Choices	Average
1	Lion King	2.7	1	Drake & Josh	1.5	1	SpongeBob	2.0	1	Entourage	2.4
2	Monsters inc	2.8	2	iCarly	3.2	2	Avatar the Last Airbender	2.6	2	Game of Thrones	2.7
3	Incredibles	2.9	3	Zack & Cody	3.8	3	Fairly OddParents	3.4	3	Breaking Bad	3.8
4	Toy Story	3.6	4	Wizards of Waverly Place	5.0	4	Tom & Jerry	4.7	4	Peaky Blinders	4.3
5	Finding Nemo	5.1	5	Victorious	5.0	5	Jimmy Neutron	4.8	5	Suits	4.3
6	Aladdin	5.1	6	Zoey 101	5.4	6	Phineas and Ferb	5.0	6	The Boys	4.8
7	Tarzan	5.9	7	Big Time Rush	6.0	7	Danny Phantom	5.6	7	Outer Banks	5.7
			8	Ned's Declassified	6.2						



Favorite Cereals		
Rank	Choices	Average
1	Cinnamon Toast Crunch	3.3
2	Frosted Flakes	4.4
3	Fruity Pebbles	4.8
4	Cap'n Crunch	5.5
5	Waffle Crisp	6.3
6	Honey Nut Cheerios	6.5
7	Cookie Crisp	6.7
8	Kariot	6.8
9	Froot Loops	6.9
10	Reese's Puffs	7.0

Favorite Sodas		
Rank	Choices	Average
1	Coca-Cola	2.2
2	Ginger Ale	3.2
3	Sprite	3.7
4	Dr. Pepper	5.2
5	Fanta	5.7
6	Pepsi	6.1
7	Seltzer	6.4
8	Mountain Dew	7.2
9	Fresca	7.4
10	Root Beer	7.8

Favorite Dunkin Donut Flavors		
Rank	Choices	Average
1	Glazed	2.5
2	Vanilla Frosted	3.3
3	Strawberry Frosted	3.7
4	Boston Kreme	4.4
5	Powdered Sugar	4.9
6	Chocolate Frosted	5.1
7	Bavarian Kreme	5.7
8	Jelly	6.4

Favorite TV/Film Villains		
Rank	Choices	Average
1	The Joker	1.7
2	Thanos	3.5
3	Darth Vader	4.2
4	Fire Lord Ozai	5.5
5	Frieza	6.2
6	Bowser	6.2
7	Homelander	6.6
8	Plankton	6.9
9	Voldemort	7.0
10	Scar	7.2

All Time Favorite Duos		
Rank	Choices	Average
1	Mario & Luigi	2.8
2	Spongebob & Patrick	2.8
3	Drake & Josh	4.4
4	Saturday & Sunday	4.8
5	Batman & Robin	5.7
6	Tom & Jerry	5.9
7	Salt & Pepper	6.0
8	Ash & Pikachu	6.5
9	PB & J	7.6
10	Chocolate & Vanilla	8.4

Favorite Sandwich Spreads		
Rank	Choices	Average
1	Nutella	2.9
2	Cream cheese	2.9
3	Pesto	3.5
4	Peanut Butter	3.6
5	Hummus	3.6
6	Butter	5.4
7	Jelly	6.0

Favorite Jewish Holidays		
Rank	Choices	Average
1	Sukkot	1.8
2	Passover	2.8
3	Purim	3.6
4	Rosh Hashanah	4.1
5	Hanukkah	4.2
6	Yom Kippur	5.3
7	Shavuot	6.2

Favorite Sporting Events		
Rank	Choices	Average
1	Super Bowl	1.9
2	FIFA World Cup	2.6
3	NBA Finals	3.6
4	Olympics	4.7
5	US Open	4.7
6	March Madness	5.0
7	World Series	5.4

Oddly Satisfying Smells		
Rank	Choices	Average
1	New Car Smell	2.1
2	Fontainebleau Lobby smell	2.7
3	Gasoline smell	2.8
4	Cut Grass smell	4.4
5	Newborn Baby smell	4.8
6	Wet Paint smell	5.0
7	Cigarette smell	6.1

Favorite Video Games		
Rank	Choices	Average
1	Super Smash Bros.	2.3
2	Halo	3.0
3	Mario Kart	3.6
4	Fortnite	4.4
5	COD	4.4
6	Wii Sports	4.9
7	Mario Party	5.4

Favorite Months of the Year		
Rank	Choices	Average
1	July	2.8
2	June	3.2
3	May	4.5
4	August	4.8
5	December	5.3
6	April	5.4
7	September	7.1
8	November	7.3
9	October	8.2
10	March	8.6
11	January	10.0
12	February	10.8



**THANK YOU FOR VISITING MY CORNER!**



# *A New Way to Transfer Real Estate Upon Passing: Transfer on Death Deeds - An Imperfect Tool*

*Robert Bichoupan, Esq.*

**LEGAL**

On April 20, 2024, New York State introduced a new way for property owners to transfer real estate after they pass away without the need for probate or administration. This new option, known as a Transfer on Death (TOD) deed, allows owners to designate those who will automatically inherit property, such as a house, condo, or vacant land, upon the owner's passing. Those with a bank account containing a transfer on death designation may be familiar with the idea. Owners will retain full control of their property while they are alive, including the right to sell, mortgage, change beneficiaries, or even revoke the deed. This may allow greater control than a deed merely reserving a life estate. However, this new option has serious limitations and may not be suitable for everyone's situation.

## Some Limitations:

**Creditor Exposure:** The property is still subject to claims from the owner's creditors after their death, including claims by Medicaid.

**Beneficiaries are Limited:** The new law restricts who can receive the property under a TOD and in what percentages. For example, trusts cannot be named as beneficiaries.

**Jointly Held Property:** There is ambiguity surrounding how TODs apply to the decedent's disposition of property that was jointly owned.

**Recording:** The TOD deed must be recorded before the owner's death. This includes a change of beneficiary deed. If recording (not execution) does not occur before death, there is a problem.

**Additional Signing of Witnesses:** A TOD must be signed before two witnesses as well as a notary public.

**Subject to Encumbrances:** The beneficiary takes title subject to any liens or mortgages to which the property is subject upon the owner's passing.

**Lapse if the Beneficiary Doesn't Survive:** The intended gift fails if the designated beneficiary does not survive the owner.

**Lapse if Property Not Owned at Death:** The deed is meaningless if the property is sold, transferred, or lost prior to the owner's death.

While TOD deeds may seem simple and cost-effective, they may not meet everyone's estate planning, creditor protection, tax avoidance, and other goals. Wills and trusts offer more complete solutions and options. It is therefore recommended that you consult with an estate planner to decide the best approach for your property transfer based on your own situation, which will be different from anyone else's. It is impossible to anticipate every possibility or outcome using this new tool or to discuss it fully in this short article, but there may be a place for it in your estate planning. Many feel that this new TOD option may also cause a variety of legal issues to come up and discourage its use. Time will tell. Feel free to reach out to the author with any questions you may have.

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# *Balancing Physical, Emotional, Social, Spiritual, and Cognitive Needs Enables Positive Mental Health*

**MENTAL HEALTH**

*Debra Ilberman, LCSW-R, Clinical Supervisor of the Bikkur Cholim Mental Health Center*

Life is certainly a juggling act! As you keep everything going, it is sometimes helpful to do a self-check. One could think about life as a pie, with each slice representing a different aspect of well-being. Maintaining a balance among the slices is crucial for overall mental health. Here's a quick breakdown of how you might consider each slice:

**Physical:** This includes your health, fitness, and overall physical well-being. Regular exercise, a balanced diet, and sufficient sleep are key components here.

**Emotional:** This slice includes how you manage stress, cope with emotions, and maintain mental resilience.

**Social:** Your relationships with others fall into this category. Positive interactions with family, friends, and your community contribute to your social well-being.

**Spiritual:** This involves a sense of purpose, values, and inner peace. It's about finding meaning and connection. People achieve this in different ways: through prayer; by feeling closer to HaShem; through appreciation of music or art; or anything that allows them to lose themselves in the moment, feel calmer, and hopefully more open to change and growth.

**Cognitive:** This slice represents your mental stimulation and growth. Engaging in learning, problem-solving, and creative activities helps keep your mind sharp and curious. By utilizing your mind and talents, you can feel self-actualized and fulfilled.

Balancing these areas can be challenging. Some individuals need more in one area and less in others, and the proportions might shift depending on what's going on in your life. Regular self-checks and adjustments can help ensure that you're not neglecting any aspect. How do you usually find balance among these areas?

One way to know that you are 'off' is if you find yourself feeling irritable, avoiding socialization, not sleeping well, and/or experiencing a lack of appetite or overeating. If this happens, try to identify what you are missing and how to allow yourself the space and time to fulfill your needs.

Our new Mashadi Bikkur Cholim Center for Mental Health was created to support individuals, couples, and families. Our mission is to destigmatize mental health treatment by breaking down barriers and ensuring that everyone has access to culturally competent, quality mental health treatment.

Through personalized therapy and commitment, we foster an environment where individuals feel safe, understood, and empowered. Together, we are dedicated to strengthening and sustaining the Mashadi Jewish Community.

Please feel free to contact us at any time:  
mbmentalhealth@gmail.com



# The Vital Role of Exercise in Healthy Aging

Gabriella Nassimiha

# FITNESS

One of the most rewarding aspects of working in the health industry is meeting and collaborating with people of all ages and backgrounds who prioritize their health and well-being. On the contrary, these connections reveal how many individuals neglect their health as they age, using their current stage of life to justify why they can no longer take care of themselves. They often accept illness and constant pain as an inevitable part of getting older. However, using age as an excuse for inactivity can have serious health consequences, accelerating physical decline and diminishing quality of life.

The benefits of consistent movement are not confined to any particular stage of life; they evolve with our changing needs, helping us adapt and thrive in every phase. In childhood and adolescence, physical activity helps build strong muscles, bones, and joints while supporting cardiovascular and respiratory health. It also enhances motor skills, coordination, and cognitive function, promoting confidence and reducing the likelihood of obesity later in life. In adulthood, physical activity is crucial for managing stress, maintaining a healthy weight, and lowering the risk of chronic illnesses like heart disease, type 2 diabetes, and certain cancers. Most people are unaware that after turning 30, muscle loss occurs at about 1% per year, increasing the risk of falls, difficulty with daily tasks, poor metabolic health, and reduced stamina, which is why exercise becomes even more important in older adulthood. Without regular exercise, these effects worsen, increasing vulnerability to chronic diseases and cognitive decline, including conditions like dementia and Alzheimer's.

Despite these facts, physical activity often decreases by 40%–80% during the aging process, as many view age as a reason to slow down or stop altogether. The ability to have strength and to perform tasks without undue fatigue is something that people accept with age. However, this mindset only accelerates the effects of aging. While aging brings inevitable changes, physical activity remains essential to maintaining independence and quality of life.

Aging must be viewed as a reason to stay active rather than a justification for slowing down. There is no way out of the natural aging process, but that does not mean that the years we have cannot be lived in the most enhanced quality. Use exercise as a tool for reducing symptoms that become more pronounced with age, to maintain independence, and to prevent chronic conditions.

Many people believe it's too late to start exercising due to age, pain, or being out of shape, but that couldn't be further from the truth. Studies show that older adults who begin exercising, even later in life, can transform those years from a period of decline to one of growth and resilience.

More often than not, age is a limit of your stage of health, only if you allow it to be. I've met people in their 80s who can hold a 5-minute plank and others in their 30s who struggle with a 30-second one. I've seen people in their 60s run marathons faster than those in their teens, and 70-year-olds excel in yoga while some in their 20s struggle with mobility. Truly, the impact of age is shaped largely by our choices, beliefs, and mindsets.

I hope that after reading this, you gain a deeper appreciation for your health and envision what the next 10, 20, or even 30+ years could look like. Your health is the foundation for everything, especially when it comes to being there for your loved ones. Set a powerful example for your family and create more opportunities to make lasting memories together. Take care of yourself now to completely enjoy and participate in the lives of your children and grandchildren in the years to come. Make the most of the years you have, and don't resign yourself to living them in pain. Most importantly, reframe aging as a reason to stay active rather than a barrier and enjoy life fully, maintaining a sense of vitality and overall well-being.

*To go along with what Gaby wrote above, as the owner of SWEATWITHCANDIE LLC, this year I will be turning 40. For the average person this is hard to accept, let alone someone who literally created a space to keep people "forever young". However going into this year I'm not telling myself to slow down or take it easy... In fact I'm going in stronger than ever. Age will naturally decrease muscle, then I need to work harder to increase it. Age will naturally decrease stamina, and I'll then need to put in extra hours to increase it. Age will naturally make me tired, and I'll then need to make sure that I exercise daily, keep up my energy, eat healthy, build strong bones for my future self. And by doing all this I will strive to keep people and myself "forever young".*

-Candie Zar



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# MYC ISRAEL DISCOVERY TRIP

2024 - 5784

## Trip Recap & Highlights

*Shirel Kashimallak*

"Izzy 24." On June 24th, 66 of us hopped on a plane to Israel, setting the stage for an unforgettable adventure. This wasn't just any trip; this was the MYC Israel Discovery trip, the one we'd been waiting for all our lives, especially for those of us visiting for the first time or returning since October 7th. Despite how challenging it may have been getting there, being there on the soil of history bonded us for life; it was a feeling we can never get back and will never forget. With our incredible chaperones, our now "second family"—Joe and Kelley Nitzani accompanied the Big Three (Yonatan, Aryeh, and Yehuda), Arieh Livieim, Nataly Cohen, Mikey Livi, Jon Zar, Gilad Azarahian, Odelia Siouni, Ethan Siouni, Eliana Namdar, and last but certainly not least, Raph Nassimiha—we explored a land rich with history while deepening our personal connections and sense of solidarity. Being in Israel during such a pivotal time gave us a profound sense of belonging and unity that we'll always treasure. Izzy 24."

Some of these hauly highlights include:

- Being warmly greeted by cockroaches on our way into Ohalo.
- Meeting new friends in our grade while fighting them for our lives for survival on AquaKef.
- Everyone flipping each other from their rafts up north.
- The pee blanket...
- Dancing with displaced children and the Carnival for evacuee families.
- Hearing Raph's "Ei Titi NayNayNay's" after every minor inconvenience.
- Bus-Mitzvahs.
- DJZJ's raves.
- When our chaperones "let" us have the iconic water fight.
- Being awoken from the bus ride naps from Rotem, our guide, who would wrap up every ride with a signature click of the tongue, followed by a friendly reminder for "all the ladies—and not-ladies—to wake up their friends, neighbors, and loved ones."
- Estherica going to Gaza.
- The emotional moment when many of the girls saw the Kotel for the first time.
- The traumatic sound of Nataly's hand knocking to do morning wakeups.
- This entire trip being Kelley's Bat-Mitzvah tour.
- Noah's shecitah of the poor bird.
- The 5am DMC's with Eliana.
- Spending an entire 24 hours at the Kotel.
- Nataly's eyeliner.
- Feeling grateful after learning about what our ancestors went through during the Holocaust at Yad Vashem.
- The Salad Trail somehow becoming a pepper taste-test challenge.
- The wholesome bonding that took place while everyone gathered around during the drum circle.
- Mommy Kelley making sure everyone is eating and drinking.
- Doing hair routines on Aryeh's luscious locks.
- Yonatan single-handedly managing to sit everyone down to sing his concert or do his magic show.
- Everyone unleashing the most interesting talents during the talent show.
- Hearing the life-changing dvar torah from Josh.
- Being at the Nova Festival Site.
- Our farewell party for Rabbi Mikey.
- Seeing Joe in his iconic attire.
- Snack O' Mak.
- Gabis Roast Battle.
- Everyone feeling good about themselves for helping package food at the Mashadi soup kitchen.
- Helping to prepare food and meeting soldiers at the BBQ.
- Everyone crying hearing and seeing the impact October 7th had by being on Har Hertzal.
- Our Havdalahs sung loud and passionately together, united as one, followed by Jon's Havdallah storytimes.
- Everyone experiencing the "Izzy Illness" at one point or another.
- Nataly winning a wrestling match against 20 girls.
- All the girls returning with their suitcases 15 pounds heavier.
- The airplane/sauna ride on our way back.
- The many tears shed while saying goodbye to each other, especially to our beloved chaperones, made us realize that as we stood together at the airport, we were facing the bittersweet truth: this family would never be entirely whole again.

The memories we created during this unforgettable journey through Israel are beyond words. They represent only a glimpse of the deep connections and lifelong friendships made. This trip wasn't just an adventure; it was a once-in-a-lifetime experience that the Izzy '24 family will cherish and reminisce about for years to come. We are truly blessed that this remarkable journey was made possible by the generous sponsorship of the late Aghajan & Malekeh Nassimi. Our deepest gratitude goes out to Yossi and Estherica Nassimi, along with Jonathan Zar, whose dedication and hard work brought this incredible experience to life.



# Post Trip Interviews

## Zachary Zar

*What was your favorite day of the trip and why?*

There were many amazing days, but if I had to choose one that I loved the most, it would be the first Shabbat at Jerusalem. We visited the Kotel on Friday night, and it was extremely exciting for me personally, as I had only visited the Kotel once in my lifetime, years ago. People say that when you go to the Kotel, you feel something "different" in the air, and that feeling of connection to Israel was certainly present for me. The night was nothing but magical, as we danced with fellow Jews and members of our army. There was no negative thought that could invade anyone, and we all felt as one group at the Kotel. Furthermore, there is no better place to pray than this site, and we all took advantage of that privilege by having meaning in our prayers. We then went to Aish for a fantastic dinner with a view of the Kotel. The next morning, some members, including me, formed a group to pray at sunrise on Shabbat morning, which is the perfect time to release the strongest prayers. We hung out all night until 4:00 in the morning, when we started our walk to the Kotel. The second time there was as great as the first, besides the fact that everyone was fighting off sleep in at the Kotel. Additionally, I enjoyed this moment because we were all settling into the trip, with optimism from the past days of activities that it would be the greatest summer of our lives.

*What is a meaningful experience that you would want to share with others?*

A meaningful experience that changed my perspective of life was our carnival for children of displaced families early in the trip. It was at around 6:00 after a full day of activities, and most people viewed it as optional. To be honest, I wasn't planning on going myself until I was told to quickly drop off a bottle of water. So I went and planned to stay for a minute, but I walked in and was drawn to the carnival. There were about a dozen families who were all filled with joy that they had forcefully been deprived of for the past few months. The kids were all excitedly running around, playing sports, drawing—doing what kids should be doing. I saw this and started to play catch with kids, race them, and help them draw their favorite superheroes. The experience was especially meaningful to me because I have four younger siblings at home, and I could never imagine them being kicked out of their homes as these children had to. Not only were the children filled with joy, but also the parents were overcome with emotion seeing their children let loose. Ultimately, the experience humbled me and led me to realize how much I take for granted in my amazing life at home. These children are all heroes, and their joy in a time of hardship is honorable and inspiring.

*What advice would you pass down to the next group of Izzy kids?*

I would say that every kid should take this trip as an opportunity to connect to the homeland of their ancestors and to the people in their grade. It is a chance to get away from some of the stress that high school brings and cool off for three weeks in the best place on Earth. The variety of nature in Israel is unmatched, and the rich history of certain cities is intriguing. The food options are speculative, and I still crave shawarma here and there, but it's not the same at home. Secondly, connecting with your peers on the trip is key to a meaningful experience. I tried to spend time with people who I didn't know the most rather than the guys who I have been friends with my whole life. This resulted in me becoming friends with many guys that have great qualities, and I still maintain those friendships today. There are people that I met for the first time on the trip that I know speak to weekly, and I could never imagine my life without them. It is a time to get out of your comfort zone and be present in the greatest land on earth with people who end up becoming your brothers and sisters.

## Jaden Livian

*What was your favorite day of the trip, and why?*

Izzy '24 definitely had a rough start. Ohalo was the first hotel we stayed in and without a doubt the least glamorous. For the first few days, all anyone heard were complaints. The beds were difficult to sleep on, the bathrooms would flood, and the boys and girls weren't hanging out. We had all just accepted that we weren't going to experience that amazing Izzy trip that everyone talks so highly about. The one piece of advice that we heard a lot during this time was "just wait until the first Shabbat; it changes everything." I wasn't sure how this could be true. On our first Friday of the trip, we headed to Jerusalem to spend shabbat by the Kotel. The girls did their makeup together and swapped clothes. The boys took their first shower of the trip. We all felt the cleanest we had felt since we got to Israel. A bus took us to the Kotel, where Rabbi Mike gave us the most beautiful dvar torah about how when the Jews were expelled there was a prophecy that the old and young Jewish people would return to the streets of Israel and we are living the prophecy. They allowed us an hour to pray at the Kotel before dinner, where most of the girls ended up in tears from the overwhelming emotion of just being there.

When we were beginning to head to Aish for our shabbat dinner, the girls had the privilege of meeting the mother of a hostage. We danced and cried with her. At dinner we were blessed with another powerful dvar torah from Ava Hakimian teaching us that having faith in Hashem can guide us through the most difficult of times. When we were done eating, we headed up to the rooftop, where we were then awarded with our last dvar torah of the night from the incredible Jon Zar. Our wonderful chaperones allowed us to go back down to the Kotel after dinner. As a group, we walked back to the hotel. The night was spent playing games, dmc'ing, and forming new friendships. At 4am, we began the journey back to the Kotel for nets. This was arguably the best 4 hours of my trip. When we arrived at the Kotel the realization hit that it was not only 4 am and we were exhausted, but we were also starving. The delusions we were feeling led to a morning of laughter and bonding.

The memories and friendships I made at Netz will stay with me forever. When we got back, I slept from 8am until 5pm. When I came downstairs, the courtyard was full of members of our trip all together bonding and spending time without any of our devices. These few hours were the most comforting and peaceful moments on Izzy 24. Shabbat ended, and we headed to bowling. But it wasn't until after bowling that we experienced our activity of the night. When we got back to the hotel, the biggest water fight broke out. Girls vs. Boys. To this day, we still think back to how incredible this water fight was. We were all drenched head to toe, and we all loved it. It was the perfect way to end the night. That Shabbat turned everything around.

What began with disappointment and unmet expectations evolved into a trip filled with excitement, growth, and openness. In just 24 hours, we went from being a group of strangers struggling to connect to a community bonded by laughter, tears, and a shared experience that none of us will ever forget.



*What is a meaningful experience that you would want to share with others?*

Due to the tragic events in Israel, many of our activities turned into solidarity efforts. Not only were most of these activities under the scorching sun, but, although meaningful, they started to feel very repetitive. After a while, the messages in the speeches blurred, and many of us felt frustrated. We wanted the full experience, not just a solidarity tour. Though everything shifted when we had the privilege of hearing Hadas Loewenstern speak.

That moment changed everything for Izzy '24. Hadas gave us a private speech about the struggles her family has had to face and the way they live their lives following the death of her husband. It wasn't just the girls who were in tears—every single boy was crying, too. Imagine looking around and seeing a room full of 17-year-old guys completely breaking down. That moment hit us all so deeply. Her story, her strength, and the way she lives her life made me realize I want to go back to Israel next year. She inspired something in me that I didn't even know was there.

After that, everything changed. We stopped complaining about the solidarity activities. Instead, we felt so grateful to be in Israel during such a hard time and to hear these stories from people who were alive and able to share them with us. We understood how lucky we were, and we promised to take every lesson to heart. From that moment on, we made it our mission to truly appreciate the experience, no matter how different it was from what we expected.

*What advice would you pass down to the next group of Izzy kids?*

If I could give future Izzy kids any advice, it would be: 1. Don't have expectations, and 2. Keep an open and positive mind. For years, you'll hear stories from siblings, cousins, and friends—everyone has their own version of the Izzy trip, and it's easy to start imagining what yours will be like. But the reality is you won't have the same trip as anyone before you. Every trip is its own experience, shaped by the people you're with and the moment in time. If you go in with expectations, you'll only end up disappointed. That doesn't mean your trip will be worse—just different. So, go in ready to embrace your own experience. The second thing is to stay positive, even when things don't go as planned. It's so easy to get caught up in complaining—about the heat, the dirt, the schedule changes, the unexpected twists. But every time you focus on the negatives, you're missing out on the beauty of the moment. I've seen how negativity can spread like wildfire, making everything feel worse than it actually is. The truth is, you're in Israel, having an experience that will stay with you forever, and it's up to you to make the most of it. The more you focus on the good—the friendships, the culture, the once-in-a-lifetime moments—the better your trip will be.

This journey has the potential to change you in ways you can't even imagine, but only if you let it. Keep an open heart and mind, because that's what will truly make the difference.

## **Ava Hakimian**

*What was your favorite day of the trip and why?*

My personal favorite day of the trip was a day that happened to be a roller coaster of emotions, to say the least. To be quite honest, if you asked me to recall any day on the itinerary and recite what we did that day, I would not be able to answer you; it was all a blur, but this day in particular I remember. It stood out amongst all the rest. We began the day going to the Tekuma "Car Graveyard" site, in which all the cars from the Nova Festival were held, then attended a base to barbeque for soldiers.

*What is a meaningful experience that you would want to share with others?*

We began the day going to the car cemetery site, where all the cars from the Nova festival are held, then attended a base to barbeque for soldiers, and then visited the Nova Festival site. I've had the opportunity to visit this site before on a UMJCA Women's Solidarity trip, and yet, it still shook me to my core. Piles and piles of cars, one on top of the other, all burned and destroyed beyond repair. The question that remained at the forefront of my mind for this entire visit was, "If there are this many cars, how many people were inside them? How many people lost their lives in these very cars, being burned to death?". The thought is beyond depressing, but following that, we went to visit a soldier base and barbecue for them. Despite the horrors that we had just seen and everything these soldiers were experiencing, their strength was indescribable. They seemed happier than most people I interact with regularly, having a true appreciation for their lives. It was awe inspiring to see. Amidst everything we are experiencing as a nation, all the pain and tragedy, we still have so much light.

*What advice would you pass down to the next group of Izzy kids?*

Some advice I would pass down to the next group of Izzy kids is to take advantage of every second, because this trip truly is a once in a lifetime experience and will be over before you know it. Find the fun in the activities that you might not particularly enjoy, and make the best of them.

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## **COMMUNITY BAR MITZVAH TRIP RECAP**

*Elana Aminoff*

Am Yisrael Chai!

This has been the slogan of the year, and what a year it has been. Not only did we experience milestones and once-in-a-lifetime events as a nation, many of us experienced them as a community. This year, my family celebrated our first Bar-Mitzvah. We are grateful to be able to mark this special occasion and fortunate enough to have done so with our community in Israel.

We participated in the Mashadi boys Bar Mitzvah trip this past July 2024. To say it was an experience to remember is an understatement. As this was my first Bar-Mitzvah boy, I had no idea what to expect. My son knew most of the boys from either playgroup, Kanissa, or school, but I only knew a handful of the moms. As a group of ladies, nothing bonds you like trying to plan a trip to Israel for over 20 families during a war.

I quickly felt reassured, as every step of the way was planned and arranged with thoughtfulness and care. Classes for the boys began months before the trip and were meaningful, insightful, and gave them the foundation they needed to make their way in the world and community as righteous Jewish men. The trip meetings were informative and non-judgmental, sometimes even fun. We even snuck in a ladies night or two. and truly felt the bond of one big family.

Our itinerary was masterfully planned. There were activities for those seeking adventure, water sports, history buffs, chess, something for the young, old, and everyone in-between. From the swag bags and t-shirts to the camelback water bottles and a lavish party at Aish Hatorah, we were set!

When July 1, 2024, arrived, our adventure began!!! One of our first memorable experiences (and there were many, too many to write about in one article) was our hike through Ein Gedi. Even if you have done the Ein Gedi water hike before, nothing prepares you for doing it on very little sleep with over 200 people in the heat of summer. Seeing our group weaving through the mountains, helping each other, waving flags, splashing, and dancing in the water is something I will never forget.

There were countless other memories to last a lifetime: camel rides, drum circles, Masada at sunrise, spa treatments, visiting the Nova sites, BBQing with soldiers, volunteering at the soup kitchen and learning about our heritage, Friday night at the Kotel (and the walk back!). We sang and danced with soldiers, had Shabbat services led by our boys, lounged at the pool, visited Ben Yehuda Saturday night, enjoyed the Bar-Mitzvah celebrations at Aish Hatorah, and walked through the streets of the Old City. It was beautiful to watch our boys putting on tefillin at the Kotel, the upbeat Tel-Aviv beaches, scoring deals at the shuk, Aqua Keif, the Dead Sea, boat rides (where some people managed to remain on the boat), and of course EVERY SINGLE BUS RIDE (even the ones where we got lost) was an adventure in and of itself.

There is a bracha you say when you see a significant gathering of Jews in one place. (600,000 or more). The bracha is: "... Chacham harazeem." It translates to "Blessed are You, LORD, our God, King of the Universe, knower of secrets." The

Talmud is the source of this blessing, which is meant to acknowledge the diversity of humanity and Hashem's all-knowingness. This is based on the number of people that were at Har Sinai when we received the Torah. Moshe prepared to transfer leadership to a new generation. He was concerned on behalf of his people that the new leader should not seek to deny the individuality of each member of the community, imposing a bland homogeneity on all. Instead, Moshe insisted that the legitimate claims of the community must accommodate and celebrate individual expression and difference.

I wish we could have said this bracha on our trip as we prepared to transfer leadership to our sons and grandchildren, the new leadership of our community. This experience truly embodied the lesson Moshe wanted to teach us. Everyone is an individual within a greater community. The trip personified this. Everyone was included and made to feel a part of the group. No matter where your kids went to school or your religious level. We were Am Ehad, representing the best of the Mashadi community wherever we went. The boys were all celebrated and made to feel special individually and as a group. Truly one of the best experiences of our lives. My family will never forget the memories we made and will forever be bonded with our new extended family. G-d willing, we hope to continue to share in smachot together in the future.



# COMMUNITY BAR MITZVAH IN JERUSALEM

July 7, 2024 - Tamuz 1, 5784













# 2024 UMJCA OLYMPIC GOLD MEDALISTS



## 3-PT Shootout:

Manny Hakimian

*\*Not all Gold Medalists are included on this page as certain photos were not made available to Megillah by the UMJCA Olympics Committee*

## Tennis:

Manny Hakimian

## Basketball (Men's):

Cody Cohen, Adam Namdar, Marc Namdar, Ethan Simchayof



## Softball:

Dustin Kamali, Aaron Kamali, David Kamali, Kyle Kamali, Jake Hakimian, Byron Hakimian, Nathan Hakim, Matin Hakimian, Giacobbe Nouriely, Daniel Nitzani

*(Team has gold medal wins three years in a row!)*



## Dodgeball (Men's):

Josh Levian, Brandon Etessami, Jason Levian, Benjy Levian, Steven Levian, Jeremy Levian, Daniel Liviem, Ryan Etessami

## Dodgeball (Women's):

Sofia Asher, Kelly Mayer, Hailey Hakimi, Sophia Hajibai, Chantal Hazghiyan, Julianna Levy, Kylie Rafinia



## Ultimate Frisbee:

Sam Dadfarin, Jeremy Hakimian, Alex Kamali, Noah Namdar, Joseph Mayer (IR), Nathaniel Hakim, Chase Rafinia, Eyal Hakimian

## Soccer (Men's):

Charlie Hakimi, Damien Chafe, Dan Gorjian, Giacobbe Nouriely, Jacob Cohen, Jonathan Erfanian, Jordan Cohen, Julien Namdar, Sam Dadfarin, Toby Nabavian

*(Team has gold medal wins threeyears in a row!)*



## Flag Football:

Byron Azizi (QB), Zach Kashi, Adam Lavian, Jeremy Levian, Joseph Mayer (IR), Brandon Djourabchi, Josh Kashanian

## Pickleball:

Elliot Hakimian, Zach Kashi

## Volleyball (Men's):

Leo Hakimian, Alex Kamali, Kevin Rahmanan, Jacob Nasrolai, Tyler Hakimi, Beckett Hakimi, Ben Ijadi



## Volleyball (Women's):

Noga Arjang, Bailey Hakimi, Brooke Hakimian, Jacqueline Kalaty, Juliana Levy, Lauren Namdar





# MYC SUMMER SOIRÉE

September 1, 2024 - Av 28, 5784











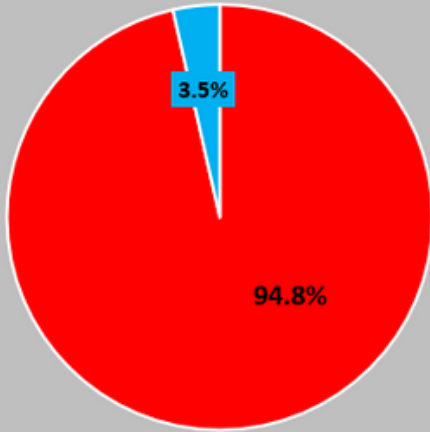
# US GENERAL ELECTION

## Mashadi Community Exit Poll



*This Megillah Magazine exit poll for the 2024 US General Election was taken to identify the voting patterns and political preferences of the Mashadi Community.*

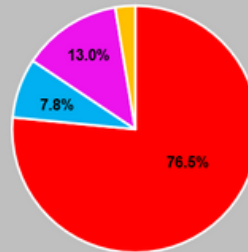
Voting for: President of the United States



Donald Trump (Republican Party) 3.5% Kamala Harris (Democratic Party) 94.8%

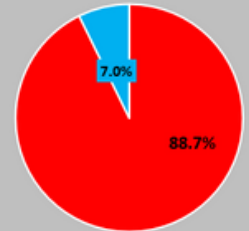
*On November 5th 2024, President Donald J. Trump (R) defeated incumbent Vice President Kamala Harris (D) in the 2024 US Presidential Election. President Trump was inaugurated on January 20th, 2025, becoming the first President since Grover Cleveland in 1892 to win non-consecutive terms.*

Political Party Registration



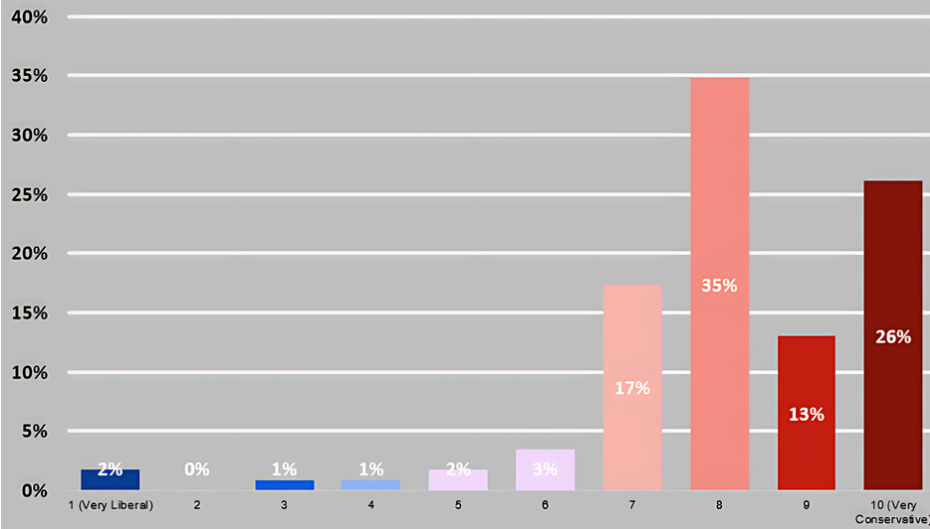
Republican 76.5% Democrat 7.8% Independent (No Party) 13.0% Other 2.7%

Voting for: U.S Representative for New York House District 3

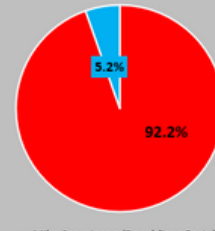


Michael LiPetri Jr. (Republican Party) 88.7% Tom Suozzi (Democratic Party) 7.0%

Political Views



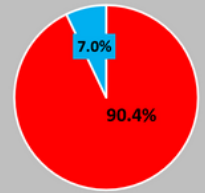
Voting for: US Senator for New York State



Mike Saporcone (Republican Party) 92.2% Kirsten Gillibrand (Democratic Party) 5.2%

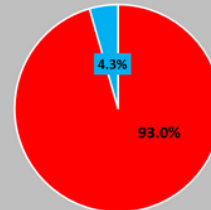
Voting for: Proposition Number 1

This proposal would protect against unequal treatment based on ethnicity, national origin, age, disability, and sex, including sexual orientation, gender identity and pregnancy. It also protects against unequal treatment based on reproductive healthcare and autonomy.



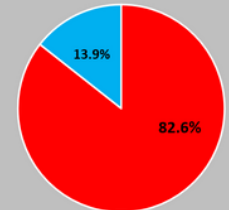
NO 90.4% YES 7.0%

Voting for: State Senator for New York State Senate District 7



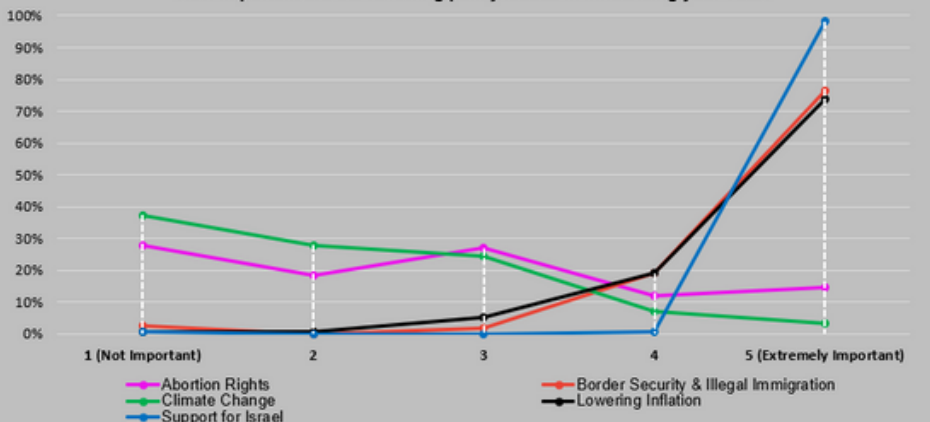
Jack Martins (Republican Party) 93.0% Kim Keiserman (Democratic Party) 4.3%

Voting for: Assemblyman for New York State Assembly District 16



Daniel Norber (Republican Party) 82.6% Gina Sillitti (Democratic Party) 13.9%

How important are the following policy issues in influencing your vote?



As most of our readers would likely expect, exit polls show an overwhelming majority of community members voted for Donald Trump and Republican Party candidates down the ballot. Roughly 8% of respondents identified as registered Democrat, but only 3.5% of respondents voted for Kamala Harris (D), showing that even half of the few community registered Democrats voted for Donald Trump.

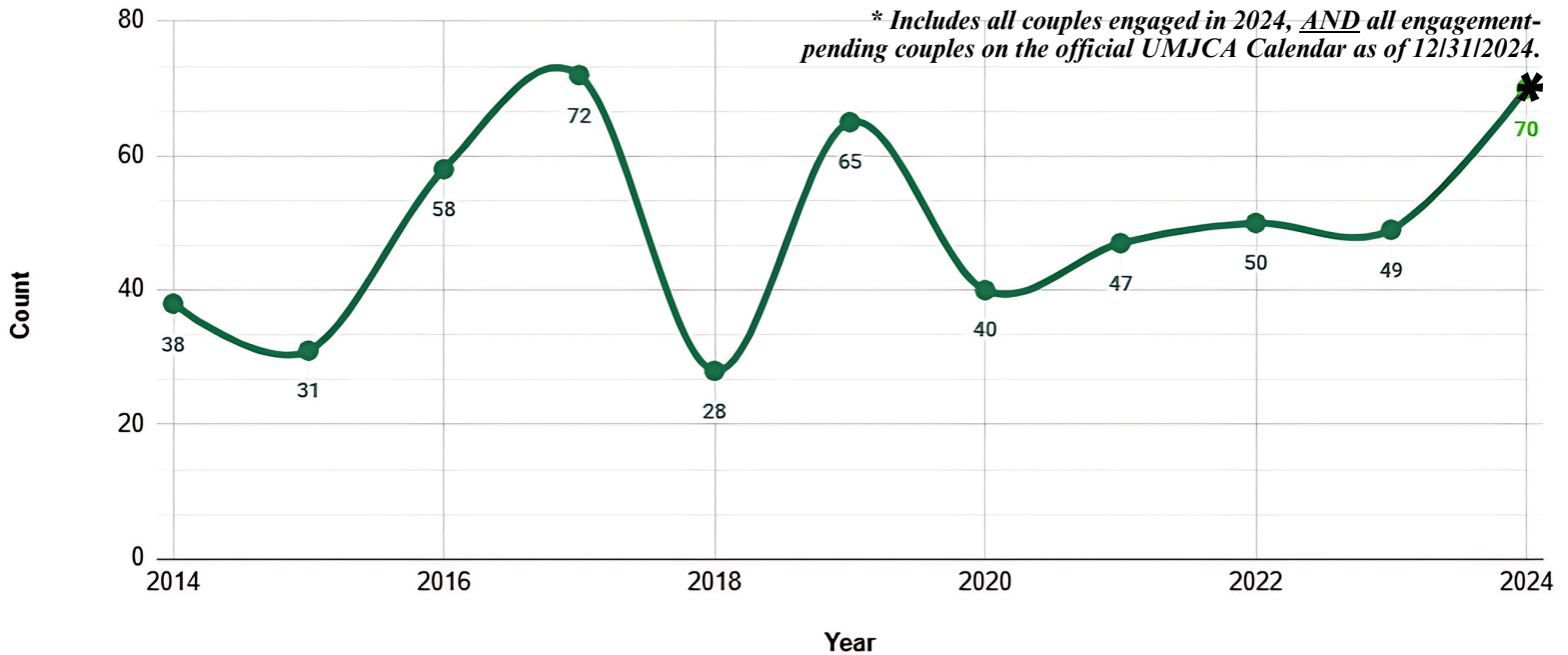
Support for Israel is classified as an extremely important issue for 100% of respondents. Respondents also identified Border/Security and Lowering Inflation as important policy matters that impacted their votes.



# ENGAGEMENT STATISTICS

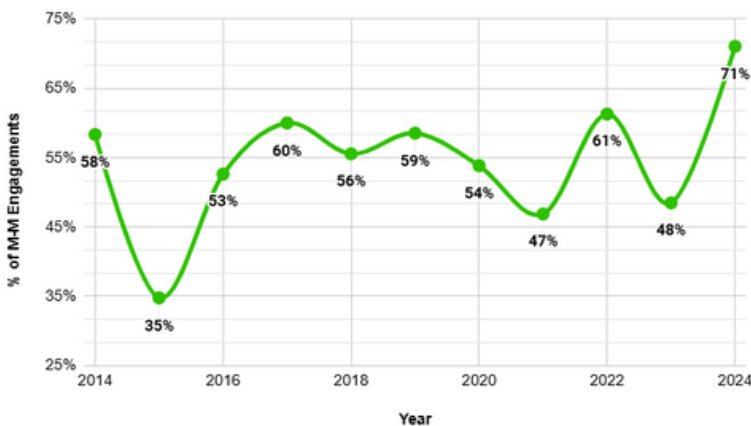
Compiled & Analyzed by Adam Etessami

## Mashadi Individuals Engaged per Year



As of the date of writing, 58 individuals of Mashadi birth (29 gentlemen, and 29 ladies) have gotten engaged in calendar year 2024. However, that figure would misrepresent our current standing as six more *engagement-pending* mashadi-mashadi couples have wedding dates reserved on the official UMJCA Calendar. So to best represent this year's engagement count we included the 58 who got engaged this year, and the 12 who are on the wedding calendar and are *engagement-pending*. That brings us to 70 Mashadi individuals engaged for calendar year 2024, roughly a 33% increase from 2023. Not since 2019 has that figure been reached, and only two other times in the past 10 years have we had 60+ engaged in a year.

## Mashadi-Mashadi (M-M) Engagements per Year



The above chart illustrates the percentage of engagements per year in which both the bride and groom are of mashadi birth (mashadi-mashadi or M-M).

**In 2024, 71% of all couples were M-M engagements, which is an 11 year high!** We are confident that this was the primary factor in increasing the annual mashadis engaged count.

## Total Marriage Age Singles by Year



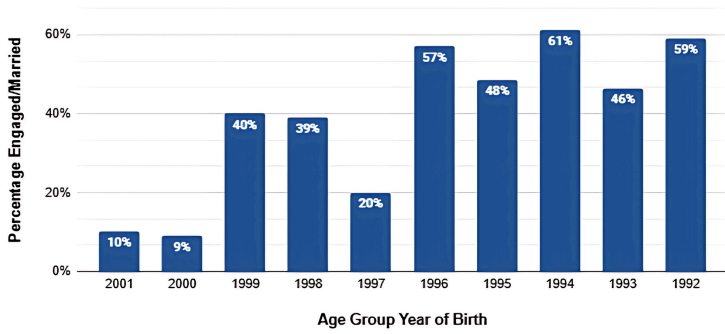
Yet, while 2024 may have been better than preceding years, the number of *singles* in the community actually increased year-over-year, as a total of 71 (\*37 gentlemen and \*\*34 ladies) became marriage age this year.

\* Marriage age is considered 23-36 for Gentlemen  
 \*\* Marriage age is considered 18-36 for Ladies

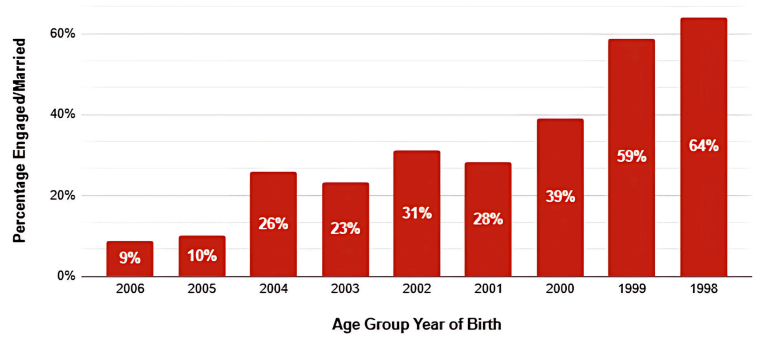


**\*\*The charts below categorize age groups by 'year of birth' based on school grade. For example, someone born in December 1999 is grouped with the majority of their grade, which is 2000.**

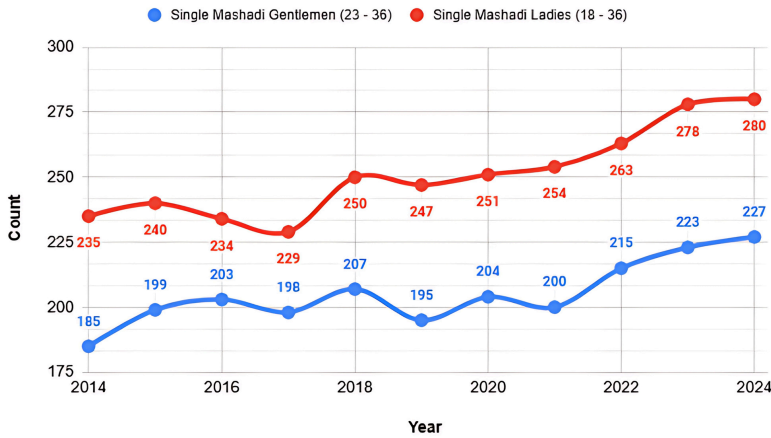
**Percentage of Gentlemen Engaged/Married by Age Group**



**Percentage of Ladies Engaged/Married by Age Group**



**Singles of Marriage Age by Year**



The adjacent chart displays the number of community singles over the past 7 years when divided by gender.

The norm appears to be somewhere around 40 to 50 more ladies than gentlemen at any given time.

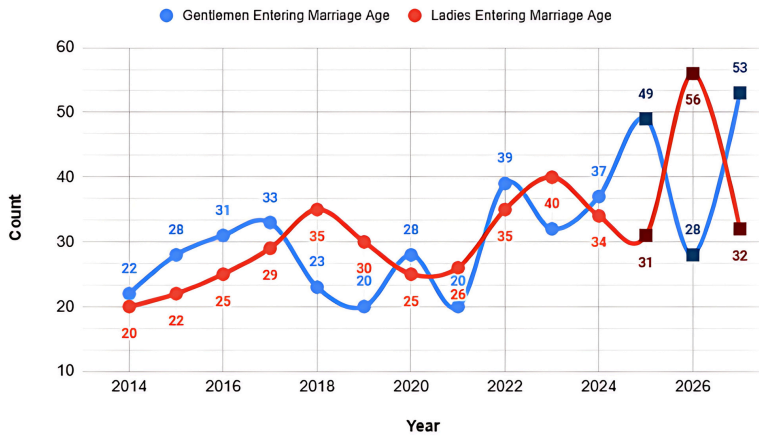
*Why is this the case?*

Well, we are not certain but it could be one of the following reasons:

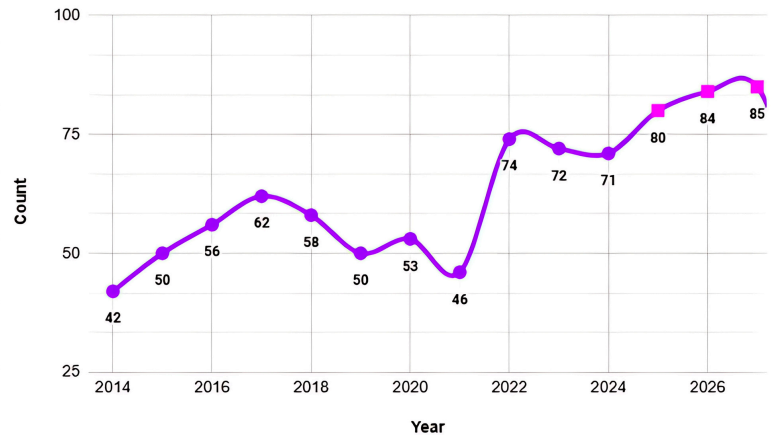
1) Ladies become marriage age younger than gentlemen. Due to continued community growth, the younger grades are on average larger than the older ones. So basically, groups of girls born in say, 2005, are likely larger than the group of boys born in 2000, *so this essentially creates a permanent imbalance and disadvantage for the ladies.*

2) This is likely a small factor, but some gentlemen do get engaged before turning 23, so they are then never statistically counted as 'singles of marriage age'. Meanwhile ladies under 18 almost never get engaged.

**Singles Entering Marriage Age by Year**



**Singles Entering Marriage Age by Year (Ladies + Gentlemen)**



As we can see via the above charts, there has been a recent **boom** in the size of singles entering marriage age per year. We used to be at around 45 to 60 new singles of marriage age per year, since 2022 we've been over 70, and beginning next year in 2025 we are projected to be at 80 and 2026 and 2027 are also estimated to be 80+ new singles on the year. Additionally, large percentages of age groups that are marriage age and have been for some time still have large percentages of singles.

To keep up with this boom, we need to see a continued **boom** in engagements. To keep up with the growing number of singles entering marriage age each year, we need this year's increase to not be a blip but rather a start of a steady increase.

***What has resulted in the recent increase in engagements?***

We are uncertain about this. *Megillah* is opening an inquiry into this to study the potential reasons.

However, we should acknowledge the work of the outgoing Mashadi Youth Committee (2022-2024), along with the efforts of Mrs. Karen Koren, and Rabbi Adam Sabzevari who have done excellent work trying to help community singles.

Additionally, the *Megillah Editorial Staff* believes that bringing attention to this subject in recent issues of *Megillah* has helped keep parents and the youth informed and more self aware, helping all community members to make better decisions.

*Megillah* will seek to continue to cover this matter in future issues.



# THE SECRET TO FINDING YOUR SOULMATE

*Rabbi Yosef Bitton*

Worldwide, single Jewish boys and girls are having a hard time finding their soul mates. People resort to all kind of metaphysical help and even superstitions, which for the most part, are not working.

Today I will share with the reader a very powerful SEGULA which can help you to find the right girl, and could solve the Shiddukhim crisis altogether !

This SEGULA is brought in the Talmud Yebamot, 63. So, you can consider it absolutely legit an 100% Kosher! It is addressed mainly to men, but it works also for girls. This Segula consists of just four words: **נחית דרגא ונסיב איתתא** (nahit darga unsib iteta) Literally: “Descend one step and get yourself a wife”. What the rabbis are saying is that you, the man “should not be looking for a woman that is on a higher level than you, rather, look for a girl that finds YOU attractive”.

Well, you have to admit that this is, indeed, a revolutionary statement for our modern society, a total paradigm shift! And I guess this statement represents a very big problem for those who think, and try to make others believe, that our Tora is (or our rabbis are) chauvinist.

Allow me to illustrate how this SEGULA works. If I ask a single guy of certain age why he still single, knowing that BH he has many potential suitable candidates, he would usually repeat this mantra: “Rabbi, I need to find a girl that I feel attracted to”. If a guy considers himself in terms of looks, say, level “8” (apologies for using this materialistic superficial conventionalism, but it is the best illustration to explain this critical point), he expects to find a girl who is at least level “9” . It absolutely does not cross through his mind for a second that a level “9” girl might be expecting a level “10” guy, not a level “8” guy!

Now, you can see why we have this “shiddukhim crisis”. Boys and girls are trapped in this vicious cycle. if a level “8” girls looks for a 9 guy, and a 9 guy looks for an 10 girl, this trend means that everyone is looking for an upgrade of himself or herself, and the pool of potential candidates is smaller and smaller.

Our rabbis said that in terms of appeal, if you date a good person (good middot, i.e., good qualities, good values, good personality) as long as you do not feel a physical rejection for that person, you should try to explore the possibilities of a serious relationship with that person. What about attraction? You need to allow time to do its magic. Emotional closeness and love will eventually trigger a long lasting attraction. Let me explain. Contrary to what was believed in Greek (and what is believed in modern society) for the Jewish mind, beauty is absolutely subjective, and it is “the result”, not the cause, of love. It is NOT that I love you because I find you beautiful, but rather, I find you beautiful because I love you. When I get to love someone, then I find him or her beautiful. Think about a mom or a dad with their children: no matter how handsome my neighbors’ 4 years old boy is. To ME there is no one in the universe more handsome than MY boy. Why? Because I love my son! So, if you go out with a “good” potential candidate, give it some time, even if you don’t feel the butterflies right away.

*This article was published on January 12, 2017  
by Rabbi Yosef Bitton on  
[Halakhaoftheday.org](http://Halakhaoftheday.org)*



The media, on the other side, is trying to reprogram our minds and make us believe that “I cannot be attracted to any girl that does not look like a movie star”. Modern media is perhaps the main responsible for the materialistic consideration of “looks”, as the most important determining factor in a Shiddukh.

Our SEGULA teaches men to make a switch and think: “I must find a girl that finds ME attractive”. When people think that way, the pool of potential candidates for marriage suddenly grow exponentially!

I know many (too many, unfortunately!) guys who are very suitable bachelors, and sometimes years might pass by until they get married. Why? Because, opposite to the Rabbis’ SEGULA and probably guided by modern-media-values, they often fall in the trap of their own imagination: “I loss interest in this girl because she likes me. I need to conquer a girl who is still not attracted to me”. This destructive, and unfortunately, not uncommon utopia sometimes can last for years.

So, if you are looking seriously to get married, repeat this SEGULA: Nahit Darga Unsib Iteta, as many times as needed. And start looking for the right boy or girl: the one that is attracted to YOU.



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