

Megillah

מגילה

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Mashadi Youth Committee



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is published by



Mashadi Youth Committee

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The Return of Megillah

Adam Etessami

During these past years, especially upon the dawn of the COVID era in which we now live, it has become necessary to revive the until now defunct, much beloved, thought provoking and informative community publication of *Megillah*. With the growth of social media and widespread use of Twitter, Facebook and to a lesser extent WhatsApp, casual interpersonal dialogue, factual news reports and opinion have all gradually descended into chaos. Morality and respect for one another has gone out the door, and incoherent verbal battle is the norm. American society is now defined by one sentence insults and blanket statements, causing great anger and an extreme partisan divide.

Given these developments, with the interests of safeguarding the traditional values of the Mashadi Jewish Community in mind, it is necessary to provide a platform enabling the expression of opinion, proposal of initiatives and official community reports in a respectful, thoughtful and educational manner. We aim to achieve the following:

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

1. Enable a high-level exchange of ideas.
2. Ensure community members have the opportunity to be informed without resorting to the ‘WhatsApp rumor mill’.
3. Maintain the unprecedented level of respect for our fellow Mashadis that our elders had.
4. Preserve the unity of our community, at a time where Jewish assimilation into American culture and the rejection of religion is an ongoing crisis. We encourage all who are interested in contributing to *Megillah* to reach out to any of our editors, or email megillah@mashadiyouth.org with any article submissions or questions.

A Message from the Youth Committee:

Michael Livi, Adam Etessami, Brooke Rahamanan, Kayla Hakimian & Kayla Ebrani

At the beginning of the 2010s, a time synchronous with the until now most recent publication of *Megillah*, the MYC was in an unrecognizable state of affairs, the community was mired in conflict, burdened with the economic hardships of the Great Recession, and saw its longtime leadership team retire for a variety of said reasons. This void created went mostly unnoticed at the time, as more pressing issues demanded the collective attention of the community, though it eventually became clear that the diminishment of the MYC was a disservice to the community’s new generation of youth.

Community youth entering post high school life, in an increasingly digital and culturally revolutionary era, were and continue in the present day to be at their most vulnerable to assimilation, losing connection to the traditional values that make the Mashadi Community extraordinarily unique, and losing touch with fellow Mashadis whom they no longer see.

Identifying this void, and determined to assist the new generation of Mashadi Youth, the MYC boards led by Mr. Jonathan Levian and subsequently Ms. Carolina Aziz pioneered a new era of MYC programming and with the contributions of Ms. Ilene Levy re-started the monthly publication of *HaChodesh*, and the organizing of annual singles retreats and frequent events such as Learn It Up. The board of Mr. Nathan Kashizadeh reimagined the concept of community programming and boosted attendance at all MYC functions, via creative getaways to Camp Lavi, Purim

Parties and New Years Eve events and more. The board of Mr. Itai Hakimian followed in the footsteps of its predecessors, introducing annual winter ski trips, though his board was greatly hindered by the onset of COVID.

The current MYC Board led by Mr. Michael Livi, continues to follow the lead of the preceding boards of the 2010s, by aiming to maintain unity and encouraging connection amongst the youth, with added emphasis on making more educational programming available, and promoting Kanissa attendance by all.

The MYC looks to continue hosting Summer and Winter retreats, the Summer Soirée, Movie Nights, and Ice-Skating outings. These along with educational and inspiring programs including: Learn It Up, Ivread, Rosh Chodesh Lectures, Shabbat lunches, Challah bakes, and Lectures on Antisemitism.

We, as the current MYC Board, would like to emphasize our goal: focus on providing the forum and means necessary for community youth to remain in touch, maintain their values and grow educationally and spiritually.

The MYC board would like to thank all current board members and advisors for their continued efforts, and all prior board members for their hard work and dedication which has served as an inspiration to us all.

Overcoming the Snakes:

Adam Etessami

A few weeks ago, my friends and I attended a seminar featuring Dr. Jordan Peterson. He is a renowned Canadian Professor of philosophy, who became a controversial figure for his outspoken defense of conservative values. Dr. Peterson is an intellectual, and his sophisticated style of speaking made this seminar difficult to follow. Though the following lesson of his stood out to us, and I'd like to share it with all readers:

Preventing the appearance of ‘snakes’ is an impossible task, and rather one must be prepared to deal with the appearance of a ‘snake’.

What does a ‘snake’ represent?

To answer this question, we look to the most ancient story in the history of man. In Parshat Bereishit (book of Genesis), Adam and Eve are initially living in the Garden of Eden.

What is the significance of a ‘garden’?

Well, a garden is an enclosed oasis that symbolizes nature in its most organized setting. Unlike the sprawling wilderness and disorganization of a forest, or the endless wasteland of a desert, a garden is an enclosed setting, with plants and vegetation that are organized and cared for.

This is epitomized by the initial situation Adam and Eve were in, they did not have to work to survive, there were no apparent threats and food and drink were abundant. And then – we all know what happens. Eve was deceived by a ‘snake’ in some form, to violate God’s one commandment against eating the forbidden fruit. While opinions vary, all agree that the snake can serve as a metaphor for an obstacle or deceitful force.

Dr. Peterson now posed the following question: “If the Garden of Eden was created by God to serve as the ideal setting to house man, why was a snake able to enter the garden?”.

He then answered with his theory: “In the world God created, it would simply not be possible to prevent a snake from entering the Garden, or anywhere for that matter.” What this means is clear,

EDITORIAL

that if a snake, an unexpected obstacle or stumbling block to man can penetrate the perfection of the Garden of Eden, a snake of some form can appear anywhere and at any time.

The lesson here is that no matter the health, strength, or wealth one may have, nobody is able to prevent unexpected obstacles and hardship. Though, what one can do is to prepare and learn to deal with the difficult bumps that test you throughout life. In other words – don’t put all your focus on building a walled garden to keep the snakes out, but also learn to fight off the snakes that do appear.

Completely life-changing and unexpected events happen regularly in our community’s history. In 1978, Iran under the Pahlavi Monarchy, was a westernizing nation allied with the United States and friendly with Israel. In 1979 a radical Islamist revolt overthrew the Shah, and precipitated our community’s escape from Iran. During the past two years we experienced the COVID Pandemic and its economic and political impacts. And in recent weeks, Europe has witnessed a territorial war waged by Vladimir Putin’s Russia against Ukraine, and a subsequent refugee crisis, both which were considered nearly impossible by many and contrary to the ‘global order’ which had been in place since the end of the Cold War if not World War II.

These examples should serve as a reminder that no matter how indestructible and permanent the status quo might feel, anything can happen. In times of peace, we should prepare to deal with future hardships that may arise. Given what we have seen, it would be prudent to dedicate a portion of our time and resources to prepare our community for the snakes that may come, as putting our faith in the hands of the United States and allied governments would make us reliant on protection less secure than the Garden of Eden’s.

College Education & Mashadi Women

Seda Livian

Shabbat dinners in our home can get heated. Often with frustration directed toward me when I, a college graduate turned successful businesswoman, put very little weight on the importance of college and often discourage women (including my own girls) from pursuing “traditional” corporate careers.

My sense is those debating at the dinner table, argue reflexively. We’ve all been conditioned to think prestigious and expensive colleges are the key to success and that women and men should be encouraged in the same way

EDUCATION

when it comes to college and career options. However, I find most people emulate behavior in their day to day lives that differs from their vocal position on these topics.

College - most non-Mashadis go to college to gain access to a network they otherwise would never have. This can provide them access to people, corporations, and careers. One of the unique advantages of being in our community is that it already provides access to a very valuable and

exclusive network and makes spending exorbitant amounts of money on college unnecessary in many instances.

Education vs college – often conflated. Mark Twain is quoted as saying “Never let schooling interfere with your education”. These days access to education and the ability to gain valuable knowledge is available at people’s fingertips, far beyond what was available even 10 years ago. And we live in a world where the pace at which job qualifications change far outpace the speed at which colleges can teach students skills necessary to be successful.

On top of that, many people spend a lengthy part of college trying to figure out what they even want to do – often never understanding what that job means in real life until it’s “too late”. In most cases, on the job learning can fully replace and significantly exceed the way we learn in a college classroom. So, you need to learn on the job to keep up with the pace of change and really understand if you enjoy a career path, but you can’t get a job without a college degree... so what are you paying for when you pay for college?

Gender matters – both my corporate and my community experiences have taught me quite clearly that, for a woman, achieving BOTH a successful family life (defined, for example, by marriage and children before 30) and a successful corporate/professional career (defined as an accountant, lawyer, doctor, investment banker, engineer, etc)

is a statistical anomaly and the exception - certainly not the rule. However, our community is full of very successful female entrepreneurs – spending their days doing what they’re passionate about, making their own hours, their own rules, their own decisions, with flexibility to raise a family... That’s success.

As my eldest prepares for ACTs/SATs, college selection and future career path selection – my hopes for her and my other kids shortly after her are to focus on things that interest them. Find people in our community or connected to our community that work in fields that seem aligned to their interests and intern for them. Take advantage of our network to get access and experience early. Create their own path and future. Take full advantage of all their entitlements. But most importantly be practical about what that career means from a family and personal life perspective – which will likely mean very different things for my daughters than for my son.

My advice to all our community kids, and their parents in guiding them... don’t stress about what college you’re going to... stress about finding something you love doing. Figure out how to learn it most effectively and efficiently. Figure out who you know that has forged a path in that field already and use them to help you – then take all that knowledge and do it your own way - better.

The Challenges that Loom

Eddie Levian

OPINION

We are supposed to learn from our past and live for the future. Our community has a glorious past, and is amongst one of the the most noteworthy Jewish communities in the world, and should take guidance from our history in the decisions we make now and in the future.

Our story begins as a group of Jews exiled to Babylon, and later falling under the rule of the Ancient Persian Empire. The honor and trustworthiness of our ancestors became apparent to many, even the new King, Nadir Shah who summoned them to Mashad, in an effort to enhance commerce and attain guards for his treasures.

Immediately upon the arrival of the Jewish convoy c.1746, King Nadir Shah was assassinated. Leaving the newcomers as the only Jewish community in the Muslim dominated, and intolerant city of Mashad. Now suppressed under the rule of Islamist fundamentalists, the Jewish community in Mashad was discriminated against for several decades, that served as a prelude

to the infamous Allah Dadi Disaster, just days before Passover in 1839. This was a murderous pogrom targeting the Jews of Mashad. The result was a forced conversion that was endured, by the sheer dedication of our ancestors, who secretly kept and practiced Judaism for almost 100 years. The stories of the strength of the Mashadi women who endured such hardship to keep Judaism is legendary, almost hard to believe, except that it was our own great grandfather, Mr Farajollah LeVian, a man known for his character, who interviewed the elders of the time and wrote the memoirs that became the basis of many books about our community.

How did we become the only Jewish community in the world to survive after 100 years of forced conversion? It was the preservation of our values. Respecting our elders, valuing character, “Najib” above all, the value to practice a non-judgemental, non-denominational but traditional version of Judaism that let Hashem do the judging while we did the respecting. It was the value that a Jewish woman’s responsibility is

to keep the Judaism of her family, at all costs. Hidden passageways, hidden synagogues, hidden Jewish schools, Muslim first names, marriage before reaching puberty, were all parts of the solution.

What did it give us? We became the only community that when we go to the Kotel, whether in the tens or hundreds, we only have a single Minyan. It gave us a close-knit community of people united in tragedy and joy, who time and again share their business and family secrets to help each other grow.

And look at us today; We live in one of the wealthiest neighborhoods of the most prosperous country in the world. With the support of our community and the help of HaShem, several of our families have accumulated tremendous wealth, a feat recognized by only the most elite business professionals throughout the United States.

Our ancestors, the children of slaves, and forced converts who practiced Judaism in hiding for 100 years, and fled Iran during the Iranian Revolution of 1979, certainly have put us in a position of great fortune and opportunity - especially in the United States.

Though, is it possible that with our rapid success lurks some real dangers and hangovers? With over half of our community of 7,000 born in the US, Mashadi Jews are now predominantly Americans. While we have gone to spectacular lengths to bring our community organizations under one roof, have the three vibrant synagogues in Great Neck, have roughly half of Mashadi youth acquiring a Jewish education at a Jewish day school or Yeshiva, it is of my humble opinion that we are in grave danger and the signs are ever present.

The following observations may be an indicator of the times in which we now live:

- 1) Our children, especially those now entering adolescence, are faced with prominent exposure and addiction to cell phones, social media, alcohol, nicotine, marijuana, and more.
- 2) Some parents are dictating what playgroup their child should belong to from the mere age of two, the decision often based on the child's perceived socio-economic background.
- 3) The Shabbat Minyan of our elders, the main Kanissa in Shaare Shalom, has become the least popular Minyan in the community.
- 4) Our girls and young ladies, feel enormous pressure to have the latest fashionable clothing, bags, jewels and watches by their twenties, and are encouraged to select a husband on the grounds of his perceived ability to buy her those luxuries.
- 5) Roughly half of all community marriages feature a Mashadi marrying a non-Mashadi.

Could a primary reason for these issues be the education of our children? We have delegated the Jewish education of our community to others. Our youth are sent to one to 35+ different

high schools, a practice that I argue has caused the ongoing fragmentation of our community.

Is it far-fetched to believe that these ongoing issues outlined above, may result in a sense of radicalism or elitism, that would encourage more of youth to turn away from the community and into the tempting arms of American secular life?

So how shall we fight today, to prevent this future outcome I so greatly fear? How do we change ourselves back to valuing character for marriages rather than looks and money? How do we not only preserve the unity established via our ancestors' 100+ years of suppression and false conversion, to become examples and shining lights of Judaism to the secular Jews in the United States and world at large? An opportunity exists for us to lead by example, by reinvigorating the traditional values of respect for each other and religion, the values that made us great and hindered our assimilation while in Mashad.

Jews across the country are being thrust into the wilderness, often believing the only ways forward are strict secularism or ultra-orthodox Jewish observance. Should our community be able to remain unified, it is our duty to display our style of living - the Mashadi Jewish lifestyle of integrating with society, working hard in business, attending Kanissa and Torah study. We can serve a welcome inspiration for Jews, particularly youth throughout the diaspora.

I am excited to see that after decades living in New York, that after much deliberation our community seems to have reached a consensus that we need a Jewish School. With the combined forces of the COVID Pandemic, the annual rejection of dozens of Mashadi students a year from local Yeshivas, the fear of a radicalized and politicized public school system, most married parents of school age children are advocating that our community deliver our own Yeshiva that should strive to be the best, like all we seek to do.

It is exciting that our current Central Board has changed the development plans for a new community center, to now house a state-of-the-art Jewish Elementary Day School, a major milestone for the Mashadi Community, and a tribute to the sacrifice of our ancestors. I am thrilled that the internal debate amongst community leadership is no longer about whether we need a school business, but rather how we ought to achieve the establishment of a top notch traditional Sephardic and Zionistic Mashadi Jewish school that is open to all?



Why is Everyone Telling Me to “Follow My Passion”?

EDUCATION

Emanuel Mordekhai

During one's late years in high school and early years in college, each student faces a tough, and important, life decision: What do I want to do in my career? In today's day and age, that question is becoming increasingly complicated to answer. I am not going to pretend to be some sort of academic expert or career-guru. However, since I have already been through the struggle of choosing a career path at university, I wanted to share some wisdom that I learned along the way that I think every student can benefit from.

Modern-day entrepreneurs, like Gary Vee and Steve Jobs, have preached to adolescents that everyone has that one thing that they are extremely passionate about, and if they don't pursue a career in that field, they will regret it for the rest of their life. Plainly, this advice is both vague and misleading. Nevertheless, these passion-preaching celebrities are very convincing.

Going into college with my major/career path already decided, I was quite confident that I wanted to stick with that decision. However, after hearing all the passion-buzz both on social media and from my peers, I began to second guess my career choice. What if the major I chose is not my true passion? How could I know for sure what my true passion is? Am I making a huge mistake? This relentless pressure to make sure you are following your "passion" can cause students tremendous amounts of stress, especially for those who have no idea what career path they want to take yet.

While still in my early years of college, I luckily came across the following article on Forbes titled: "'Following Your Passion' Is Dead' – Here's What To Replace It With" by Mr. Michal Bohanes. The wisdom in this article redefined the way I thought about my career, allowing me to be more confident with my decisions.

Mr. Bohanes claims that not everyone is born with a 'built-in passion for life' that they must pursue at all costs. He referenced a research study that discovered that one's passions are not fixed for life. If you are passionate about something right now, you may not be as passionate about it in five years from now. So, if you ride with the "follow your passion" philosophy, you might get frustrated and give up on that career a few years down the line when your passions shift in other directions. Yes, in some cases people have a

unique calling that they want to pursue for the rest of their career. However, for most of us, this is not the case.

So, if you don't have a passion to follow, then what should you do instead? To this question, the article ended with a truly intelligent quote by entrepreneur Ben Horwitz that he gave at a college graduation: Following your passion is a very "me"-centered view of the world. When you go through life, what you'll find is what you take out of the world over time — be it money, cars, stuff, accolades — is much less important than what you've put into the world. So my recommendation would be follow your

contribution. Find the thing that you're great at, put that into the world, contribute to others, help the world be better and that is the thing to follow.

Most significant in this quote is his use of the word contribution. When you have the mindset that you are going to follow your passion, you are essentially asking yourself "how can I get the most out of the world/my career?" This is a selfish way to view your life. If you shift your mindset to following your contribution, you will instead be asking yourself the question "how can I give the most to the world through my career?" In terms of how to figure out what you want to contribute to the world, the author says there are two important questions that you should be asking yourself:

1) What are my strengths? 2) What does the market need? In other words, what am I good at that the world needs? By constantly asking yourself these two questions, you will not only find a career that works for you but also, according to the author, you will develop a passion for what you are doing.

Even if you do have some passion that you want to pursue with all your heart, you will never be able to say with true confidence that you are on the correct path. So instead, have a "follow your contribution" mentality and, according to the author, you are on track to much higher levels of career satisfaction.

**I highly recommend all college and late high-school students read the full article by Michal Bohanes on forbes.com

To Rent or to Buy?

Kevin Hakimi

MONEY MATTERS

When it comes to one's living situation, many people will come across this question at some point in their life (especially in their youth) - to buy or to rent?

Many people have this misconception that renting is "throwing money down the drain" (you can thank your grandparents for that), while owning a home is an appreciating investment that can help you build your fortune while having a nice roof over your head. Actually, without crunching specific numbers, depending on your interest rate and the term of your mortgage, most people usually don't begin significantly cutting into their principal loan amount or recuperating their closing costs until at least 7 years into their mortgage, and in some cases, at the halfway point of their amortization schedule (15 years on a 30 year fixed rate mortgage). So for those first few years, you're paying primarily interest, taxes, and insurance (not to mention repairs and maintenance!). Basically, throwing your money "down the drain"!

Below are some of the pro's and con's of renting vs. owning your home:

Renting

Pros:

- Moving flexibility
- Predictable monthly expenses (leases may change annually but are stable on a monthly basis, utilities become somewhat predictable over time)
- No need to do repairs or fixes for the most part
- Lower initial capital contribution - maybe a 1 month security deposit, an application fee, and possibly a 1 month broker fee
- Reduced financial risk - you're bound by your short lease term, that's it!
- Free time! Go backpacking in Europe for a month. Enjoy football Sundays!

Cons:

- You may be at the mercy of a poor landlord. They can raise your rent significantly or take their sweet time in fixing things in your home. If you're renting a house, they may decide to sell and leave you searching for a new home.
- You may outgrow your living situation
- Less freedom to do as you please
- You aren't building equity

Buying

Pros:

- Home value can increase over time
- Tax deductions (interest deduction, as long as you're itemizing and your itemized deductions are greater than the standard deduction)
- Preserving your cash through home equity (may provide a higher return than a savings account) and being able to

build equity over the long run as you cut into your principal loan amount

- Could lock in a long term fixed rate loan, giving you stable monthly mortgage payments
- A starter home may provide you with an easier transition if you choose to move to a more expensive house
- Privacy and freedom to do as you please. You want a dog? Go for it!

Cons:

- Your hard work, time, and sweat! Even if you don't pay for it, you will physically have to spend your time and energy fixing typical household issues, which can range from routine problems to major issues (not to mention those who pay for work still need to spend time finding a quality person who will get the job done).
- High capital contribution (at least 20% down, 5% closing costs)
- Higher financial risk
- More bills to keep track of
- Less predictable monthly expenses (property taxes, garbage removal, water and sewer/cesspool (hello Kings Point!), major and minor repairs (appliances, roof, pipes, boiler, HVAC, plumbing, etc.), pest control, landscaping, property insurance, etc. These monthly expenses can equate to tens (maybe hundreds) of thousands of dollars a year!
- Illiquid asset that may take months to sell (and a bit of a hassle). Less moving flexibility.

When making this decision you must consider your financial situation. Do you have the cash available to comfortably cover the down payment, closing costs, annual maintenance reserves (about 2% of the home value as a rule of thumb) and other homeowner expenses, and still have about a year's worth of mortgage payments available as reserves? If you take out a large loan, does your current income support the large monthly mortgage payments you'll be making for the foreseeable future? Do you have any other uses for your cash? Perhaps there are other opportunities or investments that may make more financial sense than using that cash as a down payment for a home (which some will argue isn't necessarily an investment).

Overall, homeownership is generally considered more costly than renting, although if you plan on staying put in your home for a long time (at least 7+ years) it may prove to be the most beneficial. So finances aside, there's plenty to consider!

Interest rates have been at historic lows which have made this debate a little more lopsided than previous times for those who are on the fence, but with interest rates on the rise, it's something to think about!

Inflation: Does it Really Matter?

Sidonya Rahamanan

From as far back as I could remember, rampant inflation was something I learned about in history books. The prime example I recalled was when Germany battled hyperinflation after WW1, when the German government printed unbacked money and underwent massive debt in an attempt to win the war. The result was that money was worthless – at some point one US dollar was worth 4.2 trillion German Papiermark (the currency at the time). When my dad lived in Israel he told me stories of running to the toy store after getting his paycheck to buy a bicycle or a basketball because he knew in a day's time he wouldn't be able to afford it. This was due to the rise in inflation. At the peak, inflation in Israel hit 130% in the 80s.

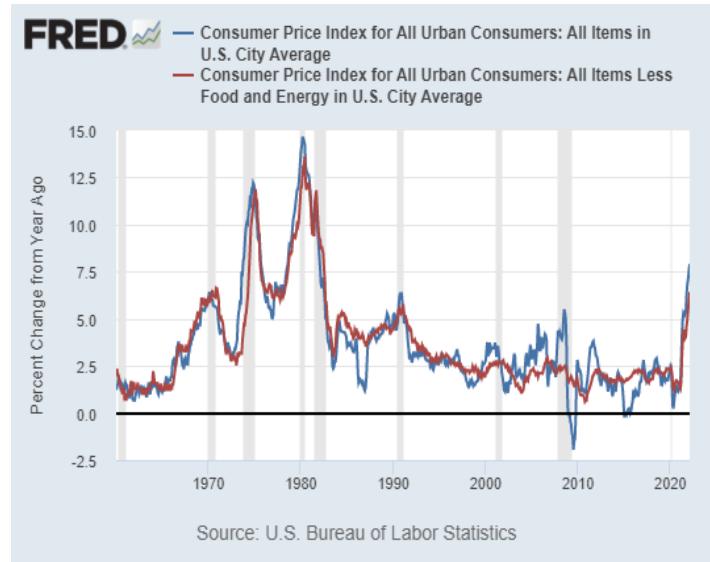
In a Covid recovery world, inflation has become a hot button word to characterize one of the biggest risks for the American economy. But we aren't seeing the impact in the way the Germans did who made dresses out of worthless bills, or my dad who had to spend every earned penny as quickly as possible driven by the fear that it would lose value in mere days. Being that the impacts of inflation are not detectable to the untrained eye, it is easy to be dismissed. This article will divulge into the causes of inflation and the impacts it currently has, as well as what it means if it continues to run unchecked.

In 2021, the Consumer Price Index (CPI) soared to 7%, which was the biggest annual increase since 1982. The CPI measures the average price of a market basket of consumer goods, which is one of the primary indicators for inflation. Some sectors that accounted for the rise in prices were shelter and used cars. The rise in prices is largely attributed to the supply chain bottleneck, driven by compromised labor due to Covid. The pandemic caused changing supply and demand dynamics because of a shift in consumer needs; for example, quarantine and a shift to virtual work propelled the need for electronics which caused a strain on the semiconductor industry. The scarcity of this product led to the drop in production of vehicles, which in turn led to the spike in the used car industry. These events have a domino effect and flow into other aspects of the economy.

The spike in the auto industry is just one visual consequence of the supply chain imbalance and inflation. While the auto example is a prime culprit of pandemic related supply snags, inflation has also manifested itself in more obscure ways – such as Dollar Tree's increased prices or the cream cheese shortage, making it

impossible to find Temp Tee cream cheese in supermarkets or bagel shops.

What does this mean moving forward? The Federal Reserve has been prompted to respond to inflationary concerns after they have proven to be persistent rather than transitional, meaning they will not just subside as Covid cases drop. In times of rising prices and expanding economic growth, the Fed has different tools at its disposal to put brakes on the economy and prevent inflation from running loose - a primary tool being hiking interest rates. The issue with rising rates is that this action not only curbs inflation, but growth as well. For example, in a low rate environment, companies are more likely to take out loans to fund new projects, fueling the economy from a top down approach. When companies increase investment and take on new innovative projects, they need to hire labor to support these efforts. Apart from interest rates, the government provided the stimulus to help pump money into the economy which is now fading, causing additional alarm that growth slowdown is imminent. Currently, inflation is outpacing growth post-pandemic and a rise in rates may dampen the recovery outlook. The market has priced in the expectation for the Fed to hike rates 4 times this year and the Fed has remained flexible to make any necessary moves to control the rise in inflation. Markets have been resilient thus far despite the rise in inflation and Omicron cases, however 2022 may be the year where the market finally takes a toll. Many theorize that the market has been going up for far too long and this year it may reach its breaking point.



One Day or Two Days?

Rabbi Mosheh Aziz

In the Torah, the holidays are always prescribed to have only one day of Yom Tov as opposed to two days. Thus, for example, Shavuot is kept only one day, whereas outside Israel it is observed for two days. Sukkot only has one day of Yom Tov where once may not work (not two), followed by six days of Chol Hamoed, followed again by only one day of Yom Tov for Shemini Atzeret (not two). This indeed continues to be the practice in Israel until today, as prescribed by the Torah.

Outside of Israel, due to confusion regarding the calculation of the calendar, the rabbis instituted a second day of Yom Tov. There are some who suggest that the practice of observing two days of Yom Tov dates back over 2500 years, and was first instituted by the prophet Yechezkel and Daniel when Israel was first exiled to Bavel. And even though today we already have a fixed calendar, and there is no longer any doubt regarding the correct identity of the day of Yom Tov, rabbinic law requires that we continue the traditions of our parents and keep two days of Yom Tov.). The observance of the second day – Yom Tov Sheni Shel Galuyot – is required by rabbinic law.

The institution of observing a second day of Yom Tov applies only outside Eretz Yisrael. In Eretz Yisrael, only one day is celebrated as the Torah explains. The only exception to this rule is Rosh Hashanah – even in Eretz Yisrael, Rosh Hashanah is celebrated for two days.

What happens if an individual from outside Israel travels to Israel for the holidays, or vice versa? If one was traveling and moving permanently, then the law is clear that he would begin keeping like the native residents there. For example, a person who moves from the Diaspora to Israel observes only one day of Yom Tov just like native residents of Israel. Even though he had been observing two days of Yom Tov his entire life, once he becomes a resident of Israel, he observes only one day.

For this circumstance, Maran (Rav Yosef Karo, 16th century) in his responsa applied the principle from the Mishna that one who leaves his home, but has in mind to return must observe the holiday according to the custom of where he came from, and not according to the custom of where he is staying. Maran argues forcefully that this is the correct practice, and that the common practice of his day was that those who came from outside Israel to Israel for the holiday would observe the second day of Yom Tov, and make their own Minyanim with Torah reading like the second day of Yom Tov. Based on this principle, Maran says that an individual who lives in Israel but is spending the holiday outside Israel should keep only

one day of Yom Tov (just like his place of residence). However, Maran says that such an individual should not publicly do melacha. If such a person wants to work or do something which is forbidden on Yom Tov, he should only do so privately and not publicly. For example, if he wishes to drive, or turn on the lights, or buy or sell an item, he must do so privately and not in a way which would disrespect the Jewish community which is residing there and keeping the 2nd day of Yom Tov.

HALACHA

The Hacham Tzevi (Rav Tzevi Hirsch Ashkenazi, 17th Century) in his response disagrees with Maran's contention that we should apply the principle that one who leaves his home but has in mind to return should observe the holiday according to the custom of where he came from. Hacham Tzevi was asked about those outside of Israel who travel to Israel for the holidays, if they should observe one day or two days of Yom Tov. He says that the principle regarding one who leaves his home but has in mind to return only applies to matters of minhag, not matters of halacha or of mitzvot in the Torah. Only in areas where, in essence, the customs of both communities are permitted according to halacha and but different communities had different customs do we say that an individual should be strict and observe according to the custom of the community he came from. However, this situation is not only a matter of custom. In fact, if a resident of Israel decided to keep two days of Yom Tov instead of one day, he would be violating a Torah commandment not to add on to the Torah! Therefore, Hacham Tzevi ruled that those who go to Israel for the holidays must keep only one day of Yom Tov. He rules that on the second day they should pray as they do in Israel, and they may even do melakha.

The final halacha continues to be a matter of wide-ranging machloket with many opinions. Rav Ben Haim's opinion is as follows. Other rabbis may differ or disagree. One who travels from outside Israel to Israel for the holidays: If the person owns an apartment or home in Israel, he should keep only one day of Yom Tov in Israel. It is as if he is going back to his own home, even if it is only temporary. If the person is single (unmarried), and in theory if the circumstances were right (he would find the perfect spouse in Israel and his expense would be taken care of) he would move to Israel, he should also keep only one day. It is on this basis that students studying in yeshiva or seminary in Israel should only observe one day of Yom Tov.

If an individual is married however, and does not have a residence in Israel, he should be strict and not do melacha on the second day of Yom Tov. On the second day he should pray and put on Tefillin as though it is a regular day (or Chol Hamoed, depending on the holiday). However, he should not work on Yom Tov or engage in any acts of Melacha which are prohibited on Yom Tov such as driving or turning on lights. An Israeli who is not keeping the second day of Yom Tov may perform these acts for him.

One who travels from Israel to outside Israel for the holidays: Such an individual, whether single or married, should follow the opinion of Maran. In essence, he only keeps one day of Yom Tov even though he is outside Israel. The second day for him is a regular day (or Chol Hamoed, depending on the holiday) and he should pray accordingly in private. Out of respect for the Jewish community residing there, he may only perform melacha in private for himself and not in public. He should not perform acts of melacha for the other Jews residing there, though he may participate in the meals and holiday rituals together with the Jews who are keeping two days of Yom Tov.

Dating Advice

Haleh Banilevi



COURTING

About 10 years ago, having four single children, I became interested in matchmaking, the dating scene and the ongoing ‘marriage crisis’ and dating problems in our community. Due to said reasons, I joined the UMJCA Marriage Committee, read many dating related books, attended several seminars, became a matchmaker on different Jewish websites, and developed close relationships with matchmakers from many communities in order to better understand the obstacles facing our singles today.

Matchmaking is not only about sending two people on a date, but rather it involves guiding them throughout the dating process. It is important for singles (of all ages) to have a strong support system. A trusted third party, who knows both sides can serve as a bridge and eliminate potential misunderstandings and miscommunications between the young couple. This ‘bridge’ does not have to be a matchmaker, and is often a Rabbi, a dating mentor, or trustworthy friend. As an example, I once set up a gentleman and a lady who were both in their 30’s. Following their first date, both gave me a call and described the same concern. Both were certain that the other was uninterested, and did not want to go on another date. After speaking with both of them, it became evident to myself that they both got the incorrect impression of the other. The interest was there, but they each lacked the confidence to see it, and having a mediator to bridge this miscommunication prevented the relationship from abruptly ending.

After speaking with countless singles over the past years, I’ve heard many of their complaints, needs and errors made. Below some of the most prominent mistakes made by singles in the dating scene are listed:

- **Playing Games:** Since most fear rejection, one often feels the need to play games. Stop playing games. Be straight up and honest. Honesty and healthy communication are necessary.
- **Being too picky:** Making a long list of all the qualities that you’re looking for in a partner will only limit your options and set you back. Pick three traits that you think are an absolute must and concentrate on those qualities. Look past your “type” and push yourself to get out of your comfort zone. It’s important to remember that the key to success is compromise.
- **Giving up too easily:** Many people give up on a solid relationship thinking there’s someone better around the corner. Think twice before you let go of a person who has many of the qualities you’re looking for.
- **Fear of rejection:** The number one reason why you’re not reaching out to someone you are interested in is the fear of being rebuffed. Don’t allow this fear to prevent you from finding your soulmate.

- **Texting:** Don’t have important conversations over text. It is better that they are conducted in person, as much can be lost in translation and misunderstood.

- **Red flags:** Don’t ignore red flags. Doing this will only make a break-up more difficult. Red flags include lack of respect, lack of interest towards the relationship, refusing to compromise, dishonesty, inconsistency, and inconsideration of the other person.

- **Giving up:** Dating can be very difficult and there are times when the journey is more frustrating than fun, especially as one gets older. So instead of focusing on having an enjoyable date you’re wondering why you can’t seem to find “the one”. Keeping hope alive can be a struggle but by keeping a positive attitude and believing that it can happen at any age will give you something to look forward to. A few years ago, I set up a couple who had never been married and had given up on dating and marriage. He was in his 50’s and she was in her 40’s. Now I have the pleasure to see them happily married B”H.

- **High Expectations:** When you go on a date with high expectations you will most likely end up getting disappointed. Try to keep your expectations low and you will be pleasantly surprised.

Girls, try not to be clingy and needy; it pushes guys away. Don’t talk about commitment and past relationships too soon. Show appreciation when he makes an effort to plan a date and PLEASE put your phones away.

Guys, what happened to chivalry? All ladies want to be treated like ladies. Be a gentleman, hold the door for her, call when you say you will call, don’t be late, show her you respect her, and you value her opinion. I promise it will go a long way.

It's a good rule to go on at least three dates before saying no. I know many happily married couples who had a lousy first date.

Look to find happiness before finding love. An unhappy person cannot possibly make another person happy. Try to work on yourself, meet your body goals, exercise, dress to impress, and get professional help if you need to. Make sure you feel good about yourself. Remember, confidence is the most attractive trait!

Finally, good manners go a long way. At the end of the day, the golden rule always applies; treat others how you want to be treated. GOOD LUCK!

A Tribute to Mrs. Behnaz Dilmanian & The Former Megillah Team

Talia Zabihi

Upon immigrating to the United States, the Mashadi Community was a tight-knit body, led in large part by the newly established Mashadi Youth Committee. The Youth Committee, with the aim of keeping members informed on community affairs, began publishing a small newsletter called *Megillah*. Behnaz Dilmanian noticed an ad in one of the early publications, as the newsletter was looking for an employee. With her degree in Translation from The College of Mass Communications and various other achievements in the field of journalism in Iran, she was intrigued by the opportunity. She started off as a volunteer contributor and was soon elevated to the position of Managing Editor.

Upon Behnaz taking over, *Megillah* became quarterly and slowly started resembling a news magazine. With her at the helm, the distinguished efforts of Mehran Etessami and the help of the editorial board, *Megillah* saw a period of continued success that had a great impact on the evolution of the Mashadi Community for nearly 30 years. Community youth increasingly began to use *Megillah* as a platform to speak their minds and express their ideas. Editorials were written that either shook our way of thinking or even reinforced it. Writers would profile accomplished community members in the field of business, education or

medicine. While others would write restaurant reviews, movie reviews and entertain us with satirical articles or fake letters to the 'editor'.

When Behnaz's tenure began, the world was in the early days of the 'computer era', which made obtaining article submissions, photographs and typesetting a tremendously strenuous task for a startup publication and one person to manage. Behnaz persisted as she loved working alongside the vibrant community youth, and never missed a beat making sure each publication came out quarterly. She was assisted by the countless hours of volunteer work by Mehran Etessami, among other and overcame these challenges and preserved *Megillah*.

The *Megillah* for years served as the cultural fabric of our community by keeping us all united, in spite of our differences. As a member of the Mashadi community, I am grateful for Behnaz and the entire team for their invaluable service. We hope to see many more issues documenting the evolution of our unique and beautiful community and serving as a record of history for generations to come.

Kosher Munchie's Top Three Mid Price Restaurants

Ronnie Aziz & Eddie Kelaty

I hate to sound like an old-timer, but back in my day there were just a few kosher restaurants on the scene. For some, it was Burger Nosh on Jewel Avenue in Queens, now long gone. For the younger crowd it was the heyday of Carlos and Gabby's in Lawrence, sadly now a shell of what it used to be. And of course, rookie and seasoned "foodies" alike will always keep a special place in our hearts and stomachs for Monday's Dougies all-you-can-eat special.

But these days, the scene has absolutely transformed. Dozens of restaurants to choose from, all over Long Island and neighboring boroughs. Restaurant openings, different cuisines, and fresh tastes are constantly sought after by anyone and everyone with a yearning palate and a growling belly. Instagram feeds are flooded with the new unique dish "you gotta try", be it from the 350 square foot spot at Sandwich bar to the hustle and bustle of Wall Street at Reserve Cut, and everywhere in between. There's no question the foodie scene has grown, and thankfully so has the number of kosher restaurants.

But today comes with new pricey challenges. While a night at a high end place is always a delight, the bill is an unwelcome

RESTAURANT REVIEWS

reminder of what's going on in the world. Restaurants are short staffed, some adding a so-called "Covid Tax" on checks. Costs of food, supplies, labor, and gas have trickled into the menu prices we see when we sit to enjoy a meal, and not for businesses to get rich, but to just stay open.

That's why a lot of people are turning to the moderately priced restaurants, the bang-for-buck spots that don't compromise on quality. I personally love those venues and try to frequent these places as often as I can. As my friends will tell you, I'm constantly being asked what's a good spot to take friends or a date, so here it is, my Top 5 Mid-priced Restaurants, in no particular order.

Izzy's BBQ Smokehouse

Hands down, my personal favorite. Izzy's is an award-winning smokehouse in the Crown Heights neighborhood of Brooklyn. Pit-master Izzy Eidelman brings a local twist to a Southern tradition, combining simple ingredients with quality meats to create a unique and laid-back dining experience for the BBQ lover so that every meal feels like the 4th of July.



This small order-at-the-counter place has been so successful that it had to expand next door and open a party room to accommodate for large groups. With new locations in the Upper West side and now Miami, Izzy's has always been worth the trip for me. Their claim to fame are the smoked delicacies such as Dino ribs, brisket, and burnt ends which are absolute must-tries if you ever make the trip. What brings me back for more are the underrated sandwiches, of which the smoked fried chicken (with pastrami when available) is my top pick, especially when paired with Izzy's Thursday Night Cholent. You won't leave here disappointed.

Chimichurri Charcoal Chicken

My top “bang for your buck” spot today. Chimichurri is a Portuguese barbecue restaurant and heaven on earth for chicken lovers as it offers authentic Portuguese style of barbecuing chicken to perfection over an open pit of fire. Chimichurri's popularity has grown at rapid pace, opening locations in Carle Place and Oceanside in addition to their original Cedarhurst store. There is a decent amount of seating at each order-at-the-counter venue, and there's no question as to why there are always food deliveries going out: Feasting on Chimi won't put a dent in your wallet.



The menu offers plenty to choose from but my go-to item is the Portuguese rice bowl with either grilled or fried chicken (for a few bucks go wild and do both). They also have

fantastic fresh wings, your choice of either Charcoal or Southern fried, plain or tossed in any of their sauces which they've conveniently ranked on a spice scale. I'd highly suggest the Charcoal chicken tossed in Chimichurri sauce and the Southern fried chicken tossed in mango habanero.

The dark-horse deal however, is the hefty-portioned half chicken special with two sides. The menu touts this item as a “customer favorite” which I certainly don't doubt. With a plethora of sides to choose from, this \$15 item will almost certainly have you leaving

Marani Glatt Kosher Georgian Restaurants



In my opinion the best restaurant in Queens. Marani is a sit down restaurant that serves authentic classic Georgian dishes alongside unique cocktails. The two level restaurant, one floor for dairy one for meat, has become a destination spot for foodies across the Metropolitan area.

On the casual lower level (which closes early by the way), I'd highly recommend the delicious Georgian speciality known as khachapuri, which is a bread bowl with a cheese center, into which a raw egg is cracked and stirred just before it's served. Upstairs, where the dining room is more formal, you can't go wrong with any of the well-priced kebabs, meat pies, and khinkali, which are doughy soup dumplings with beef, lamb, and herbs.

Whether you go gushten or mosteen, Marani is a one stop shop for a great dining experience and kind wait staff. Cancel any after-dinner plans you'll have, Marani can certainly put you in a food coma without breaking the bank.

Changing Laws in Changing Times

Robert Bichoupan, Esq.

As we start the new year, I think back on my thirty years of practice. As a young attorney, I was invited to write articles regularly for the Megillah publication and at one point I was invited to write two articles each month. Although it's been years since I've written in this magazine, it seems like only yesterday that I wrote my last article. The opinions shared with you in the following paragraphs are my own and are not intended to be legal or tax advice, but merely my own thoughts. As always if there are any questions about anything written here, feel free to reach out to me.

What a different world we live in than the one that existed a couple of years ago. Due to the COVID-19 hardships, many tenants are

LAWYER LOGIC

behind on their rental payments and many property owners are behind on their mortgage payments. Some simply cannot afford to pay. Some lost loved ones and find themselves in a real bind. Others received government funds but chose not to pay their obligations.

To make matters worse, immediately prior to COVID-19, New York State passed a series of new rules affecting Landlord and Tenant rights and obligations to one another. These rules broadened rights for tenants and imposed additional obligations or reduced protections for Landlords. Tenant advocates may say this was long overdue and leveled the playing field. These rules included additional notice requirements, diminished ability to review tenant

backgrounds, and prohibitions against requiring more than one month security or charging more than \$50 in late fees. The results of these rule changes and the several COVID moratoriums are that landlords may find it difficult to collect rent, and have lost many of the enforcement tools or penalties to use to enforce their rights with respect to non performing tenants. Upon the lifting of the moratorium, it is generally expected that there will be a surge of eviction proceedings due to the nearly two-year delay in allowing landlords to repossess their properties or to collect long overdue payments from tenants. Most agree that there will be long delays in court actions due to this backlog. My expectation is that there will be a lot of settlements and a lot of waivers of sums due by Landlords just to regain possession of their properties.

On the mortgage front, lenders have it a bit better in that NYS did not severely curtail their rights as with landlords. Notwithstanding, many lenders wisely have decided to pursue alternate remedies or to delay foreclosure proceedings to allow homeowners the opportunity to reinstate, modify, and otherwise cure delinquencies. However, some portion of those delinquencies will not be cured, or cannot be cured, and so there is an expectation of an increase in foreclosures in the near future.

Due to the change in administration in the executive branch of the US government, there has been a dramatic shift in focus and intention with regard to estate planning. During the Obama administration, Congress increased estate tax exemptions dramatically to \$5 million per person. The Trump administration saw a doubling of that exemption to \$10 million per person. Both exemption amounts were indexed to inflation. The current exemption amount is, therefore, nearly \$12.06 million per person. Nevertheless, the current Biden administration and Congress have advocated for a raise in revenues for their budget and spending proposals, by reducing the exemption amount, so as to collect more

in estate taxes. The proposed exemptions have reduced the exemption available to US citizens to \$3.5 million per person, and more recently to a return to the Obama era limits of \$5 million per person. However, this issue is still in flux. There has also been further discussion of increasing the federal tax rate on estates from its current 40% and eliminating the step-up in basis at death in favor of carryover basis. This change in basis rules is potentially huge. Whereas previously, upon death, many beneficiaries would enjoy an elimination of capital gains tax on the sale of their parents' assets after death, they now would face whatever capital gains taxes would have been due had the decedent sold the property during their own lifetime. However, as of this writing, to my knowledge, these rules have not yet been changed.

The standard annual gift exemption, which had been \$15K, has now been raised to \$16K. This means that anybody can give any other person gifts of \$16K per year, free of taxes. Most student tuition expenses are allowed in excess of this amount and there is still no limit on gifts between US citizen spouses.

The SALT cap deduction is still at \$10K (referring to the deduction of New York State taxes such as income taxes and real property taxes from federal income). However, in 2022, New York State enacted a workaround for the \$10K SALT deduction limitation in its budget bill signed in the spring of 2021.

I hope to further explore these and other issues in next month's article but will conclude by offering this: these are tumultuous times, they will not last forever. While they last, there may yet be opportunities for bettering the situation for those who keep a level head. I hope to continue to discuss these opportunities with you soon.

Parasha Humor

Michael Hakimian

JOKETIME

Dear reader, if you don't enjoy corny jokes, please immediately turn the page to the next article. In the event that you proceed to read the below, please direct any and all complaints to the MYC, and demand a full refund on your purchase of this free publication.

Q: Why was Noah ready and willing to build the ark and leave humanity behind?

A: Because his mother in law wasn't on the boarding list
Q: Why did Cain get jealous and kill his brother in the field?
A: He tried to talk it out but he wasn't really 'Abel'.
Q: Why did Abraham choose monotheism?
A: Pagan life was getting a bit 'idol'

Q: Why did Sarah laugh when she heard that she would be a mother at 90?
Q: Why did Pharaoh dream of skinny corn eating fat corn?
A: Because he was gluten free. [Sorry, that was 'corn'y]
Q: Why did Judah offer to be Joseph's slave instead of the accused Benjamin?

A: Because Abraham already gave away Ishmael's baby clothes...
Q: Why did a starving Esav trade the first born blessing for a pot of Jacob's red lentil stew?

A: Because the 'khoresh lapeh' was worth it, even back then...
Q: Why did Abraham pay 400 silver coins for the Cave of Machpela, when Ephron offered it free?
A: Ephron tried to 'taaroff', but Avraham didn't 'cave' in.
Q: Why did the brothers tear Joseph's coat, toss him in a pit, & sell him to Egypt?
A: Ask your older brother...

A: His back hurt, and he heard that Egypt had a good 'Cairo'-practor.
Q: Why did Joseph embalm Jacob when he died?
A: He missed his 'mummy'.
Q: Why did Moses stop to see the burning bush?

- A: It was ‘berry’ interesting.
Q: Why did the angel of death ‘Pass Over’ the houses with blood painted on their doorposts?
A: Because he was wearing all white.
Q: Why didn’t Pharaoh let the Jews go, even when it got really bad?
A: He was in De’Nile.
Q: Why did Moses & the Jews cross the Red Sea?
A: To get to the other side.
Q: Why did Hashem sustain the Israelites in the desert with Manna?
A: Hummus wasn’t invented yet.
Q: Why do we fast before the Megillah, then curse the memory of Haman after reading?
A: It’s hard to stay angry after eating Hamantashans...
Q: Why are the precious stones on the breastplate of the ‘Kohen Gadol’ written about in the Torah?
A: To prove that ancient Jews dealt in jewelry ‘on the books’.
Q: Why was the Tabernacle built from wood beams, metal sockets, & animal coverings
- A: The concrete union was on strike.
Q: Why did the Jews pressure Aaron into making the golden calves?
A: They missed idol worship and were in the MOO’d.
Q: Why did the people complain to Moses about the ‘manna’, and cry for meat in the desert?
A: Maybe they were Mashadi.
Q: Why didn’t Bilaam’s talking donkey simply say that there was an armed angel on the road?
A: Because he was a ‘khar’ (transliterated from Farsi)
Q: Why did Moses make a copper serpent to heal those bitten by snakes in the plague?
A: Because gold was at an ‘all time high’ after they used it for the Golden Calves...
Q: Why did Pinchas famously grab a spear and stab it through the sinning couple?
A: Because idol worship is wrong, and he wanted them to ‘get the point’

*This Section Has Been Dedicated by
Mrs. Miriam Hajibay & Family*

*In Loving Memory of Mr. Sami Hajibay
L’Iluy Nishmat Shmuel Ben Avraham*

This Section Has Been Dedicated by Mr. Michael Livi

In Honor Of:

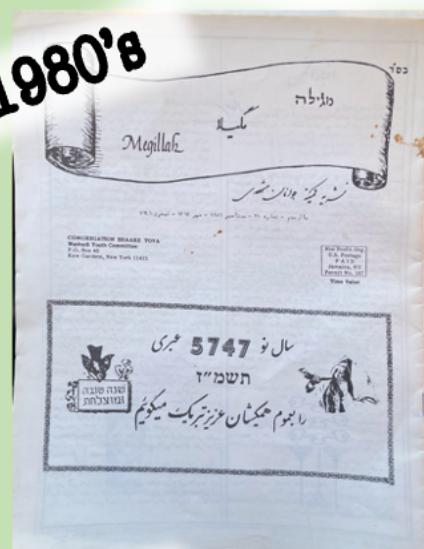
His Loving Family: Mr. Herbert, Mrs. Monica, Ms. Valerie and Ms. Ariella Livi

In Recognition Of:

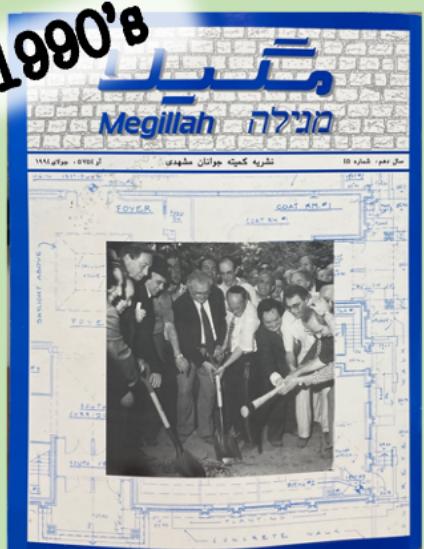
His Fellow MYC Members: Kevin Nassimi, Adam Livi, Jacob Gorjian, Brooke Rahaman, Kayla Ebrani, Rachel Aziz, Kayla Hakimian, Emma Hakimi, Ilan Bassali, Lauren Dilamani, Matin Hakimian, Shawn Alishahian, Noga Arjang and Matt Livi

megillah Time Machine

1980's



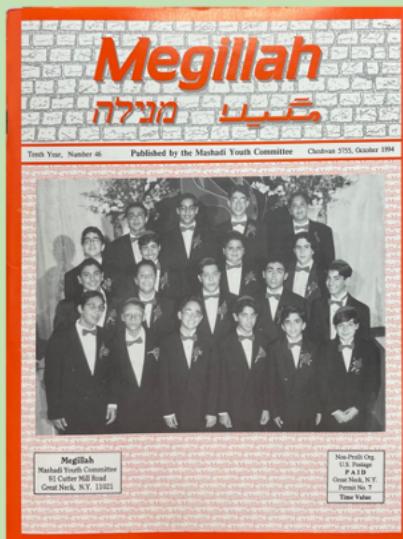
1990's



megillah



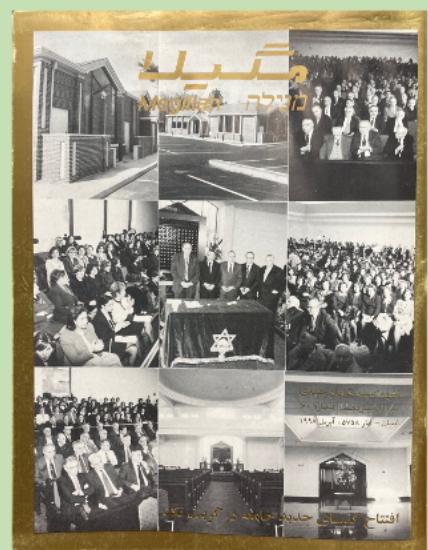
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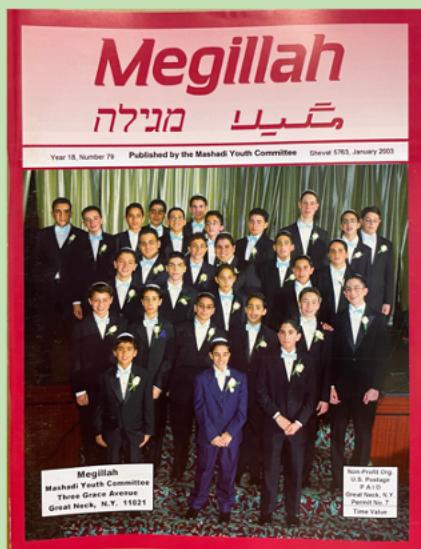
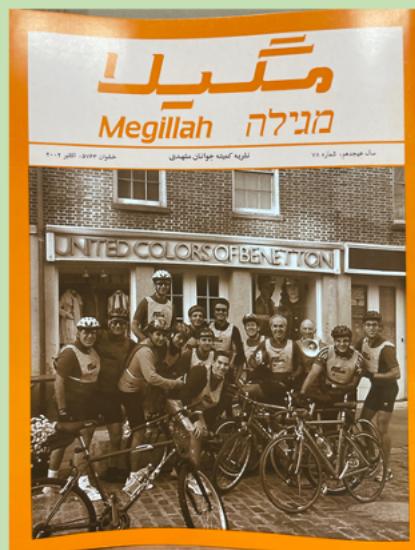
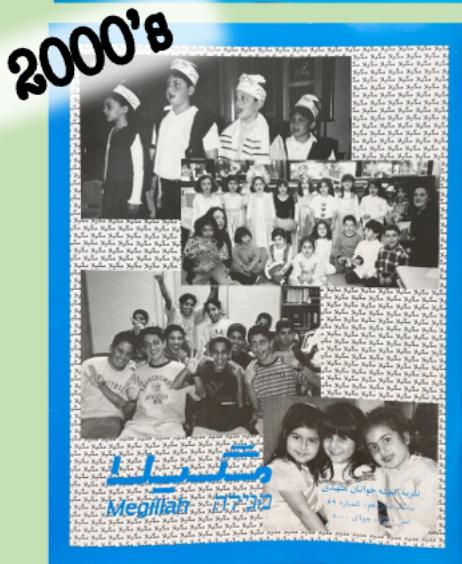
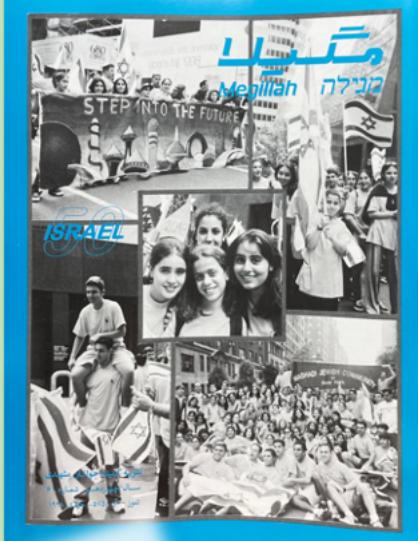
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Engagements (Tishrei – Adar II 5782)



Josh Aharonoff & Sharon Smilovich



Matthew Livi & Shana Deil



Emanuel Karmely & Yasmine Aziz



David Dilamani & Naomi Sohet



Gad Hakimian & Alessia Abigail Wolkowicz



Gabriel Kohanim & Sarah Ohayon



Daniel Namdar & Isabelle Benilevi



Aaron Kohanim & Natascha Hakim



Solomon Birnbaum & Vanessa Nassimi



Ziv Cohen & Emily Galapo



Danial Rangkar & Khaterah Hakimian



Joey Yehounatan & Natali Nassimian

Engagements (Tishrei – Adar II 5782)



Adam Livi & Lauren
Loloi



Daniel Nitzani & Joelle
Metsch



Tomer Enayatian &
Limor Heskia



Mikey Nassimi & Tehilla
Liviem



Max Aziz & Laura Bokser



Kevin Nassimi & Shirley
Bessalely



Yonatan Berger &
Hodaya Goodman



Emanuel Levy &
Elisheva Nassimiha



Don Bichoupan & Aryella
Moreh



Kovi Leiter & Tehilla
Bassalian



Mat Hakimi & Rachel
Aharonoff



Mazyar Kashani &
Ashley Yosifon

Photos

MYC PURIM 2019



SUMMER RETREAT 2020: DEWEY BEACH, DE





MYC SUMMER RETREAT 2021: CAMP SENECA LAKE





MYC WINTER RETREAT 2022: GREEK PEAK MOUNTAIN RESORT





MASHADI SENIOR CLUB



MASHADI SENIOR CLUB PICNIC: SUMMER 2021





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TODA

54 Steamboat Road
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Report from the UMJCA Central Board

Dear fellow community members,

Congratulations on the first publication of the Megillah magazine in many years. We want to wish the team at Megillah good luck on this important initiative. As per the request of the Megillah, below are some of the items the Central Board has been focused on during this term.

At the start of the term our goal was to keep the Community united as a family, work with all community members as a team, while modernizing and significantly increasing many services and programs. This is in addition to planning the development of the new Community Center, fundraising for it and creating and opening our new and extremely needed Jewish Day School. Please find below some of the updates and initiatives of the Central Board during this term.

Response to COVID-19

COVID-19 presented many challenges for the UMJCA. Our goal was to remain united and connected during the pandemic while carefully considering the health and wellness of our community members. Below are some initiatives of the Central Board in relation to the COVID-19 pandemic:

- The UMJCA quickly responded to the pandemic in its early days by being the first to close our buildings
- Implementation of temporary outdoor tents and many Minyanim so that the community could continue services in a safe manner during the Covid-19 Pandemic
- Help was provided regarding vaccination sites, vaccination appointments, masking, and general guidance
- Assistance and guidance were provided in many ways to community members such as social, financial, marital, Rabbinical, etc.
- The buildings and programs were gradually reopened in an efficient, proper, and healthy manner

Financial viability

Maintaining UMJCA's financial viability was of utmost importance during this term of the Central Board. Below are some initiatives of the Central Board in relation to the community finances:

- The addition of additional Minyanim, especially during high holidays, provided congregants the opportunity to pray in a healthy and safe manner while also increasing our donations significantly
- A modernized approach was taken to seek government grants, including several important security grants as well as Covid related grants
- Implemented alternative fundraising methods such as Go Fund me, Stock contributions, modernized Yeshiva scholarship campaigns, Venmo acceptance, Israel fundraising, etc.

Community operations and programming

The community came together to improve operations of the UMJCA. Below are some initiatives of the Central Board in relation to community operations and programming:

- Implementation and creation of the foundation for our much-needed new Jewish elementary school serving grades K-5 with emphasis on prioritizing the opening of kindergarten
- Creating and opening the Mashadi Educational Enrichment of Teens (MEET) after school program for high school students which offers all High School students the opportunity to receive a well-rounded Jewish Education three times per week with our community Rabbis and teachers
- New security protocols were implemented for UMJCA properties
- Creation of the UMJCA Kosher Food Pantry (Great Neck Kosher Food Pantry) that services over 100 local families each week. We currently offer this to the entire Great Neck Community free of charge.
- Several important personnel decisions were made including Rabbi Mosheh Aziz becoming the head Rabbi of Ohr Esther, Rabbi Adam Sabzevari being promoted with many added responsibilities, and

- Rabbi Barak Levy being hired to help run our Community Talmud Torah
- There was a significant increased focus on public affairs, community outreach, and voter participation
- Supported the dedicated synagogue Boards on the maintenance, repair, operations and improvements of UMJCA buildings
- Provided assistance and support for UMJCA committees and subcommittees to better serve the community

Mashadi Jewish Community Center

Mashadi Jewish Community Center (MJCC) at 195 Steamboat Road, Great Neck, NY will be the largest center in our community's history. It will, B'H, be an important center for prayer, Jewish and secular education, community unity, recreation, and health/wellness. Below are some initiatives of the Central Board in relation to 195 Steamboat Road, Great Neck, NY:

- Closing on the sale of Shaare Tova of Queens to a reputable and orthodox Jewish Community
- Closing on purchase of 187-195 Steamboat Road
- Completing feasibility, design, legal, construction and logistical matters related to the development of this project
- The site is being planned for the future home of Shaare Tova of Great Neck, a Mashadi Jewish community center, the Jewish Day School, and Camp MJC
- Fundraising plans are being completed and will be distributed to all community members very soon

Further Initiatives & Goals

Many tasks and goals of the Central Board are in the works or are being planned. Below are some initiatives of the Central Board its remaining term:

- Focus on development and programming of 195 Steamboat Road, including the planning of an elementary school further committing to Jewish education
- Fundraise for the development of our Community Center and all related costs
- Community endowment fund
- Young Professionals Committee
- Online billing
- Creating an advertising team to solicit advertisements for all our publications
- Increase alternative fundraising methods significantly
- Continue working on feasibility of projects that would provide "affordable" housing for young couples and community elders (as well others in need)

We welcome the input and encourage community members to offer suggestions and ideas. We would also like to take this time to thank our community Rabbis including Chief Rabbi Eliyahu Ben Haim, staff, donors, Boards, committees, and volunteers for their dedication to this community.

Sincerely,

Central Board of UMJCA

President:
Jonathan Hazghiyan (Hezghia)

Chairperson:
Benny Hematian

Executive Secretary:
Nasi Gorjian

Board Members:
Farid Aziz
Morris Aziz
Marty Bassaly
Khandan Kalaty
Babak Kamali
Mehran Kohanim
Effy Namdar

Vice President of Operations:
Oliver Etessami

Treasurer:
Mika Hakimi

Recording Secretary:
Shawn Hakimian

Vice President of Community Center:
Omid Hakimi

Co - Treasurer:
Andy Levian



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The Mashadi Jewish Community Center (MJCC)

It is with much excitement that the Central Board was able to announce plans for the “Mashadi Jewish Community Center” (MJCC) to be constructed at 195 Steamboat Road in Great Neck. The MJCC is a proposed 4-story, 70,000 square foot architectural jewel, home to multiple sanctuaries, 24 classrooms, full-court basketball courts, event spaces and studios for music, dance, art, etc. The funding for the property and project will come from our generous community member donations as well as the proceeds from the sale of our beloved Shaare Tova of Queens.

Over the last 20 years, our *kanissas* have generously shared their limited space with a wide slate of successful community programs, such as the Shalom School and summer camp, Senior Club, Camp MJC, a variety of after school programs and Jewish Education programs. As our community continues to grow, the need for a community center has become apparent. Planning ahead for future generations, the main objective for the development of the MJCC is keeping the community socially unified in the long term. The MJCC is modeled after Jewish Community Centers that are hubs of community togetherness and places for wholesome activities. We believe that the MJCC will be large enough to accommodate and host virtually all our community members for various social, recreational and religious events. It will become a social and recreational focal point for people of all ages, regardless of religious or financial background, hopefully for many generations to come.

In addition to serving as a traditional community center, the MJCC can meet many needs of our growing community.

1. The building will house our next large *Kanissa*, named “Shaare Tova of Great Neck”.

2. The building will include our first Jewish day school, the Sephardic Hebrew Academy, guided by the principles of our unique Mashadi ‘minhagim’ (customs) and morals, and under the guidance of our Chief Rabbi, Rabbi Ben Haim, as well as our ‘Rav Minhag’ (Rabbi of our customs), Nassim Bassalian.
3. The MJCC will also be a permanent home for Camp MJC during the summer weeks, bringing together the current 500 campers (growing each year) and providing the first job opportunities for approximately 100 community teens.
4. The MJCC will house many of our community programs under one roof. Children and adults will be able to take classes, attend workshops and play sports.
5. The MJCC will be able to accommodate large groups of children engaging in a variety of activities, so that our children can create close bonds with one another, similar to the Club MJC community-wide playgroups.
6. The MJCC will allow our community to congregate and socialize together on Shabbat afternoons, and throughout the week.

Building the MJCC is the next step in accommodating the emergent needs of our growing community.

G-d willing, we should all stay united for generations to come.

Sincerely,

Central Board of UMJCA

Report from the Shaare Shalom Board

Herzl Cohanpour

The board of Shaare Shalom would like to thank all employees, volunteers and committees that have contributed to the success of our operation during the difficult times that we have all experienced. We are especially grateful for our generous community members who have supported us and continue to do so every day.

- Shaare Shalom Board Report- In addition to day-to-day operations and maintenance of the building, we've had several key accomplishments that are listed below:
- Increased security during weekdays and Shabbat to ensure comprehensive safety coverage all week for our members.
- Working diligently to identify the best use of the government security grant that the Central Board obtained and was allocated to our synagogue. Safety and security of our community members is of utmost importance and these additional funds will be spent in the areas most warranted.
- Completed the renovation of the social hall, Rabbi Ben-Haim's sanctuary, replaced the carpeting and refurbished seats in the main sanctuary. This project was conceived during the previous board's term and was completed during our term under the supervision of the renovation committee.
- Completely reorganized our staff employment agreements and adjusted their salaries all while keeping our steadfast dedication to compliance with NY state and local labor laws.
- Worked closely with the Central Board to plan and obtain our annual budget.
- Working with our Shalom school board to construct a new playground for kids in the back of our parking lot.
- Repaired the asphalt and applied a new blacktop to the entire parking lot.
- Reinstated the Shabbat children programming to accommodate our younger couples with small children.
- Transitioned the backyard temporary synagogues during Covid back into the building by first accommodating these Minyans in a large tent, followed by the Minyans moving into the social hall.
- Created new rules and affordable pricing for social hall rentals to better cater to our community's needs.
- Continuously monitored the local laws and mandates on Covid and implemented appropriate safety measures.
- Safely and responsibly reopened the programs and services of our building once the closure ended.
- Created two new rows in the back of the main hall for the ladies.

- Worked diligently with the social hall Minyan so that they can attract the groups that have not decided to move over to our building yet.
- Created a joint Shabbat kiddush gathering for all three Minyans in the building to ensure our community's long history of unity remains intact. In doing so, we also significantly improved the food and its service to our community members.
- Accommodated the annual camp in a safe and secure manner while adjusting existing events and Minyans to ensure a good continuous operation of the building.
- We have redesigned the bathrooms and have selected the contractor. The construction for the new bathrooms is to begin soon.
- Worked closely with the team in charge of planning and construction of the new expanded Kindergarten school. Four large new classrooms are now built in the Mezzanine area of our building.
- Accommodated the kids programming (run by Mrs. Nasi Gorjian) held four times a week, and created a gym committee to oversee the programming in the gym, including the adult basketball use of the gym.
- Hosting the Mashadi Educational Enrichment of Teens (MEET) program three times a week.
- Began a new speaker series in the main sanctuary to attract new talented and qualified speakers. We have received very positive feedback regarding this initiative.
- More to come:

We fully understand that there are hundreds of couples and community members that currently do not go to synagogue because there is no room for them to sit. And as everyone recognizes, our beautiful main sanctuary can accommodate a large percentage of those community members. Therefore, we intend to offer blocks of seats to any group that wishes to take the lead and come and establish themselves in our new revitalized sanctuary. Please keep in mind that there is a unique opportunity for any new group(s) to begin attending the Shaare Shalom main sanctuary and since the synagogue board elections are near, they can effectively create change that best suits them.

Our most prominent and beautiful center is coming back. Be a part of it.

Thank you,

The Shaare Shalom Synagogue Board

Report from the Ohr Esther Board

Michael Hakmian

The Ohr Esther Board is pleased to submit the following report of its activities from thus far in the term. Our high level goal is to increase kanissa attendance, enhance the synagogue experience, and preserve & propagate our Jewish values and Mashadi traditions. Here is the full report:

Friday Night Services. After several years of declining attendance on Friday nights, our board has revamped the service by offering raffle prizes (a poster, sports cards, etc) and poppers for kids. Special thanks to Etan Hakimi, who has done a wonderful job of promoting attendance and getting sponsors.

Shabbat mornings. Early attendance on Shabbat mornings has ‘exploded’ thanks to an extremely popular sports jersey raffle, driving 30-40 kids to the bema by 9:45 AM to read the Shema (as a requirement to get a raffle ticket). Special thanks to Ariel Hakimian for buying & fundraising for the jerseys every week, & keeping our kids engaged in Shabbat prayers.

Shabbat Kids Program. Aharon Liviem directs a wonderful shabbat kids program with ping pong, parasha learning (with Eliyahu Siouni), board games, and much more. Ariele Liviem runs a mock Minyan with 20-30 7th graders, giving them the skills to read from the siddur and Torah before they graduate to the gym Minyan. Special thanks to Shelby Hakimian for keeping a close eye on the program.

Sunday Father & Child Minyan. This term, we introduced our first ever Sunday Minyan at Ohr Esther, with 25-30 dads coming regularly at 9:15 AM. The Minyan culminates in a short Dvar Torah by one of the children, a raffle of 4-5 prizes, as well as Bagel Menthach breakfast. Aharon Liviem volunteers to lead services (with help from his brother Avraham), and pulls winning raffle tickets. Thanks also to Tony Aziz for ordering the breakfast.

Combined Kiddushes. Every 4-6 weeks, the main Minyan and Youth Minyan have a combined kiddush in the social hall, bringing back the Shaare Tova feeling of all ages mingling together. Thank you to Josh Namdar & Itai Hakimian for your help in timing & coordination.

Aggressive Budget. Thanks to negotiating vendors, consolidating expenses, and spending wisely, our board has cut over \$80,000 per year from our initial annual budget (yielding almost a quarter million dollar savings for the term). Very special thanks to Justin Hakimian, who carefully reviews expenditures, tracks the budget, and comes up with phenomenal ideas in general.

Shira limit & reversal! As with many other tough choices during covid, we made an unpopular decision to limit the building to 2 shiras. This was a catastrophic failure. We have since reversed

this policy and do NOT limit shiras. Special thanks to Joe Loloi & Andy Levian who help shira families distribute the trays.

Security. Aside from adding security shifts to Friday night, as well as the Sunday morning Minyan, Eli Kashi has been instrumental in staffing the security of the building, and has even helped train many of our own Mashadi congregants in advanced security techniques. We are all much safer thanks to his hard work.

Building Improvements. We have added an extremely popular in ground basketball hoop, sealed the parking lot (to preserve it without further repairs), changed the cafeteria flooring to a beautiful waterproof plank, built a wood and glass bema, added sound panels to improve acoustics in the main Minyan, and added door guards to all classroom doors to protect children’s fingers.

New position for Rabbi Mosheh! Our board is most pleased to announce the promotion of Rabbi Mosheh Aziz to be the Rabbi of the main sanctuary. Rabbi Mosheh has an extremely broad and precise knowledge of ‘Halacha’ (Jewish law), has been teaching chazzan & kallah classes for 10 years, has a degree in social work, and is the prime student of our Mashadi chief Rabbi: Rabbi Eliyahu Ben Haim. Rabbi Mosheh has written books on family purity, tzedakah, and more. The rabbi hosts a pre-services class on Shabbat mornings, and teaches classes before Minyan at Shaare Shalom every morning. The Rabbi invites and welcomes questions, and general interactions with our congregants, and the Mashadi community at large.

Ryan Levian joins the team! Realizing that we have hundreds of singles, many of which have questions on dating, halacha, professional careers, the Parasha, etc, our board started looking for help for our amazing Rabbi Adam. After a rigorous negotiation (in which he refused any form of compensation) Ryan Levian has graciously agreed to help us, and attends our singles Minyan every week. Ryan also volunteers to teach the ‘Daf Yomi’ (a daily portion of gemara to about 10 men every single day), and teaches multiple other classes day and night at the SBM. He and his wife Kelly also help matchmake.

Rabbi Adam expanded role. Seeing the incredible needs of our vast number of singles and young couples, Rabbi Adam made a life altering career change, and expanded his role and hours with the UMJCA. The board is very pleased to report that he has been privately seeing many young Mashadis, guiding them in everything from career advice, to dating, to Judaism in general. Aside from his extremely popular speeches, Rabbi Adam is known for giving extremely prudent advice in Judaic and secular topics. Rabbi Adam teaches a Tuesday night gemara class, as a Sunday

morning parasha zoom, gives the children a divrei Torah on practical halacha on Sunday mornings, and much more.

Eliyahu Ebrani leads the early Minyan. Adding to our growing ‘farm system’ of bringing up Mashadi Rabbis from within, Eliyahu Ebrani has joined the Ohr Esther team, both leading the early Minyan, as well as helping in the main sanctuary by reading multiple Torah parts, etc. Eliyahu is an excellent chazan, and is an extremely dynamic speaker.

Report from the Shaare Rachamim Board

Ryan Liviem

When our Kanissa Board sat together at a meeting for the first time, back in November of 2019, we quickly realized that we were all very like-minded, with one common goal. Our goal was ultimately to make Torah and Mitzvot as accessible and pleasant as possible to our beloved community. Little did we know, HaShem would help us achieve our objective, in ways we never dreamed.

Four months into our term, the Covid-19 pandemic hit, closing Synagogue doors . We as a board wondered on our Zoom calls, what would Kanissa look like if and when we would have the merit of opening back up? How would we ever accomplish the goals we set out to achieve with locked doors? They say however, that man plans, and God laughs. While we were worrying, HaShem was smiling down on us, for he had set forth a path which would lead to the most vibrant days our Kanissa has seen to date.

When Kanissa finally reopened, like all our Kanissas, we were forced to implement social distancing, and capacity limits. With these “restrictions”, we decided to provide multiple Minyanim, so as to allow as many community members as possible, to come and pray in a comfortable environment. With the support of our Central Board, we also procured a tent, to allow for “outdoor services”, which in turn, increased our overall capacity substantially. The multiple Minyanim soon expanded to weekday services, and eventually, the high-holidays as well. Thankfully, the expanded offering of Minyanim was a great success, and has become a new norm. As a result, there are currently four Minyanim every morning for Shacharit followed by breakfast. Every Shabbat morning, there are five Minyanim, essentially filling every available segment of the building. More recently, our board meetings often feel like Tetris games, as we attempt to accommodate multiple Minyanim, while simultaneously offering children’s programming and Torah classes. We consider this a good problem to have and a blessing from HaShem.

Another silver lining we soon discovered was that most of the college-age youths in our community were forced to stay home and conduct their classes remotely. This afforded them the opportunity to come to Kanissa on a daily basis, as well as join Torah classes provided by our treasured SBM (Sephardic Bet Midrash). This too, has now become a new staple of the daily

As always, our board appreciates feedback, ideas, and suggestions which will improve attendance, enhance the Judaic experience, and bring more socializing amongst Mashadis. Thanks to all of our amazing congregants for your attendance and support.

happenings in Kanissa. Days and nights are now filled with the vibrant Torah learning of the SBM program, and classes from our community Rabbanim. This infusion of the “Javoon ” movement in the building, both in the Minyanim and in the Torah learning, has been a crucial factor in the increased vitality of the building. As a board, we firmly believe that the accommodation of the Minyanim and Torah classes was and is a catalyst for HaShem's blessings!

While we have witnessed much increased vibrancy during the week, it all culminates on Shabbat, especially in the Summer months. Our weekly Seudah Shelishit program, the brainchild of Rabbi and Rabbanit Bitton, has been an attraction for the entire community. Each week, multiple members from the community are appointed by Rabbi and Rabbanit Bitton to speak before capacity crowds and deliver Divrei Torah for both the Men and Women, respectively. As a result, every week new faces enter the building in anticipation of the exciting atmosphere. Overall, we consider ourselves very blessed to have access to the brilliance of Rabbi and Rabbanit Bitton. Their vision and guidance is invaluable and accompanies us in all our actions, and for that we are tremendously grateful.

Along the way, with HaShem's help, we have also been able to make several improvements to the building, and the Kanissa experience overall. There has been an overhaul of the building's HVAC system, air filters and distribution. This has improved overall air quality and proper distribution of air in the main sanctuary and throughout the building. All lighting throughout the building has been upgraded, to allow for brighter rooms, and more energy efficiency. A security glass has been mounted atop the stairs outside the main sanctuary, reducing a security liability for children who would often play there. The entry doors of the building have been re-stained, creating a more modern look and feel. With the ever-generous support of our community members, all of the tables on the ground level and in the Beit Midrash have been upgraded, and a beautiful new Heichal has been installed on the ground level, further enhancing the Tefilla and Torah learning experience. Most recently, with the support of the Central Board, the Tent outside Kanissa has officially been purchased, and will continue to serve as a location to host Minyanim and events on a permanent basis. The capital improvements are ongoing and we

hope to be able to continue to enhance our facilities for the benefit of our community members.

While we strive to continue to improve the aesthetics of the building, we also aim to continue to offer more avenues for growth in spirituality, as well as more programming and resources which all community members can benefit from. We realize that in today's day and age, the influences and dangers of society are many, and it is the duty of community leadership to provide a safe haven to its members and families, primarily through the enrichment of Torah values and heritage. Today, Shaare Rachamim has become a thriving hub of Tefilla and Torah for our community, and our hope is that this will only get stronger as time passes.

We are tremendously thankful firstly to HaShem for enabling us to achieve our goals of offering as many Torah and Tefillah services as possible to our community. We are also immensely thankful to our Central Board, who are always extremely supportive of all our efforts, and provide us with guidance and wisdom every step of the way. Lastly, we are thankful to our beloved community members for all of their efforts, encouragement and support. It is an absolute honor and pleasure to be able to cater to the needs of our community, in a small way, and we hope that HaShem continues to bless our community with unity, happiness and prosperity, always.

Report from the UMJCA Sisterhood

Haleh Ghalandar

After one year of inactivity due to COVID, the Sisterhood was motivated to renew many beloved programs and begin new initiatives, which became possible when the term began on April 18, 2021. From there we began organizing many fun, educational and important community functions, including though not limited to:

A Mother's Day plant sale, Bat Mitzvah Girls classes with Mrs. Coty Bitton, dance classes, yoga sessions, scrapbooking, Bar Mitzvah Boys dinners and classes, the senior club picnic, challah bakes, Chanukah parties, two Bat Mitzvah Jamati parties this past summer, lectures with Mrs. Coty Bitton, Holiday Boutique Pop-Up Shop at Shaare Shalom as well as two Shalom Bayit

classes, & the annual Purim Carnival at Shaare Shalom, and more!.

The Sisterhood remains committed and excited to our mission of organizing events, classes, lectures and celebrations and other programming for our fellow community members, to keep us united and equipped with a strong support system.

Sincerely,

-The UMJCA Sisterhood

Report from the UMJCA Program Committee

Avital Raynor

UMJCA programs and classes foster positive growth and provide a safe space where our children and teens can explore their interests and potential. Our youth and adult programs support social, emotional, and cognitive development while promoting physical health in an exciting environment.

UMJCA Programs and classes have been offered to community members of all ages since 2012 and we have grown exponentially over the years. We provide an opportunity for Public School and Yeshiva students to connect and form life-long, close friendships with each other regardless of social, religious, or financial status.

Despite COVID-19 challenges, Camp MJC remained open in 2020/2021 and we continued to offer after-school programs and classes in person and on Zoom throughout the year.

Please see below for some of the exciting and educational activities we offer to the community.

- **Camp MJC** opened in 2015 with 250 campers and to date, we have over 500 campers in attendance in addition to approximately 150 staff members. We offer trips, swim, tennis, sports, special events, arts & crafts, dance, game room, and martial arts. These activities allow our youth to forge connections with others in a Jewish environment. We are proud to provide summer activities for children and employment for our teens.
- **UMJCA Programming:** Over the years we have offered over 50 types of programs and classes for community members. Some of our in-demand classes include Mommy & Me, Basketball (classes and leagues), Dance, Gymnastics, Soccer, Karate, Winter Camp, Cooking demos, and Fitness classes for ladies. These programs allow more engagement with community members and promotes cooperation, support, and respect for others. The programs service over 700 children and adults in the community.

- Club MJC is a community program for boys and girls in grades K-5 on Saturday afternoons at Ohr Esther. This adult-supervised and Shabbat friendly program is run by volunteer mothers and serves as a substitute for playgroups. Club MJC offers fun activities, games, dinner, and birthday parties.

The Program Committee is dedicated to developing new classes and programs for our youth and adults. We are committed to enriching and enhancing our growing Mashadi community while preserving our unique traditions. As our community continues to grow, we are faced with the challenge of securing locations

including gym space and campgrounds for our programs. We are in urgent need of sites, and we are looking forward to the new community center being built on Steamboat Road. The community center will fulfill our vision of streamlining programs and activities under one roof while strengthening unity amongst our community members.

We thank Shaare Shalom, Ohr Esther, and Shaare Rachamim for welcoming our programs and patiently working with us to accommodate our needs. Thank you to all community members for your continued support and encouragement.

UMJCA Senior Programming

Ania Nassimi

For many years, the UMJCA has hosted an extremely vibrant senior program in the Social Hall of Shaare Shalom (54 Steamboat Road). A wide array of programs and services have been offered to our seniors, including bussing, light breakfast, a full lunch, entertainment (including card play, outings, etc.), and supervised care. Our seniors have always benefited from the camaraderie, and warm Jewish environment.

Unfortunately, the Senior Program of the Mashadi Community (like almost everything else) came to a ‘screeching halt’ at the beginning of the Covid-19 Pandemic, back in March of 2020. Since the elderly were the most vulnerable to the virus, we have also been the slowest to come back online. Thankfully, as of April 2021, we have slowly started to bring some activities back.

The Senior Lounge at Ohr Esther has been re-opened to all Seniors. This Lounge is available for use:

- One hour after Shabbat ends Saturday nights
- From Sunday to Thursday every afternoon and evening

While this particular program is run without professional supervision, there are custodians in the building. The seniors are provided with beverages and help as necessary. The lounge also features books in Farsi, games, and a Satellite feed of Persian TV. While the elder care is limited at this time, we are still pleased to provide some Holiday Events for the Community (Purim fair, etc). With God's help, we hope that the Senior Program will return to full strength in the near future.

Mashadi Bikkur Cholim Volunteers

Ariel Nassim, M.D

In the Autumn of 2019, a group of volunteers founded the Mashadi Bikkur Cholim (MBC). Many of those volunteers had spent years assisting others in their times of need with expertise they gained through their own experiences. The MBC is a network of volunteers working together to help community members and their families in the critical times of social and medical needs. Our philosophy is “someone has been through this before; We can be there to help make it a little easier for you and your family this time around – let us help you!”

The MBC provides a network of subdivisions, each with its own background of expertise, working in a strictly confidential manner

to bring resources and guidance to community members. The following are a list of the various subdivisions, with many others being added with time. We work collaboratively with the UMJCA Angel Fund when there are situations requiring financial assistance. The MBC is a member organization of the UMJCA and has full time representation of a Central Board member (**Babak Kamali**) serving on the MBC board to allow a seamless partnership in bringing much needed resources to all community members. Our goal is to have every member of the community serve as a “volunteer” to help others in their time of need!

به منظور قدردانی از خانم بهنائز دیلمانیان و تیم زحمتکشان مگیلا

تالیا ذبیحی

چند سال پس از مهاجرت به آمریکا خانم بهنائز دیلمانیان در مجله مگیلا متوجه یک آگهی شد که در آن، مجله مگیلا در جستجوی شخصی بود که برای مدیریت این نشریه استخدام شود. بهنائز با مدرک خود در رشته ترجمه از دانشگاه و فعالیت‌هایش در رشته روزنامه‌نگاری و سایر استعدادهای خود می‌دانست که برای این کار بسیار مناسب است. پس به طور داوطلبانه با این مجله شروع به کار کرد و بعد از چندی سردبیری مگیلا را به عهده گرفت.

شروع مگیلا به صورت یک نشریه کوچک بود که با چهار تا شش صفحه هر ماه منتشر می‌شد. در اوایل سال‌های ۱۹۸۰ عده‌ای از افراد عاقبت‌اندیش جامعه، اهمیت چنین نشریه‌ای را برای گزارش فعالیت‌های انجمان مرکزی کمیته تلمود تورا، کنیای شعره طوا و کمیته‌های جوانان و بانوان تشخیص دادند. در طی ۲۹ سال با کمک بهنائز و هیئت تحریریه مجله به صوص با زحمات زیاد مهران اعتمادی و میکی کریم‌زاده این نشریه به صورت یک مجله پر ورق درآمد که عقاید اعضای جامعه را در رشته‌های مختلف دین و مذهب و کشور اسرائیل منعکس می‌کرد. برای جوانان و سیلیه‌ای فراهم شد که عقاید خود را با دیگران در میان بگذارند، اشخاص موفق را به جامعه معرفی کنند، از رستورانها و فیلم‌ها انتقاد کنند و با نامه‌های طنز به سردبیران، خوانندگان را سرگرم کنند.

آنچه که با یک ماشین تحریر کوچک و یک ماشین چاپ در یک زیرزمین کوچک در کیو گاردنز شروع شد به تدریج به سندی تاریخی از زندگی جامعه ما در نیویورک تبدیل شد. در این مدت مرکز مجله مگیلا ۵ بار تغییر مکان داد، ولی بهنائز در تمام این مدت به طور مرتب مجله مگیلا را در سروقت موعده به جامعه تحویل داد.

با زحمات خستگی‌ناپذیر بهنائز و یک تیم فعال و علاقمند از جوانان جامعه، مجله مگیلا به وسیله‌ای برای توسعه فرهنگ جامعه و ایجاد یگانگی بین اعضای جامعه تبدیل شد. بدین وسیله از زحمات بهنائز دیلمانیان قدردانی می‌کنیم و امیدواریم که شاهد پیشرفت این نشریه در ثبت تحولات جامعه در نسل‌های آینده باشیم

طی چند سال گذشته مخصوصاً با شروع دوران کووید احتیاج به احیای مجله دوستداشتی، آگاه‌کننده و آموزنده مگیلا کاملاً احساس می‌شود. با گسترش فضای مجازی و رسانه‌های اجتماعی مانند تویتر و فیسبوک، مکالمات شخصی و اخبار و گزارش‌های موثق جای خود را از دست داده‌اند. احترام به دیگران از بین رفقه و جنگ‌های لفظی و بی‌معنی جایگزین آن شده‌است. جامعه امروز مملو از تک جملات اهانت‌آمیز و عبارات بی‌معنی شده که منجر به رنجش و جدایی اعضای جامعه گردیده است.

با توجه به این تحولات و با در نظر گرفتن ارزش‌ها و رسم و رسوم جامعه مشهدی، احتیاج به یک سکو برای تبادل نظر و معرفی برنامه‌های جدید و گزارش فعالیت‌های ابعاد جامعه بسیار مبرم شده‌است.

با انتشار مجدد مجله مگیلا سعی بر این خواهد شد که نتایج زیر به دست آیند:

1. تبادل نظر در سطح بالا میان افراد جامعه
2. آگاه کردن جامعه از اخبار موثق بدون استفاده از رسانه‌های اجتماعی
3. ایجاد محیطی با احترام به تمام اعضای جامعه
4. حفظ یگانگی و اتحاد جامعه در زمانی که فرهنگ آمریکا باعث از هم پاشیده شدن جوانان و بی‌تفاوتی به دین و مذهب شده است.

بدین وسیله کلیه اعضای جامعه تشویق می‌شوند که عقاید خود را با سردبیران مگیلا در میان بگذارند.

لطفاً نظرات و مقاله‌های خود را به megillah@mashadiyouth.org ارسال کنید.

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We encourage all who are interested in contributing to Megillah to reach out to any of our editors, or email megillah@mashadiyouth.org with any article submissions or questions.

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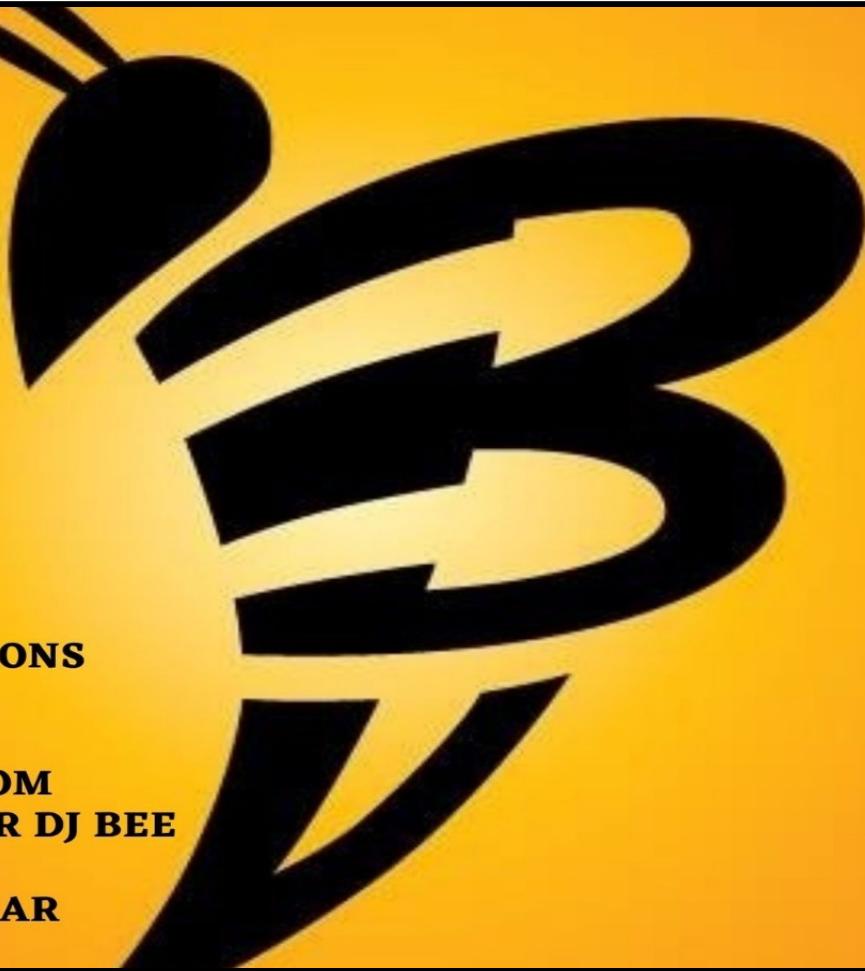
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