

PERSPECTIVES

ISSUE 22 | PESACH 5785 | APRIL 2025

The magazine of
**jewish
futures**

The LEADERSHIP *Line-up*



Chag kasher v'sameach



Enhancing political security



Building tomorrow's leaders



Supporting our community



find out more
thejlc.org



DEAR READERS,

Welcome to the 22nd edition of *Perspectives*, our Pesach issue.

These pages come together during a time of continued and profound challenge for the Jewish people. In recent months, we have experienced and witnessed heartbreak, joy and awe-inspiring resilience—the courage of hostages returning home despite unimaginable conditions, the strength of those who returned to the devastating loss of their loved ones and the grief for those who were brought back for a dignified burial. We find ourselves in an era when “once-in-a-century” events seem to unfold on a near-daily basis, making it impossible to capture every new development within these pages. As this magazine reaches your hands, we continue to hope and pray for the safe return of those still held captive, and for lasting peace within our borders and beyond.

Perhaps these tumultuous days echo what our ancestors experienced in Egypt, when they were freed from harsh bondage through a series of incredible miracles. Back then, too, each day must have brought stunning developments that felt like once-in-a-lifetime headlines.

Now, as we prepare for Pesach—the time during which we tell the story of our national liberation from slavery to freedom over to the next generation—we have put together meaningful and engaging articles that will surely spark conversation at your festival meals.

Rabbi Dr. Effie Kleinberg offers a thought-provoking analysis on the concept of freedom, while the creators at Ta’amim

present a comprehensive exploration of Seder plate customs from around the globe, illuminating the rich diversity of our shared tradition.

After a powerful article exploring the concept of leadership, written by Jewish Futures’ founder and CEO, Rabbi Naftali Schiff, we feature an exciting *Jewish Leadership Line-up*. It spotlights men and women—some well-known, others working quietly behind the scenes—who devote their energy and vision to strengthening the Jewish people and improving lives worldwide, each in their own important role.

Next, you will meet rising musical star Aaron Holder, fresh from his first European tour and recording new music. Our Wellness section features practical, expert guidance for balance and resilience, while our Culture section presents a fascinating look at the history of the Jews in Arabia during the time of Muhammad. Finally, cookbook authors Rorie Weisberg and Chef Sara Goldstein share recipes for stunning, wholesome and uncomplicated dishes that will surely elevate your meals, on Pesach and all year round.

May we experience this Pesach in true freedom, united as a nation in lasting peace.
Chag Pesach Kasher v'Sameach!

Sasha Silber

Disclaimer: The views expressed in this magazine, including all articles and imagery, are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect those of Jewish Futures. Content is accurate as of 20 March 2025. This magazine is for educational and non-commercial use only. Any copyrighted material is included under fair dealing (UK Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988) for education, research, commentary, news reporting and criticism.

Executive Director

Rabbi Naftali Schiff

Editor-in-Chief

Rabbi Ari Kayser

Executive Editor

Sasha Silber

Art Director, Perspectives Magazine

Kimberley Rumble Nugent

Editorial Assistants

Bari Gold

Alice Reich

Trustees

Edward Misrahi (Chair)

Rabbi Naftali Schiff (CEO)

Joanna Benarroch

David Hammelburger

Karen Harris

Edward Lee

David Morris

Debra Sobel

Saul Zneimer



Ambassador Yechiel Leiter by Avi Ohayon, GPO

Michael Eisenberg

Chagit Leviev Sofiev by Zusha Goldin

Eli Beer by Yisroel Teitelbaum



Jewish Futures is a family of diverse educational organisations working together to ensure a vibrant Jewish future.

To advertise with us or get in touch, contact us at info@jffutures.org

Jewish Futures

379 Hendon Way

London

NW4 3LP

Registered Charity No. 1069048

CONTENTS



**The 49 Tough Challenge:
A Jewish Blueprint for Growth** **46**
Rabbi Avrohom Zeidman

Holy Lies: Spycraft in the Bible **48**
Ariel David Assis

Oath **55**
Bari Gold

PESACH

A Nation of Freedom Fighters **58**
Rabbi Dr. Effie Kleinberg

Seder in the Shadows **61**
Jonny Lipczer

FEATURES

Extreme Ownership **10**
Rabbi Naftali Schiff

The Jewish Leadership Line-up **12**
Sasha Silber

JEWISH FUTURES

Snapshots **34**
The Perspectives Editorial Team

INTROSPECTION

The DNA of Jewish Resilience **42**
Tsippy Kraus





Sophy Weiss Photography

FOOD

Why Is This Plate Different? 76

Rivkie and Dan Matalon, Ta'amim

More Food You Love That Loves You Back 81

Alice Reich



Photo by Avi Werde

WELLNESS

Sustainable Steps to a Healthy Relationship with Food 66

Nomi Spain-Levy

Preparing Your Child for the Road, Not the Road for Your Child 71

Terry and Brian Rubenstein



Menahem Kahana/AFP via Getty images

CULTURE

On The Map: The Jewish Journey in Sport 86

David Wiseman

The Fashion Edit 91

Chaya Baumgarten, Valour Magazine

The Forgotten Jews of Arabia 95

Rabbi Ari Kayser

Artist Spotlight: Aaron Holder, Rising Star 98

Bari Gold

CONTRIBUTORS



ARIEL DAVID ASSIS

Ariel David Assis is an expert in Diplomacy, specialises in Geopolitical Forecasting. He studied Diplomacy & Strategy at Reichman University, Middle East Studies at BIU and interned in intelligence at the IIC. Ariel provides future forecasting and geopolitical analysis for investors and governments. He served in the IDF (combat engineering special forces, intelligence corps (res)).

✉ @ArielDavidAssi2

📷 @ariel_david_assis



CHAYA BAUMGARTEN

Chaya Baumgarten is the founder of *Valour Lifestyle Magazine*, launched in 2019 to elevate the fashion and lifestyle of Jewish women. With training from the London College of Style, she blends her expertise in fashion, marketing and branding to publish the only high-end women's Jewish magazine. *Valour Lifestyle* inspires and connects a global audience.

🌐 valourstyle.co.uk

📷 @valour_lifestyle



BARI GOLD

Bari Gold is a writer from Miami, Florida. She recently received a Master of Fine Arts Degree in Creative Writing from Boston University, and is currently furthering her Jewish education at Midreshet Rachel v'Chaya in Israel. Bari hopes to continue using her English literature background to spread a positive Jewish message through a creative lens.



RABBI

ARI KAYSER

Rabbi Ari Kayser is the Director of Media for Jewish Futures and Editor-in-Chief of *Perspectives Magazine*. Ari leads a talented team of creatives, producing impactful video content, and was instrumental in creating 'Maven', the online courses of Aish UK. Ari relishes the challenge of conveying authentic Jewish teachings in the language of the 21st century, particularly through immersive experiences and travel.



ALICE REICH

Alice Reich, a creative writing major and journalism minor at the University of Miami, avidly writes for *The Miami Hurricane*. Her notable article on rising antisemitism on campuses since 7 October highlights her passion. Alice aims to inspire Jewish youth through her articles and future novels.



TERRY & BRIAN RUBENSTEIN

Terry and Brian Rubenstein, once full-time members of the Jewish Futures team, now specialise in teaching resilience and wellbeing to children, parents, educators and organisations worldwide through their co-founded ventures: iheart and resiliemy.com. They have co-authored several books and are joyful parents of six sons, with a growing family of daughters-in-law and grandchildren.

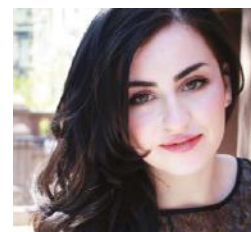
🌐 iheartprinciples.com



RABBI

NAFTALI SCHIFF

Rabbi Naftali Schiff is the founder and CEO of Jewish Futures, a family of educational organisations including JRoots, Gift, Aish, Chazak, Chazon and Shelanu. He read International Relations at the London School of Economics, gained rabbinic ordination from the Jerusalem Rabbinate, a Diploma of Education from the Israeli Ministry of Education, and saw active service with the IDF Givati infantry unit.



SASHA SILBER

Sasha Silber, Executive Editor of *Perspectives* magazine since 2022, is committed to empowering Jewish identity and connecting Jews worldwide. With a diverse background as a concert pianist, vocal coach for opera singers, and performance coach for Oscar-nominated actors in films such as *Star Wars*, she has worked on three continents, speaks several languages and lives in Jerusalem with her family.



RABBI DR.

EFFIE KLEINBERG

Rabbi Dr. Effie Kleinberg serves as Senior Educator at the Forum for Jewish Leadership, focusing on cultivating the next generation of ambitious future Jewish leaders. Rabbi Kleinberg studied at Yeshiva University and worked as an educational leader in North America before making *Aliyah*. He is the host of "Daf In-Sight", a podcast on the daily page of the Talmud.



TSIPPY KRAUS

Tsippy Kraus is a mother of seven, childbirth educator and founder of Birth Journeys Online, the first pre-recorded childbirth education course tailored for Jewish couples. As a Birth Trauma Release Practitioner and co-founder of Menucha, she is passionate about empowering women and couples with knowledge for positive birth experiences.

🌐 birthjourneysonline.com



JONNY LIPCZER

Jonny Lipczer is Director of Communications at The Rabbi Sacks Legacy. A Holocaust educator, he has led dozens of Jewish journeys in Poland with JRoots for groups from around the world. Originally from the UK, Jonny now lives in Israel with his wife, Belinda, and their four children.



RIVKIE & DAN MATALON

Rivkie and Dan have led Ta'amim since 2021, crafting exciting educational content with Jewish food at its heart. With a combined 25 years in creative fields, the pair are renowned for their flair, immersive events and envelope-pushing recipes. They live in London with their one-year-old daughter, who already shares their love of food and cooking.

🌐 wearetaamim.com

📱 [@wearetaamim](https://www.instagram.com/wearetaamim)



NOMI SPAIN-LEVY

Nomi is a double board-certified nutritionist and health and wellness coach who holds an MS in Nutrition and Functional Medicine. Nomi speaks to groups of all ages and stages on topics ranging from holistic health to Jewish identity and connection. She has lived in Jerusalem for the past 20 years with her husband.

🌐 nomiknows.com

📱 [@nomiknowsnutrition](https://www.instagram.com/nomiknowsnutrition)

✉ nomi@nomiknows.com



DAVID WISEMAN

David Wiseman, founder of Follow Team Israel, shares stories of Israeli and Jewish sports with a significant global audience. Originally from Australia, he now lives in Jerusalem with his family. He works in online reputation management and digital branding and has been selected a member of the first-ever Voice of the People (VoP) Global Cohort.

📱 [@followteamisrael](https://www.instagram.com/followteamisrael)

📘 [@FollowTeamIsrael](https://www.facebook.com/FollowTeamIsrael)

✂ [@followteamisr](https://www.x.com/followteamisr)



RABBI

AVROHOM ZEIDMAN

Rabbi Avrohom Zeidman designs, writes and presents curricula for the educational arm of GIFT, inspiring the next generation of givers. He researches Jewish approaches to altruism and leads innovative pedagogic programmes. Previously, he worked for Seed UK and the United Synagogue. He has taught at UK schools and universities and lives in London with his wife and seven children.

PERSPECTIVES IS ONLINE!



Scan the QR code above or visit **publications.jfutures.org/publications** for the latest insights, articles and creative work.

Stay connected with us on Instagram **@perspectivesjf** for regular updates, behind-the-scenes glimpses and more. **Discover** exclusive contributor stories and engage with fellow readers along the way. **Get in touch** info@jfutures.org

BSME AWARDS 2024

Perspectives is proud to have been recognised at the 2024 BSME (The British Society of Magazine Editors) awards, often dubbed the "Oscars of the magazine world."

Executive Editor Sasha Silber was nominated for an 'Editor's Editor of the Year' award, 2024, recognising her work on Issues 19, 20 and 21. Meanwhile, the cover of Issue 19, featuring a poignant photograph by Léa Ouahba of the "Lights of Hope" installation raising awareness for the hostages, earned *Perspectives'* Art Director Kimberley Rumble Nugent a nomination for Best Cover Design (Independent). Although no awards were taken home on the night, this achievement highlights the dedication of the entire team.





CITRUS
GROUP

Proudly Supporting
Jewish Futures

FEATURES



A Torch of *Responsibility*

Discover how each of us shapes our collective destiny in two powerful pieces about leadership. First, founder and CEO, Rabbi Naftali Schiff, makes the case for 'extreme ownership' and shouldering responsibility with humility. Then, meet our special Jewish Leadership Line-up—diplomats, volunteers and social entrepreneurs—stepping up to serve pressing needs and illuminate our path.

EXTREME *Ownership*

Rabbi Naftali Schiff

Humility is the hallmark of true leadership. Were it not that the *raison d'être* of the Jewish People is to lead, it would be both presumptuous and arrogant for one to talk about it. However, leadership is not coincidental to any Jew. It's neither that which is mistakenly identified as the contemporary world's apparent road to success, power, wealth and fame, nor a course or initiative to be sold or pedalled to the highest bidder. Leadership is far more elemental and foundational to us.

Several years ago, when producing a documentary and book as a legacy to Lady Amelie Jakobovits, I interviewed Dayan Berger of the Manchester Beth Din. He described her family tradition with the words "*noblesse oblige*". Known affectionately as Lady J, she was raised in the home of Rav Munk of Paris,

where a sense of right and wrong, duty and responsibility and communal dedication was woven into the very fabric of daily life. This, I believe, is part of the 'spiritual DNA' of every Jew. The ultimate destiny of the Jewish People is to be an *ohr lagoyim*, a Light unto the Nations. We are here to fix that which is broken, to mend that which is fractured, to bring insight, understanding and clarity where reality, faith, goodness and decency are tragically overlooked, obfuscated or confused.

Moshe Rabeinu, Moses, the man who led us out of slavery to the Promised Land, the man through whom the Torah was bequeathed to us, is simultaneously the most humble of men and the greatest of leaders. Before the giving of the Torah at Sinai, he conveys the marching orders to the nascent Jewish People to become

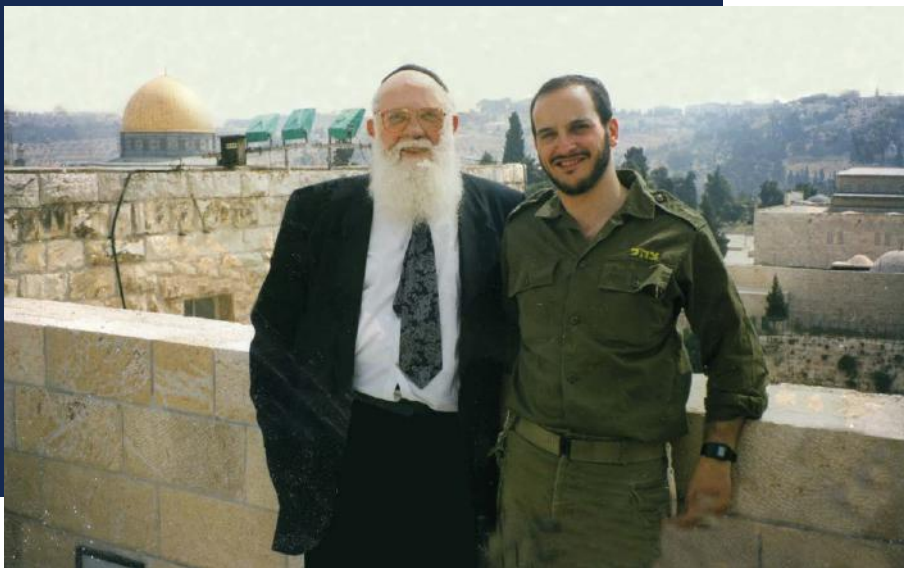
"a nation of priests and a holy people." Rabbi Ovadia Sforno, a prominent 16th-century Italian commentator, explains that the unique status of the Jewish People is directly related to the shouldering of this role; that it is incumbent upon each member of the nation of Israel to first understand for himself, and then to teach all of mankind about Godliness and the unity of all.

Stepping up to accept responsibility is the calling of every Jew, and talking about how to lead and how to assume responsibility on the road to the fulfilment of our mission is clearly part of the development and education of our next generation.

True leadership is not about self, it is rather about getting the job done. It is about identifying, nurturing, coaching and



Rabbi Naftali Schiff, October 2024. Leivi Saltman Photography



his brave departure from the privileges of Pharaoh's palace to observe the plight of his people, his compassion for just one lone, straying sheep, his personal pain for the suffering of a fellow Jew and his decisive action, taken only when he realised there was no one else to bear the mantle of leadership.

Rabbi Weinberg's own journey to set up leadership academies was the direct result of both the Judaism he imbibed and the tragic state of a fast-assimilating Jewish People he observed in communities around the world in the 50s and 60s. Despite having no backing, no precedent, no partners and no plan, he undertook the mission, in its totality, and then worked tirelessly to figure out the how. Time and time again he failed, yet he never wavered!

It reminds me of the summer of 1996 when Dame Margaret Thatcher addressed one of our student groups in Jerusalem. In a quiet moment I asked her what she felt was the most important trait necessary for a leader. She replied very simply, "Principles, young man, and never waver!" She was not called the Iron Lady for nothing! Irrespective of her philosophy, her leadership was remarkable.

It didn't take a Hollywood movie to educate Jews that, "when the going gets tough, the tough get going!" When the bullets are flying, the commander in the field needs the bravery and courage to make the call and shoulder the responsibility; when the casualties come pouring in, the medic needs to employ triage to determine who shall live and who shall die; when the budget needs cutting, the CEO decides which staff has to go. When repeatedly forced out of Anatevka, Jews consistently had the grit, the vision and the resilience to rebuild the team, the community—the *kehilla*—around Jewish life, elsewhere. When there is nowhere to turn, when possibilities are exhausted, when the situation seems hopeless—the leader stands up with passion, with belief, with clarity and leads the people, forms the team, empowering each to shoulder responsibility to forge the way forward in pursuit of the vision he has shared.

Leadership is diverse, often emerging from the most unlikely of quarters. Some are born to lead, others are forged by dint of circumstance. Despite the loneliness, burden and despair experienced by leaders; despite a zeitgeist that tends to espouse comfort and balk at the notion of the responsibility necessary to stand up and be counted, extreme leadership is truly the calling of the Jewish People. It is glorious and exhilarating as much as it is challenging and testing to the limits. It is noble and gallant as much as at times it may be unpopular and lonely. Today, perhaps more than ever before, leadership is ultimately the destiny of Am Yisrael.

empowering others in order to build a team made up of the people that will drive forward together to achieve success. Leadership, however, is not measured by the number of followers or likes, whether on- or offline. It is defined by grit, determination and the unwavering pursuit of mission. True leadership seldom aligns with ease or the pursuit of popularity. In fact, true leadership is often excruciatingly lonely, with clarity, belief in the cause, resilience and persistence tested to the core. The essence of our God-given name *Yisrael* reflects the duality inherent in the struggle for meaning and purpose in the world. This journey encompasses both the trials, pain and tribulations we face, as well as the exhilaration, nobility and magnificence of the achievements that define the vision of *Yisrael*.

My personal journey was influenced in my teenage years by my involvement in a youth group, with responsibility to lead thrust upon me at the age of 14. It continued in Yeshiva where I took on various leadership functions, and then in an infantry platoon in the IDF, where, even though I was a simple soldier in

the ranks, could not help but observe extreme ownership, the hallmark of leadership, in action.

Rabbi Noach Weinberg, the Founder of Aish, probably had the most profound influence upon me in terms of leadership and the imperative to step up to the call of Jewish responsibility. It was more his attitude than aptitude; his principles and action, more than his practical distillation of how to form, build and manage a team. He would cite the Talmudic dictum, "a person is obligated to say, 'the world was created for me.'"¹ Rabbi Weinberg interpreted this as a directive for each person to harness the universal reality of self-centred ego for the good. He taught that we should understand this to mean that change in the world depends on the actions of each and every Jew shouldering maximum responsibility, rather than the leadership of a select few. He would quote the Midrash about the young King Josiah who, on comprehending his personal responsibility proclaimed the words, "*alay lehakim!* (it is incumbent upon me to uphold!)"²

Rabbi Weinberg often reminded his students that the pivotal moments of Moshe's journey to leadership centred on four key actions:

Top image: Former Prime Minister of Britain, Margaret Thatcher (left) speaking at Aish UK Jerusalem Fellowships event, 1998.

Bottom image: Rabbi Noach Weinberg (left), Rabbi Naftali Schiff (right). Jerusalem, Israel, 2004 (approx). ¹ Sanhedrin 37a ² Jerusalem Talmud Sotah 7:4:6

The Jewish Leadership LINE-UP

Sasha Silber

Who are some of today's exceptional Jewish leaders? The high-profile diplomat shaping policy on the world stage, the grassroots volunteer delivering urgently needed supplies or the social entrepreneur tackling communal priorities? They can be all of these—and more. For this special feature, I had the privilege of asking a group of remarkable individuals about what drove them to step up to or create their current role, how responsibility shapes

their vision and what they believe are the key qualities and challenges of leadership from a Jewish perspective.

Their answers span diverse spheres yet converge on a unifying theme: leadership anchored in compassion and moral duty. Some took action after spotting a gap in crisis relief or education whilst others harnessed innovation or media to stand against hatred and antisemitism and defend Israel's image. Each story underscores that leadership rarely

demands a formal title. Instead, it emerges whenever someone identifies a need and dares to act. These leaders also acknowledge growing pressures: disunity, misinformation and the challenge of engaging younger generations. Still, they inspire hope. By shining a light on what each has achieved, may we all find our individual resolve to stand up wherever we are, serve our people and strengthen the ties that bind us together.



Danielle Abraham

Co-Founder and Executive Director of Volcani International Partnerships (VIP), Founding Director of ReGrow Israel

Danielle Abraham is the Co-Founder and Executive Director of Volcani International Partnerships (VIP) and the Founding Director of ReGrow Israel. She began her career as a policy advisor at MASHAV, representing Israel in international organisations, and later graduated from the University of Oxford. "After the horrific attacks on 7 October, it

became clear that our farming communities faced devastation unlike anything we had seen," Abraham explains. "Hamas destroyed tractors, irrigation pipelines and livestock. Entire communities lost their livelihoods overnight." Seeing the urgent need for coordinated support, Abraham established ReGrow Israel. "There was no organisation

poised to respond to this unprecedented crisis," she says. "Once you see an unmet need and understand you can add value, you can't turn your back."

Her resolve to "grow back stronger" is more than just a slogan. "We bring together Israel's top agricultural experts, strategists and donors to design real solutions," Abraham notes. "I thought it would be a three-month emergency effort, but soon it expanded into a three-year recovery plan. Now, it feels like a lifetime commitment." Under her leadership, ReGrow Israel aims not only to restore farmland but also to build a more resilient future for the nation's food security. "Farmers are the backbone of this country," she adds. "If we give them the right tools and knowledge, they will flourish again."

Reflecting on Jewish leadership, Abraham emphasises two qualities. "First, it's about recognising a need and taking responsibility, regardless of titles or formal authority. Real leadership is defined by how you act and what you accomplish," she says. "Second, we must remember our history while looking ahead to the generations not yet born. Every decision we make should be about building a stronger future for the Jewish people." For Abraham, this commitment underpins everything ReGrow Israel stands for: resilience, vision and an unwavering resolve to protect what matters most.

Photo courtesy of ReGrow Israel

Jacki Alexander

Global Chief Executive Officer and President - HonestReporting

Jacki Alexander leads HonestReporting with a bold strategic vision in the fight against anti-Israel disinformation.

HonestReporting began in 2000, when a spontaneous gathering around Rabbi Naftali Schiff's dining room table, where ten Jewish individuals—outraged by anti-Israel media bias—laid its foundations. It was initially spearheaded by Rabbi Shaul Rosenblatt (then co-director of Aish UK), and soon spun off as an independent organization dedicated to holding the media accountable.

With over 15 years of experience at AIPAC—where she bolstered pro-Israel support across Florida and the Southeastern United States—Alexander has emerged as a transformative

figure in Israel advocacy. She assumed her role as CEO of HonestReporting in 2022.

"We are living in a world that is constantly changing and entirely misunderstood. The way people learn information, analyse data and internalise world events is vastly different from a decade ago," she explains. Confronted with a digital era where disinformation thrives, Alexander saw a critical need for new initiatives aimed at engaging younger audiences. "Social media is not the real world – that's evident from the disinformation campaigns that are prevalent there. Yet, the bias and misinformation from these platforms shape how people understand real-world events."

She is particularly concerned about the

shift among Gen-Z and younger Millennials. "Data shows that this group is relying on new, 'authentic' sources of news and is highly impressionable because their core beliefs are still being shaped. If we aren't meeting those people where they are and delivering information in the way they like to consume it, we are ceding our rights to shape their understanding. That's unacceptable to me."

For Alexander, true leadership transcends titles. "Leadership is finding ways to help the greater good. It's about recognising problems and finding solutions," she says. Central to her approach is building a strong, dynamic team: "A true leader knows that surrounding yourself with capable colleagues—ones that challenge you—is the only way to truly succeed. And what makes us Jewish leaders is our empathy and sense of family. There will be struggles along the way, but embracing them builds loyalty and trust."

Alexander also identifies a broader challenge facing Jewish leadership. "Neither Jews nor Judaism is black and white. We are complex, we question and we thrive in debating the grey areas. Yet, today's world distills complex issues into binary judgments, replacing facts with narrative storytelling." She emphasises that without clear, unified leadership, the community is at a disadvantage: "If we want to win this propaganda war and prepare our children for the narratives they will face beyond the Jewish bubble, we must have clear messaging. We cannot continue turning a blind eye to uncomfortable conversations. We have to face them head on, or risk conceding the battle to those who wish to see our way of life destroyed."

“

What makes us Jewish leaders is our empathy and sense of family... That builds a loyalty and trust you cannot put a price tag on



Photo courtesy of Jacki Alexander



Eli Beer

Founder and President, United Hatzalah

Born in Israel, **Eli Beer** witnessed a terror attack at the age of seven – an experience that instilled in him a lifetime commitment to saving lives and set him on the path to create United Hatzalah in 1992. As a teenager, he became a volunteer medic and, over the course of more than three decades, has treated thousands of patients and led responses to some of Israel's most challenging civil, wartime and terror-related incidents.

On 7 October 2023, during one of the

most testing moments in Israel's history, Beer coordinated United Hatzalah's rescue efforts from the organisation's main dispatch centre in Jerusalem. Thanks to the heroic actions of over 1,500 volunteers, United Hatzalah treated 4,720 victims, evacuated 1,250 patients to hospitals and saved hundreds of lives.

Recognising that every second counts, he pioneered innovative approaches to emergency response. One such innovation was the Ambucycle—a motorcycle equipped

“

You cannot ask others to act if you are not willing to do it yourself

with life-saving medical supplies that enables responders to reach emergencies in minutes, often much faster than traditional ambulances. Today, United Hatzalah is Israel's largest all-volunteer, 100% free emergency medical response service with urban response times of 90 seconds or less.

Beer's journey has not been without its challenges. Reflecting on the early days of building United Hatzalah, he explained: “The main obstacles were bureaucracy and the monopolies of unions that operated ambulance services in Israel, which resisted a volunteer national service offering free care—after all, United Hatzalah is a free, volunteer-based model. We had to confront organisations that, since Israel's creation, held almost unchecked authority and left no room for new initiatives. So we had to fight. We relied on a lot of *chutzpah*—audacity—and simply did what needed to be done, creating a working model not by asking for permission, but by asking for forgiveness. That was our approach: launch the service, recruit and train volunteers even without initial authorisation and later set an example to secure the necessary approvals.”

Innovation, he believes, is not enough on its own. “I see Jewish leadership as fundamentally about leading by example. You can't ask others to act if you aren't willing to do it yourself. I started doing this nearly 36 years ago, and I am still answering calls—I even went out on a call today—so that people can see it firsthand. When volunteers see me serving alongside them, it reminds us of where we came from and motivates them to continue.”

For Beer, another critical leadership challenge is ensuring the organisation's continuity. “I'm 51 now, and I want to ensure that this organisation continues. Building an organisation is very difficult, but ensuring it endures with strong leadership is even harder. We often assume we live forever, so we sometimes overlook the need to plan for succession. I experienced this challenge when I was very ill, and now it has become my priority.”

Eli Beer's relentless determination, innovation and selfless leadership have completely transformed emergency medical response in Israel, making every second count in the pursuit of saving lives.

Photo by Yisroel Teitelbaum

Chantal Belzberg

CEO and Co-Founder, OneFamily

Chantal Belzberg's journey into her current leadership role as CEO and co-founder of OneFamily began during the tumultuous period of the Second Intifada. On August 9, 2001, the bombing of the Sbarro pizza restaurant in Jerusalem occurred on the same day as Belzberg's second daughter's 12th birthday. In response to this tragedy, Belzberg, her husband and their daughter informed their family and guests that they would redirect their energy to "creating something meaningful for terror victims." Within weeks, what started as an initiative to support terror survivors became OneFamily, an organization dedicated to helping victims rebuild shattered lives.

From the start, Belzberg's approach to leadership has been deeply personal. She believes that OneFamily isn't just about financial and emotional aid. She emphasises, "We walk alongside victims and their families who are suffering, ensuring no one is left alone in their pain."

Belzberg's vision of Jewish leadership is rooted in service, not power. She believes a true leader carries the burdens of their people, following the example of Moses. For her, Jewish leadership is defined by key qualities: "Humility is paramount, as a Jewish leader must recognise that their role is not about personal glory, but about serving the people. Empathy is crucial, as leaders must genuinely understand and feel the pain of others to drive meaningful and impactful action."

She continues, "Courage is essential, as Jewish leaders must make difficult decisions and advocate for what is right, even when it is unpopular. Responsibility and accountability are vital components of strong Jewish leadership, not just to people, but to God and a higher moral calling."

For Belzberg, vision and action go hand in hand: "It is not enough to merely dream of change; a Jewish leader must take concrete steps and inspire others to join them."

Belzberg identifies unity as a serious challenge: "We are a people with diverse backgrounds, opinions and perspectives, and our political and religious divisions can sometimes feel overwhelming. A true leader must find ways to bridge these gaps and remind us that we are all part of one family, bound by a shared destiny."

She also highlights the challenge of crisis

response and engaging the next generation. "Many young Jews feel disconnected from their heritage and communal responsibility," she observes. "We must go beyond talking and show them the power of action and purpose. The future of the Jewish people depends on leaders who can ignite that sense of belonging and commitment."

Reflecting on the war, Belzberg wonders, "Maybe God needed us to develop experience over the past 23 years precisely to try to be prepared for the tsunami of need that has hit the Jewish people on and since 7 October."

“

It is not enough to merely dream of change; a Jewish leader must take concrete steps and inspire others to join them



Legacy Live



YOUR LIFE STORY

A life's story is more than just a collection of events and memories.
It encompasses values, beliefs and heritage.

At Legacy Live, we believe every story deserves to be captured and
preserved as a precious keepsake for future generations.

Our cinematic documentaries are expertly created by experienced
former BBC television professionals and journalists, who understand
the power of a life story and of passing on cherished lessons and values.

*"I wanted my grandchildren to understand the values
that have guided our family. The final
result was nothing short of a masterpiece."*

*"Without exception, all the family found it deeply
emotional to watch. They also learned many things
they hadn't known before. My granddaughter,
aged 9, even asked to watch it again!"*

EVERYONE HAS A STORY. WE CAN HELP YOU SHARE YOURS.

Contact Debra - info@legacy-live.com for more information



Michael Eisenberg

Co-Founder and General Partner at Aleph

Michael Eisenberg is a major figure in Israel's venture capital landscape who brings a unique perspective to Jewish leadership that blends traditional wisdom with modern entrepreneurial spirit. As General Partner at Aleph, an early-stage venture fund with \$850M under management, Eisenberg has been instrumental in nurturing groundbreaking Israeli startups like Lemonade and Melio.

Eisenberg explains the vision behind Aleph: "We saw a bigger opportunity to create one of the best funds in the world by focusing only on Israel and the unique talents of the Jewish State, and up-leveling the service we could provide entrepreneurs."

Eisenberg's approach to leadership is deeply rooted in Jewish tradition yet forward-looking. "The hallmark of leadership is curiosity, as I wrote in my book *Everyone Can Be Moses*. Today, we need leaders steeped in Jewish tradition and texts who are also worldly and technologically proficient."

His commitment to Jewish values extends beyond his professional life. He chairs the Nevo Network, a fellowship programme supporting immigrants in Israel's tech sector. Eisenberg explains, "When you move to a new country, one of the hardest challenges is the lack of a professional network. It impedes professional and economic growth. Nevo solves that, creating

a high-level professional network for *olim* in Israeli high tech."

For Eisenberg, the greatest challenge facing Jewish leadership today is conformity. He states, "Leaders need to be bold, willing to stand up to the prevailing zeitgeist. Leadership in a fast-changing time, such as the era we live in, requires hewing to the past but charting a very new path to the future."

Eisenberg's unique leadership approach offers a compelling vision. By bridging ancient wisdom with technological innovation, he's not just building successful companies—he's helping to shape the future of Jewish thought and action in an increasingly complex world.



Shai Graucher

*Chairman of the B'Yachad Nenatzeach
Klal Yisrael organisation*

Shai Graucher became a household name in the weeks following 7 October when a video of a truck loaded with washing machines, dryers and mobile showers pulling into the Gaza envelope went viral. He delivered essential supplies to soldiers who had been in the field for weeks without showers or fresh clothes, necessities and toys to families crammed into hotels and the latest gadgets to injured soldiers and survivors in hospitals. “On 7 October, the world shook and the Jewish heart shattered,” he recalls. “Families were torn apart, children became orphans, women became widows, hundreds of Jews were brutally kidnapped and Israeli heroes went to battle and did not return.”

Just a month before the war, he lost his father, Rabbi Dedi Graucher—a beloved professional singer renowned for his kindness and generosity. “I stood at his funeral in immense pain and promised to continue his path.” He truly delivered on that promise as the atrocities of 7 October unfolded. “There was no time to hesitate. We

simply stood up—and haven’t stopped since.”

He witnessed raw need. “I saw thousands of people who needed help, and someone had to lead—to turn that will into action,” he says. His journey began with simple acts of compassion—visiting wounded soldiers and comforting grieving families—and quickly evolved into orchestrating large-scale operations that now support thousands of orphans and widows. Recently, his team launched a project to celebrate the birthdays of war orphans and widows in a truly exceptional way. “Once, knocks on the door were the worst nightmare for bereaved families, delivering harsh news. Today, we knock with a decorated cake, colourful balloons, a gift wrapped with love and a personal letter for each child and widow.”

For Graucher, his role is defined by an unwavering sense of responsibility. “When you know there are widows waiting for strength and children who have lost their father and have no one to celebrate their birthday with, you can’t stand by and wait for someone else to

help,” he insists. He has been busy building long-term support systems so that no family should ever feel alone, even after the initial surge of compassion fades. “I work with an amazing team, with partners and donors from all over the world, ensuring that every action we take is both heartfelt and calculated.”

Reflecting on what it means to lead as a Jew, Graucher explains, “A true leader in Judaism does not pursue power or honour. Our greatest leader, Moses, was ‘the most humble man on earth.’ I have learned from the greatest Jewish leaders—both past and present—that kindness isn’t just something you do; it’s a way of life.” He sums up his guiding principles in three words: responsibility, self-sacrifice and a big heart. “A true leader sees the pain of others and acts—he doesn’t just solve problems; he hugs, listens and supports those in need.”

For him, the biggest challenge in Jewish leadership today is the risk of division. “After 7 October, we witnessed unprecedented unity—religious, secular, right-wing and left-wing coming together. The challenge now is to sustain that unity every day, not just in the wake of tragedy.”

“True Jewish leadership today is not a position but a mission,” he concludes. “It’s an enormous privilege to be part of rebuilding the people of Israel from the fragments. It’s not just leadership—it’s true love for every Jew.”

Photo by Shlomi Cohen

Jonathan Harounoff

*Israel's International Spokesperson to the United Nations
Founder & CEO of Noff Media*

Jonathan Harounoff serves as Israel's International Spokesperson to the United Nations—a role that blends his passion for journalism, diplomacy and strategic communications. Harounoff is an alumnus of the Forum for Jewish Leadership, part of the Family of Jewish Futures organisations (Summer 2014). An acclaimed journalist whose work has appeared in the New York Post, NPR, BBC, Haaretz and more, his deep-rooted connection to the Middle East began at home. “My family is from Israel and Iran. Growing up, I was surrounded by talk of the Middle East’s history, culture, politics and languages,” he recalls. That early exposure ignited a lifelong fascination with the region’s complexities.

From covering Iran, Israel and antisemitism as a journalist, to serving as Director of Communications at a Washington, D.C. think tank advancing U.S. national security interests in the Middle East, Harounoff has been “driven by an urgent desire for Israel’s voice to be heard clearly on the world stage, especially

in hostile environments.” Stepping into his UN role was a natural progression. “My sense of responsibility comes from understanding that Israel faces unique geopolitical challenges that require both delicate strategic communication and a firm grasp of historical and contemporary realities,” he explains.

In addition to his UN role, Harounoff is the founder and CEO of Noff Media, a consultancy leveraging his extensive background in Middle Eastern diplomacy and corporate communications. His approach is defined by a commitment to clarity, responsiveness and factual integrity. “It’s not enough for our perspectives to be heard—they must be understood in a way that fosters informed dialogue,” he asserts.

“Jewish leadership is rooted in a deep sense of moral responsibility, humility and service to others. Figures like Moses exemplify the ideal leader—not seeking power for its own sake, but embracing the burdens of leadership for the greater good.” He believes true

leadership requires balancing strength with compassion and a steadfast commitment to truth and righteousness.

When asked about today’s biggest challenges, Harounoff is clear. “One of the greatest challenges in Jewish leadership today, in my view, involves bringing about unity within a diverse and often divided global Jewish community while confronting external threats, including antisemitism and delegitimation efforts. It’s certainly true that post-7 October we saw a resurgence in Jewish unity and connection, but the goal is to build that kind of community not just after tragedy, but in the good times as well.”

With his forthcoming book, *Unveiled: Inside Iran’s #WomanLifeFreedom Revolt* (out August 2025), Jonathan Harounoff continues to push the boundaries of informed discourse. In every facet of his work, he is committed to communicating Israel’s truth with clarity and integrity, and to uphold the values and security of his people.

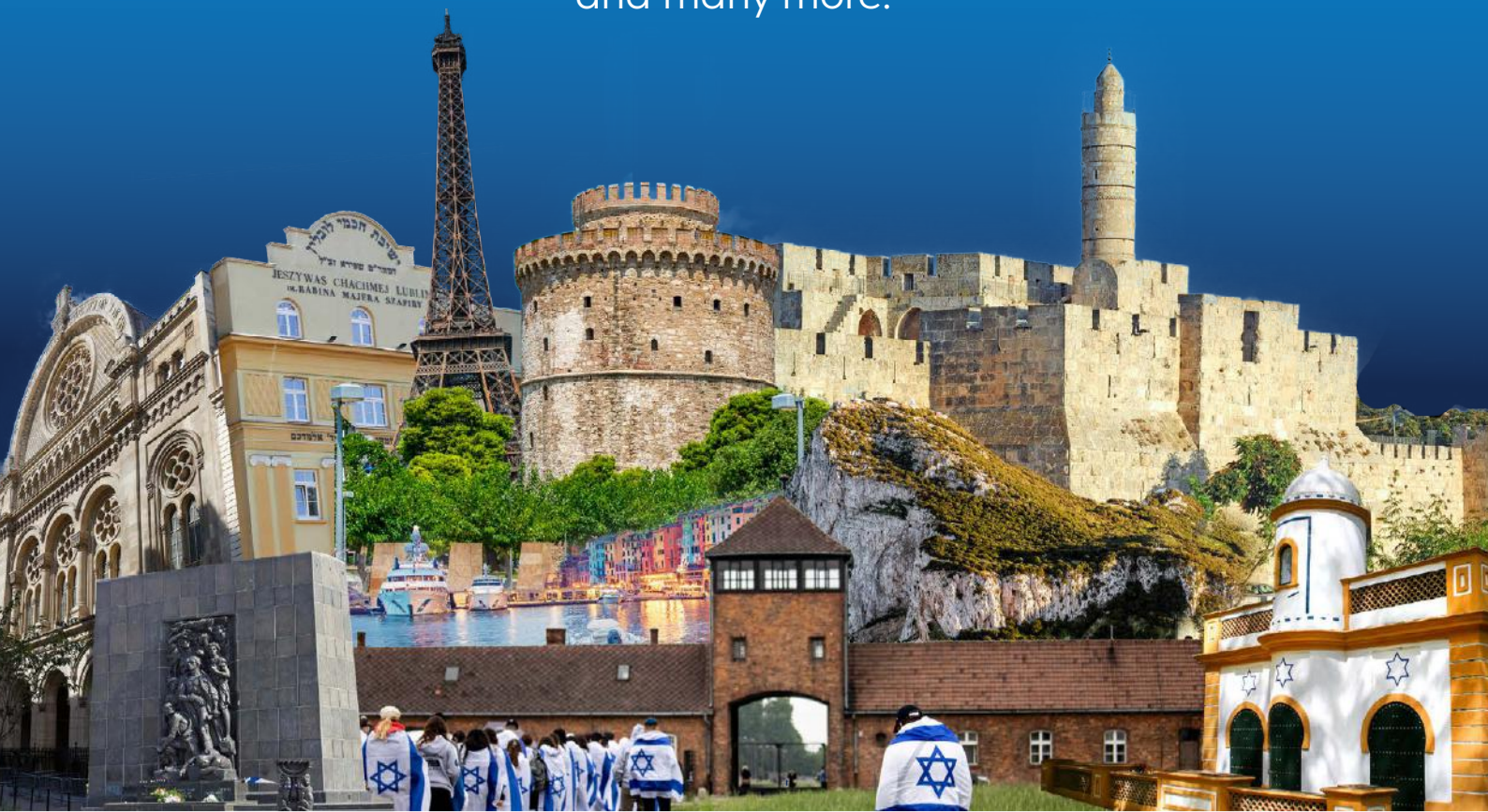


Photo courtesy of Jonathan Harounoff

J»ROOTS

IMMERSIVE JEWISH JOURNEYS

Inspiring and educational all-inclusive Jewish Journeys to places of Jewish heritage, including Poland, France, Spain, Gibraltar, Greece, Italy, Eastern Europe, Israel, Morocco and many more.



**VISIT THE PAST. REFLECT ON THE PRESENT.
ENSURE THE FUTURE.**

Arrange your once-in-a-lifetime Jewish Journey today*

info@jroots.org

* Community, shul, school and private groups

www.jroots.org

Registered Charity No. 1136532

 **jewish
futures**
a member of the family



“

*If you see a
need, you
must act*

Lt.-Col. (res.) Maurice Hirsch

*Director of the Initiative for PA Accountability & Reform at the
Jerusalem Center for Security and Foreign Affairs*

Lt.-Col. (res.) Maurice Hirsch was born in 1973 in Bloemhof, South Africa, and at age eight moved with his family to England. “I grew up in a proud Jewish household,” he recalls. “Even before I first visited Israel, I already felt a deep connection to our ancestral homeland.” That first visit came when he was just thirteen, attending a five-month programme through JFS. “It was then,” he says, “that I realised Israel was more than a place—it was home. I decided I would make *Aliyah* one day.” He further deepened his connection with Israel by graduating from Jewish Futures’ Aish UK Jerusalem Fellowships scholarship programme, class of 1994.

True to his vision, Hirsch pursued a law degree, spending significant time in Jerusalem to gain practical experience. “Every step reinforced my Zionist belief,” he remarks. “Israel has been the living heartbeat of our 4,000-year heritage. I wanted to be part of protecting it.” In 1996, he officially made *aliyah* and soon joined the IDF Military Advocate General’s Corps, eventually becoming one of the fastest-promoted officers in the unit’s history. “Leadership, for me, has always been about more than authority—it’s about accountability and filling the gaps where change is needed,” he explains.

His tenure in the Military Prosecution for Judea and Samaria showcased that belief. “I was entrusted with a responsibility that demanded not just legal expertise but also the courage to stand up for our nation’s truth,” Hirsch recalls, referencing his unprecedented role negotiating updates to a controversial UN report. “Even the Prime Minister’s Head of Communications acknowledged our success as the most positive report the UN ever issued about Israel.”

Beyond his military service, Hirsch continued to spearhead transformative reforms. “I have always believed that if you see a need, you must act,” he says. His authorship of an amendment to Israel’s Citizenship Law—allowing the stripping of citizenship from convicted terrorists receiving Palestinian Authority payments—stands as a prime example. “It passed with unprecedented support from ninety-four members of the Knesset,” he notes proudly, “proving that principled, clear-eyed action can unite us.”

Reflecting on Jewish leadership, Hirsch stresses three main challenges. First, he insists that leaders must view our sense of Jewish heritage as a gift rather than a burden. “We come from a four-millennia history,” he says,

“which should inspire awe and responsibility, not reluctance.” He also highlights the importance of “combating misinformation that undermines Israel’s legitimacy,” pointing to the Balfour Declaration, the Paris and San Remo Conferences and the League of Nations Mandate as pillars that affirm Israel’s just claim to the land. “We are not thieves or colonisers,” he asserts. “We are recognised sovereigns in our homeland.”

Lastly, he challenges the prevailing narratives around the Oslo Accords. “We must persuade the international community that Oslo was a disaster,” he says firmly. “Our leadership must be honest in explaining how another hostile state west of the Jordan River could be an existential threat. Real solutions do exist—similar precedents around the world prove that alternatives to the ‘Two State’ concept are possible.”

Lt.-Col. (res.) Maurice Hirsch’s view, authentic Jewish leadership means “combining a commitment to tradition with the courage to innovate.” Above all, he remains steadfast in his mission: “I believe in *tzidkat haderech*—our just path—and I will keep striving to protect and advance the Jewish people’s rightful place in our homeland.”

Ambassador Dr. Yechiel (Michael) Leiter

Israel's Ambassador to the United States

Ambassador Dr. Yechiel (Michael) Leiter has been the Israeli Ambassador to the United States since January 2025. He was born and raised in Scranton, PA to American parents. His mother is a third generation American and his father was a refugee from Nazi-occupied Austria who came to the US in 1938. Ambassador Leiter made *aliyah* to Israel at 18 and served as a combat medic in the IDF in the first Lebanese war. He received his doctorate in political philosophy from the University of Haifa.

Also an ordained rabbi, Leiter has distinguished himself as a public servant prior to his ambassadorship—advising Ariel Sharon, serving as Deputy Director at the Ministry of Education and as Chief of Staff to Prime Minister Netanyahu at the Ministry of Finance. His career also includes roles as a policy analyst, CEO of 3H Global and Chairman of the Israel Ports Authority.

When asked about the personal and national challenges that fuel his dedication, Ambassador

Leiter explained: “Israel is facing a certain degree of trauma since the horrors of 7 October. I personally have made a tremendous sacrifice, losing my oldest son as he led troops into Gaza. This is a battle of good against evil and Israel stands at the forefront of that battle. Israel is the outpost of American values and interests in the Middle East. I am ready to roll up my sleeves and embrace our charge of moving into the future and making the world a better place through diplomacy, normalisation and peace.”



Chagit Leviev Sofiev

President & CEO, Leviev Group USA. President, Leviev Diamonds

Chagit Leviev Sofiev is a multifaceted business leader and philanthropist who serves as President & CEO of Leviev Group USA and President of Leviev Diamonds. As the driving force behind the U.S. operations of the esteemed Leviev Group of Companies, she has redefined the diamond industry by controlling every aspect of the supply chain from mine to market. Reflecting on her career, Leviev Sofiev shares, “Stepping into my role as President & CEO was driven by both responsibility and vision. Coming from a family with a legacy of business and philanthropy, I felt the need to continue that tradition while bringing my own perspective as a modern Jewish woman in leadership.”

Yet for Leviev Sofiev, leadership extends far beyond corporate success. “Being a Jewish woman in the workforce, I quickly realised that there weren’t many others who fully understood what I was juggling—balancing professional responsibilities, family, faith and community involvement,” she reflects. “It often felt lonely, like there was no one who could truly relate to the unique pressures and expectations I was experiencing.” That sense of isolation became a catalyst to her personal initiatives: “I became passionate about creating networks of support where Jewish women could uplift one another, share experiences and feel understood. Leadership, to me, isn’t just about professional success—it’s about paving the way for others, building strong communities and ensuring that no woman has to navigate these challenges alone.”

Whether serving on the advisory board of Ezras Nashim—an all-female Orthodox Jewish volunteer EMT service dedicated to preserving women’s modesty in emergencies—or as a national board member of The Jewish Women Entrepreneur—a nonprofit that empowers working Jewish women through education and networking for financial independence—or as president of Ohr Avner Foundation USA, which supports a vast network of Jewish educational institutions in the former Soviet Union, she uses her platform “to invest in our future and empower Jewish women to achieve greatness while staying true to our values.”

When asked about the challenges facing Jewish leadership today, she adds, “One of the biggest challenges is maintaining unity despite our diversity. Our strength



as a people comes from our unity, and it’s essential to create connections that bridge our differences. Engaging the next generation through Jewish education is key to ensuring the future of our people.”

Chagit Leviev Sofiev is aware of the influence she wields and the responsibility it entails. “When people look up to you, you have a platform, and it’s your job to use it wisely. A real leader leads by example,” she reflects. “It’s not just about having a title or giving speeches—it’s about living the values you expect from others and taking responsibility for the influence you have. Leadership isn’t about choosing the easiest path; it’s about doing what’s right and what’s best for *Am Yisrael*, even when it’s hard.”

“

It’s about living the values you expect from others, and taking responsibility for the influence you have



Pesach Sameach **FROM EVERYONE AT CST**

**We are working with communal partners,
government and police to keep our community
safe and facilitate Jewish life in the UK.**

National Emergency Number (24-hr) 0800 032 3263

Manchester Office 0161 792 6666

London Office 020 8457 9999

Community Security Trust is a registered charity in
England and Wales (1042391) and Scotland (SC043612)



Claudia Mendoza

CEO, Jewish Leadership Council

Claudia Mendoza leads a “small but mighty” team of 13 as CEO of the Jewish Leadership Council, a dynamic organisation that brings together a diverse range of voices from the UK Jewish community. The Council represents a breadth and depth that extends across religious and issue-based lines, addressing everything from mental health and social care to domestic violence and antisemitism, ensuring that long-term strategy and community support remain front and centre.

On today’s challenges, Mendoza insists, “It is unacceptable that there should ever be a moment in this country where Jewish people feel they have to hide any part of their identity.” While it is essential to educate about the Holocaust and antisemitism, these should not be the only lenses through which

Jewish identity is viewed. She believes it is crucial to celebrate the multifaceted vibrancy of Jewish life.

A passionate advocate for leadership development, Mendoza has spearheaded a variety of programmes designed to nurture talent at every stage. Her approach is about empowering others to step into their own greatness. “When they shine, I shine. I don’t need to shine all the time.”

Authenticity is a non-negotiable for effective leadership. Mendoza defines it as “understanding what you do and don’t know, and being open-minded about the fact that there might be concepts or people who can change the way you see things. People know immediately when you’re not being true to yourself,” she says. “Even though I’m the

boss, I recognise there are huge gaps in my knowledge and ability. I’ve learned to consult widely with my team. It’s not always about the CEO; it’s about the collective brilliance of the team.”

“

It is unacceptable that there should ever be a moment in this country when Jewish people feel they have to hide any part of their identity



Michal Oshman

CEO & Founder, Maximize

Michal Oshman has spent over two decades empowering leaders and teams around the globe through executive roles at companies like TikTok, Facebook and eBay. Today, as CEO and Founder of her leadership consultancy, Maximize, she channels her passion for organisational growth and Jewish wisdom into helping organisations unlock their full potential.

Deeply influenced by Jewish teachings, Oshman believes that not only is true leadership defined by care and responsibility,

as with Moses, but also that the purpose is to grow leaders. She cites the Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson, who insisted that every individual possesses an innate spark of leadership. “I think sometimes people hear the word ‘leadership’ and think that it belongs only to CEOs or heads of state, but that’s not true. It is active in every corner of our lives. I see mothers at my childrens’ school who may not hold a leadership position in a company, but they certainly lead us to come together to do

meaningful things,” she notes.

For Oshman, leadership means understanding what matters now and pivoting yourself to meet those needs—both for oneself and for the world. “God brought you here for a specific mission. This mission can change, but you are needed.” She concludes, “The day you were born was the day that the world was missing you,” and urges, “You need to be who you are, stick to your values, but also think about what the person in front of you needs right now.”

Steven Phillips

Co-founder & Executive Director of JewishERGs

Steven Phillips, co-founder and Executive Director of JewishERGs, emerged as a leader when he recognised the need for authentic Jewish representation in the corporate world. While working at Amazon in London, he initiated an informal social group for Jewish employees—a space that grew organically as concerns about identity and inclusion emerged both at home and abroad. “I was met with a lot of push-back to starting the group. There was a total lack of understanding within the DEI (Diversity, Equity and Inclusion) world about the complexities of the Jewish people being a culture, ethnicity, spirituality and religion”.

Undeterred by the initial resistance, Phillips adopted a “forgiveness, not permission” approach. He began with a simple Slack channel and an email list that gradually evolved into a robust network. “Often, it is not executives running these groups; rather, it is people much lower down the chain that decide to stand up”.

This tenacity found Phillips introduced to others in similar positions at other companies and he quickly saw a need to strengthen this network of aspiring leaders he’s called JewishERGs. “What I am doing with JewishERGs is helping them grow into leaders,” he explains.

This grassroots effort soon took on a life of its own. JewishERGs has grown to be the world’s largest network of Jewish Employee Resource Group leaders with experience founding, creating and running Jewish employee groups at some of the world’s biggest companies (and some small ones too!). The group works together outside of their employers to support each other in creating and running Jewish ERGs, events and educational content for everyone. Its board looks after members and partners with charities, NGOs and other organisations to secure the resources needed to continue sharing, supporting and growing ERG networks and Jewish communities worldwide.

By 7 October 2023, Phillips’s network had expanded to include 30 workplaces. Being in Tel Aviv during the attack further solidified his resolve. “Witnessing Israel’s transition from political disarray to active unity in the face of war was incredibly moving,” he recalls. That pivotal moment deepened his commitment to supporting Jewish professionals and led him to leave the tech sector to focus on JewishERGs full-time.

Under his leadership, the initiative has grown significantly – now encompassing over 160 workplaces across various industries and geographies. JewishERGs has evolved into a central resource for Jewish employee groups, hosting key events such as an online commemoration on 7 October attended by more than 350 people, and contributing to important research like Jewish at Work 2024.

Phillips also advocates for a reimagining of traditional funding programmes within the Jewish sphere. “I know a lot of funding is based on location, but we have to think differently about this space. The leaders of these groups are not always situated in a geography that makes traditional sense – you could have a person in London working for a company headquartered in Seattle, but with most of their Jewish colleagues in New York. This work has both global and local reach in a very non-linear but effective fashion.”

All these efforts have reinforced his conviction that true leadership begins with stepping forward in whatever space you are in, as he explains: “I saw a place where Jews were not being represented so I decided to take action. Now I see an even bigger need to connect, support and grow other leaders who want to stand up and be counted as Jews.”



“
*I see a need to connect,
support and grow
other leaders who
want to stand up and
be counted as Jews*

Ujia scholarships available for TLV programme. T&Cs apply.

The FJL Summer Internships

Forum for Jewish Leadership

NEW YORK

June 30 - July 28 2025

TEL AVIV

June 18 - July 22 2025

Forum for Jewish Leadership offers summer internship programmes living in New York or Tel Aviv, combining top-tier professional development, exclusive networking, inspiring Shabbat dinners & leadership sessions with dynamic speakers & educators

www.jewish-leadership.com

ujia



BIRTHRIGHT ISRAEL
ONWARD

 **jewish futures**
a member of the family

Rabbi Andrew Savage

CEO, OpenDor Media

Rabbi Andrew Savage has always seen a need to merge traditional Jewish values with modern methods. “I was studying at Oxford, and I was getting progressively more involved in my commitment to Judaism”. He quickly noticed a dilemma. “If you’re an upwardly mobile, intellectually curious person, what you do *Jewishly* often seems like the least-exciting part of your life.” Frustrated by this trade-off, he set out to show that ambition and Jewish identity need not be mutually exclusive.

After spending several years in Yeshiva, Rabbi Savage decided to work with outstanding young talent. “I wanted to do something in that space—something that proved you could be everything you aspire to be, both professionally and in your Jewish commitment,” he explains. In 2007, upon returning to England, he began engaging with students at Oxford and Cambridge. “Within about a day, it was clear that something different was needed to be interesting, attractive and compelling.” This realisation led him to launch an internship programme in Washington, D.C., connecting young British Jews with pro-Israel think tanks. “That idea grew into what became the Forum for Jewish Leadership,” a member of the family of Jewish Futures organisations.

Today, as head of OpenDor Media, Rabbi Savage is focused on scale. “The only way to reach millions every moment of every day is through the media.” Traditional methods, he notes, are limited: “You can only fit so many people in a room, and if you want to operate at scale, media is the only way.” Since becoming CEO in 2021, he is driven by the belief that modern technology can amplify Jewish voices and values globally.

He is candid about the challenges facing Jewish leadership today. “The world moves incredibly quickly, and as Jews—especially those of us living traditional Orthodox lives—we must find a way to remain true to our traditions while engaging with a fast-paced modern world. You have to be involved in that world to understand it,” he observes.

Rabbi Savage also highlights the difficulty of providing meaningful roles for emerging leaders. “Typically, organisations rely on lay leadership—often those who contribute most philanthropically. But if you are in your mid-20s and expected to be that leader 20 years from now, how do you get on the ladder



early on? There are more problems to solve than there is talent—even though we have immense talent—and we’ve yet to work out how to address the bigger challenges. That’s just the reality.”

Rabbi Savage’s approach to leadership is both direct and measured. “I’ve learned most of what I know from people with ambition and drive. One of the grounding ideas in Judaism is that you can have humility and ambition at the same time. Great leaders start by identifying the problem they’re trying to solve and then think through it rationally and strategically.”

“

You can have humility and ambition at the same time



Tzili Schneider

Founder and Director, Keshet Yehudi

Tzili Schneider grew up in Mea She'arim, Jerusalem in an *Haredi* (ultra-orthodox) family, “with neighbours from all directions and shades of the Jewish people”. Reflecting on her childhood, she recalls the Six-Day War: “We responded so well. We were so united, and it was so clear to all of us that the victory belonged to the entire Jewish people.”

“Over the years, I simply saw a high wall before my eyes, full of stereotypes, full of prejudices, full of lies,” she explains. This wall, dividing ultra-orthodox and secular Jews, struck her as not only harmful but dangerous—weakening the entire Jewish people. Motivated by a deep sense of responsibility, Schneider founded *Keshet Yehudi* (literally, ‘Jewish Connection’). “I felt that this division oppressed both sides and weakened us as a people,” she explains. “Our primary need as a people is to return and

be united. ‘United’ does not mean ‘uniform’. Even if we do not agree on everything, we agree that we are one people, that we are brothers and sisters, and we must love, respect and embrace each other despite our differences, because that is where our strength lies.”

Since 7 October, Keshet Yehudi has taken on an even more urgent role. “I knew that our work had to extend beyond dialogue to concrete action,” Schneider explains. “We launched emergency response programmes to support hostage families and survivors—organising Shabbatons, one-on-one study sessions and community gatherings that provide comfort and solidarity in such times of crisis. Every conversation and every shared moment of prayer reinforces the belief that our strength lies in our unity.” Through these initiatives, she has reached out directly to

those in pain, ensuring that every affected individual feels the warmth of connection.

Schneider explains, true Jewish leadership is defined not by authority, but by service and compassion. “A king, in Judaism, is not the ruler of the people; he actually serves the people,” noting biblical leaders like Jacob, Moses and King David—all shepherds who cared deeply for their flock. Recalling a famous *midrash*, she says, “Moses chased a little goat that ran away from the flock. When the goat stopped to drink, Moses caught up, asked forgiveness and carried him back. This teaches that a leader must be by his people’s side—patient, compassionate and attentive to every detail.”

Schneider concludes, “The greatest challenge facing Jewish leaders today is not being afraid of the long road to the survival of the eternal people.”

Brian Spivak

Founder & CEO at Barzel Media

Brian Spivak's leadership story begins in the aftermath of 7 October, when he volunteered at The Hostage and Missing Families Forum and saw a critical gap in activating influencers. His approach was simple yet powerful: influencers should tell the individual stories of hostages by connecting their everyday lives to the hostages' struggles. The campaign resonated deeply, and soon, hundreds of influencers had joined these

campaigns. Meanwhile, influencers supporting Israel were facing backlash—losing followers, enduring harassment and even losing their revenue streams. Recognising the need for a commercially viable solution, Spivak founded Barzel Media, quitting his job to fully commit to the cause.

Today, Barzel Media has a growing community of over 175 pro-Israel

influencers worldwide, offering paid partnerships, critical resources and the Digital Israel Fund, which supports influencer-led initiatives and subsidises influencer marketing for struggling charities.

"My approach is to re-educate the market on the importance of businesses in their role to support Israel's advocacy efforts. The responsibility of our organisations is not *only* to support our top influencers and celebrities—our generals and commanders—but also look out for the everyday 'digital warrior' who is actively engaged on the front lines." His vision is to create an economic 'Iron Dome' for Israel and Jewish People.

Spivak shared the biblical story about Jacob lifting a boulder to feed Rachel's sheep. "Jacob didn't actually have the ability to do it, but when he took on the responsibility, that gave him the ability." He sees this principle play out in the aftermath of 7 October, where ordinary people stepped into roles they never imagined they could fill. "I took on the responsibility, and all of a sudden, I had the ability to do it," he reflected. "Leadership qualities don't necessarily emerge until there's a necessity for them," he said.

"Half the people I know became overnight defense contractors, measuring their contribution to the war effort by the number of duffel bags of vests and helmets they procured. I don't see my role as any different; I found a way to provide a version of a bulletproof vest—financial protection—for our digital warriors. I still feel like an unlikely entrepreneur, but quitting my job forced my hand, and I had no choice but to make it work. I trusted that the mission was just, and that ultimately it was up to God."

“

Leadership qualities don't necessarily emerge until there's a necessity for them





יבוא ידיד בן ידיד ויבנה ידיד

A community dedicated to sharing an authentic experience of meaningful Torah and passionate Tefillah



WHAT DO WE OFFER?



UPLIFTING AND INSPIRING DAVENING FOR ALL SHABBOS AND YOM TOV SERVICES



SUNDAY MORNING AND SHABBOS AFTERNOON SHIURIM



MEANINGFUL, RELEVANT, ACCESSIBLE AND TRANSFORMATIONAL DIVREI TORAH



WOMEN'S LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES



A FOCUSED DAILY SHACHARIS MINYAN



MUSICAL HALLEL TOGETHER WITH EILECHA



A VIBRANT BEIS HAMEDRASH PROGRAMME EVERY MORNING



CRÈCHE AND CHILDREN'S PROGRAMMING

For more information on Kehal Yedidim
please email office@kehalyedidim.com

JEWISH FUTURES

A woman in profile, looking upwards, is the central figure. A CD is suspended in front of her face by a blue ribbon. The CD has handwritten text on it: "Bring them HOME". The background is a soft-focus bokeh of warm, golden lights, suggesting a festive or celebratory atmosphere. Blue ribbons hang vertically across the frame.

United in *Strength*

Amid evolving challenges, the Jewish Futures family of charities has demonstrated solidarity, resilience and shared responsibility to unite our community. From transformative volunteer efforts to meaningful Jewish heritage journeys, see how adversity transforms into renewed purpose, strengthening bonds and igniting hope for generations to come.

SNAPSHOTS

The Perspectives Editorial Team

From memorable experiences and immersive programmes, to uplifting community gatherings and inspiring trips, the Jewish Futures family of charities celebrates every Jewish journey, encouraging deeper pride in Jewish identity and connection to Jewish life

SHAPING THE FUTURE

Exciting news from the FJL family! International Director, Ben Thwaites, has been selected as a member of the first-ever Voice of the People (VoP) Global Cohort. VoP, led by Israel's President Isaac Herzog, is a groundbreaking initiative bringing together 150 Jewish leaders from around the world to tackle the most pressing challenges facing the global Jewish community. Thwaites will represent FJL in this transformative initiative and contribute to meaningful conversations and solutions that will shape our collective future.

“

Bringing together 150 Jewish leaders from around the world to tackle the most pressing challenges facing the global Jewish community



Above: Ben Thwaites (left), with President Isaac Herzog (right), Jerusalem



Enjoying the FJL sponsored Bristol-Oxford football match

THE NEXT LEADERS

Recruitment for FJL's six internship programmes and three volunteer trips for 2025 is well underway, with information events held in universities across the UK including LSE, Bristol, Warwick, Imperial College, Kings and UCL.

An FJL sponsored Bristol-Oxford football match was a great opportunity to showcase the FJL summer trips to New York and Tel Aviv, with many alumni from recent years playing in the teams and keen to share their experience of being a part of the Forum for Jewish Leadership.

AROUND THE WORLD

FJL has run its 10th programme for European students on their Jewish J Academy gap year programme, in partnership with the Lauder Foundation. Between the 6th of March and 8th April students from Germany, Spain, Costa Rica, Ukraine and Italy came to London. The jam-packed itinerary included internship opportunities, programming in the evenings as well as *shabbatonim*. Impact sessions with successful business people from the community inspired the students to take responsibility, continue to deepen their Jewish journeys and showed how it's possible to combine professional success with strong Jewish values.

FJL alumni living and working in New York City gathered for a memorable Shabbat dinner on Manhattan's Upper West Side. Alumni dating back to the Tel Aviv 2019 Summer event reconnected with one another and pledged to further strengthen the FJL community in the months to come. The evening was filled with great food, new friends and a beautiful Shabbat atmosphere!



Natasha Hausdorff speaking at the FJL Alumni Dinner

COMMUNITY CATALYSTS

FJL staged its inaugural Alumni Dinner in London, uniting graduates from the past 15 years for an evening of reconnection and inspiration. The highlight of the night was a keynote conversation with UK barrister and staunch Israel advocate Ms Natasha Hausdorff. In that conversation, participants examined pressing challenges facing Israel and the Jewish community. Describing claims of "occupation, ethnic cleansing, colonialism, apartheid and genocide" as "modern-day blood libels," she urged young leaders to counter antisemitism boldly, defend truth and uphold justice.



Top: FJL J Academy participants all ready for Shabbat. Bottom: Tour of the British Museum, London led by Ben Thwaites



aish^{YP}

J»ROOTS

Now, more than ever...

IT'S YOUR TIME TO
STAND UP

YOUNG PROFESSIONALS JOURNEY TO

POLAND
2025

14-18 May



a member
of the
**jewish
futures**
family

OLAMI MEMBER

Having fun at an Aish event



INNOVATION HIGHLIGHTS

This academic year saw the launch of **Aish UK**'s Gold Track, which has grown into the largest weekly Jewish student programme in the UK.

One notable event was a museum-style exhibition exploring the history of antisemitism. Through a multimedia experience featuring wall displays, historical artefacts and digital presentations, students embarked on a journey through centuries of antisemitism. The exhibition concluded with a final segment highlighting modern antisemitism with a focus on real social media posts that illustrate hostility towards Jews. Students then attended a presentation that focused on the distinctive role of the Jewish people and their enduring contributions to society. The message was clear: the Jewish story is one of strength, survival and responsibility.

With over 715 students taking part across the country, it is redefining Jewish campus engagement by offering a dynamic and thought-provoking approach to education, identity and community.

COMMUNITY MOMENTS

In times of celebration and reflection, the strength of a community is measured by its ability to come together. Over the last six months, two powerful events stood out—each one uniting young Jewish professionals in a meaningful and deeply moving way.

Aish UK and **GIFT** collaborated in hosting a memorial event to mark the anniversary of 7 October—one of the darkest days in modern Jewish history. Young professionals from across the community came together, not only to remember, but to focus on unity. Through shared stories, reflection and collective strength, the evening provided a space for grief and resilience, and underscored a commitment to ensuring that the Jewish people continue to stand strong in the face of adversity.

This year's Young Professionals Chanukah Party saw over 200 young professionals gather for a festive evening full of music and latkes. The highlight of the night was hearing Mr Manfred Goldberg BEM, a Holocaust survivor whose story of perseverance left an indelible mark on all who attended. As he lit the Chanukah candles on behalf of the group, his words and the flames he kindled reminded everyone of the enduring strength and unbreakable spirit of the Jewish people.

JOURNEYS OF DISCOVERY

Over the past few months at **Aish UK**, two extraordinary journeys—one to Israel and one to Amsterdam—left a profound impact on participants.

A group of Year 13 students from King David Manchester travelled to Jerusalem, where they explored Israel's rich history, vibrant culture and participated in inspiring and dynamic Jewish learning. Beyond the stunning scenery and delicious food, the trip gave them a taste of something even deeper: the possibility of spending a transformative gap year in Israel.

Meanwhile, a group of young professionals from London embarked on a different kind of journey—one that took them to Amsterdam for a weekend of discovery. This wasn't just about sightseeing; it was an opportunity to connect with Jewish history, engage with the thriving local community and reflect on their own Jewish identity. Walking through the streets where history unfolded, visiting iconic Jewish landmarks and sharing meaningful discussions, participants returned home with renewed passion for Jewish learning and a deeper sense of purpose.



Above: Manchester Schools Israel trip: ready for Shabbat

HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL DAY 80TH ANNIVERSARY

One week before the 80th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz, **JRoots** held a meaningful encounter in the historical epicentre of systematic dehumanisation and annihilation. In times still marred with conflict, division and hatred, the moment's poignancy was palpable and the shared human connection filled all of those present with hope and strength.

In Rome, JRoots commemorated the 80th anniversary of the tragic events of 1943 on International Holocaust Memorial Day. The ceremony took place in the city's 16th October Square, where on that Shabbat morning 1,023 Jews were rounded up for deportation, with only 16 survivors. The event also highlighted the often-overlooked history of Rome's Jewish community, which has been part of the city for over 2,000 years.

In collaboration with the Jewish Leadership Academy of Miami, JRoots honoured Italian Holocaust survivors by reading their testimonies at the very site of their roundup. This ceremony marked the conclusion of an eight-day journey through Italy that explored over two millennia of Jewish heritage. Participants also took part in activities with the youth of Rome's Jewish community, including high school students and Bnei Akiva members, building strong connections.

JOURNEY CHRONICLES

On a recent journey to Poland, **JRoots'** guide Rabbi Raphy Garson led a group from Brondesbury Park Synagogue through Auschwitz. He noticed a devout Muslim family from Turkey who was nearby, and invited them to join the group as he was about to share stories before visiting the Exhibit of Names.

Reflecting on the enduring pain of the Jewish people, Rabbi Garson spoke of the unbearable weight of Jewish history and how, despite small numbers, the Jewish people have contributed immeasurably to the world. He shared a teaching from the Talmud—that Adam was created alone—to illustrate that every individual holds infinite value and to discourage any claims of superiority based on lineage.

The family listened intently, their faces heavy with emotion. When Rabbi Garson finished, they approached him. The father, overcome with feeling, fell onto his shoulders, weeping. Through his tears he said:

“

*We are all brothers and sisters.
No matter what is happening in the
world, we can live together in peace*



Above: The Jewish Leadership Academy marks the conclusion of Shabbat with a Havdalah ceremony at the Trevi Fountain in Rome, Italy



Widows affected by the war in Israel – on a trip in partnership between GIFT and OneFamily (Photo courtesy of OneFamily)



VOLUNTEER VICTORIES

The inspiring stories of volunteers continue to resonate deeply. As part of her Bat Mitzvah project, Yaeli designed a beautiful Tishrei colouring book exclusively for our GIFT children, which was then professionally printed and sent out with a set of coloured pencils.

Adina Rosenstein, creator of Beyond the Label, an inclusive fashion show, saw her GIFT charity incubator project flourish this year. More than 350 people attended the annual event for the third year running, and the project expanded to Jerusalem.

In a moving gesture of appreciation, a 17-year-old boy recently reached out to thank GIFT after successfully completing three academic qualifications. Having been supported through challenging times to achieve these milestones, his first call was to share his success story and express his gratitude.

Siblings William and Jessica Parkinson, as part of their GIFT Bnei Mitzvah, collected over 3,000 pieces of new stationery from friends and family. The supplies were then organised into more than 250 pencil cases and distributed to our GIFT households in time for the new school year.

COMMUNITY INITIATIVES

In the past year, GIFT inspired 8,600 volunteers to engage in community work. Together, they contributed over 62,500 hours, packed 84,500 food parcels and prepared 22,500 hot meals for families in need. More than 1,550 Giving sessions were delivered in schools to teach giving as a Jewish value. 99% of volunteers reported their experiences as both meaningful and impactful.

In partnership with OneFamily, GIFT recently brought 13 young, bereaved widows affected by the war in Israel to London for a week of respite and connection. These mothers, having lost their husbands in the past year, enjoyed a relaxing trip organised entirely by volunteers. The programme featured various activities and ended with a warm event at the GIFT Hub, where the widows shared their stories and encouraged further support for Israel.

Other projects highlight GIFT's support for the homeless. The "Feeding London's Homeless" project runs six initiatives a year, engaging over 480 high school students to prepare meals, assemble winter care packs and distribute essentials to up to 100 homeless people. GIFT is extending the project to Hertfordshire with a weekly kitchen where teenagers produce food for local charities. In addition, the Osim Tov B'Rachov initiative in Tel Aviv, now in its third year, sees volunteers provide 65 meals per week to homeless people, making a tangible difference.

GIFT joined forces with UCH Leeds and thousands across the UK Jewish community in 'A Time To Say Thank You'—a mission to thank and support blue light emergency services and healthcare staff working over the festive period. More than 500 volunteers in London and Leeds delivered over 2,000 chocolate bouquets to these workers, spreading gratitude and warmth.



TEN MISCONCEPTIONS ABOUT JUDAISM

A brand new course from

MAVEN

featuring

RABBI DANIEL ROWE

Is Judaism all or nothing? Does Judaism believe in blind faith? Does the Torah contradict science? What does the Chosen People mean? In this course Rabbi Daniel Rowe uncovers the truth behind the ten most difficult misconceptions about Judaism.

Watch the full course and more at aish.org.uk/maven

BECOME A MAVEN

 @becomeamaven



INTROSPECTION



Digging *Deeper*

Settle in for a fascinating piece on biblical espionage, bookmark a meaningful 49-day challenge for personal growth, reflect on ancestral experiences that define us today and check out a powerful poem for fresh perspectives on life's deeper questions.

The DNA of *Jewish Resilience*

Tsippy Kraus

Trauma is a term that resonates deeply within the global Jewish community as we continue to navigate profound national crisis. Throughout history, we have endured, overcome and triumphed countless times, which naturally raises the question: From where do we draw this remarkable individual and collective resilience?

The exploration of trauma and resilience extends beyond shared experiences to personal journeys. My research into birth trauma began with a challenging experience surrounding the birth of my twins eighteen years ago. Complications in the pregnancy necessitated a prolonged hospital stay prior to delivery, a caesarean section and then three more weeks post-birth in hospital with my babies in the special care unit.

This experience led to training as a childbirth educator, eventually guiding countless couples through the wonder and privilege of their own birth journeys. Whilst many births are positive experiences, some end in trauma, leaving lasting effects on mothers, fathers and even their babies. This awareness prompted research into ways to minimise trauma during the birthing process.

My mission crystallised upon reading an article about Israeli emergency room protocols designed to reduce PTSD (Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder) in victims of terrorist attacks. While childbirth is certainly not terrorism, it can feel like an assault on the body, mind and heart. This led to extensive study of trauma; how to prevent it and how to heal it. The goal became clear: helping families access their natural resilience in order to pre-emptively protect themselves and their babies from possible trauma.

Some question the inclusion of the babies themselves in the trauma equation. “Babies don’t remember,” they argue, “how could they be affected by a pre-birth experience?”¹ Dr. Rachel Yehuda tells a different story. Her groundbreaking research on what she calls “The Holocaust Gene” explores the intergenerational effects of trauma

experienced by concentration camp survivors. The results of her findings are fascinating. While the DNA of survivors’ descendants remains unmodified, their epigenetics—mechanisms that act as “light switches” for genes—are altered. As a result, these descendants are more likely to suffer from Generalised Anxiety Disorder (GAD), primed to remain alert to danger and have a sense of being “on guard,” even though they themselves never directly experienced the trauma.

Epigenetics, the study of changes in gene expression rather than the genetic code itself, offers a framework for understanding how environmental exposure—including trauma—is “written” onto the genome as a direct result of gene and environment (trauma) interactions. This interplay between genes and environment shapes not only individuals, but also their future generations. It is interesting to note that PTSD is often viewed as a classic interplay of nature and nurture. While trauma by definition is a prerequisite for PTSD, emerging studies reveal an inheritable component. A genetic predisposition, shaped by biological inheritance, can influence susceptibility.

Studies undertaken following the Dutch Hunger Winter (1944-1945) are noteworthy in that they demonstrate that babies in utero during this time were born primed and ready for lack. Their bodies cleverly adjusted their genetic expression to be in sync with the environment, thus providing their best chance for survival. This had ramifications further down the line when these grown “babies” displayed a tendency towards obesity as they aged and their bodies, set for “starvation mode”, accumulated fat as protection from famine.

Epigenetic research is fascinating and interestingly, aligns with certain aspects of Jewish wisdom and tradition. Much more than a history book created as a guide to learn from the past, the Torah is considered a blueprint for understanding ourselves as a nation and as individuals. Every word and detail recorded

“

*Beyond moral teachings and material wealth,
you may also be passing along something far
more profound*

¹ Dr. Rachel Yehuda et al., “Holocaust Exposure Induced Intergenerational Effects on FKBP5 Methylation,” *Biological Psychiatry* 80, no. 5 (2016): 372-380

reveals the essence and nature of our identity and the source of our outstanding national and personal resilience.

The Ramban (Nachmanides), in his introduction to the Book of Exodus, makes the following assertion: “The Torah completed the book of Genesis, which is the book of creation, in the renewal of the world and the creation of all things, and *with the events of the forefathers all of which are like creation for their offspring*.” The stories of our forefathers’ lives are not merely inspirational, but rather they are the seeds of our spiritual and genetic inheritance, impacting all Jews forevermore. Their strength and resilience, their actions and reactions, are woven into our collective fabric and are the basis for our ability to endure trials with self-sacrifice and extraordinary fortitude. The famous aphorism of the Ramban, “The deeds of the fathers are a sign for the children”, certainly takes on deeper import in light of epigenetic research.

The story of Rachel and Leah, the matriarchs of the Jewish nation, is steeped in both love and sacrifice. When their father substituted Leah for Rachel, sending Leah to join Jacob under the bridal canopy in Rachel’s place, Rachel shared the secret signs that she and Jacob had prepared in advance so that her sister would not be publicly humiliated. Rather than focusing on her own heartbreak, Rachel acted with exceptional selflessness; she stood back and remained silent allowing the union to proceed. This act of restraint—the ultimate *shetika*, refraining from speech when there was so much to say—is forever associated with Rachel. She chose to keep quiet, enduring personal loss and pain, in order to spare her sister from shame.

Leah married Jacob and initially bore him three children. Aware of the divine plan that Jacob would have four wives and father twelve children, she believed that by having three sons she had fulfilled her share of this destiny. When she was subsequently blessed with a fourth child, she recognised it as an extraordinary gift and named her son Judah (Yehuda), derived from the root *odeh* meaning ‘thanks’ - saying, “*Hapa’am Odeh Et Hashem* (This time I will give thanks to God)” as an expression of her profound gratitude for this

“bonus”. The Talmud notes that Leah was the first person to openly give thanks to God in this way, making her gratitude not only personal but also public through the act of naming her son.²

Rachel’s defining attribute therefore was her wisdom in discerning when to keep quiet, while Leah’s was her practice of expressing gratitude publicly. An examination of their descendants reveals how these traits were manifested in their progeny:

Tracing Rachel’s legacy through her descendants we arrive at Queen Esther, who hailed from the tribe of Benjamin, younger son of Rachel. Esther is renowned for her silence regarding her Jewish identity when chosen as queen by King Ahasuerus; a fact she refused to reveal on the instruction of her uncle Mordechai.

Leah’s legacy can be traced to King David, a descendant of the tribe of Judah. David, the composer of Psalms, created perhaps the most beautiful and enduring songs of gratitude and praise; his profound ability to publicly acknowledge and give thanks to God clearly reflects a direct inheritance of his ancestress Leah.

When reflecting on our lives’ trajectories, we often ponder what legacy we will leave behind for our children. We think about the financial inheritance we might provide, the stable family structure we’ve built and the good names we’ve established through years of hard work. Yet consider that beyond moral teachings and material wealth, you may also be passing along something far more profound? Just as your children may inherit your physical traits—perhaps black hair or a prominent nose—they may also inherit the internal battles you’ve fought and won in the privacy of your own heart and conscience. The strength you cultivated in holding your tongue, the courage you showed in standing up for what was right, those inner demons you overcame and the resilience you developed as a result of all these, could become encoded in your epigenetic makeup. One day, when a great-grandchild encounters their own struggles, they might unknowingly draw on the fortitude you left behind, an invisible but enduring gift.

My late grandmother’s story illustrates this

concept powerfully. Sent from Germany to England on a Kindertransport in 1939, she was a fourteen-year-old girl responsible for two younger siblings. Coming from an observant home, she was surprised to discover that the family who took them in did not ‘keep’ Shabbat. She had never before encountered Jews who were not observant! On her very first Shabbat there, she refused to accept pocket money—which would violate Jewish law—even though she desperately needed it to buy supplementary food for her younger sister. Faced with non-kosher food, she sought guidance from her father, who had faced the same dilemma as a soldier in the First World War. At the time, his Rabbi had instructed him to eat what was necessary for survival. This became my grandmother’s guiding mantra: *I must eat for survival*. She ate selectively and sparingly, often going hungry. This resilience is likely encoded in the genome of her numerous descendants, a strength we can draw upon in challenging times.

As a Birth Trauma Release practitioner, I witness how helping a woman heal from birth trauma will have a positive impact on herself, her family dynamics, her relationships with her husband and her children, and beyond. By having the courage to acknowledge her struggles and seek help to move forward, she is rewriting the response to trauma for future generations, creating epigenetic changes that will extend far beyond her nuclear family. The ripple effect of one woman’s bravery and perseverance may empower countless descendants to achieve their own healing and triumphs.

The source of our remarkable national and personal resilience is now clear. Abraham’s triumph over ten difficult tests, not only demonstrated the extent of his own inner strength powered by his absolute faith in God, but thereby embedded these “superpowers” into his descendants’ DNA. This, combined with the outstanding experiences lived by Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel and Leah all inscribed upon our epigenetic code, provides a veritable toolkit at our disposal that has kept us strong through many difficult years, and may well carry us all the way through to the ultimate peace we all eagerly await.

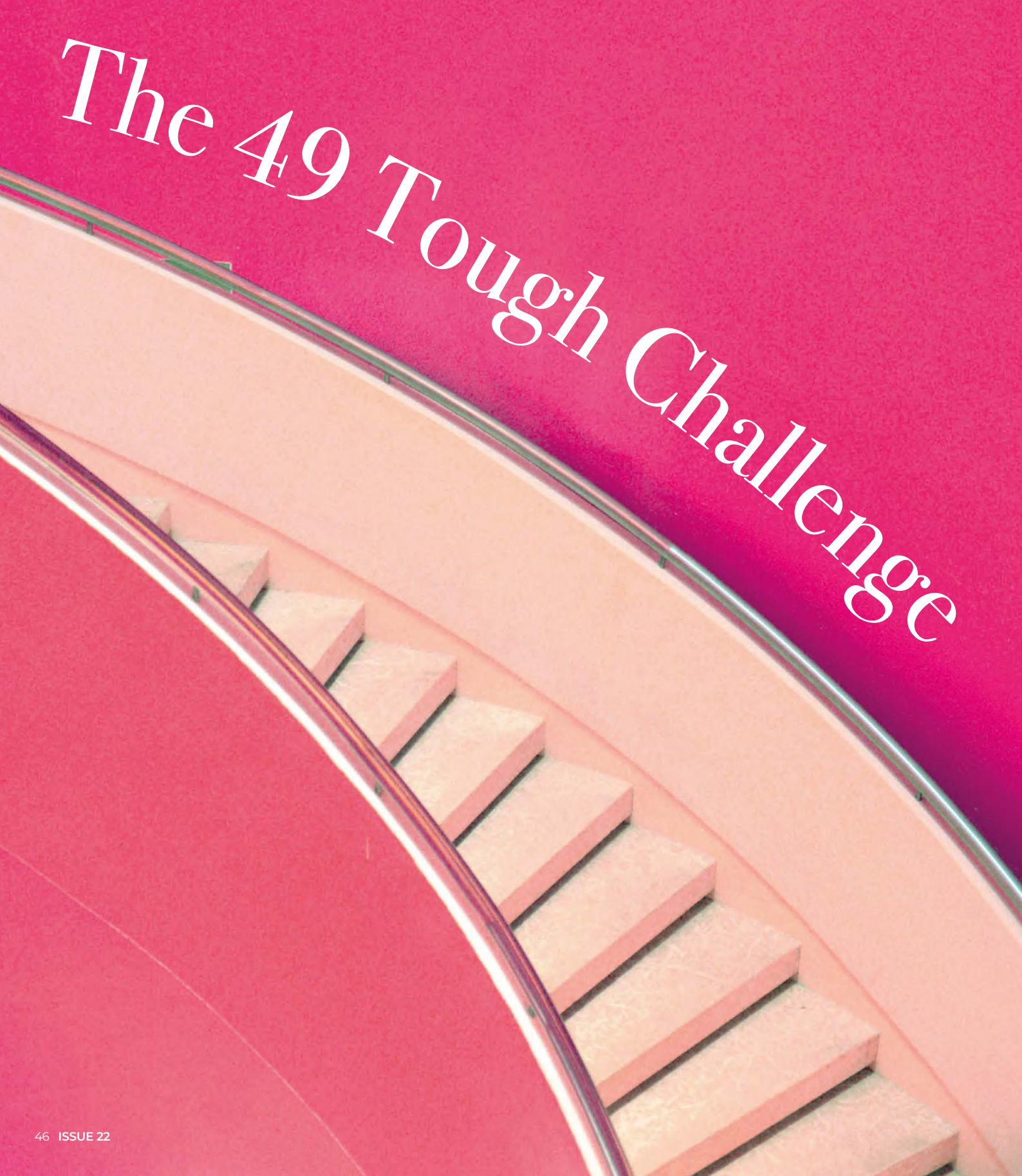
“

One day, when a great-grandchild encounters their own struggles, they might unknowingly draw on the fortitude you left behind, an invisible but enduring gift



A Jewish Blueprint for Growth

Rabbi Avrohom Zeidman



The 49 Tough Challenge

Self-improvement is a booming industry. From *75 Hard* to extreme fitness regimens and personal development courses, people everywhere are looking for ways to push themselves. But most of these challenges focus on *self*—becoming stronger, more resilient, more disciplined *for your own sake*.

What if there was a challenge that wasn't just about *you*—rather about making you into a person who lifts up *others*?

For thousands of years, Judaism has had such a system: a **49-day structured challenge** designed for deep character refinement. It's called *Sefirat HaOmer*—the *Counting of the Omer*—and it's not just about personal growth. It's about becoming the kind of person who can *give*, who can *lead*, who can build a better world—**49 Days. 7 Core Traits. A Complete Personal Overhaul.**

This isn't just another self-help programme. It's an ancient Kabbalistic roadmap for inner transformation—tried and tested for over 3,000 years.

The 7 Core Traits of the Challenge

Each of the seven weeks of the *Omer* is dedicated to a core trait, with each day refining a deeper aspect of it. Since each trait contains elements of the others, we work on them in a 7×7 structure—49 unique combinations. This means we don't just develop *Chesed* (kindness), but also *Chesed* within *Gevurah* (kindness with discipline), *Chesed* within *Tiferet* (balanced kindness) and so on. Each day becomes a step in a structured journey toward becoming a more refined and giving person.

Week 1 Chesed – Kindness & Giving

Chesed is about expanding beyond ourselves, recognising that giving to others is at the core of what it means to be human. It's not just kindness—it's *boundless* kindness, a generosity

that overflows and uplifts. This week challenges us to see where we can give more, love more and break out of self-centredness.

Week 2 Gevurah – Discipline & Strength

Gevurah teaches us that real strength isn't just about force—it's about control. It's the ability to set boundaries, to say no when necessary and to hold ourselves accountable. Without *Gevurah*, kindness can become indulgent and directionless. This week focuses on developing discipline, structure and a strong moral compass.

Week 3 Tiferet – Balance & Truth

Tiferet is the perfect balance between *Chesed* and *Gevurah*. Too much *Chesed* leads to uncontrolled giving, while too much *Gevurah* leads to rigidity and withholding. *Tiferet* ensures that kindness is not reckless and that discipline is not harsh. But this balance isn't just about moderation—it's about truth. *Tiferet* is the ability to see things as they really are and to respond in a way that is fair, just and aligned with reality.

Week 4 Netzach – Assertive Giving

Netzach is about the imposing of will onto another—not in arrogance, but with purpose. It is about influencing, pushing and driving others toward what is right, even when they resist. This is the force of a parent guiding a child, a teacher disciplining a student or a leader inspiring action. *Netzach* doesn't accept passivity. It fights for what matters and is relentless in ensuring the right outcome.

Week 5 Hod – Empathetic Giving

Hod is the opposite of *Netzach*. Where *Netzach* drives forward, *Hod* steps back. It is about restraint in relationships—about not imposing, but listening to others and

respecting their needs. *Hod* is the ability to submit to others' needs—not out of weakness, but out of deep emotional wisdom.

Week 6 Yesod – Real Connection

Yesod is the ability to create meaningful relationships, to build trust and to connect on a deep level. It is the foundation upon which all healthy relationships stand. This week challenges us to reflect on our connections—are they genuine? Are they built on integrity? Are we people others can rely on?

Week 7 Malchut – The Power of Receiving

Malchut has no energy of its own. It is the ultimate receptacle, receiving everything that came before it. It is the ability to empty oneself of ego completely, to take in, absorb and internalise. But *Malchut* is not passive—true receiving is preparation for future giving. It is about developing the humility to accept, so that when the time comes, we can pass it forward and uplift others.

Are You Ready for the Challenge?

Unlike most self-improvement challenges, the **49 Tough Challenge** isn't about proving how great *you* can be. It's about becoming the kind of person who can *give more*, *lead more* and *make an impact*.

This is a journey of **self-mastery—not for self-glorification, but for self-transformation.**

Scan the QR code to learn more and join the 49-Day Personal Growth Challenge



“

What if there was a challenge that wasn't just about you—rather about making you into a person who lifts up others?

HOLY LIES

Spycraft in the Bible

Ariel David Assis

Since time immemorial, the secret world has captivated our hearts and minds. Mysterious agents in Moscow, shadowy organisations in the corridors of the White House, reports whispered in safe houses in a Middle Eastern principality or diplomatic deals forged somewhere between Vauxhall and Belgravia have always made for a good story. Likewise, mysterious “accidents” that somehow always—purely by chance, of course—manage to reshape the economic and geopolitical map in favour of powerful states and vested interests have long provided fertile ground for both intelligence research literature on the one hand, and conspiracy theories on the other.

From Francis Walsingham, the Elizabethan spymaster who exposed the Ridolfi Plot (leading to the beheading of Mary, Queen of Scots), to Captain Sir Mansfield G. Smith-Cumming, the legendary head of MI6 who habitually signed the letter ‘C’ in green ink, thereby inspiring the character ‘M’ in the James Bond films, and the “Cambridge Five” scandal that brought the soviet intelligence all the way into Buckingham Palace—the secret realm has always been a subject of fascination that ignites the imagination.

Just recently the world’s attention was captured by the Mossad’s bold “Pagers” operation in Lebanon. In a creative, years-long campaign, it nearly toppled the terrorist organisation Hezbollah, exposed Iran to the prospect of a military strike and even indirectly contributed to the collapse of Assad’s murderous regime in Syria.

Although it may seem that the art of espionage only truly reached its pinnacle in modern times alongside the rise of nation-states and their illustrious intelligence agencies, a deeper look into the Book of Books offers an entirely different perspective on the secret world.

“Intelligence agencies are the true expression of a nation’s subconscious.”

John le Carré

The Bible teems with spies. The human fear of an enemy lurking beyond the walls has given rise to canonical tales of espionage: from the ten brothers suspected of spying by Joseph in ancient Egypt, to the ‘sin of the spies’ in the wilderness, from the spies in Jericho to those dispatched by King David and others throughout the Bible. In this article, I will delve into the psychology and methodology behind some of these narratives—their *modus operandi*—which may reveal a fascinating and timeless truth that few are familiar with.



No Time to Lie

In 1868, modern Japan was established under Emperor Mutsuhito during the Meiji Restoration and found itself in urgent need of a modern intelligence apparatus. The art of espionage—which demands deception, theft, betrayal and even murder—is regarded as refined and sophisticated in some nations. Yet in cultures where honour is the supreme value, such as Japanese or Arab cultures, it can be deemed disgraceful. The pay was meagre, and those involved were seen as morally inferior and therefore unworthy of respect.

The solution was unique: outsourcing to criminal organisations—groups of individuals already living on the fringes of society and the law, experienced in deceit, often emerging from difficult family backgrounds and lacking in conventional dignity and values. These criminals were nicknamed “Soshi” (meaning ruffians), and became the foundation of Japan’s intelligence services.

Organisations such as the KGB, the Stasi and the CIA have deliberately recruited orphans, individuals who are relatively easy to shape and indoctrinate, with vague family histories

that facilitate the crafting of robust cover stories. Until the late 20th century, many cover stories incorporated elements of orphanhood, making agents harder to trace. The world’s most famous spy, James Bond, lost both of his parents in a snow avalanche when he was 11, and the head of the agency, ‘M’, even praises this (*Skyfall*, 2012), stating that orphans make “perfect candidates for recruitment.”

It seems that this method is not new: In ancient Egypt, when Joseph accused his brothers of spying—“Spies you are! For you have come to see the nakedness of the land!”¹—they responded with a most peculiar answer: “We are all the sons of one man; we are honest men; your servants were not spies.”² What kind of reply is that? He accuses them of espionage, and they answer that they are... brothers? That they share the same father? What is the connection?

Catch Me if You Can

Biblical commentators explain that the fact they were not orphans—but instead have a renowned father with a solid, easily-verifiable background—coupled with their status as honest people (not criminals),

¹ Genesis 42:9 ² Genesis 42:11



The human fear of an enemy lurking beyond the walls has given rise to canonical tales of espionage

clearly demonstrates that they were not made from the same substance as spies:³ “We are all the sons of one man”—we are not orphans; we have a clear lineage. “We are honest”—in a tribal society, espionage is reserved for those held in contempt, whereas we are people of integrity and honour. “Your servants are not spies”⁴—they have never engaged in deceit or crime and are unaccustomed to such behaviour.

Brilliant. But Joseph, who had initially tried to concoct an unconvincing cover story for them, declares, “No! You have come to see where the land is exposed.” They then offer additional details about their background: “We, your servants were twelve brothers, sons of a certain man in the land of Canaan; the youngest, however, is now with our father, and one is no more.”⁵ In other words, they lay out their entire family history and even volunteer details never requested—including their place of origin. Essentially, they are saying that a simple background check would prove they are not spies. Joseph continues: “You shall be kept in prison, that your words may be proven, whether there be any truth in you: or else by the life of Pharaoh, surely you are spies,”⁶ and they are sent for ‘interrogation’. From this exchange, it becomes clear that the use of ambiguous backgrounds and the principles of recruiting spies in ancient times sound, quite surprisingly, very familiar to modern methods.

A leap to another book, in another place and time—the Book of Esther, which unfolds in Persia during the Achaemenid dynasty—reveals that even regarding the de-facto ‘double agent’ in the king’s palace, Queen Esther, it is said that “she has no father nor mother”⁷ and that “Esther does not declare her homeland nor her people”⁸—again, that same vague past... But as will soon become apparent, these are not the only cases.

The Book of Numbers recounts the famous ‘sin of the spies’. The well-known simple reading of the text is as follows: Moses sends 12 spies—the tribal leaders—for 40 days to survey the land. Upon their return, all but two (Joshua and Caleb) complain: the land is terrible, the people are giants, the cities are “fortified as in the heavens”⁹ and there is no chance of conquering it—it is better to die in the wilderness than even return to slavery in Egypt. The people weep “in vain,” and God, angry, decrees that they shall weep “for generations” on that very date: the Ninth of Av.

From Sky-Level to Eye-Level

So far, the conventional interpretation is a spiritual reading—sometimes called the “sky-level” approach—in which the Bible is viewed from lofty heights, highlighting divine holiness and near-celestial figures free from human frailties. By contrast, an “eye-level” approach recognises the divine providence of biblical events and personalities but, without belittling biblical figures, focuses on their very human dimension, full of intrigue, scheming and plotting.

One fascinating biblical commentator to consider in the context of this story is Rabbi Isaac Abravanel. In addition to being a scholar and Jewish philosopher, he served as finance minister in the medieval European kingdoms of Portugal, Castile and Aragon, and even advised the kings of Venice and Naples. Having sat at the king’s table and understood a thing or two about covert affairs, he offers a fascinating perspective on what happened in the ‘sin of the spies’: namely, a security failure.

In order to understand the situation, we must first become acquainted with some of the professional terms used in the world of intelligence, and then re-read the story through its realistic and fascinating lens of a statesman.

The intelligence apparatus is, in fact, a production facility: Raw material (“raw intelligence”) enters on one side, and undergoes a specific process (the “intelligence cycle”), during which it is transformed into a product (an “intelligence picture”)—and then it is sent to the ordering party (the “intelligence customer”) for execution.

The intelligence customer (for example, the Royal Air Force) orders an intelligence product (say, information about a particular weapons convoy) and outlines his requirements (for instance: what it contains, when it passes, coordinates, etc.). The details of the order are called Priority Intelligence Requirements (PIR), and its prioritisation process called Essential Elements of Information (EEI). For example, if intelligence personnel listen to the convoy commander, they will hear plenty of chatter unrelated to the order (non-prioritised intelligence) and discard it. In contrast, any suspicious, important or relevant chatter is marked as prioritised intelligence.

Intelligence itself is divided into levels and types:

Levels of Intelligence

STRATEGIC INTELLIGENCE:

General information – enemy institutions, government, military history, social divisions, economy and more.

OPERATIONAL INTELLIGENCE:

Specific, concrete details – for example, which warehouse in which unit stores the convoy’s weapons.

TACTICAL INTELLIGENCE

(Actionable int/Pre-Mission int):*

Micro-tactical data – exactly where the convoy will pass, how many security personnel are present and the expected blast radius.

Types of Intelligence

(BY SOURCE OF ORIGIN)

HUMINT: Human source (spy or agent), which is the most important.

SIGINT: Electronic source (signals, wiretapping, etc.).

VISINT: Visual intelligence (from surveillance photography, aerial imagery, satellites, etc.).

FININT: Financial intelligence (Follow The Money) – for example, it was reported that before the Twin Towers disaster, significant short positions were taken linked to Al-Qaeda; in other words, Bin Laden “gambled” that the stock market would fall when he himself caused it.

OSINT: Open sources (information available to the public that requires professional gathering—often underestimated in quantity, yet surprisingly effective).

* (int = intelligence). There are a few more types, but these are the main ones

The Production Process (THE “INTELLIGENCE CYCLE”)

Divided into five stages:

- 1. COLLECTION** – Raw intelligence is gathered from various sources (HUMINT, SIGINT, etc.) and consolidated (for example: a suspicious vehicle is seen heading north).
- 2. ANALYSIS** – The collected intelligence is examined: what exactly was observed? (For instance: the vehicle is a transmitter heading toward a terror base.)
- 3. ASSESSMENT** – Intelligence analysts compile all the information and evaluate its significance. Now, the intelligence product is ready and is sent to the customer.
- 4. DECISION** – The intelligence customer (the military or political echelon) makes a decision: what to do, how and when, based on the intelligence picture received.
- 5. DISSEMINATION** – The decision-makers (and only they) distribute the product to the relevant operational units. The intelligence cycle is complete.



Now, with a fresh, intelligence-based perspective, let us relook at the ‘sin of the spies’:

One might forget that Moses—who was the greatest of all prophets, a holy man of God, righteous and humble beyond comparison—was also an Egyptian prince.

He grew up in the royal household, received an elite education, mastered many languages and was likely accustomed to discussions about a kingdom’s economy, regional geography, enemies, military affairs and diplomacy. Now, as the Leader of the Israelites (the intelligence customer), he outlines their role: Collection (as spies—human intelligence) and Research (since there were no photographs or recordings back then, the collector also served as the investigator)—and that was it.

He even provides them with the PIR: “What is the land like? Is it good or bad? Is it fertile or lean? Does it have trees or does it not? And what of the people who dwell in it—are they strong or weak? Are they few or many? And what of the cities in which they dwell—are they open camps or fortified?”¹¹

In other words, here is a precise intelligence PIR that the spies were required to answer! Note the symmetry between the first and second parts of each of the questions.

Part A	Part B	Intelligence Significance
The land is good/ fertile/has trees	Bad/barren/has no trees	Economic status, presence/absence of logistical supplies for a siege and military campaign
The people are strong	Or weak	Military capability
The people are few	Or many	Strength of the military force
The cities are built as camps	Or as fortresses	Defensive capabilities
Summary: Strong, numerous, residing in a camp	Summary: Weak, few, fortified in a fortress	Military quality and willingness to resist

¹¹ Numbers 13:18-20

This is a brilliant gathering of EEI: Moses essentially understood (which would later prove to be true for almost all of human history) that a people of limited size in such a dangerous region tends to develop formidable resilience and an extraordinary fighting spirit (the Spartans, for example), and therefore, they also reside in an open camp: relying on their military strength. This might be misleading—it may seem easy to conquer them, but in fact, the opposite is true (as Rashi notes: "...If they dwell in open camps, they are strong, relying on their might").¹² In contrast, a people that is weak and numerous—with many elderly, women and children to protect—tend to reside in fortresses and rely on walls. In this, among other things, the spies were mistaken.

Not Saints

Moses demands that the spies carry out only the first two stages of the intelligence cycle

(collection and research):

1. Observe and listen (Collection)

2. Report to me what you saw and heard (Research)

However, according to Abravanel,¹³ the spies conducted their work unprofessionally. Although they did collect the information, they already failed at the analysis stage. They saw a people living behind impressive walls and deduced that this meant the enemy was strong—when in fact, the walls testified to weakness. They also saw many corpses and inferred that this was a "land that devours its inhabitants"¹⁴—when in fact, it indicated an army whose ranks had thinned and been thrown into disarray.

But the sin—the professional failure—did not end there. In the next stage, they exceeded their authority by undertaking a military

assessment ("We are not able to go up against the people; for they are stronger than us.")¹⁵—a task for which they were never authorised (Stage 3). Afterwards, they launched an open rebellion and assumed the decision-making stage as well ("Let's go back to Egypt!").¹⁶ Who asked them? Are they the decision-makers? Did they suddenly become the royal echelon?

And if that weren't enough, they crossed every professional boundary by taking over the final stage: dissemination. Instead of Moses—the reigning leader—disseminating his decision to the operational units, they bypassed him and distributed it themselves, not to the units but to the people (!)—a decision they were not at all allowed to receive: "And they shall reassemble them, word by word and all the congregation... and they will be disheartened in their tents..."¹⁷ until the entire people wept as they heard all the top officials of the security apparatus sitting in the media studios, declaring that all was lost.





Modern espionage concepts have long existed as a direct consequence of our primaeval human fears

This, according to Abravanel, is the essence of the 'sin of the spies'—a lesson that sheds considerable light on troubling processes that still occur today in the unholy interconnections between the military, government and the media. Recall that only two of the spies—Joshua and Caleb—did not partake in this failure and performed their duties faithfully. Both were granted entry to the Land after 38 years. Joshua, in turn, was personally appointed by Moses as the next leader.

From Jericho, With Love

Joshua, who, like Moses, grew up in the royal court, learned the ceremonial intricacies of kingship and the rites of war directly from Moses¹⁸—until he himself rose to become a tribal leader and a professional spy. Even when the entire intelligence apparatus collapsed around him, he never faltered in his duties. After 38 years, when he inherited power and needed to dispatch spies, he vividly recalled the lesson he had learned firsthand from the sin of the spies decades earlier.

Joshua understood, in fact, what had led to the sin of the spies:

- An excessively long waiting period (40 days) during which each tribe awaited its leader's report.
- An overly large delegation (12 spies) that compromised the integrity of the intelligence by involving unprofessional, politically-influenced operatives.
- And an overly detailed SVI that cast doubt on the mission.

Joshua corrected all of these shortcomings: "Joshua...secretly sent two men from Shittim as spies, saying, 'Go, reconnoiter the land, and Jericho.'"¹⁹

Two professionals, for three days, covertly—and that was all. The Sages explain that the word "stealthy" (in Hebrew: *Cheresh*), which might seem superfluous since spies are always expected to act covertly, is actually meant to elucidate their *method* of operation: "not *cheresh* (secretly)—but rather *cheres* (pottery makers): they made themselves as potters."²⁰ In other words, they disguised themselves as incense-sellers and strolled along the main thoroughfare of an enemy city while offering their wares for sale!

This is the very first infiltration operation in history ever executed "in plain sight": an

action so bold and overt that no one would ever suspect it to be a hostile espionage activity. Moreover, it carried an additional operational advantage—the ability to gauge the mood on the street and in the market, all while observing every corner, alley and building.

They arrive at the home of a woman harlot named Rahab. Why her home, you might ask? Because her establishment is the ideal location for gathering intelligence: questions aren't asked there due to its inherently dubious nature, and it is situated on the city wall ("and on the wall she sits")—from where one can easily survey the security arrangements.

However, I would like to suggest that Rahab held a somewhat unique status: she was an 'elite' harlot. How do we know this? Pay attention: she instructs them to climb onto "the stalks of flax that were laid out for her upon the roof,"²¹ and then she sneaks them out through the window using a "crimson rope."²² This text tells us that she is a woman who has help with household chores or servants, and she possesses luxury items—like a crimson rope, which was once a well-known symbol of wealth. This crimson rope would eventually become their agreed sign (in modern professional terms, "Dead drop"/"Visual Cue").

Various interpretations further suggest that she hosted all of the influential figures of the most important city in Canaan at the time (the sages explain, "Jericho was the door bolt [for unlocking] the land of Israel. They said, 'If Jericho is conquered, the whole land will be conquered immediately'").²³ Thus, it can be understood, perhaps, that she was an 'elite' harlot.

In effect, she served as an agent, HUMINT source—the most crucial kind of intelligence—informing them about the prevailing mood in both the city and the palace. She was willing to betray her people and even managed to deceive the king's soldiers during their pursuit. It is not beyond the realm of possibility that she also knew how to provide them with tactical intelligence regarding the patterns of visits to her establishment, and perhaps even about the personal security arrangements for her visitors, the hierarchical structure and more.

In contemporary terms, this is called an "intelligence gold mine." Yet perhaps the most crucial information she provides is essentially about morale: What is the prevailing mood of the people? What is their fighting spirit? The kingdom is under extreme pressure ("Now

Jericho was closely shut up because of the children of Israel: none went out, and none came in."),²⁴ and the king's counterintelligence (CI) operatives work in double shifts. Even though they are stationed in a discreet location where no questions are asked—and although they are professional spies adept at camouflage—mere hours after their arrival the king himself sends her an order: "Bring out the men!"²⁵ This indicates that the kingdom is on such high alert that even in a private location, every suspicious movement is immediately reported to the king.

The intelligence regarding the people's morale—especially that of the military officers—is crucial for understanding the overall picture, and indeed, she provides it. Take note of the subtle allusion in the biblical text, presented with due modesty: "Neither did there remain any more courage in any man," implying a complete collapse of desire for relations under the weight of fear. If you have guessed correctly, this highlights a highly sensitive human intelligence source from the top ranks of the officers. This very hint is even noted explicitly in Rashi's commentary.²⁶

After striking a betrayal agreement with the spies to save her family (in modern terms, an "Extraction"/"Defecting"), she executes a classic misdirection manoeuvre aimed at the king's CI's. She then sends the spies back to Joshua, where they report—exclusively to him—that the land is about to fall into their hands, ripe for the taking.

What has been done is what will be done, and there is nothing new under the sun.

King Solomon

We have seen, then, that ostensibly modern espionage concepts—such as collection, research, assessment, decision and dissemination; strategic intelligence, tactical intelligence, human intelligence; deception, smuggling, counter-espionage, orphan recruitment, cover stories and more—have long existed as a direct consequence of our primaeval human fears. A thorough examination of the Book of Books may, indeed, teach us a great deal about political and military insights.

"The further we look back, the better we shall be able to look forward."

Winston Churchill

¹⁸Exodus 33:11 ¹⁹Joshua 2:1 ²⁰Midrash Rabbah, Numbers 16:1 ²¹Joshua 2:6 ²²Joshua 2:21 ²³Samuel bar Nahmani, Midrash Tanchuma, Beha'alotcha 10:1 ²⁴Joshua 6:1 ²⁵Joshua 2:3 ²⁶Joshua 2:11



Fruitful Spirits sources casks of maturing whisky for independent bottlers, collectors and investors, as well as bottling select casks under our own brand.

We can help you build your own cask portfolio that will increase in quality and value year on year as the whisky matures.



Fruitful Spirits
whisky cask merchants
& independent bottlers

BOTTLED UNDER OUR BRAND AT



THE
GRAPEVINE

Mitrovs

AND OTHER STOCKISTS

To view the latest releases please visit our website

fruitfulspirits.com

INFO@FRUITFULSPIRITS.COM

020 7100 4949

Oath

Bari Gold

Possessed by my own breath,
I've been an oath all my life.
I flew to Rome,
looking for Jerusalem. I found
a ruined Colosseum. I kissed
The Collected Poems of W.B. Yeats
as if it were a book of Tehillim.

I live in Boston. Here, my peers
pronounce Canaan like Kay-Nuhn.
My mother is proud of me
because I study poetry at university.
It doesn't matter about the protests
chanting *from the river to the sea*.

An old prof reminded me,
*sweetheart, there's been a war
since before you and I were born.*

He meant today's war,
not what you'd find in the Tanakh,
the same war, over and over.
I've been an oath all my life.

It's almost dawn. After a long night,
we've forgotten what it is to watch the sun
rise and fall. Swifts scatter from the cracks
of an ancient wall like a nation's prayers,
outnumbering the stars. Do I dare
remind you what's to come?
I'm not scared. You are.

CELEBRATE PESACH IN A WHOLE NEW WAY

ULTIMATE PESACH PACK

Your Perfect Seder Night accompaniment!

MAKE YOUR SEDER UNFORGETTABLE WITH OUR PESACH PACK, FULL OF INTERACTIVE, ENGAGING, AND MEANINGFUL CONTENT TO ENRICH YOUR EXPERIENCE

What's Inside?

- 'Our Story' Interactive Haggadah
- Maggid Map Game & Discussion Cards – embark on a personal journey to freedom!
- Dingbats
- Freedom Cards
- Journey Map

Haggadah:
Only £3.49!
(+P&P*)

Full Pesach
Pack:
Only £4.99!
(+P&P*)



Make this Pesach a night to remember

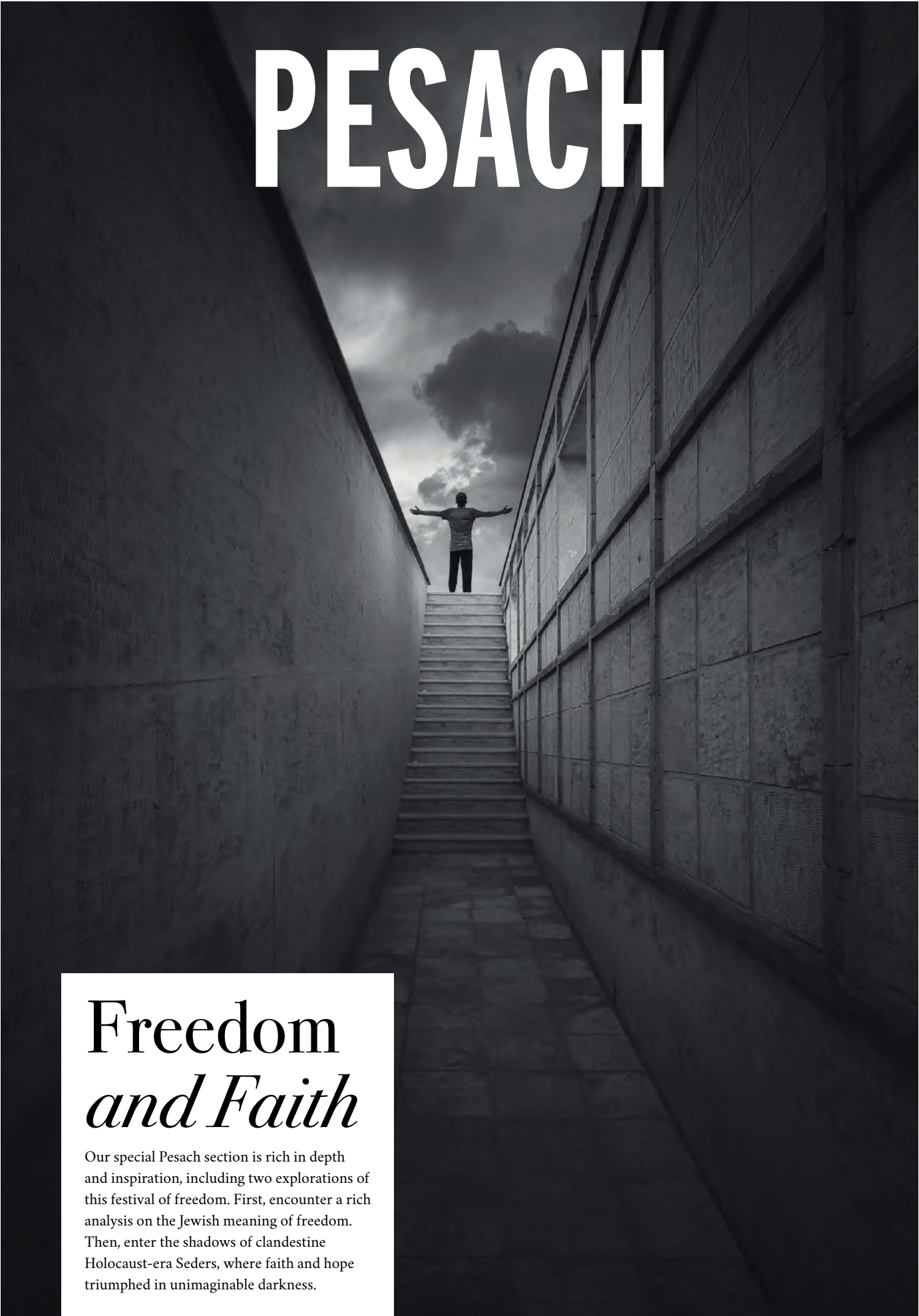
ORDER YOUR PESACH PACK TODAY AT: SEDERNIGHT.ORG

Or purchase our Haggadot at Jewish bookstores and Kosher shops

In partnership with



PESACH

A black and white photograph of a person standing on a long, narrow staircase that stretches from the bottom of the frame towards the top. The person is at the top of the stairs, with their arms outstretched horizontally. They are flanked by two high, textured stone walls that create a sense of enclosure. The sky above is dark and filled with dramatic, heavy clouds, with a small patch of light breaking through near the person's head.

Freedom *and Faith*

Our special Pesach section is rich in depth and inspiration, including two explorations of this festival of freedom. First, encounter a rich analysis on the Jewish meaning of freedom. Then, enter the shadows of clandestine Holocaust-era Seders, where faith and hope triumphed in unimaginable darkness.

A Nation of

Rabbi Dr. Effie Kleinberg

Freedom Fighters

I refuse to allow Hamas to co-opt the Jewish people's nation-forming narrative. The Jewish people's Exodus story is the true original freedom-fighting epoch of history and nobody can take that away from them. Each year at the Pesach Seder, it is the collective Jewish family who retells and relives their ancestors' fight for freedom from the slavery they endured in Egypt to the freedom they achieved. It behoves us to reclaim this phrase and return it to its unadulterated and uncorrupted place in history.

Hamas, one of Israel's sworn enemies usurped the notion of freedom fighting to justify their murderous rampage and convince the masses of the uprightness of their cause. Those who claim that the rejection of terrorism is due to it emanating from an unfavoured source is, "a denial of all decency, and a profound insult to the genuine heroes of historical quests for freedom and justice."¹ Terrorism is the objective abandonment of all foundations of morality regardless of its goals or purpose it claims to support. Thus, the corrupted attempted use of the concept of freedom to justify acts of terror must be battled against with all of our might.

Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik commented that on the very night the Jewish people were freed from the shackles of slavery and were preparing to leave Egypt, they were commanded to restrain themselves by remaining inside of their homes.² Rabbi Soloveitchik noted that it was common throughout history for liberated people to take revenge on their tormentors, by committing murder and destruction. Just as the Jewish nation was beginning to taste freedom, they were instructed to elevate these emotions to a higher moral calling. Freedom fighting in the Jewish people's Exodus narrative was marked with discipline and responsibility.

Cherut—freedom—is the core anchoring phrase of the Passover festival; it is the title we use in the festival liturgy and text of *Kiddush* (*z'man cheruteinu*), as well as throughout the *Haggadah* ("next year we will be *b'nei chorin*' (free people)"). Our body's posture and mindset at the Pesach Seder is of a carefree nature—we lounge on pillows and drink glasses of wine as if we have achieved the ultimate state of relaxation and lack of worry.

The Jewish people's freedom they won

during the Exodus was an eternal concept that endured and was longed for even during the millennia of exile. Jews celebrated this message of freedom on Pesach throughout the darkest moments of our history: in the Nazi death camps, the Soviet Gulag and most recently, in the dungeons of Gaza.³ Our people's freedom was not tied to living in the Land of Israel or to achieving sovereignty,⁴ rather it transcended these stabilisers as an ideology and foundational principle.

“

No terrorist can be a freedom fighter, because the two are as far from each other as good and evil

The term *cherut* is not mentioned in the Torah. In its place we find the term *chofesh*,⁵ which speaks of a slave's freedom but does not contain the fullness of what we are celebrating and recounting on Pesach. Thus, *cherut* is different from *chofesh*. The Exodus from Egypt was not a mere cessation of slavery, as we recite in the *Haggadah*, "From the beginning, our ancestors were idol worshipers. And now, the Place [of all] has brought us close to His worship". The opening words of the *Hallel* prayer we recite at the Pesach Seder, "*Halleluyah!* Give praise, servants of the Lord,"⁶ is a transformation from being servants of Pharaoh to becoming servants of God.⁷ This notion is made explicit when God tells His nation, "For to me the children of Israel are servants; they are my servants whom I brought forth out of the land of Egypt."⁸

Our pursuit of observing the *mitzvot* of the Torah is itself called a service.⁹ Thus, *cherut* is not "freedom from" but rather "freedom to"; it is a concept that does not translate to unfettered and unshackled behaviours, but rather freedom from tyranny in order to focus on a new mission that was offered to the Jewish people at Mount Sinai.

Thus, argues Rabbi Daniel Feldman, "The freedom fighter cannot be a terrorist because

"there is no free man but he who involves himself in Torah;"¹⁰ liberty, unrestrained by discipline and law, is an illusion, even a contradiction. No terrorist can be a freedom fighter, because the two are as far from each other as good and evil. Confusing the two has led to a confused generation, deaf to the call of the most basic principles of morality and civilization."¹¹

What should matter to us as we dine at our Pesach Seder is that the Jewish people actively chose a form of freedom that is imbued with responsibility and accountability, restraint and discipline. On the evening before the Jewish people left Egypt, each male performed a circumcision and every Jewish home slaughtered a Pascal lamb. These acts concretised a decision to take on a new identity and element of service.¹²

These early moments of the Exodus narrative are what we must point to when we talk about fighting for our freedom. Thus, the Exodus did not extract the Jewish people from servitude, but it did transition from slavery to *cherut*. In the words of Rabbi Yehuda Halevi, "For servitude to Him is freedom, and submission to Him is true honour."¹³

Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks summed up these ideas in one of his most eloquent speeches when he said: "That is what Locke meant when he contrasted liberty, the freedom to do what we *ought*, with licence, the freedom to do what we *want*. It's what Adam Smith signalled when, before he wrote *The Wealth of Nations*, he wrote *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*. It's what Washington meant when he said, "Human rights can only be assured among a virtuous people." And Benjamin Franklin when he said, "Only a virtuous people are capable of freedom." And Jefferson when he said, "A nation as a society forms a moral person, and every member of it is personally responsible for his society."¹⁴

There is a tradition that the four cups of wine that feature at the Pesach Seder mirror the four stages of redemption described in the Exodus narrative.¹⁵ The law is that additional wine may be drunk between the first and second cups of wine as well as between the second and third cups of wine. However, between the third and fourth cups of wine, one is prohibited from drinking any additional cups of wine. What accounts for

this difference in practice?

When one pays attention to the first three expressions¹⁶ corresponding to the first three cups of wine, each of them are depictions of being rescued, saved and redeemed from slavery. The fourth expression, “and I will take you to Me as a nation and I will be for you a God”, introduces a new dimension of freedom, one that comes with ‘strings attached’. The first three expressions are easier to accept, as they represent freedom from tyranny and suffering, while the fourth expression introduces responsibility, covenant and a relationship. One may not drink additional cups of wine between the third cup and the fourth cup because freedom without commitment to a moral calling can lead to anarchy.¹⁷

Cherut has one more layer that runs deeper than just the notion of “freedom to” moral responsibility versus “freedom from”. In a harrowing exchange, Rabbi Ephraim Oshry, the Rav of the Kovno Ghetto during the Holocaust period was asked whether a prisoner in the ghetto should continue to recite the morning blessing, “Blessed are you God Who did not make me a slave”. He responded that this blessing was not established regarding slavery of the body, but rather slavery of the soul. When one recites this blessing, one is declaring that they are free in their mind and spirit, even whilst they are physically imprisoned inside the walls of the ghetto. Rabbi Oshry encouraged the recitation of this blessing with extra passion as a message to their enemies, that despite being in their hands to do with us as they wish, we should see ourselves as free men in captivity where salvation is near.

Rabbi Avraham Yitzchak Hakohen Kook pointed out another facet of this mindset, “The difference between slave and free man is not just one of social standing. It is possible to find an educated slave whose spirit is full of freedom, and conversely, a free man whose spirit is servile. What is characteristic of freedom is the exalted spirit whereby a person or a people is able to be faithful to its inner essence, to the image of God in its midst. This fidelity allows one to feel that one's life is purposeful and worthwhile. The spirit of servility is quite the opposite. The content of one's life does not connect to one's soul but rather to the conception of beauty and good of the Other who rules over one, whether that rule be official or moral.”¹⁸

Our forefather Abraham was the first freedom fighter of history. When his nephew Lot was kidnapped, he sprung into action to rescue him, but our Sages teach that Abraham did not embark on this mission at any cost, he understood that his personal

mission did not legitimise the killing of innocents. By doing so, Abraham rejected the perpetration of terrorism and this sensitivity and moral clarity was passed onto his descendants throughout the generations. Truly free individuals and nations are those who are guided by their inner moral compass, unswayed and unaffected by the surrounding pressures.

Thus, Hamas has successfully fooled the world into buying their lie that they are freedom fighters when in reality they are nothing more than a tyrannous, blood-thirsty, murderous entity that stands for nothing more than destruction and evil. Pesach is the festival in which the Jewish people relive the Exodus and it is our duty during a time where voices of moral clarity and truth are sparse and muted to raise our cups of wine and exclaim unequivocally that we are the original freedom fighters of history, and we will fight for the freedom of others who share our special vision and blessing of *cherut*.

¹ open.substack.com/pub/riets/p/parashat-bo-the-torah-and-terrorism

² Shemot 12:22

³ Based on testimony from hostages returned to Israel <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/r1qe2c300jx>

⁴ See Gevurot Hashem Ch. 61

⁵ See Shemot 21:2, Devarim 15:12-13, hence the words of HaTikva, “Lehiyot Am Chofshi B'Artzeinu”, chofesh is also the modern Hebrew term for taking a vacation, which implies an absence of responsibility

⁶ Tehillim 113:1

⁷ See Jerusalem Talmud, Pesachim 37a

⁸ Vayikra 25:55

⁹ Devarim 11:13

¹⁰ Mishnah, Avot 6:2

¹¹ open.substack.com/pub/riets/p/parashat-bo-the-torah-and-terrorism

¹² See Gur Aryeh to Shemot Ch. 12 and Pachad Yitzchak Ma'amara 42

¹³ Kuzari 5:25

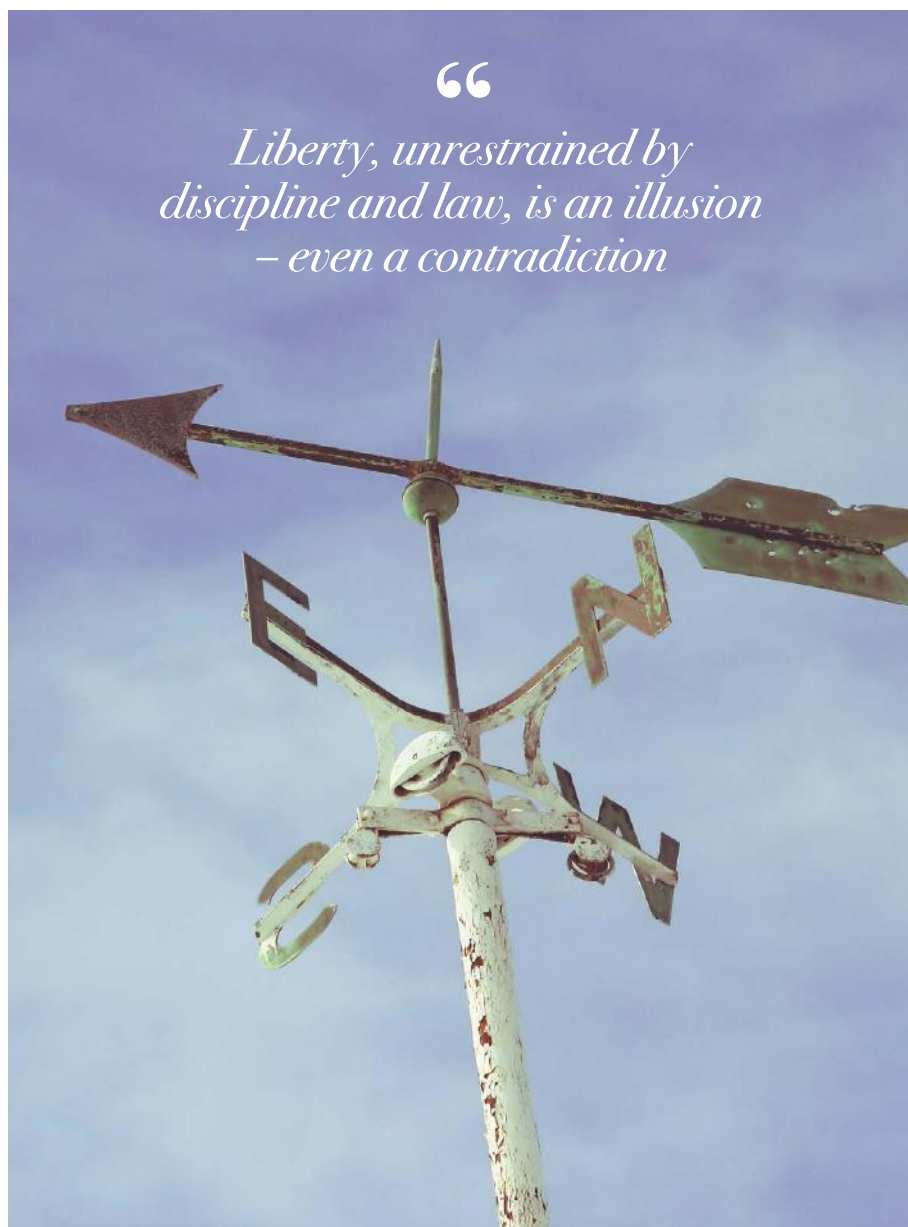
¹⁴ Speech about being awarded the Templeton Prize in 2016

¹⁵ Jerusalem Talmud, Pesachim 10:1

¹⁶ Shemot 6:6-7

¹⁷ This idea is quoted in the name of Rabbi Asher Weiss in the Haggadah commentary of Rabbi Reuven Taragin

¹⁸ Ma'amrei ha-Rayah pp. 158





SEDER IN THE SHADOWS

Jonny Lipczer

Pesach is the festival of freedom, a celebration of hope even in the darkest times. Yet what happens when the very idea of liberation is tested under the crushing weight of oppression? During the Holocaust, Jews faced fundamental dilemmas that went far beyond the traditional “four questions” of the Seder night.

How could they forego *chametz*¹ for a week when a crust of bread was their only sustenance? How could they drink four cups of wine when even water was barely within reach? And how could they celebrate freedom while enduring Nazi enslavement?

During the Holocaust, the Nazis cynically exploited the Jewish calendar, choosing key dates to deepen the cruelty of their

persecution and mock the very essence of Jewish tradition. Their intimate knowledge of Jewish holy days revealed a calculated effort to maximise devastation that was both physical and sacred. On Yom Kippur 1940, the Warsaw Ghetto was established, coinciding with the solemn *Ne'ilah* service—the “closing of the gates”. On the eve of Tisha B'Av 1942, the day symbolising destruction, mass deportations to Treblinka began. On Shavuot 1944, the festival that celebrates the giving of the Torah, the Nazis burned the Torah scrolls of Krakow, further desecrating the sacred. And on Pesach 1943, the Nazis carried out the liquidation of the Warsaw Ghetto – transforming a celebration of liberty and freedom into an act of

unfathomable enslavement.

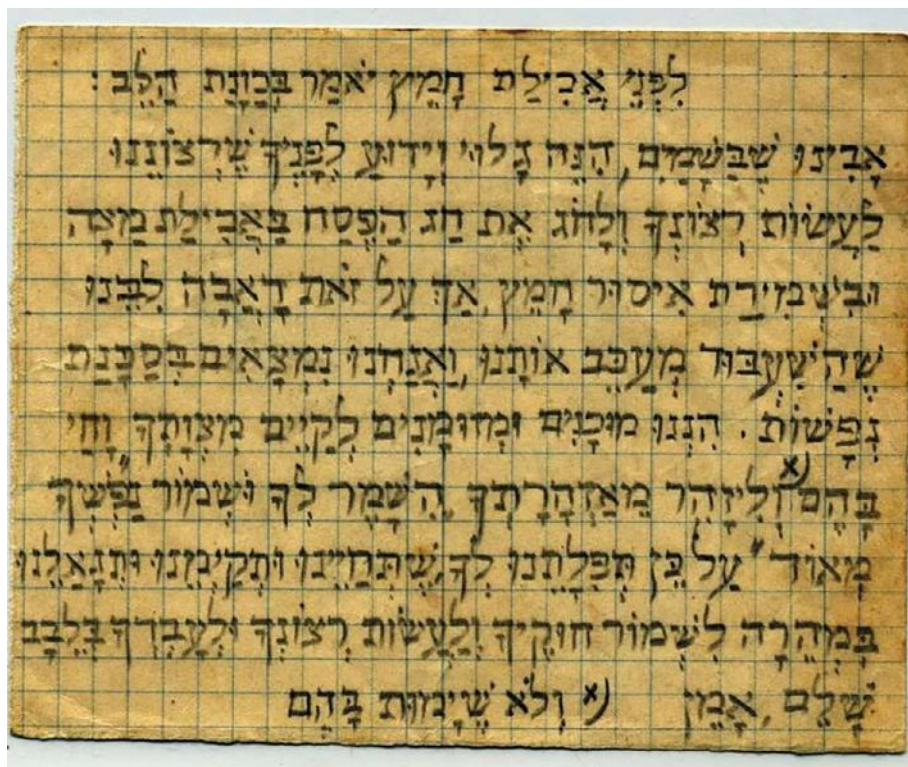
In the face of such relentless persecution, Jewish leaders recognised that survival required a shift in mindset—from martyrdom to the sanctification of life.

Rabbi Yitzchak Nissenbaum, leader of the Mizrachi movement in Warsaw, offered a profound perspective on Jewish survival under Nazi rule. He taught that for centuries, Jews had sanctified God's name through martyrdom, *Kiddush Hashem*. But now, when death felt inevitable, a new principle was required. “This is a time for *Kiddush HaChayim* (the sanctification of life),” he declared “and not for *Kiddush Hashem*... Now the oppressor demands the Jew's body, and the Jew is obliged, therefore, to defend it.”

¹ Foods with leavening agents that are forbidden by Jewish law on the holiday of Passover



Despite the grief and pain of modern Jewish history, there have been moments... that can only be compared with the wonders of the Bible



Bergen-Belsen Dispensation for eating chametz, written by Rabbi Aharon Davids in Rotterdam, Holland, 1944. Photo, Ghetto Fighters' House

In ghettos, concentration camps, and while in hiding, Jews refused to let their oppressors strip them of their faith. A whispered rendition of the “four questions” in a hidden corner, the decision to pass on bread rations and subsist on watery soup at Majdanek, or a defiant secret Seder on the eve of the Warsaw Ghetto uprising – these acts were declarations of spiritual resistance.

Aharon Carmi, a survivor of the Warsaw Ghetto, captured this subversiveness in words that deliberately echoed the *Avadim Hayinu* (“We were slaves”) from the *Haggadah*: “We were slaves in the ghettos of Poland / to Hitler, Führer of Germany, accused by his name / And we were taken from there... to be killed and enslaved/led naked across the snow and ice.”

This spirit of resistance manifested in countless ways across the ghettos and camps. In Bergen-Belsen, Pearl Benisch and a group of Jewish women demonstrated remarkable resilience. Despite being separated by illness and surrounded by death, they gathered on the first night of Pesach, reciting the *Haggadah* from memory and using ersatz coffee in place of wine. Pearl ingeniously prepared ‘matzah’

from thin slices of turnip. Though no miracle transformed the turnips into real matzah, the women blessed them as *karpas* and *maror*. One of the women present vowed that if she survived, a turnip would forever hold a place of honour on her Seder table, a profound reminder of the faith that sustained her.

In his book, *Blood and Tears in the Lodz Ghetto*, Rabbi Zusha Harcsztark offers a glimpse into the spring of 1941. The ghetto administration announced the opening of three large kosher-for-Passover kitchens to provide meals for residents during the holiday. Registration required ration cards and a small fee in exchange for meals of soup and vegetables served in dishes brought from home. Though humble, these meals allowed families to maintain a semblance of a traditional Seder. Appeals were issued for residents to clean their homes and clothing in preparation for the festival, stressing the importance of caring for their physical needs and preserving their spiritual dignity. Even amidst extreme deprivation, the ghetto leadership endeavoured to preserve the spirit of Pesach, ensuring the community could



Distribution of matzah by the ZSS during Pesach, in Warsaw, Poland, 1940. Photo, Yad Vashem archives



Jews baking matzah in hiding. Łódź, Poland, 1943. Photo, Yad Vashem archives

remain steadfast in their commitment to Jewish tradition.

That same year, Jewish prisoners in the Gurs detention camp in Nazi-occupied France performed an extraordinary act of spiritual defiance. Aryeh Ludwig Zuckerman and Rabbi Leo Ansbacher painstakingly recreated a *Haggadah*, handwriting it entirely from memory. This simple yet profound effort provided their fellow inmates with a sense of hope, enabling them to celebrate the Festival of Freedom—even behind barbed wire.

In Rotterdam in 1944, Rabbi Aharon Davids faced an impossible choice when his community was deported to Bergen-Belsen just before Pesach. With only bread available for nourishment, he lifted a slice and declared: “Our Father in heaven... You know that it is our desire to do Your will and we wish to celebrate Pesach... Yet enslavement prevents us... We prepare ourselves to perform the *mitzvah* of ‘You shall live by them,’ not to die by them.” The community answered, “Amen,” a chilling preservation of spiritual integrity, even when it seemed impossible.

A story of Rabbi Yekutiel Halberstam, the

Klausenberger Rebbe, demonstrates how faith could triumph even in the darkest moments. When Nazis discovered and confiscated a hidden supply of flour meant for baking matzah, his students were devastated. The Rebbe assured them they would still celebrate Pesach with matzah. Remarkably, a nearby flour factory was bombed, and among the rubble, they found bags of flour. Risking their lives, they smuggled the flour to their barracks and baked matzah in secret. During the Seder, the Rebbe recited the *Haggadah* from memory, and each person received a portion of matzah.

The Warsaw Ghetto fighters embodied resistance in body and spirit. Tuvia Borzykowski described how, as rumours of imminent deportations circulated in April 1943, families still baked matzah, obtained wine and prepared their dishes for Pesach. On Seder night, as the Germans encircled the ghetto to begin their final assault, Rabbi Eliezer Meisel led a defiant Seder in his apartment. "The rabbi's reading of the Seder was punctuated by explosions and the rattling of machine guns," Borzykowski recalled, "the faces of the family around the table were lit by the red light from the burning buildings nearby."

This same spirit of defiance prevails today. Hostages recently freed from Gaza have spoken about their determination to hold on to Jewish practice, even in the depths of captivity—keeping Shabbat, attempting to fast on Yom

Kippur and refraining from eating *chametz* during Pesach. Agam Berger, held in Gaza for 482 days, described the quiet strength she drew from her faith: "I chose the path of faith, and in the path of faith I returned." Forced to cook for their captors, Agam prepared meals throughout the week, but on Shabbat she refused to light a fire, despite threats from the terrorists. These acts of ritual became lifelines, carrying them through the unthinkable.

Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks reflected on resilience in the face of suffering, offering a timeless message that resonates with us still today: "Despite the grief and pain of modern Jewish history, there have been moments—especially in relation to the State of Israel—that can only be compared with the wonders of the Bible. Perhaps we are too close to be able to see their miraculous character. One day, though, historians will look back at the second half of the twentieth century and wonder at how a people that in the Holocaust had come face to face with the angel of death responded by reviving a land, recovering its sovereignty, rebuilding Jerusalem, rescuing threatened Jews throughout the world and proving itself as courageous in pursuit of peace as in defending itself in war. The echoes of Exodus continue to reverberate through Jewish history, undiminished through time, as wondrous now as in those days long ago."

How could they hold a Seder when there



was nothing to eat but crumbs? How could they sing of freedom when they were trapped in the depths of despair? And how could they celebrate Pesach while living under the shadow of death?

These stories remind us that, despite unimaginable suffering, the will to live, to resist and to remain connected to our traditions never wavered. As we remember their courage, we carry that same spirit with us, knowing that, no matter what we face, our faith will always be there to strengthen us.



Above: A Passover Seder in the Warsaw Ghetto, Poland, approximately 1940-1942. Photo, Yad Vashem archives

Top right: Survivor with a bowl. This is a detail of a photograph taken shortly after the Wöbbelin satellite camp was liberated in 1945

ISRAEL

Prepare for take off...



OPENING SOON

Dr Abelman is delighted to announce
**JDoc365 expansion plans with a new Jerusalem
Medical Centre due to open this Summer.**

Full details will be announced on our newsfeed when the
Jerusalem launch date is confirmed. Subscribe for news
updates on the website or scan the QR code below.

THE JDOC365 MINI HEALTH CHECK

A Mini Health Check is invaluable as it's able to detect symptoms that may
need attention. You will be seen by our HCA for a 30 minute appointment
and it even includes an ECG. Full details are on the website.

The cost is £50 but is **FREE** for
members of Club365.

Contact us to enquire
about membership
and to book your
appointment.



Call Reception today

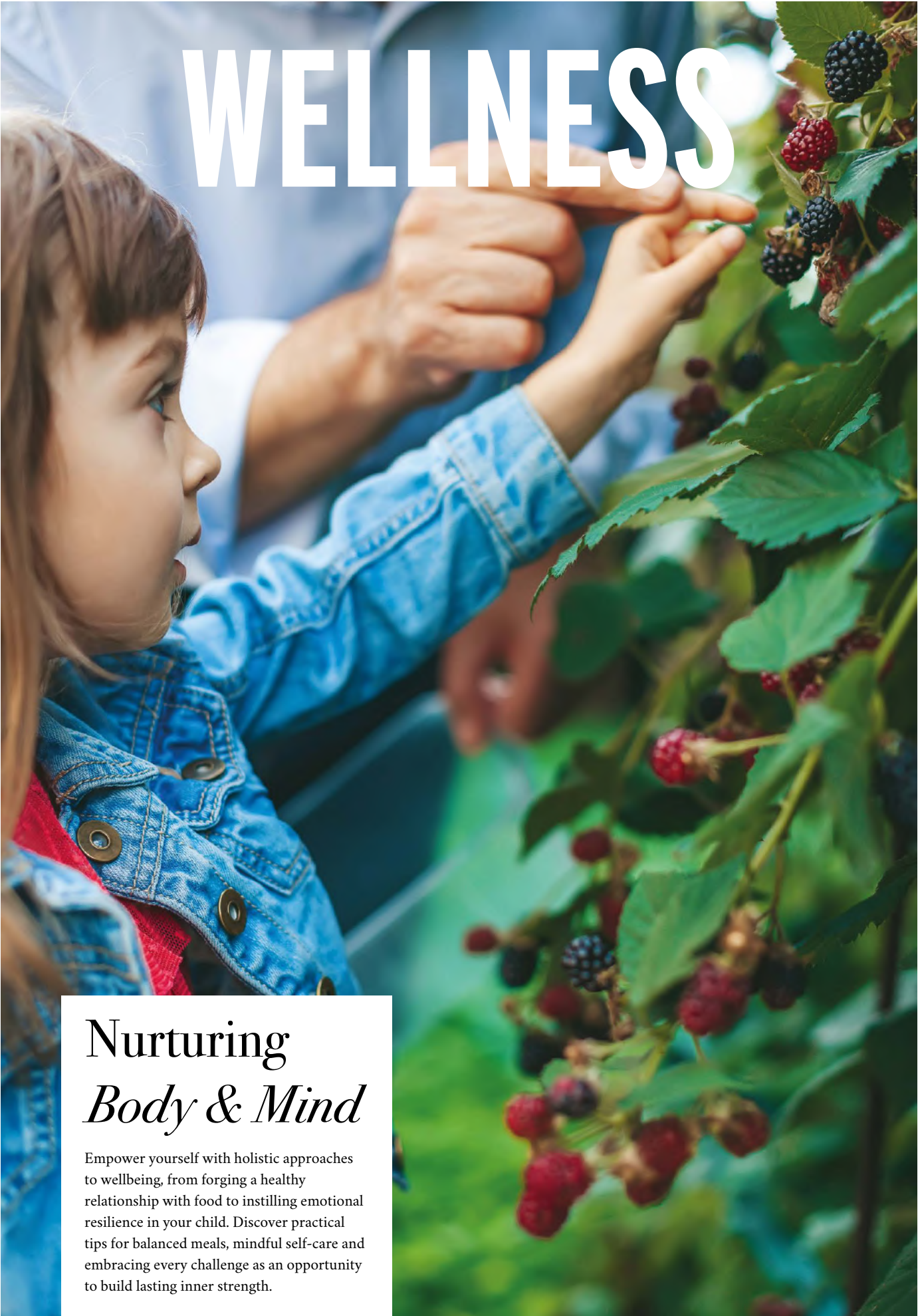
0203 65 65 65 7

reception@jdoc365.co.uk


JDOC365
INDEPENDENT HEALTHCARE

jdoc365.co.uk





WELLNESS

Nurturing *Body & Mind*

Empower yourself with holistic approaches to wellbeing, from forging a healthy relationship with food to instilling emotional resilience in your child. Discover practical tips for balanced meals, mindful self-care and embracing every challenge as an opportunity to build lasting inner strength.

SUSTAINABLE STEPS TO A *Healthy* Relationship WITH FOOD

Nomi Spain-Levy

The easiest thing for any dietitian or nutritionist to do is be bossy. It's simple enough to dive into the research and make a meal plan for anyone dealing with a simple or complicated, temporary or chronic condition. But health isn't as straightforward as following a set of directions.

We have a plethora of information today, yet more people than ever are struggling. Connecting people to the correct information is crucial, but valuing that information enough to make consistent steps towards long-term change is another matter. Often, a negative emotional relationship with food will undermine the best intentions, plans and information.

To empower ourselves and our families with the energy and knowledge to make great food decisions, we can implement several simple strategies consistently.

Food Without Fear

Food is more than just what we eat in the moment—it's a complex nutritional biochemistry experience in our body. The environment affects how food is processed; for instance, carbohydrates are utilised differently after exercise than when eaten first thing in the morning. Understanding these processes helps eliminate unnecessary food fears.

When clients express anxiety about certain foods, whether it's fats, pesticides or the latest wellness fad, I remind them: *if you knew what I know about modern food production, you wouldn't want to eat anything—but if you also knew what I know about the body's ability to thrive when supported, you'd feel incredibly empowered.*

Small Steps, Big Impact

Let's not set unrealistic expectations for weight loss. Crash-dieting may seem like a good idea when motivated by an upcoming





“

Instead of crash-dieting or focusing on a specific number on the scale, let's ditch the diet mentality altogether, and shift the goal toward supporting what our bodies need

event looming in the near future, but it's not sustainable. When one loses body fat, fat-soluble matter is converted to water-soluble compounds for excretion primarily through urine—a process facilitated mainly by our liver. In mammals, body fat immobilises potentially harmful compounds we don't want in circulation.

Weight loss done well takes time, allowing the body to process everything at a rate that doesn't overwhelm the phases of biotransformation and detoxification in the liver. It also gives one time to practise habits needed to maintain that weight loss.

A 10-pound weight loss may take 10 weeks to a year. Slow is fine and desirable.

Research shows that rapid weight loss often leads to weight regain within 6-12 months, potentially to a higher weight, as the body tries to prevent starvation in a process that has evolved over time. Constant dieting can push the body's 'safe' weight point up over time.

Instead of crash-dieting or focusing on a specific number on the scale, let's ditch the diet mentality altogether, and shift the goal toward supporting what our bodies need to be healthy and allow them to find their natural balance over time.

Shifting Focus

The first time I heard my mother mention that she was on a diet was when I was in my 30's. My childhood home, whether due to the decade or culture, was free from weight-loss mentality and diet talk. I appreciate that I grew up in a home where there was no back and forth relationship with food and dieting. This created a safe, happy environment around food, which translated into my own balanced relationship with nutrition as an adult.

Our home needs to be a place where food feels happy, safe and where our loved ones are free of body comments. Seeking guidance from a professional for open and thoughtful discussions can be a valuable investment if a parent is struggling with their feelings about their child's weight.

Billboards, magazine covers and social media are replete with idealised body images. Aside from limiting social media exposure that promotes unrealistic health and beauty standards, making our home a place that is free of any comments about the body is an effective way to make our kids feel safer. Instead of telling a teenager wearing a cute dress that she looks really good or thin in her outfit, shift the focus to compliment her style.

I've had girls that I worked with in dormitory settings tell me how difficult it is to listen to their average-weight roommate sit around and complain about how overweight she is. A girl listening to this who is struggling with her body image can turn those comments into shame instead of seeing them for what they are—a poor choice for conversation.

The most interesting thing about us is not what we look like, but what we are able to do and how we show up with our unique talents. Leave any body comments and criticism on the side and show up with genuine compliments about skill and effort.

Food Snob vs Foodie

Food is about connection and experience, but it's still *just food*—an important part of life, but not our entire identity. When a parent tells me they're a 'foodie' and can't change the food atmosphere at home, but wants me to teach their 14-year-old to control their eating, it's concerning. A home identity centred on indulgence and eating primarily for taste rather than health can make it challenging for children to develop healthy habits. In these cases, working with the parent is often the first step.

The home food environment significantly impacts our children. While people often attribute chronic health issues to genetics, we frequently inherit lifestyles from our families that can trigger these genetic tendencies. We can't control our genes (yet), but we



can influence which genes are expressed through our lifestyle choices (a process called epigenetics).

I advocate being a ‘food snob’—choosing food you truly love and enjoy—but not embracing a ‘foodie’ identity that might prioritise indulgence over health in the long term. This mentality can create conflicts when health goals compete with the desire to eat foods that may be contraindicated for certain medical conditions.

Enjoy beautiful and fresh food, but focus on feeling energetic and satisfied after eating, not just on taste and indulgence during the meal.

Offer Upgrades, Not Ultimatums

Sometimes a parent will come and want to do a total cupboard overhaul. When a parent gets in that mood, they can tell me they want to ditch everything in their cupboards and start fresh. I am totally against this, as it just induces an all-or-nothing, stressful power struggle around food.

Instead of ditching everything, gradually upgrade the choices that work for your family.

I had one family that wanted to get rid of their dependence on cereal. Smoothies worked for some mornings but often were too complicated to do with the busy morning rush. A better option was to cut up a colourful fruit salad every few days and keep plain Greek yoghurt stocked up so the kids had an easy breakfast to throw in a bowl in a matter of moments.

Quality = Quality

Fruit and vegetables only taste good if they are good quality. Packaged food tastes good if the manufacturer has refined the product to the point where it is shelf-stable, then balanced the salt and sugar and packed it attractively. That’s hard competition if the fruit and vegetables you are trying to incorporate into the meals you eat or serve are not top quality. Find a high-quality produce supplier and buy what is in season for maximal taste.

Get Moving

Really, every human needs a physical hobby—but let’s focus on the kids. How we feel mentally and how we age physically depends greatly on how active we are. If I had to go

back to school and couldn’t study nutrition, I’d study Sports Science. If a parent told me their picky eater won’t eat a vegetable and there’s no way to influence that, I’d say, get your kid obsessed with a sport.

All genders, ages and stages need physical activity on a daily basis. The UK Chief Medical Officers recommend 60 minutes of moderate to vigorous activity per day for children ages 5–18. We are made to move, not be sedentary. Movement isn’t about getting a six-pack or fitting into a certain dress; it directly affects how we process food, our psychological state and our resilience—both mental and physical.

Boring Nosh, Better Habits

If it’s shelf-stable and needs no preparation before eating, there’s a good chance that it’s not a food one wants to be eating daily. Snacks should be fruit and vegetables, nuts and seeds, seed crackers or whole grain crackers, a bit of protein like a hard-boiled egg, a slice of cheese or Greek yoghurt.

In reality, I have four boys and they aren’t lining up to take seed crackers to school. However, the snacks that I do offer have

remained consistent for years. My *nosh* cupboard hasn't changed, and therefore it isn't very exciting.

Every novel food experience induces a dopamine spike. Dopamine is the neurochemical of wanting, acting as a key neurotransmitter in the brain's reward system that influences motivation, pleasure-seeking behavior and reinforcement of satisfying experiences. When we have a plethora of treat-like snack foods, and we keep changing those, our kids will eat more of them and less of the things we'd like them to snack on. I suggest that everyone leave out a plate of cut-up veggies for kids after school. The worst-case scenario is that your kids don't ever eat it, but you will have a snack for yourself. If you do it consistently enough, they may do the same thing for their kids. We aren't just feeding our kids to check it off our daily to-do list. We are doing it to give them ideas and habits to take with them for the next generation.

A Balanced Approach

It's all about context and ratios. Sure, I'll eat a slice of pizza made with white flour and conventional dairy—but not that often. When I eat it, I enjoy it. But it's happening within

the context of a healthy diet and lifestyle. No foods are forever forbidden unless medically necessary; just make sure the ratio of energising, nutrient-dense choices is balanced with those treats.

Practice What You Preach

All caregivers in the home should actively model the behaviours they would like their children to engage in. This doesn't mean perfection in desired behaviours; it means consistent effort. "Do as I say, not as I do" is not a mentality that works with today's youth. Our kids need good examples at home to compete with the barrage of celebrity-endorsed diets, influencer "expertise" and social media food fads. No one is making perfect nutrition choices all of the time (that's also a form of anxiety), but we do need to model the skills that we would like our kids to take into adulthood. That isn't just balancing a budget or tithing; it's also modelling healthy behaviours around food, sleep, screen time and movement. Working out too much or not enough, subsisting only on coffee until the early afternoon, a dislike for certain food groups or a poor sleeping schedule are a few habits that we wouldn't want our kids to repeat. Our actions speak

loudly, and when we have adolescents who don't really want any more verbal instruction from us, just showing up for our own workouts and healthy meals influences them to observe and repeat.

When in doubt about what to do, keep it positive. Positive emotions expand our options, while negative ones narrow our emotional focus as we try to find a solution. This positivity is key to overcoming the challenges we face in today's information-rich but often confusing nutritional landscape.

Take the next action step that is energising, without obsessing. Encouraging positive emotions, making small, better choices and focusing on minor victories trigger beneficial physiological changes. These small changes add up, affecting our cells, tissues, organs and ultimately our whole body, leading to better health.

By implementing these sustainable steps consistently, we can move beyond simply following directions to developing a truly healthy relationship with food. This approach empowers us to make informed decisions, navigate the plethora of available information, and overcome negative emotional relationships with food, ultimately leading to long-term, positive change.



• WORK AVENUE •

Creating Employment • Growing Business

WOHL ENTERPRISE HUB

SCAN ME



ARE YOU LOOKING FOR...

A SHARED WORKSPACE?

BUSINESS ADVICE?

A NEW JOB?

HELP WITH YOUR CV?

CONTACT US FOR FREE EMPLOYMENT OR BUSINESS ADVICE

THEWORKAVENUE.ORG.UK

020 8371 3280

REGISTERED CHARITY 1164762



Preparing Your Child for the Road

Not the Road for Your Child

The Fundamentals of Building a Resilient Family

Terry and Brian Rubenstein

“

*What lies behind us
and what lies in front
of us are tiny matters
compared to what lies
within us*

Ralph Waldo Emerson

So here's the thing that every single one of us parents know, but often find difficult to get our heads around: Each of our children is on their own epic journey called life!

If that's true, then every child has a path to navigate in order to arrive at the desired destination, which brings us to a crucial question: How do we prepare our child for this journey? Or to put it differently, how do we prepare our child for the road—NOT the road for our child?

There is one particular pattern which almost universally recurs: Well-meaning parents exert considerable energy to make life easier for their children. This often takes the form of parents who jump in to fix, solve and get rid of the difficulties in their children's paths. In essence, so many of us parents do everything we can to prepare the road for our children, rather than support and empower them to go through the essential process they need to go through to uncover the confidence and resources within



themselves which are necessary to deal with life's inevitable challenges.

The real problem behind our children's struggles is a *belief of lack*. In other words, our children (and usually us parents too!) think they need certain things to be in place in order to feel psychologically safe and secure, worthy, motivated and confident—in short, good enough. Our kids innocently assume that there is something lacking in themselves as they are. And so they look to fill this hole with getting enough likes and shares on social media, validation, being appreciated, fitting in, looking perfect, getting things right and achieving success. They believe that these things have the power to give them what they need in order to feel complete, a belief which carries enormous implications—because when any human being believes that they

are not good enough as they are, they will invariably live in a whirlpool of insecurity. So our children find themselves trying to get the things they need to be *ok*, and avoid the things that they believe are a threat to their okayness. In essence, this belief of lack lies behind almost all human struggle, and it is relentless, exhausting and painful, as it gives power to so many things outside of a person's control—including ours, as parents.

Nowhere is this more prevalent and pervasive today than in the impact social media has on our children's lives (and our own!). The all-pervasive barrage is non-stop: “Click here to be more successful; *post* this to get more likes and comments; *buy* this product to look better; *follow* this influencer to find out how to win more friends ...” Every offer to click, follow, post and buy is an invitation

“

We fail our children by not allowing them to fail

to remind our kids what they are lacking; to reinforce their belief in their own lack. It's all about telling them they need more to feel better about themselves; to be complete. And it puts our children in a no-win situation, over and over.

If you look closely, you will see that there is a link between all the struggles in your child's life (not to mention your own) and this belief of lack. You will also notice that in areas of their lives when they don't have this belief, then their ability to navigate life's challenges are completely different. So in order to truly deal with your child's struggles in a healthy and sustainable way, this belief in lack must be confronted.

But here's the good news: This belief in lack is a myth—it is simply not true. Our children are not lacking (and neither are we!). Why? Because, they have all the resources they need for life already built-in.

Albert Camus, the French Nobel laureate, wrote: “In the midst of winter, I found within me an invincible summer. And that makes me happy, for it says that no matter how hard the world pushes against me, within me, there's something stronger, something better, pushing right back.”

Failing to recognise the ‘invincible summer’ that resides within our children is the reason why, despite our best intentions, our parenting is not as effective as we would like it to be. Because us parents have *also* bought into this belief of lack. We look at our children, and if we are honest, we also believe that they often lack the flexibility, the resilience and the clear reasoning to deal with life's challenges and to reach their potential. As a result, we end up reinforcing this false belief, rather than helping them to change it.

So, rather than guide our children on their journey, we adopt the role of hero. We become helicopter parents, hovering over them, waiting to swoop in and rescue them from any hardships. Or snowplough parents, clearing the path of any obstacles so that our child can sail through without any bumps. Or velcro parents, creating a dynamic of dependency because we actually prefer our children to be dependent on us. The common denominator in all of these approaches: We over-parent, and in so doing, we fail our children by not allowing them to fail.

So what is the solution? How can we become effective guides that support our

children on their epic journey through life?

Here's an anecdote from our own parenting: a couple of years back, when our then 11-year-old son informed us that he could not go to school for the week-long duration of bike riding training. "Why not?" we asked him. "Ummm, I haven't told any of my friends that I don't know how to ride a bike!" he tearfully responded.

A little context here: this kid is stubborn, knows his mind and does things when he is ready. In the past, things haven't gone too well when we've tried to give him a nudge, or when we've fallen into that all-too familiar parenting trap of "by this age, your older brothers were already..." (to which he quite appropriately responds: "I am not my brothers; don't compare us!". Point taken).

We certainly did not want our child spending an entire week in the classroom by himself while the other children were out there doing wheelies and the like. But allowing him to stay home conflicted with our core parenting value of not rescuing our children (unless, of course, they are in physical danger). So how did this story play out?

To start with, we listened to him and validated his feelings. (Understandably, this was tough for him.) Then, we let him take two of the five days off school, but only if he used the time to practise riding. And finally, we told him that for the other three days, he needed to

own his own story. We all have stories—until we drop them and create new ones. His story is that he does things when he is ready; in his own time at his own pace. So we told him we respect his story, but also pointed out that he is disrespecting it by wanting to be the same as everyone. And we told him how this was a great opportunity for him to back himself.

Did this work? Well he moaned. A lot. But we—particularly Terry—have significant bandwidth for moaning. And he went to school for those three days. It was uncomfortable; no doubt somewhat humiliating at times. But he did it. And he learnt to ride!

Here's the main takeaway: Our children need to experience discomfort in order to grapple, learn and grow so that they can discover within themselves a resilience that lasts. If they are always protected from challenges, they will take a very long time to learn how to deal with the tough decisions and situations that life will inevitably throw their way. Facing challenges enables our children to dig deep and uncover the qualities with which they are born. It allows them to access their "invincible summer", a summer which they may not have even known about until this point. It gives them the opportunity, the gift, to exercise and build their resilience muscle.

Let's share with our children the profound sentiment behind the words of Ralph Waldo

Emerson: "What lies behind us and what lies in front of us are tiny matters compared to what lies inside us." The world does not hold power over us. The power lies inside of us. Deeply appreciating this psychological fact will expand our children's tolerance for discomfort. It will remove so much of the unnecessary, insecure thinking that preoccupies their minds such that they cannot feel and access their innate resources of wisdom, optimism, gratitude, love and self-love, confidence, motivation, innovation and connection.

Parents say that they rescue out of love. But love can be harmful and misguided at times. So, rescuing—an emphatic 'no'. Supporting, teaching and guiding—a categorical 'yes'. Crucially, this kind of guidance does not reinforce a belief in lack. Rather it sends a consistent and strong message of wholeness and resilience. It sends a message to our children that they *are* prepared for the road—for their epic journey through life.

And that, dear fellow parents, is our job!

To find out more about Resilimy's work and programmes for parents, children and families, please email info@resilimy.com or go to resilimy.com





GIVE YOUR TIME!

VOLUNTEERING OPPORTUNITIES



DRIVING



PACKING



THE GIVING
KITCHEN



BEFRIENDING



DOFE &
YONI JESNER
AWARDS



TUTORING/
HELPING
HAND



TO GET INVOLVED PLEASE VISIT
JGIFT.ORG/VOLUNTEERING

a member
of the
**jewish
futures**
family



FOOD

Timeless *Traditions*

Discover diverse customs for the Seder plate that unite Jewish communities from across the diaspora over Pesach. Check out recipes worthy of (and kosher for) your beautiful Seder table—but so easy, wholesome and delicious that you will want to cook them all year!



Why Is This Plate *Different?*

Rivkie and Dan Matalon, Ta'amim

The Pesach Seder is, according to many sources, the most widely celebrated Jewish calendar event. According to a 2019 survey conducted by the Institute for Jewish Policy Research (JPR), more Jews attend a Pesach meal every year than fast on Yom Kippur. It ties us tangibly back to the practice of our ancestors, right back to the Exodus and yet, widespread as the practice is, no two Seder nights are the same. Each one is a unique testament to a family's history, and with each generation, traditions are remembered, acted out and added to, passed down to the next like an ever-evolving heirloom.

Each of us has a particular, often nostalgic, something that makes our own family Seder special, because, although the *Haggadah* lays out a clear blueprint for the evening, individual interpretation is used to encourage

a Seder that involves everyone around the table. Our customs can tell a story of the journey our family has taken through the millennia of meandering in the diaspora.

From having one leader reciting everything, to divvying up the role to multiple participants of the Seder, or, like many Sephardi families, physically acting out the coming out of Egypt to varying degrees, we bring the Exodus to life through all the senses for the most immersive of the Jewish festivals. And, of course, food and taste play a central role in the night, with the Seder plate taking prime position on the table. And yet even the Seder plate is up for some interpretation.

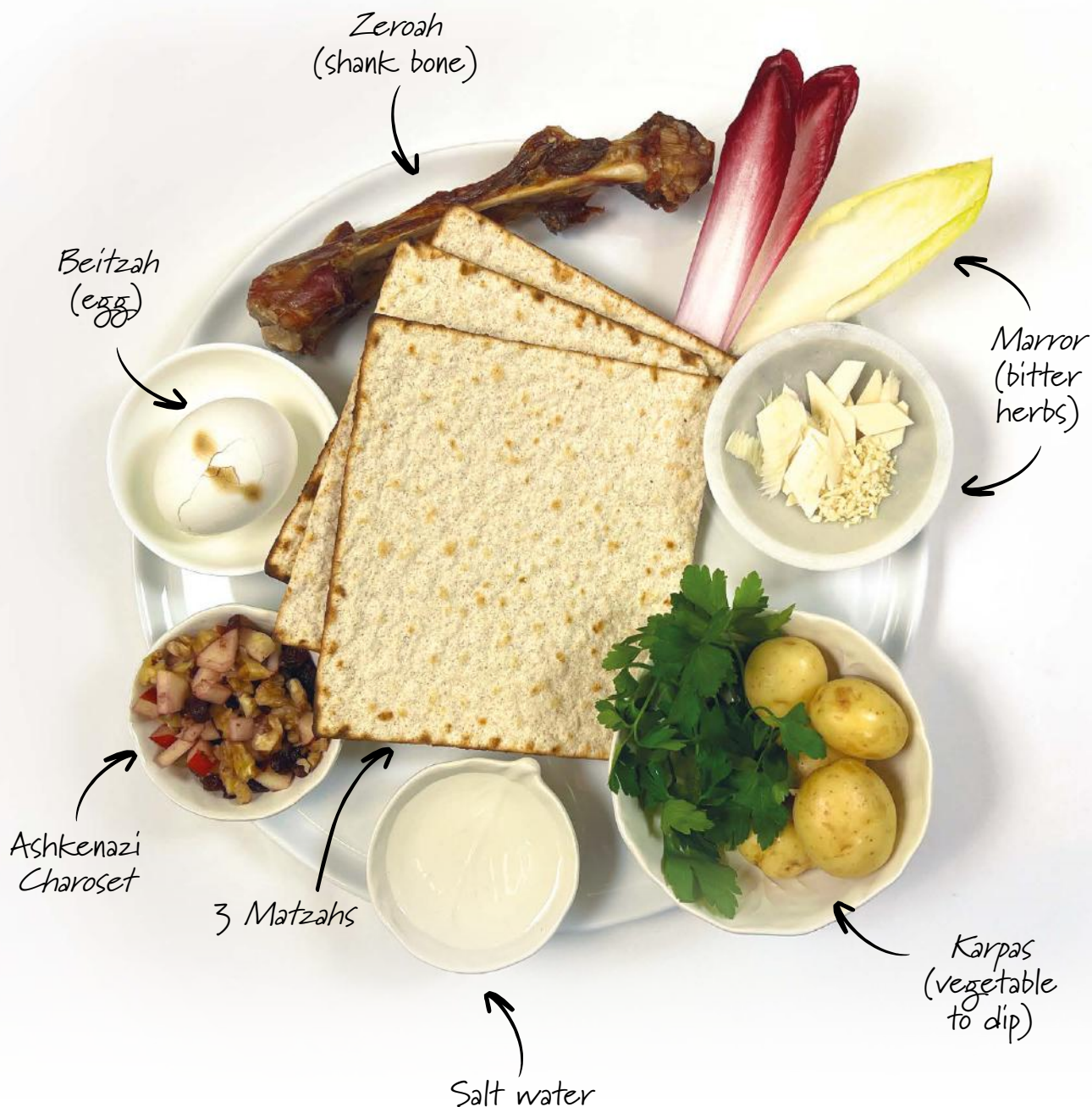
If you have ever laid the table on Seder night, you have probably uttered something along the lines of “is this lettuce for the *marror* (bitter herbs), the *karpas* (vegetable

for dipping into salt water) or the *chazeret* (a second bitter herb)?” Because, as well as very personal family recipes and specific customs pertaining to *kitniyot* (legumes) and *gebrokts* (wetted matzah), depending on where your family lived throughout history, there are also different customs regarding the layout of the Seder plate itself, and what goes on it.

There are far too many variations for us to list them all, but there are some traditions which are widely observed across whole communities, with key differences between the Seder plates in Ashkenazi homes compared with those in Sephardi and Mizrahi homes. Notably, Eastern European Hassidic Jews also arrange their plate following the kabbalistic customs of the Arizal, whilst the ingredients reflect the customs of their geographic locale.

“

*With each generation, traditions are remembered,
acted out and added to, passed down to the next
like an ever-evolving heirloom*



THE ASHKENAZI SEDER PLATE

The Talmud teaches us that a person should not pass over (no pun intended) items to be used in the performance of a *mitzvah*. Ashkenazi authority on Jewish law, Rabbi Moses Isserles (1530-1572), known by his acronym 'Rema', arranges the Seder plate in the sequence the items will be used during the Seder, placing the *karpas* and salt water nearest to the leader, followed by the matzah, and then the *marror* and *charoset*.

And, because Ashkenazi Jews have Central and Eastern European roots, the Seder plates will feature potatoes, radishes, parsley and a

*charoset*¹ made primarily from apples, wine and ground walnuts. Almost all Ashkenazi Jews use horseradish for *marror*, with romaine lettuce as *chazeret*.

THE SEPHARDI, MIZRAHI AND HASSIDIC SEDER PLATES

Sephardi Jews and Hassidic Jews arrange their Seder plates according to the kabbalistic teachings of Rabbi Isaac Luria (known as the Arizal), following the 'Sefirot,' the spiritual attributes through which God interacts with the world. Each item on the plate represents

one of these attributes: the shank bone symbolises 'Lovingkindness' (*Chesed*), the egg represents Might (*Gevura*), the *marror* signifies Harmony (*Tiferet*), the *charoset* stands for Eternity (*Netzach*) and the *karpas* represents Splendour (*Hod*). The placement of these items follows the kabbalistic model, aligning with the body's spiritual structure. For example, *Chesed* is associated with the right hand, so the shank bone is placed on the upper right of the plate, while *Gevura* is linked to the left, placing the egg on the left side, and so on.

The foods on Sephardi and Mizrahi Seder plates reflect the fruits and spices of

A CHAROSET TOUR

We have created three charoset recipes inspired by different customs from around the world.



1. The first is a coarse apple, walnut and wine based charoset, inspired by various Ashkenazi customs.

wearetaamim.com/ashkenazi-charoset



2. The second is a sticky, blended date-based charoset, inspired by the practices of many Sephardi cultures.

wearetaamim.com/sephardi-charoset



3. The third are fruity, sesame-coated, charoset pyramid bites, inspired by Yemenite and Moroccan customs.

wearetaamim.com/charoset-pyramids

SEDER PLATE SALAD

Inspired by Seder plates from around the world, this salad is a combination of *karpas* (green or root vegetable) favourites, such as radish and celery, alongside romaine lettuce and endive leaves representing *marror* and *chazeret* (bitter herbs). The cool, bitter leaves are topped with a deconstructed taste of *charoset*, including chopped dates and walnuts and finely sliced apples, for a salad that delivers a satisfying salty, sweet and savoury crunch.

The full recipe can be found here:

wearetaamim.com/seder-plate-salad/



LET US MAKE PESACH EASIER FOR YOU!



Check out Tamim's free downloadable shopping guides, meal planners and Pesach recipe ideas by scanning the QR code.



the Levant, North Africa and the Arabian Peninsula. Almost all use romaine lettuce as *marror*, with some dipping their karpas in vinegar or lemon juice instead of saltwater. A vast array of varying *charoset* recipes features a range of ingredients including dates, figs, other dried fruits and fruit peels, almonds, ginger, sesame, cumin, cloves, honey or silan, chilli, black pepper and more! In Moroccan and Persian homes, one may find spring onions on the table (used to act out whipping), whilst Iraqis and Moroccans have the custom to pass the entire Seder plate over the heads of guests whilst reciting blessings for Divine protection.

Pesach preparation can often seem like hard work, so it may be tempting to buy a pre-packaged Seder plate, but going the extra mile to keep it personal and unique to your family has deep meaning, worthy of remembrance and celebration. Whatever your customs, your Seder plate layout and *charoset* recipe are part of your history, part of Jewish history. They reflect the unique way in which you and your family fit into the tapestry of the Jewish people, connected by one weaving thread back to that very first Seder Night in Egypt. And they are the means by which your descendants will keep the story of the Exodus alive for generations to come.



Wishing Jewish Futures every success!

Lingering sporting injury?

Neck or back pain?

“Growing pains” in children/teens? (also known as hypermobility)

Contact The Green Clinic on

020 8728 0625

greenclinicedgware@gmail.com

Male & female therapists available

Home visits offered

Covered by most major UK health insurers

Expert Physiotherapy for the whole family



Dov *Here to help!*
Newmark
INDEPENDENT ALIYAH CONSULTANT

FREE
ADVICE & GUIDANCE
FROM **A-Z**... AND BEYOND!

Aliyah • Returning Citizens • Investing in Israel

REGISTER HERE TO KICKSTART YOUR JOURNEY WITH EXPERT SUPPORT



www.makeAliyaheasy.com

dov@makeAliyaheasy.com

+972-54-678-5914

020-8150-2245

Choosing Food You *Love* That LOVES YOU BACK

Alice Reich

Rorie Weisberg and Chef Sara Goldstein have crafted a new cookbook that redefines healthy eating without sacrificing flavour. This eagerly-anticipated sequel serves up predominantly Pesach-friendly fare, proving that healthy, balanced eating can be delicious and abundant at any time of the year.

Rorie Weisberg founded Full 'N Free, an organisation that empowers women to transform their eating habits and live more satisfactorily and comfortably. As a health coach certified in integrative nutrition, recipe developer and creator of her own brand of dough mixes, she specialises in helping women with metabolic issues and hormonal imbalances. Her training in integrative nutrition and functional medicine with principles from the Rambam and other Torah sources permeates the framework for a practical lifestyle that she has created for women everywhere in her cookbooks (*Food You Love*), products and online courses. Her philosophy centres on the belief that ingredients matter and that you can make the foods you love with ingredients that "love you back".

When Weisberg was being pressed for more recipes, she knew it was time for a sequel. She turned to Goldstein, a certified culinary chef trained in classic French and Middle Eastern cuisine at the Jerusalem Culinary Institute, who has honed her craft within the culinary arts, food styling and photography, to construct visual and tasteful masterpieces.

With their combined skill, the result was, as Weisberg describes, something even "bolder and more elevated." Not only is *More Food...* a perfect staple for all things Pesach,

as it is entirely gluten-free¹, but there is also a focus on providing foods that would be accessible to households with dietary restrictions, with recipes clearly demarcated as egg or nut-free—and an entire vegan section.

In today's market, with the great selection of kosher and health food cookbooks, *More Food You Love: That Loves You Back* is the perfect combination of the two. It provides food fit for a holiday meal for guests and family while utilising nourishing ingredients. Importantly, the recipes don't necessarily look "healthy"—they scream "delicious" and just happen to be good for you too. Goldstein adds, "Normal ingredients, normal techniques, super clear steps and delicious results everyone loves." The cookbook spans from basic to gourmet, offering something for everyone, from cookbook enthusiasts to those with specific dietary needs.

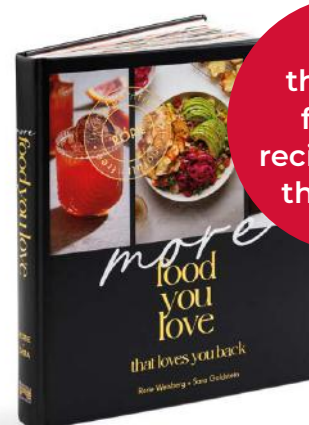
The creation of this cookbook was truly a labour of love. Weisberg and Goldstein worked closely, brainstorming each recipe, testing and retesting and bringing their complementary visions together. "We lived in each other's brains!" Weisberg jokes, describing the intense collaboration process. When the authors were asked what they hope will be their readers' takeaway, Weisberg provided a beautiful response. "God gave us our bodies as a gift, and it's our task to nurture that gift—lovingly, caringly—in



Chef Sara Goldstein (left) and Rorie Weisberg (right), behind the scenes of *More Food You Love That Loves You Back*, published by Artscroll 2024

the best way we know: through wholesome eating, sleeping, hydrating, exercising and embracing positive, affirming messages that motivate us to make the most of every day." Goldstein adds, "I hope readers will feel empowered to try new things and cook inspired! Food is delicious, nourishing and beautiful, and it does not have to be complicated to be all those things and more."

Read on for a sneak peek into Rorie Weisberg and Sara Goldstein's stunning new cookbook which they have graciously shared with *Perspectives'* readers.



Turn
the page
for two
recipes from
the book!

¹ During Pesach, Jews are bound by Jewish law to avoid all chametz—a food product made of wheat, barley, rye, oats or spelt, that may contain fermentation

Chestnut and Mushroom French Roast

Kosher for Passover | Egg Free | Meat - Serves 8-9



Most go-to French Roast recipes include some combination of ketchup, soy sauce, onion soup mix—or all of the above. This one draws on the complex flavours of mushrooms, wine, chestnuts and the gentle sweetness of honey to produce a dish you will come back to over and over... always double the recipe to have one ready in the freezer!

INGREDIENTS

1 (4 lb / 1.8 kg) French Roast
4-5 shallots, sliced
12 oz (340g) baby bella and shiitake mushrooms, sliced
1 cup (240ml) dry red wine
5 oz (140g) bag roasted chestnuts
3 tbsp honey

Spice rub

1 tsp ground black pepper
1 tsp kosher salt
1 tsp garlic powder
1 tsp onion powder
2 tbsp paprika
2 tbsp olive oil

METHOD

- 1 Prepare the spice rub: In a small bowl, combine all spice rub ingredients.
- 2 Rub spice mixture onto the roast. (Marinate overnight if time allows.)
- 3 Preheat oven to 150°C/300°F. Set out a large roasting pan.
- 4 Heat a skillet over medium-high heat. Add roast; sear on all sides. Transfer roast to prepared roasting pan.
- 5 To the same skillet, add shallots; sauté until translucent. Add wine and honey, stirring to combine. Add mushrooms and chestnuts; cook for an additional 1-2 minutes. Transfer shallot mixture to the roasting pan.
- 6 Cover; bake for 3-3½ hours, until a fork easily slides through the thickest part of the meat.
- 7 Let cool and store.

“

This recipe draws on the complex flavours of mushrooms, wine, chestnuts and the gentle sweetness of honey

Decadent *Chocolate* Pie

Kosher for Passover | Egg Free | Dairy Free
Serves 8-10

Calling all chocolate-lovers for this decadent chocolate pie! It's so rich and satisfying, and perfect with a glass of tea to end a beautiful festival meal.

INGREDIENTS

For the crust

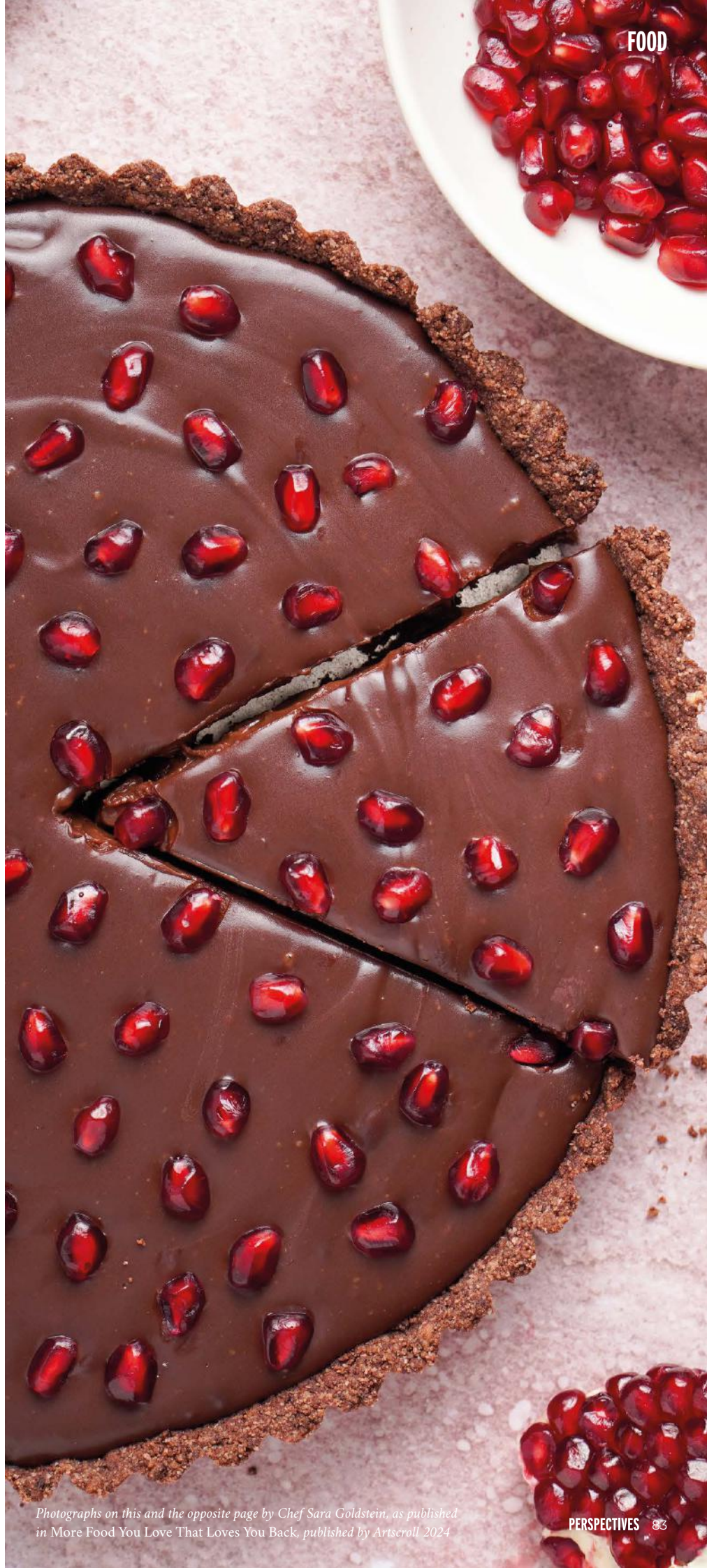
2 cups (225g) finely ground blanched almond flour
¼ cup (30g) unsweetened cocoa powder
¼ cup (60ml) melted coconut oil
3 tbsp (45ml) maple syrup
½ tsp fine salt
Coconut oil spray

For the filling

1½ cups (360ml) full fat coconut milk
16 oz (450g) dark chocolate, chopped
1 tsp vanilla extract
Pomegranate seeds, for topping

METHOD

- 1 Preheat oven to 180°C / 350°F.
- 2 Stir together crust ingredients in a bowl until evenly combined.
- 3 Spray a 23cm/9" tart pan generously with coconut oil spray. Press the crust mixture evenly into the bottom of the pan.
- 4 Bake for 12 minutes, or until it begins to feel dry and firm. Remove from the oven and cool.
- 5 Meanwhile, as the crust is baking, heat the coconut milk on the stovetop until simmering.
- 6 Place the dark chocolate in a bowl, and pour the coconut milk evenly over the top of it.
- 7 Wait 30 seconds, then slowly stir together until the chocolate is completely melted and smooth. Stir in the vanilla extract.
- 8 Pour the chocolate filling into the baked crust, and smooth the top with a spoon until it is even.
- 9 Add pomegranate seeds immediately.
- 10 Refrigerate for at least 2 hours, or until firm.
- 11 Let cool and store.



Photographs on this and the opposite page by Chef Sara Goldstein, as published in *More Food You Love That Loves You Back*, published by Artscroll 2024

AWARD-WINNING DOCUMENTARY

FEATURING THE REMARKABLE HOLOCAUST SURVIVOR AND NAZI-HUNTER WHO CAUGHT THE BUTCHER OF PLASZOW

THE UNEARTHED STORY SCHINDLER'S LIST COULDN'T TELL

JOSEF The Survivor's Revenge

AS TOLD IN
**SUNDAY TIMES
BESTSELLER**
'THE SURVIVOR'

BOOK HERE &
WATCH THE TRAILER:

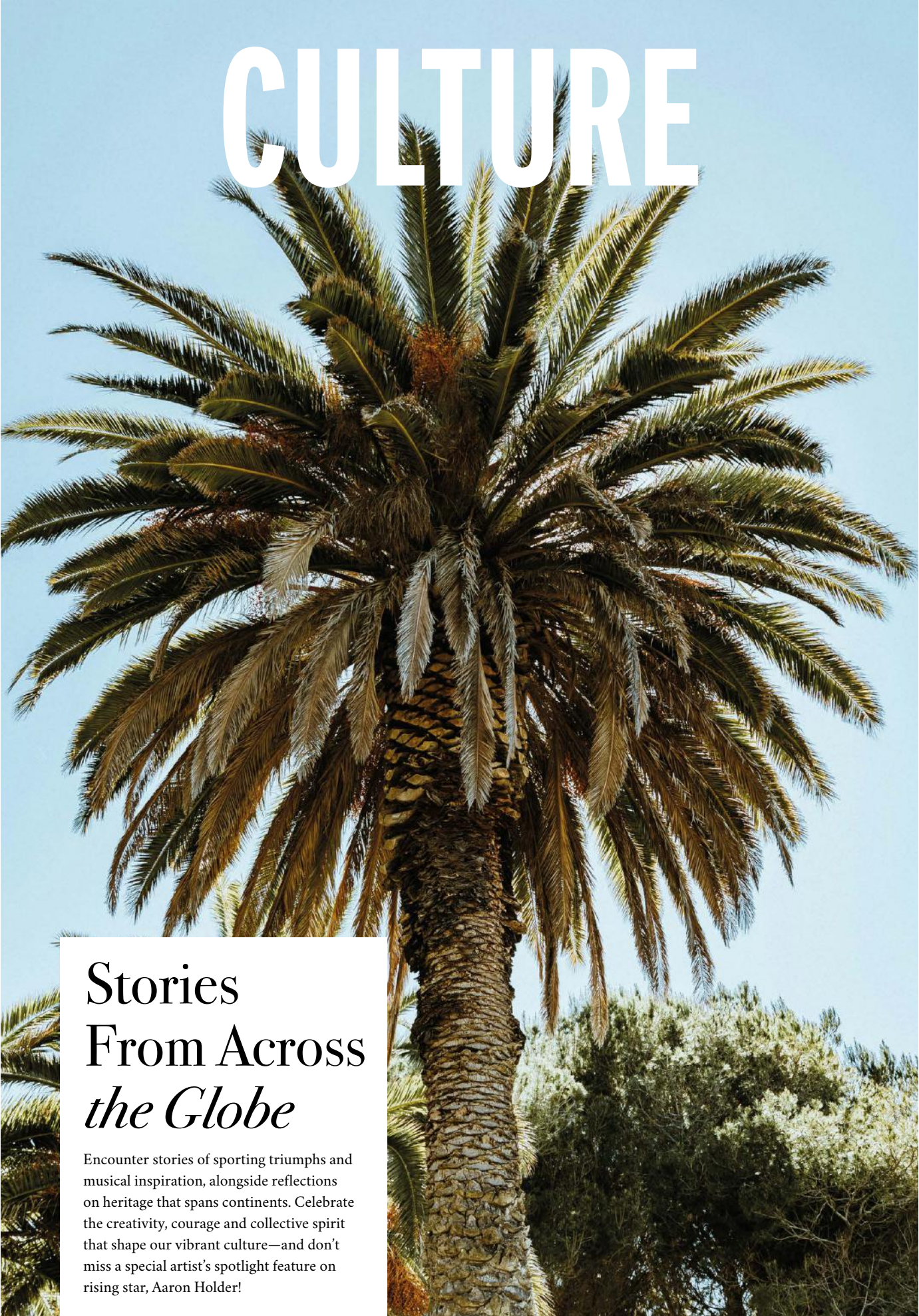


ROOTS AND LEGACY LIVE PRODUCTIONS PRESENT **THE SURVIVOR'S REVENGE** THE ONLY FIRST-HAND ACCOUNT BY **JOSEF LEWKOWICZ**
EXECUTIVE PRODUCER **NAFTALI SCHIFF** ASSISTANT PRODUCERS **DEBRA SOBEL** AND **ILANA EPSTEIN** AND **NATALIA SEGERMAN** AND **SORANA HOWARD**
PRODUCED BY **NAFTALI SCHIFF** DIRECTED BY **JONATHAN KALMUS**

EXCLUSIVE YOM HASHOAH SCREENING | NW LONDON | 23 APRIL 2025

To book your place, visit roots.org/thesurvivorsrevenge or scan the QR code

CULTURE



Stories From Across *the Globe*

Encounter stories of sporting triumphs and musical inspiration, alongside reflections on heritage that spans continents. Celebrate the creativity, courage and collective spirit that shape our vibrant culture—and don't miss a special artist's spotlight feature on rising star, Aaron Holder!



On the *Map*

The Jewish Journey in Sport

David Wiseman

For a long time, the prevailing wisdom held that Jews and sport didn't mix, due to several misconceptions and societal barriers. This belief stemmed from stereotypes, cultural reluctance and antisemitic attitudes prevalent in many sporting bodies. However, as Israel emerged as a young state, it began to forge its own unique sporting narrative—one that would come to embody the nation's resilience, determination and ability to triumph against the odds.

The 1960s marked a turning point when Jewish sporting icons such as Mark Spitz

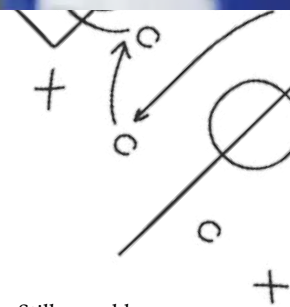
and Sandy Koufax were sporting superstars, inspiring Jews all over the world.

At a time when the young State of Israel was only beginning to shape its own sporting narrative, these early experiences in international sport set the stage for a unique relationship between Jews, Israel and athletic achievement. More than mere competitions, sporting victories have come to represent something far greater for the Jewish people.

Sport is well-known for its ability to set off a range of emotions, and Israel was riding the rollercoaster dealing with both triumphs and

tragedy in the sporting arena. Still arguable, Israel's biggest sporting highlight was when the national football team qualified for the 1970 World Cup, its only appearance to this date at sport's biggest event. The lowlight was undoubtedly the tragedy at the 1972 Munich Olympics, where eleven Israeli athletes were massacred by terrorists.

The David vs Goliath trope is popular in sport, and played out in real time as tiny Israel was battling against its much larger, well-resourced Arab-state neighbours in the 1970s. People like to insinuate that sport is a matter



Israel players line up for the national anthem before a game in the World Baseball Classic in Tokyo in 2017. For the first time, Israel is fielding an Olympic team (Matt Roberts, Getty Images)

“*Sport is well-known for its ability to set off a range of emotions, and Israel was riding the rollercoaster dealing with both triumphs and tragedy*”



of life and death—as far as the State of Israel surviving went, it actually was!

All of this came to life on the court as one of Israel's most iconic sporting moments. Maccabi Tel Aviv basketball team was up against the mighty CSKA Moscow for a spot in the 1977 European Champions Cup final. The Russian government wouldn't allow the match to be played in Israel or Russia, so it took place in Belgium. Maccabi won 91-79 in a watershed moment that captured the attention of a nation. For a country still reeling from the Yom Kippur War, this moment was much

bigger than sport, and simultaneously could only have been accomplished *through* sport.

Towards the end of the 20th century, as sport became a full-time profession, athletes gained the ability to make a living from it—sometimes even a lucrative one. As such, more Israelis and Jews than ever excelled on the global sporting stage.

Israeli athletes such as Omri Casspi, Deni Avdija and Gal Mekel made their mark in the NBA, while Yossi Benayoun, Eyal Berkovic, Ronny Rosenthal and Manor Solomon showcased their talents in the English Premier

League. Israel boasted fantastic tennis players in Anna Smashnova, Dudi Sela and Shahar Peer. Meanwhile, Andy Ram and Yoni Erlich formed one of the world's best doubles pairs, clinching the 2008 Australian Open title together.

International Jewish athletes also give us a lot of *nachat* (pride). Athletes including Aly Raisman, Julian Edelman, Harry Sheezel, Alex Bregman, Jessica Fox, Jake Retzlaff, Sue Bird, Max Homa, Zach Hyman, the Hughes brothers, Sarah Levy, AJ Edelman and Amit Elor have all made their mark. Even when we

Top: Government Press Office (GPO) - Gold Medalist Windsurfer Gal Fridman Left: Team Israel, 1970 Right: Linoy Ashram poses with her gold medal upon arrival from Tokyo at Ben Gurion International Airport, 11 August 2021. (Menahem Kahana/AFP via Getty Images)

have no personal connection to their specific sport, we take great pleasure in seeing Jewish athletes excel in what they're passionate about.

Team Israel has been steadily finding its niche at the Olympic Games, the pinnacle of sporting events, winning 20 medals since 1992, when Yael Arad won silver in judo, Israel's first Olympic medal. As Arad later recounted, "A fateful day, a watershed day, a day of fame, a day of self-fulfillment. A day that required fifteen years of hard work, endless investment and hidden self-confidence. The day I won the Olympic silver medal. My medal. The first medal of the State of Israel...That day I changed from a person who *wanted* to a person who *could*. And that made all the difference."

12 years later came Israel's first Olympic gold medal when Gal Fridman won the windsurfing event. "I was extremely proud to be the first to win a gold medal for Israel and the first to win two medals" (after winning bronze eight years prior at Atlanta). Things came full circle in 2024, when Fridman coached Tom Reuveny in the same event to gold, a gold which came in the midst of the Swords of Iron War, following the atrocities committed against Israel by Hamas on 7 October.

Israeli President Isaac Herzog immediately sensed the gravity of the situation. "You floated on the surface of the water like something divine. You made a whole nation happy, a nation that is at war and a nation that prays for the return of those being held hostage. You brought us a great light. You raised our flag the highest and our anthem was played, *Hatikva*, hope, for the first time in these Olympics in

France. Thank you, you are just amazing."

Reuveny felt it as well. "So many soldiers have sacrificed their lives [for Israel], I knew that the only thing I could do, [so] that I could give back to the country, was to hear the anthem being played. There are still hostages in Gaza, and it was difficult training when the whole country is burning. I want to say a big thank you to all the soldiers and all of the heroes who lost their lives. They are the real heroes."

Linoy Ashram became Israel's first female Olympic gold medallist when she won at Tokyo in 2020. It took a while for the magnitude of the occasion to sink in. "Never in my wildest dreams did I imagine that I would win a gold medal. But now when it says Olympic champion by my name, I know how worthwhile it all was. I wanted to reach my peak. Even now, eight months later, it is still difficult for me to say Olympic champion. I ask myself, who am I? Just Linoy Ashram from Rishon Lezion? A gold medal winner? I am still asking myself if it really happened...I felt that an entire nation was on my shoulders. I couldn't disappoint, and I knew that all of the people in the State of Israel were supporting me and that they wanted me to prevail. This really motivated me to succeed. Thanks to my country of Israel for all of the love and support."

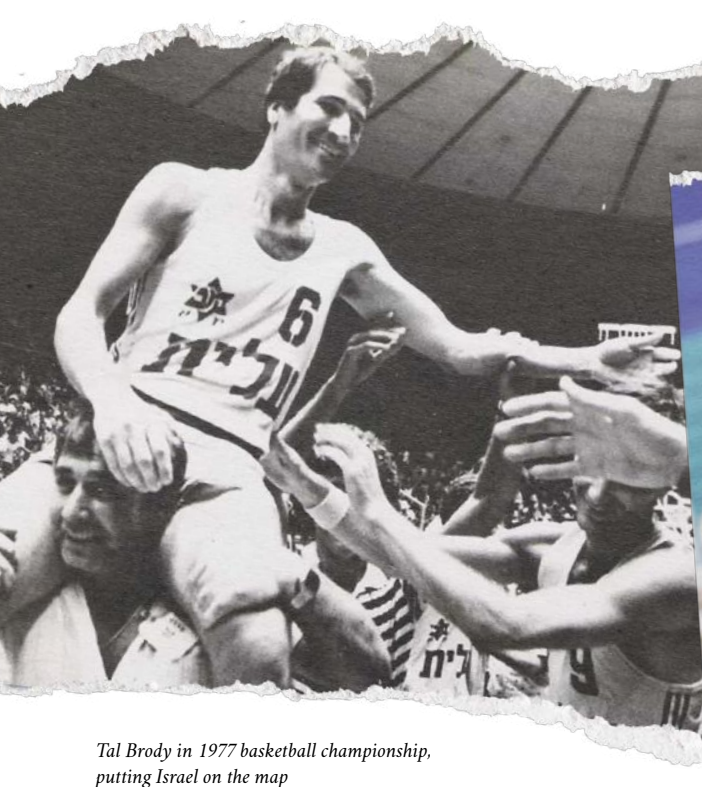
All in all, since opening its account in 1992, nine of Israel's twenty Olympic medals have been won in judo, but not one of them gold. Israel has won four gold medals at the Olympics, two in windsurfing and two in gymnastics. Canoeing and taekwondo have also contributed to Israel's Olympic medal wins.

Sports and politics shouldn't have anything to do with one another, but the goalposts move when it comes to Israel. The World Cup predates the existence of the State of Israel, and so the first iteration of the Israeli national team was called the Mandatory Palestine national football team (which attempted to qualify for the 1934 and 1938 World Cups). Israel was not just originally part of the Asian Football Confederation, but a founding member—they not only played football matches against Iran, but travelled to Tehran to play them!

Israel famously won the 1958 World Cup qualifying stage for Asia and Africa without playing a single game, as all their opponents boycotted the matches. Things came to a head in 1974 when Israel was expelled from the Asian Football Confederation.

Football was not the only sport in which Israel faced boycotts; they have occurred in other sports such as tennis, boxing, cricket and even chess. If an athlete from Iran, Kuwait or Algeria is drawn to face an Israeli opponent, they suddenly 'do not feel well,' and are unable to compete. Then, due to the Swords of Iron war, from lawn bowls to ice hockey, there have been repeated cries to kick out Israel and Israeli athletes from every international sporting contest.

The shame and irony of this is that sport has the power to bring people together. Before the war, the Abraham Accords were taking shape and the most effective way to showcase normalised relations between Israel, the UAE, Bahrain and Morocco was through sport. With talk of an imminent peace treaty between



Tal Brody in 1977 basketball championship, putting Israel on the map



Israeli equestrian Daniel Bluman pats the Israeli flag on his uniform after competing in the team jumping qualifier at the 2024 Paris Olympics on 1 August 2024. (Olympic Committee of Israel)



Israel and Saudi Arabia, one can only imagine what a momentous occasion it would be to hear *Hatikvah* in Riyadh before the two teams give it their all.

Sport achieves so much good within Israel. *Olim* (new immigrants) from all over the world who do not speak a common language come together over their shared love for a particular sport. It's an instant community and will immeasurably help assist one's integration. Then there are those select few who get to achieve the ultimate goal of representing their new country and their ancestral homeland in an international sporting competition. Citizens of Israel, regardless of religion, background, race or creed—including Jewish, Israeli Arab, Christian and Druze athletes—come together to represent their country on the same team with shared goals and aspirations.

When Israel is able to open its doors and host international sporting matches, visiting athletes marvel at the country, remarking that

it is modern, fresh and dynamic—nothing like the heavily-biased image portrayed by the media.

Geopolitics aside, Israeli athletes face other challenges when it comes to excelling on the global stage. Israel loves two sports—football and basketball—and this is where the bulk of the attention and resources go. Though Israel excels at the Olympics in sports such as windsurfing, judo and gymnastics, there is not a lot of money in these. Further, there is a lack of physical infrastructure in Israel to hold Olympic-sized swimming pools or cricket fields.

There is always great pride in Israel and among Jews worldwide when the country excels on the international stage, be it winning Nobel Prizes, the Eurovision contest or other prestigious awards. But there is something different about the pride that comes with an Israeli player or team winning a sporting contest—maybe because, when we win, we are still the underdog, and so we prevail

against the odds. In this way, our athletes are emblematic of the State of Israel, representing a country that continues to face persistent existential threats.

But as Tal Brody said after his incredible win, “We are on the map! And we are staying on the map—not only in sports, but in everything.”

“
*New immigrants from
all over the world
who do not speak a
common language
come together over
their shared love for
a particular sport*

Above: Bronze medalist Israel's Peter Palchik celebrates on the podium of the judo men's -100kg at the Paris 2024 Olympic Games at the Champ-de-Mars Arena, in Paris on 1 August 2024. (Jack GUEZ / AFP)

Mr. Baker is proud to support the Jewish Futures family in their mission to connect Jews to their Jewish Identity across the UK

We are privileged to supply Jewish Futures with their catering needs for:

SOCIAL EVENTS - PAIRED LEARNING - LUNCH & LEARNS - SOCIAL ACTION EVENTS
EDUCATIONAL SESSIONS - STAFF DEVELOPMENT - SHABBAT MEALS



**Wishing the whole kehilla a
Pesach Kasher v'Sameach**



MR. NEAPOLITAN
Neapolitan style pizza

119-121 Brent St, London NW4 2DX | 020 8202 6845



The *Fashion* Edit

Chaya Baumgarten, founder of Valour magazine

In collaboration with **VALOUR**
LIFESTYLE



Simplify Your Style: Embracing the Capsule Wardrobe

As busy women, we are continually navigating a whirlwind of responsibilities, from work to family, holidays and festivities. I've found that my personal struggle with ADHD—something I am realising is actually quite common—often compounds the daily challenge of choosing what to wear. Despite being aware of my style and having a strong sense of fashion, I frequently find myself standing in front of a wardrobe full of clothes, feeling overwhelmed and unsure of what to put on.

One strategy that has significantly improved my daily dressing experience is adopting a capsule wardrobe. In a world filled with fast

fashion and ever-changing trends, the concept of a capsule wardrobe has brought the relief of simplicity and sustainability.

A capsule wardrobe is a curated collection of essential clothing pieces that can be mixed and matched to create a variety of outfits.

It saves time and eliminates the daily struggle of deciding what to wear. A smaller, well-thought-out selection allows for easy mixing and matching, making getting dressed a breeze. By focusing on quality over quantity, you can declutter your closet and create a more organised space. This approach enables you to appreciate the pieces you own rather than feeling overwhelmed by too many options.

Investing in high-quality items that you love and will wear frequently also reduces the need for constant shopping. Over time, this can lead to significant savings, as you purchase less often but select better-quality pieces. A capsule wardrobe encourages you to buy fewer, high-quality items, contributing to a more sustainable fashion industry. By reducing consumption, you play a part in minimising waste and supporting ethical brands.

Creating a capsule wardrobe also forces you to evaluate your personal style and preferences. This process leads to a clearer understanding of what you truly love to wear, helping you build a wardrobe that reflects your unique identity.

How to Create a CAPSULE WARDROBE

1

EVALUATE Your Current Wardrobe

Start by assessing what you already own. Remove items that you haven't worn in the past year or that no longer fit your style. This will help you identify gaps in your wardrobe.

DEFINE Your Style

Consider your lifestyle and the types of occasions for which you typically need outfits. Reflect on the colours, patterns and textures that you gravitate toward.

2

3

CHOOSE a Colour Palette

Select a cohesive colour palette that allows for versatility. Neutral tones paired with a few accent colours work well, ensuring that all your pieces can be easily mixed and matched.



New Balance 530 Trainers £100, Office



Cropped Bouclé Jacket £285, MyTheresa



Quilted Jacket £145, H&M



Skinny Ivy Silk Scarf £170, Burberry



Classic Leather Tote Bag £97 &OtherStories



Collared Rib-Knit Cardigan £87, &OtherStories



Bubble Hem Maxi Skirt £110, Cos

Wrap Midi Skirt £119, Arket



Strappy Block Heels £49.99, Zara

Belted Poplin Shirt £27.99, Zara



Studded Leather Corset Belt £49.99, Zara



Daphne Waisted Knit £119, Aligne



Cotton Shirt Dress £305, MyTheresa

Top tip:
Black with a pop of yellow works great for Spring/Summer.

4

SELECT Essential Pieces

Aim for around 30-40 items in your capsule wardrobe, including tops, bottoms, dresses, outerwear and shoes. Here are some essentials to consider:

TOPS

Basic t-shirts, blouses and a couple of statement tops.

BOTTOMS

Skirts that can be styled in various ways—some more statement pieces and some basics.

DRESSES

A versatile dress that can be dressed up or down.

OUTERWEAR

A classic jacket, a sweater or a coat in different lengths and thicknesses for varying weather conditions.

SHOES

Comfortable yet stylish options such as trainers, flats and a pair of heels or boots.

ACCESSORIES

Scarves, belts and a couple of bags to elevate your outfits.

XL Skirt £100, Levis



Embroidered Denim Shirt
£97, &OtherStories



Denim Midi Skirt £87,
&OtherStories

Top tip:

Think of denim as a neutral. It works well with red, blue or tan.



Tie-Front
Waistcoat
£85, Cos



Drawstring Peplum
Blouse £65, Cos



Beaded
Stone
Necklace
£40, Cos



Fluid Denim
Belted Shirt
Dress £155,
Jigsaw



Mid-Waist
Leather
Belt £37,
&OtherStories



Lightweight
Long Sleeved
Top £35, Cos



Napped Jacket
£39.99, H&M



Denim Maxi Skirt £115, &OtherStories



The Quartz
Cascade
Earrings
£75, Cos



Oversized Boxy T-shirt £35, Cos



Buckled
Ballet Flats
£115, Cos

Adopting a capsule wardrobe is a transformative approach to fashion that can simplify your life, enhance your personal style and promote sustainability. By carefully curating your clothing collection, you can enjoy the freedom that comes from having a wardrobe filled with pieces you love and wear regularly. Embrace the simplicity of a capsule wardrobe and discover how effortless and enjoyable getting dressed can be.

חג כשר ושמח

Where will your
next journey
take you?



Your journey
to Israel and
worldwide
destinations
begins here

Contact us to
explore your options

020 8958 3188

info@westendtravel.co.uk

WEST END TRAVEL 
INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL AGENTS

GROUPS

| INDIVIDUALS

| FAMILIES

*Date palms in the Tabuk region
of western Saudi Arabia*



The *Forgotten* JEWS OF ARABIA

A Lost Chapter in History

Rabbi Ari Kayser

Jews lived in what later became Muslim lands for many centuries before the birth of Muhammad, perhaps over a millennium. Dating the exact arrival and circumstances surrounding their arrival is a matter of great debate among scholars, and invariably contains a mixture of academic research, archaeological discoveries, historical records or accounts, educated speculation and, sometimes, legend.

At its peak, Muslim land stretched from the Iberian Peninsula in the west to the borders of China in the east, including the coastline territories of North Africa and the fertile crescent of the Middle East, the plains

of Central Asia and the islands of Southeast Asia. Across these lands, Jewish presence was firmly established prior to the advent of Islam. The Talmudic academies of Sura and Pumbedita in Babylonia (present-day Iraq) are two prime examples of this. These academies were at the heart of Jewish learning and are the institutions where the Babylonian Talmud was compiled more than two thousand years ago. Inscriptions of Jewish gravestones have been discovered in the Tunisian city of Carthage, dating from 813 BCE.

Be that as it may, Jewish communities in urban civilizations in Arabia likely date back to biblical times. The encounter between King

Solomon and the Queen of Sheba, recorded both in the Book of Kings¹ and the Book of Chronicles,² attests to the antiquity of the contact between the ancient Israelites and Arabia. This Kingdom of Sheba, or Saba, was located in modern day Yemen, and expanded to parts of Ethiopia around 800 BCE.

It is worth noting that Jerusalem, which first came under Muslim rule in the year 638 CE, had already been the spiritual and political centre of Jewish life for more than a millennium, serving as the capital of the Jewish kingdom for over six centuries when it was conquered by the Babylonians in 587 BCE.

By the late Second Temple Period, Jewish

¹ Book of Kings I (10:1-13) ² Book of Chronicles II (9:1-9)



communities had already taken root in the oases of northern Arabia. While the region lacked the cultural richness of the south, it was far from desolate. Many Jews built livelihoods as farmers cultivating dates, traders along caravan routes and skilled artisans. Their numbers were bolstered by waves of refugees escaping the destruction of Judea following the Roman suppression of the revolts in 70 and 135 CE. By the time Muhammad was born around 570 CE, Jewish life in Arabia was well-established. Jews were not only present in significant numbers but had also become an integral part of Arabian society, adopting its language, tribal structure and even its desert ethos. Jews formed alliances, took part in local conflicts and influenced the cultural landscape of the peninsula.

This influence was particularly evident in

Yemen, where Judaism was briefly adopted by the Himyarite royal dynasty, when King Yusuf Asar came to the throne in 515 CE. He was a religious man known to the Arabs as Dhu Nuwas ('the man with the hanging locks'), who met his end resisting an Ethiopian invasion.

It is far beyond the scope of this article to detail a full account of Jews in Arabia, or across Muslim lands over history; there are many books covering this topic, some of which are listed as a footnote at its conclusion. Herein, the article will focus on a band of Jewish tribes in Arabia who were present at the time of Muhammad and who had an important impact on the region.

Muhammad, born in the Arabian city of Mecca, lived at a time when the Arab tribes followed a variety of different belief systems. While some Arabs considered themselves

monotheistic, influenced by both Judaism and Christianity, Mecca was a centre for polytheism, with the Kaaba housing many idols, attracting pilgrims and traders from the region, and the merchants benefited handsomely from this economy.

This likely explains why Muhammad, after successfully converting 40 followers, faced serious opposition from the people of Mecca. His message of monotheism posed a direct threat to this system and, fearing their social order would be disrupted, the merchants of Mecca, particularly the dominant tribe, the Quraysh, plotted to kill him.

At the same time, the city of Yathrib, which was mired in tribal conflict, made a proposition to Muhammad to come and resolve their internal tensions. They viewed him as an impartial outsider who could mediate between their warring factions, caring less about his religious message, given that monotheism was already a familiar concept to them through the Jewish presence there.

Jewish tribes had been living in the Arabian Peninsula for generations in the region where Muhammad first began to preach, and similar to their Arab counterparts, were governed principally by one social norm: tribal loyalty. This did not only include one's immediate tribal family; tribal alliances formed a great part of how the people and the region retained any semblance of stability.

Muhammad accepted the invitation from the nobles of Yathrib and established a pact, the Constitution of Medina, which placed the collective identity of the community (the *ummah*) above tribal loyalties. If one group was attacked, the others were bound to defend them. His success in establishing a framework for peace among a hotbed of warring tribes strengthened his position and won him new followers.

Ideologically, the local Arabs there were far more receptive to his monotheistic message due to their interactions with the Jews, and the city later became known as 'Madinat al-Nabi' (the City of the Prophet), or simply, Medina. Although many scholars view this as an Arabic adaptation of an Aramaic by-name, Medina—simply meaning 'the district'—was likely named by the Jews. Muhammad's journey from Mecca to Medina to escape this persecution is known as the *hijra*, and marks the start of the Islamic lunar calendar.

Despite his growing influence, the Jewish tribes in Medina did not accept Muhammad's claim of prophethood, and this set the stage for what was to follow.

The three most significant Jewish tribes—the Banu Nadir, the Banu Qaynuqa and the Banu Qurayzah—became embroiled in a series of confrontations with Muhammad and his



With the rise of Islam, a thousand years of Jewish history in this region came to an abrupt end, in a land that, even today, remains inaccessible to Jews

followers, and their centuries-long presence in the region came under threat. For a long time, the Jews of Medina, firmly grounded in rabbinical tradition, commanded respect for their wisdom and customs. Now, with the growing influence of Muhammad and his followers, the Jews increasingly viewed him as an outsider to their religious heritage, rejecting his prophethood in favour of their own, long-standing traditions. Each of the three Jewish tribes faced their own dramatic confrontations.

The Banu Qaynuqa were accused of violating the Constitution of Medina after an incident took place in their market where a Jew and a Muslim were killed. Muhammad was called to arbitrate, which the Jews refused. The Qaynuqa barricaded themselves in their fortress, hoping to rally support, but found themselves trapped. Their fortress was besieged, and they had to surrender. This was Muhammad's first victory over the Jews, and instead of having them killed, they were exiled from Medina.

With tensions between Jewish tribes and Muslims at boiling point, the Banu Nadir were accused of plotting to assassinate Muhammad following a dispute over *diyya* (blood money compensation). On Shabbat, when Jews refrain from fighting, Muhammad and his forces laid siege to their stronghold and cut down their date palms—their main source of livelihood—something the Torah forbids even during wartime. This refusal to fight was perceived as weakness, and the Banu Nadir had to beg for their lives to be spared. Like the Qanyuqa before them, they were exiled from Medina, allowed to leave with only those goods that could be carried by their camels.

Meanwhile, ongoing hostility between the Quraysh of Mecca (the enemies of Muhammad who had driven him out of Mecca) and the Muslims of Medina, led to an advance towards Medina, with the Quraysh hoping to put an end to Muhammad's power and influence. Anticipating the advance, the Muslims dug a trench around the city to prevent a direct assault, assisted by the Jewish Banu Qurayzah, who were still bound by the Constitution of Medina. Other historians suggest the Banu Qurayzah, alarmed by the treatment of their fellow Jewish tribes, formed a pact with the advancing Quraysh of Mecca in hope that they

would indeed overthrow Muhammad.

Once the Muslims of Medina defeated their Meccan foes, Muhammad's attention turned to the Jewish Banu Qurayzah, whom he accused of aiding his enemies, allegedly after being visited by the angel Gabriel, who directed him to attack them. The Muslim forces surrounded their fortress, and the Jews held out for 25 days, but starvation hung over them. Three possibilities were put before the Jews: They could accept Muhammad as their prophet and convert to Islam, kill their own women and children and go to battle Muhammad, or trick Muhammad by attacking him on the Sabbath. The Jews were not prepared to do any of these and begged for the same fate of exile that was afforded to their other Jewish brethren. Muhammad refused their plea, ordered the men and women to be separated, before executing the men and selling the women and children into slavery, with their possessions distributed among the Muslims.

Thus marked the end of Jewish autonomy in Medina and established Muhammad's dominance over the city. It was in the wake of this significant defeat that another important event took place 100 miles north of Medina - the Battle of Khaybar. An idyllic oasis, renowned for its fertile lands and formidable fortresses, Khaybar symbolised Jewish economic and cultural success alongside relative autonomy. Seeking to wipe out any Jewish independence in the region, Muhammad's army laid siege to the settlements,

including strongholds held by the Jewish Banu Nadir, who had been previously exiled from Medina. The Jewish tribes, unable to withstand the prolonged siege, eventually surrendered. They were permitted to remain in Khaybar on condition they pay a tribute to the Muslims to the value of half of their agricultural produce. This arrangement only lasted a few years before their eventual expulsion from the region, but set an important precedent in Islamic law for establishing the status of *dhimmis* - non-Muslims living under Islamic rule.

While this early history of the Jews of Arabia is little-known by Jews today, its significance to Muhammad's life and achievements is well recognised by Muslims. For centuries, Jews thrived across the Arabian Peninsula, contributing to its culture, economy and spirituality. With the rise of Islam, a thousand years of Jewish history in this region came to an abrupt end, in a land that, even today, remains inaccessible to Jews.

Much of the source material for this article can be found in the following books:

- Gilbert, M. (2010). *In Ishmael's House: A History of Jews in Muslim Lands*. Yale University Press.
 Goitein, S.D. (1974). *Jews and Arabs: Their Contacts Through the Ages*. Schocken Books.
 Ben-Zvi, I. (1957). *The Exiled and the Redeemed*. Jewish Publication Society of America.
 Stillman, N.A. (1979). *The Jews of Arab Lands: A History and Source Book*. Jewish Publication Society of America.





Artist Spotlight:

AARON HOLDER

Bari Gold

When asked for a less “religious-looking” photo of himself for a flyer, singer-songwriter Aaron Holder replied, “Would you ask Coca Cola to make a can that isn’t red?” To speak with Holder is to be on the receiving end of an outpouring of gratitude, humility and Jewish pride. Whether he’s doing chiropractic work for soldiers or transforming war into music, Holder strives to use his unique talents, abilities and experiences to spread light and positivity to the world.

Enamoured with music’s unique ability to bring people together, Holder began learning chords on the guitar and experimenting with melodies while studying abroad in Israel. “My mother is a poet,” he explained. “So I thought to

myself, instead of learning covers, why don’t I find a melody and bring her words to life.” He’s since continued cultivating his interest in music, never letting the flame go out, even as he’s pursued studies in chiropractic medicine.

For Holder, choosing a chiropractic school meant choosing a music scene, landing him in bluesy Atlanta. Performing alongside talented musicians at open mics encouraged his musical development and ultimately culminated in his performance at the NBA halftime show for the Atlanta Hawks. After years of honing his skill, Holder met Amit Yitzchak. The two of them realised they shared a musical vision, and together they booked a studio session in Israel for 8 October 2023.

Recorded one day after the deadliest attack on the Jewish people since the Holocaust, *Down To The River, Stay Forever* and *I Won’t Let You Down*, have each inherited a profound sense of purpose, meaning and resolve. “I kept asking myself, what can I do for my people? I felt like—I can’t cancel the studio session. I have to do this.” On 8 October 2023, Holder combated destruction with creativity. Years of dedication, hard work and passion came to fruition in the form of rhythm and soul. From one of the darkest days of Jewish history comes an empowering message to Israelis and Jewish people everywhere—each and every one of us has a unique purpose, and no one is getting rid of us. With an unforgettably robust voice, Holder puts a poignant love for the Jewish nation to music.

Making sense of the tools he was given both in and out of the recording studio, Holder spent the first eight months of the war providing chiropractic care for soldiers on the front lines and citizens on the street. “I didn’t understand why I had this skill until the war started. That’s when I realised that there’s a purpose for everything I know.”

This resourcefulness is as present in Holder’s music as it is in himself. Holder has created an eclectic genre of his own, influenced by Jewish *nigunim* (melodies), folky blues and his own experience. The melodies, lyrics and vocals in his songs are unmistakably-inspired by the chapters in his life. He pays homage to this idea in his song *I Won’t Let You Down* with the lyrics “I’m not sorry for leaving. I’m not sorry for living.” It is the exuberance of a life lived that Holder finds purpose in, prompting him to sing “I will be thankful for the life that I lead.” No matter the chapters in our lives, there is always what to make of it.

The depth of Holder’s lyrics are complemented by the depth and timbre of his voice. Holder always kept an eye out for opportunities to sing. “I looked for what was available to me. Before I knew it, I was a Jew with a *kippah* doing the baseline in a gospel choir.” Embodying the song lyric “No one else can do what was meant for you,” what Holder sings, he lives.

Most significantly, what he *thinks*, he lives. Holder allows the catchphrase “think good” to guide his perception of the world. To Holder, bringing a focused awareness to the goodness in our lives is more than a means to achieving a positive outlook, it’s a means to achieving a sense of purpose. There’s a reason Holder fell in love with music, just like there’s a reason for oxygen. *The world is made for you. No one else can do what was meant for you.*

aaronholdermusic.com

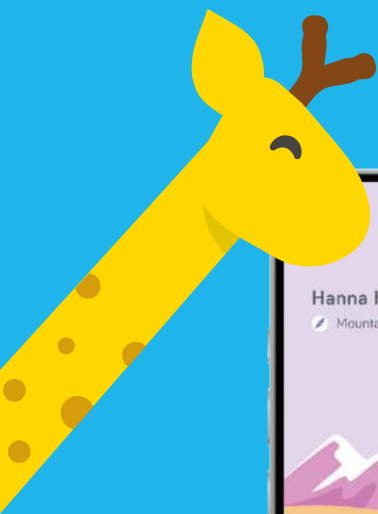
[@aaronholdermusic](https://www.instagram.com/aaronholdermusic)

Photo by Avi Werde



Protects lives. Rewards living. Inspires life.

Your all-in-one insurance, benefits and wellbeing platform designed to drive employee engagement.



Group Life Insurance



Group Health Insurance



Group Income Protection



Group Dental Insurance



Group Critical Illness



Find out more at [YuLife.com](https://yulife.com)

BEAVERBROOKS

Proudly Supporting Jewish Futures



Explore at beaverbrooks.co.uk
Experience in stores nationwide
Speak to a consultant on 0800 169 2329

