

Megillah

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De-normalizing Underage Drinking

Rabbi Yosef Bitton

Speech recited on Shabbat Parashat Re'eh in Ohr Esther Synagogue.

30 Av 5782 - August 27, 2022

COMMUNITY CONCERN

WHAT IS TESHUBA?

Teshuba consists of three steps:

Admission (Hakarat haChet).

Confession (Viduy).

Correction (Azibat HaChet).

Admission is probably the most difficult step. We are the best advocates for ourselves and the best prosecutors to find problems in others. Admission takes place when we realize that blaming others distracts us from our personal responsibility, and when we stop pointing fingers at others and look at ourselves in the mirror. Denial of personal accountability is as old as humanity. The first person who failed to take charge of his mistakes was no other than ADAM, the first human. When he ate from the forbidden fruit and HaShem confronted him, he said to God: "The woman that You made for me, she tempted me, and [that is why] I ate". Instead of admitting his responsibility, Adam blamed his wife and even the Creator. Everyone except himself.

Confession consists in articulating our flaws, mistakes, misdeeds, and problems. Confession is a type of catharsis. In psychotherapy, for example, catharsis takes place when a patient, usually after many sessions of therapy, can articulate his or her trauma with words, bringing the problem from the unconscious to the conscious mind, where it can be finally addressed and eventually resolved. Similarly, confession/articulation is the most relieving and significant of the famous "12 Steps program". In Alcoholic Anonymous group sessions, it is necessary for all the participants to "confess" and say: "My name is Joe, and I'm an alcoholic". Only when the issue is articulated, the patient begins his transition from the problem to the solution.

Without confession, there is no real admission and without admission, there is no fixing.

Correction, known in Hebrew as azibat hachet, goes beyond regular repentance. Repentance is usually done for a specific act. But correction or fixing is targeted beyond a one-time action: correction aims to fix a behavior, a bad habit that we have acquired over time. Change, that is, rectifying our bad habits, is the ultimate purpose of the entire process of Teshuba.

STRATEGIC TESHUBA

When speaking about correcting or changing our bad habits, the recommendation of many Sages is to take one step at a time, baby steps. Simply because the temptation to change "everything" in our lives might be counterproductive. Since sooner than later we realize that a total makeover is not a realistic expectation but wishful thinking, and we will soon give up the entire project...

Jewish tradition assigns a long period for the process of Teshuba: 40 days! From the beginning of the month of Elul until Yom Kippur. Why? Because Teshuba needs patience. It requires introspection to realize admission, and planning and strategizing to decide what habit specifically we are going to change and how. When Teshuba is not taken seriously, it usually fails. The fantasy to change "everything-at-once-and-now" is a kind of "hysterical Teshuba", an unprocessed imaginary urge to do something when we need to free ourselves from feelings of guilt. This non-Teshuba fades away within a few days.

Finally, when we do Teshuba, we have to make sure that whatever we decide to address and change is something meaningful,

realistic, and doable. We can't be impulsive. We need to be patient and thoughtful. We have to plan and strategize.

WAKING UP

We have many problems in our community. One of them is underage drinking. And I'm here to propose a collective Teshuba on this one issue. Let me share with you my thoughts on the matter. First, I must admit that "I" have become part of this problem. Perhaps not in an active way, but for sure passively. Let me confess to you my own mistakes. I confess that I have contributed to the COLLECTIVE NORMALIZATION of underage drinking. How so? Because at least once, I saw a couple of underage boys at a wedding party, approaching the bartender and asking specifically for alcohol. The bartender granted their wish, and the boys happily left the bar with a glass of alcohol in their hands. I confess that "I did not do anything" to stop them. To prevent this. I did not follow up to make sure that they got home safe... This irresponsible act of omission makes me an accomplice. I helped the normalization of underage drinking in our community. I'M GUILTY OF IGNORING THIS SOCIAL CONTAGION. I saw it and I did not do or say anything.

FIXING ONE PROBLEM AT A TIME

Let's go now to "correction". I suggest that we focus just on ONE PROBLEM. I know that there are many social issues we should fix: drug addictions, vaping, materialism, cultural behaviors of questionable morality, and lack of parental role modeling. As I said before, I don't think we can fix it all at once.

My recommendation will be to focus on one single issue and to address this issue as a

community: "underage drinking". Why this specific problem?

1. Alcohol (and drugs) affect teenagers more than it affects adults. Because the brain of teenagers is still in formation, drugs, and alcohol interferes with this process, and it could cause horrible and irreversible long-term consequences for these kids' intellectual abilities.

2. Teenagers are likelier than other age groups to engage in impulsive and risky behaviors like speeding. In general, much of teens' reckless driving comes from the fact that they are still changing and developing their personalities and brains. Combine 1. Teens' hormones, 2. Underdeveloped brains, and 3. Alcohol drinking, with the responsibility of driving a car, a machine that can potentially injure or kill others. Given the fact that since COVID ended, alcohol consumption has doubled or tripled in our community's parties and events, it is almost miraculous that B"H we were spared from any accidents of this type!

3. Underage drinking is illegal in America. If you host a party at home and a teenager drinks alcohol; legally, you, the host (or the homeowner) must stop him or her. Failing to do so, you could eventually be charged with a misdemeanor. And besides that, you are automatically liable for any problem or accident that this teenager might cause to herself or to a third party at your residence or after living in your residence. This is known as the Social Host Liability Law: "To supply, give, provide, or allow a minor to possess on-premises or property owned or controlled by the person charged".

A HUMBLE PROPOSAL

I propose that first we adults educate ourselves more about the consequences of underage drinking for our teenage kids. We should bring a medical professional to teach us the effects of alcohol and drugs on teenagers' health and brain development. Then, we should also bring a specialist in addictions to show us how to speak to our

children about alcohol consumption and abuse. And then, we should invite an expert from Nassau County District Attorney's office to explain how the Social Host Law works. And once we all know this law, we should adopt it fully in our community. It is our duty as good Jewish parents and responsible American citizens. We should tell each other: "When you see something, say something".

It might be claimed that given the seriousness of the multiple problems we have in our community, tackling underage drinking might not be enough. Agreed. However, bear in mind first that having one rule, one small limit goes a long way in recreating consciousness of the related problems as well. And, second, the effect of Teshuba is accumulative. In other words, if we demonstrate to ourselves that we can change and fix even one small thing, we will get the confidence to embark in new Teshuba projects in the near future. Changing habits is not a one-time impulsive act, but virtually a lifetime job.

HASHEM LOVES OUR COMMUNITY

I would like to end by thanking HaShem for the love and compassion He had and has for our beloved community. Why am I saying this? Because I'm aware of other Jewish communities have had their own "wake-up calls" on these issues as well. They have experienced tragic events that motivated them to start a process of Teshuba and fixing like we are trying to do now. In a community in Queens, for example, the wake-up call that shocked the community was the tragic passing of a 22 years old boy who overdosed on opioids. Another wake-up call took place in Brooklyn when a young guy took his own life because he could not control his addictions and was becoming an embarrassment for his entire family. In the Five Towns, the life of an underage young girl is destroyed because she killed a lady while driving under the influence. All these tragedies have been "wake-up calls" for some Jewish communities, created admission and confession, and brought change.

Now, I would like you to think again about God's love and compassion toward us. What price did we pay for our own wake-up call? It was "moftee" (for free), literally: less than a slap on the community wrist!

"Thank you, Bore Olam for Your infinite compassion. For sparing us the pain of an irreversible and tragic wake-up call. And we want to assure You, oh our God, that we don't need more wake-up calls. We learned the lesson and B"H we will do our Teshuba and start changing, one step at a time".



A Solution for the Synagogue Graduation Predicament

Herzel Hakimi



OPINION

For the last several years our various synagogue boards have been hard at work to graduate individuals from various minyans to open up space for the younger generation. This transfer of individual, the so-called graduation has faced different degrees of resistance at different minyans. Perhaps the graduation out of 130 Steamboat has been the most challenging.

These challenges make one curious about the reasons behind the original planning for the structure of our minyans and the fact that they were based on age groups. As always, there are good reasons for why those decisions were made at the time. One explanation was that our community felt a need for an English-speaking Rabbi that could connect and relate to our younger generation. Once we were able to find a suitable Rabbi after a very long search, the idea was to expose the English-speaking generation (young adults) to our new Rabbi. Other reasons include our desire to be with our friends and 'Dorehs' and let our youth run their own Minyanim which would lead to their independence.

Unfortunately, good intentions do not always lead to good results, especially in the long run. Dividing our synagogues primarily based on age groups came at the expense of splitting families during Shabbat minyans. It would be very common for parents to attend the young adult minyan at 130 while their young kids would attend the gym minyan at 54. Meanwhile the young adults would attend the lower-level minyan at 130 not to mention turning our main 54 minyan into an only grandparents minyan that would deprive them of the joy of seeing their families and younger generation on Shabbat. Having multiple generations attend synagogue together has the effect of passing our customs and heritage from one generation to the next. For example, on Friday nights, since age-based divisions are not followed, I can make sure my sons go to synagogue with me and I can try to teach them what I know but on Saturdays I can't do that since we all go to different minyans.

When our community opened Shaare Rahamim, it was wisely decided not to assign a specific age or group to it and simply opened it for anyone to attend. Today it is a thriving synagogue with multiple minyans whereas our larger synagogues have multiple empty seats on an average shabbat. Once you designate a certain age or group to a minyan, you essentially are excluding

the rest and not welcoming the new generation. I have noticed seeing a father, a son and a grandfather sitting next to each other in Shaare Rahamim and I find that very special.

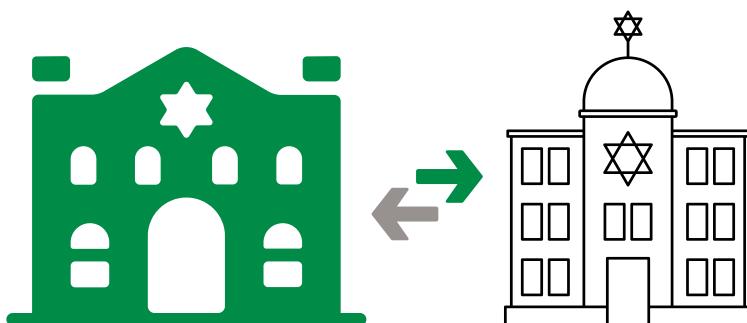
Above all, our current age-based structure for our synagogues is simply not sustainable. The current solution is not scalable.

Many solutions used in a variety of domains like computer science or business, can initially work nicely for the initial size of its target audience but fail to adapt (scale) as the target audience grows which means these solutions are not scalable or adaptable to an ever-growing target audience.

For example, companies that don't have a scalable business model fail to grow beyond a limited scope and are destined to fail in the long run.

To understand why our current synagogue structure is not scalable, imagine our community continuing to grow and there is a need for 30 synagogues instead of the current 3. How are you going to assign people to synagogues based on age? Obviously, that is not acceptable. In fact, I believe our current struggle is because of reaching the maximum size of our current structure, and the attempts to graduate and shift people around is a band-aid type, temporary solution that simply will not work as our community keeps growing. What we need is more synagogues, not necessarily large ones, preferably spread around to accommodate our growing population. People should be allowed to attend based on the vicinity and their personal preference. Of course, each synagogue can have multiple minyans and if younger kids within a synagogue would like to run their own minyans, they should be allowed to do so.

In other words, the solution to our synagogue graduation struggle is to simply allow people to choose where they want to attend and open up more synagogues as the need grows. Whether we agree or not, solutions that are not scalable will simply not adapt, and eventually will be replaced with ones that do.



Working Mom or Stay at Home Mom? My Journey with the Question that Dominated My Twenties.

Jennifer Kohanim Pittelman

Today I'm proud to say that I'm a working mom, but if you asked me ten years ago if I planned to be a working mom or a stay-at-home mom (yes, faulty terms that make it seem like there are only two polar choices), I would have told you that I wanted to be a stay-at-home mom.

A large part of my mindset back then, in my early 20s, was shaped by my Great Neck upbringing. While there were so many incredible values I absorbed growing up in this amazing community, I was certainly taught that a woman's role was raising a family and that professional pursuits were secondary, or came later in life when children were older. It was an unspoken thing, but that's what all the women around me did and were doing, including my Mashadi female family members as well as the moms of my non-Mashadi friends in school.

The confusing thing about it all was that I was a strong student and my family always encouraged me in my studies. I remember countless high school days where my mom would let me off the hook in terms of chores because I had to focus on my homework, in addition to her quick visits to my room while I was studying to drop off a plate of cut fruits. All of these gestures made it obvious that schoolwork was the priority. Similarly, I remember so many lively Shabbat dinners with my uncles and aunts in my last years of high school, where I talked about where I wanted to go to college. They challenged me in terms of my out-of-state interests (though I ended up staying local) but I always felt that they accepted my ambition and wanted to see me succeed, even though I was a girl.

At college, I continued to ambitiously pursue my interests, graduating with a degree in music business and interning every single

semester of college except my first. I loved what I was studying and was immersed in so many exciting work environments as an intern. Along the way, I would get comments about my academic and professional paths not being the right pursuit for a girl, but I honestly was never interested in the types of "female-friendly career paths." I knew I was passionate about music and writing and was drawn to marketing, communications, advertising and journalism; I couldn't see myself picking a career path that I wasn't interested in just because it would allow me to be part-time while having children.

When I finally entered the post-college working world, I was in for an adventure. I was working for a global public relations firm, surrounded by extremely talented and ambitious people who energized me, but a part of me still had this nagging question in the back of my mind: Would I be a working mom or a stay-at-home mom? At the time, a lot of senior female colleagues around me seemed to stay in the office until late in the evening and I just couldn't see how I could be a parent that way. There didn't really seem to be a middle ground between what I was seeing at work and what I was seeing in Great Neck.

I didn't realize it until I read Sheryl Sandberg's book, *Lean In: Women, Work, and the Will to Lead*, but even though I was working hard and doing well at work, a part of me was truly "leaning out" and not focusing on progressing to the next level. A part of me was really thinking that I would just put in a few more challenging, fun and exciting working years and then check out to be a parent. And by the way, I was still single while I was thinking all this, so it truly was a theoretical thought process in terms of becoming a parent, but it somehow still had this massive impact on me.

Things gradually changed for me. It wasn't just one inspirational moment that changed my perspective. It was a mixture of meeting certain people and reading certain books that exposed me to new viewpoints. For one, I had (and still have) a very special manager at the PR company I work for who is a very empathetic, compassionate person, as well as a very strong professional and devoted mom. Overtime, I started to meet more female leaders at my company who visibly prioritized their families and were still outstanding professionals. I also ended up reading an excellent book that made the argument that time spent completely out of the workforce intensely impacted their earning power, and left women vulnerable to life's uncertainties (like losing a spouse or having a spouse suffer financial loss). While the Mashadi community does a great job in protecting women from these tragic scenarios, something about that book resonated with me. I walked away with the message that the consistency of earning, saving and investing (even if it's not a high-paying job or if you're working part-time) protects women from life's calamities.

Fast forward to today, I'm a mom to an almost three-year old and love what I do working in public relations and social media. I am so grateful that I didn't transition out of the workforce early on and can now see how much my work has made me into a better version of myself, and ultimately into a better mom. I can list so many things I've gained from my work experience that have impacted my parenthood, but here are three off the bat.

Firstly, I am able to get so many things done in the span of a very short time and under intense pressure – something that comes in handy with a little one running around the house. Secondly, I have now had years of experience managing people and have learned the lesson of giving your employees space to grow and a sense of ownership

PROFILE

over their own work – something that I truly didn’t know when I started out as a manager, but now something I know deeply and am able to exercise with my own child. Thirdly, I’ve become a strong and creative negotiator at work – particularly when negotiating terms for influencers and brand spokespeople – and you’d think I’m joking, but it comes in handy when dealing with a toddler who is constantly testing and pushing boundaries.

Of course, all of this is my personal story and there are so many completely valid life paths, and I respect and adore all my friends who have made all kinds of decisions for themselves. Ultimately, this is what I decided to do and I feel so positive about it and so confident about the way I show up in my parenting and at work, though of course it’s far from easy or perfect.

Looking back, what I would have wished for my teen self and for other young girls in our community is to grow up with a greater range of role models (which, by the way, I can already see happening today) and for a more open conversation around a girl’s future. What I wish is for the conversation to be less rigid (this is what’s possible for you vs. this is what’s not) and for the adults to be more open to listening to girls’ interests and to not be scared to let them explore those interests for the fear of them not being “marriageable.” Nobody can possibly predict when they will find their life partner and leaning out of an academic or career pursuit that potentially interests you, just because you need to put all your energies into finding a partner, doesn’t make sense to me.

Pursuing something that you are interested in and that you are truly good at makes you a better person, partner and parent. Don’t believe anyone that tells you it’s not possible to have a career and be a great parent - literally anything is possible.

I would have loved to have heard that as a teenager, especially from another Mashadi woman, which is why I am writing today. I hope I’m not creating any shockwaves that will offend anyone because I truly admire our community and am so proud to have been raised in it and be a part of it, but instead I hope that sharing my story helps other young girls (and their parents) as they tackle the future and its immense possibilities.

Positive Psychology and Torah

Talia Cohen

TORAH

Positive psychology is a growing and popular field that started relatively recently. Experts in the field have identified several essential principles of positive psychology. These big ideas include: accepting negative feelings, reducing stress, relationships and quality time, mindfulness, giving, and gratitude. Studying and practicing the principles of positive psychology can be helpful in improving one’s mood, reducing anxiety, and experiencing an overall more meaningful and happy life. However, these strategies are, of course, not a replacement for therapy, and serious mental health issues should be handled by a professional. Strikingly, many, if not all, of these ideas are already found in the Torah and embedded within an observant Jewish lifestyle.

The first big idea, accepting the experience of negative emotions (without letting them take over), is essential to our ability to experience and appreciate the positive ones. We must allow ourselves to feel sadness, anger, disappointment, and failure, instead of trying to immediately push them away. Being a happy person doesn’t mean never feeling unhappy. Israeli psychology professor and author Tal Ben-Shahar, calls this, “permission to be human.” He quotes Golda Meir, who once said, “Those who don’t know how to weep with their whole heart don’t know how to laugh either.” However, that is not to say that we should be complacent when bad things happen. Rav Joseph Soloveitchik, in *A Halakhic Approach to Suffering*, outlines the Jewish response to suffering in three steps: One must first acknowledge the presence of the emotion, then take action and not give into it, and finally, have faith and pray.

The second big idea, reducing stress, is all about taking breaks. Stress is inevitable, and in fact it can often be helpful. Small doses of stress give us motivation to keep going and get things done. However, prolonged exposure to stress can lead to burnout and actually hurt our bodies. Taking breaks to recover is fundamentally built into the Jewish calendar on every level. There are three opportunities throughout the day to stop what we are doing and pray to G-d. We have one day a week, Shabbat, to unwind, unplug, and breathe. And throughout the year, the various holidays are longer breaks designed for us to feel happy and find meaning. Similarly, Jewish law emphasizes one of the most important factors that determine happiness: our relationships. Shabbat and holidays allow for us to spend quality time with those close to us, and much emphasis is placed on building a family. Other relationships, such as friendship and mentorship, are further emphasized in the Mishna.

When we hear the word “mindfulness” most of us think about quiet, focused, meditation, which might sound unattainable to many. While it can be difficult to remain mindful throughout the day, the goal of mindfulness is to be present in the moment and in what you are doing, and to appreciate where you are. There are many ways to accomplish this goal, and meditation is only one of them. The idea of kavana - focus, intentionality, deliberateness, in Judaism - embodies this goal. The goal of many of the mitzvot is kavana - to have in mind that we are doing a

mitzvah in that moment and to appreciate it. When we pray, having kavana can mean focusing on the words, or just realizing that we are standing before G-d - that is something we can think about at any moment if we are mindful.

Similarly, giving is a powerful tool we can use every day to provide meaning and happiness. Giving on any level can be highly rewarding and mood-boosting. In Hebrew, the word for giving, “פָּנָא” is a palindrome -- spelled the same both forwards and backwards. This demonstrates the reciprocity of generosity - when we give, we always get something in return.

And finally, the idea of gratitude is central to both positive psychology and to Judaism. Research shows that taking the time to express or write down what we are grateful for on a regular basis can make us happier and healthier. The first thing we do every day is verbally express our gratitude for waking up in the morning. Expressions of gratitude are sprinkled throughout the siddur, and thanks is an essential part of every prayer.

The newly discovered principles of positive psychology are already included in the Torah - the guidebook for life. It is interesting and encouraging for many to see these ideas validated by science and research. There is a lot more to learn about positive psychology, and for further reading I would recommend all of Tal Ben-Shahar's books, as well as Dr. David Pelcovitz's book, Life in the Balance: Torah Perspectives on Positive Psychology.

A Short List of Daily Mitzvot for Weekdays & Shabbat

Rabbi Adam Sabzevari

Hello, my dear friends. Below is a summary of daily mitzvot (Jewish commandments) for an average weekday and Shabbat. This is not meant to be an exhaustive list, but simply a short list of mitzvot to incorporate into our daily lives. Enjoy!

Daily Mitzvot:

- When we wake up, we say “Modeh Ani,” a prayer thanking Hashem for returning our souls back into our bodies
- We rinse each hand three times (alternating) with a cup, say a bracha (blessing) called “Al Netilat Yadaim,” and then dry our hands (in addition to cleaning our hands, our Sages explain that this also removes impurity from our hands)
- After using the bathroom in the morning, or at any point during the day, we say a bracha called “Asher Yatzar,” thanking Hashem for all of our functional organs, as we “would not even last one moment” without them
- We next say Birchot Hashachar, which is a series of blessings thanking Hashem for giving us vision, clothing, and strength, culminating in a Barcha Torah
- A man over the age of 13 wears tallit & tefillin, and says a minimum of at least Kadesh Li, Shema Yisrael, & Amida (better to read all the prayers, and better yet to pray in a minyan, or a quorum of 10 Jewish men)
- We say a bracha PRIOR to eating any food (for example, Hamotzi for bread, Shehakol for most drinks, Mezonot for most baked goods, Haadama for most vegetables, & Ha'etz for most fruits)
- We also say a blessing AFTER eating (Birkat Hamazon after bread, Al Hamichya for most baked goods, and Borei Nefashot for most non-grains)
- We pray Mincha between in the afternoon, and then Arvit after dark (or earlier with a minyan), which includes the Shema Yisrael
- At night, we say Shema Yisrael again when we lay on our beds, before we go to sleep

TORAH

Shabbat Mitzvot:

- We read one parasha per week at kanissa (or double on some weeks) from the Torah, and pray an extra prayer called Mussaf (which represents the additional sacrifice during the Temple period)
- We observe Shabbat as a day of rest by avoiding the thirty-nine forbidden activities (“melachot”), which include lighting a flame, extinguishing a flame, writing, erasing, tying a permanent knot, sewing, stitching, tearing, amongst other creative actions
- We say kiddush & hamotzi for Friday night dinner & Shabbat lunch
- We traditionally eat three meals on Shabbat: Friday night dinner, Shabbat day lunch (or meal after kanissa), and late afternoon / early evening seuda shelishit, the 3rd Shabbat meal
- To sanctify and distinguish the day, we avoid weekday activities such as doing business, spending money, and traveling
- Interestingly, modern science & high-performance business culture recommends setting aside time to “unplug” and meditate, to improve one’s mental health and boost one’s productivity and performance

Other Random Daily Mitzvot:

- We stand when our parents or rabbi enter a room, as a sign of respect
- The golden rule of Judaism is “Love your neighbor as you love yourself,” which means to treat others how you want to be treated. This will help you avoid sinning against other people.
- It is extremely praiseworthy to set a fixed time for learning Torah every day, even for five minutes a day, as our sages say that learning Torah (or learning more about Judaism in general) is equal to “all of the other mitzvot combined.”

If you wish to learn more about any of the mitzvot mentioned in this article, feel free to reach out. Also, please check out my podcast, the Sefer Hamitzvot podcast, where we go through the full list of mitzvot. You can find it on Spotify, Apple Podcasts, Google Podcasts, or your favorite podcast platform (<https://seferhamitzvot.buzzsprout.com>).

Top 3 Parenting Tips... That Can Change Your Life!

Dina Kalaty

Becoming a parent is so exciting and is a huge blessing to our lives, yet at times it can also bring us to the lowest points of desperation, sadness, and worry. Parenting is an area of our lives that is meant to bring up difficulty, challenge and even pain, but can truly be a place that brings us to deeper trust, connection, purpose and healing if we allow it to. It is one of the most humbling experiences when seeing the challenges there to help us rather than hurt us.

Parenting is not about fixing or correcting our children. It's not about knowing or having all the answers either. It's actually more about learning to trust, love, and accept another human being as they are. At times, there's need for guidance and correction, but overall, parenting is a journey of allowing our children to be who they've been created to be in this world, within boundaries. The unique challenges each parent is faced with allows for us to finally look at the parts of us that still need healing or that need to be examined in order to grow and parent from a clearer, purer space. Being a parent is a holy and sacred responsibility; it is a lifelong journey that needs to be nurtured and cared for. Parenting is an opportunity to simply grow into a better version of yourself.

Here are just a few tips or insights that have helped me on my parenting journey... *all the following listed below begins with us*

START GETTING COMFORTABLE WITH THE UNCOMFORTABLE...

Feelings and thoughts are what we're made of as human beings. Shutting down or denying our child for having feelings can truly be detrimental to their emotional health. The more we, as parents, learn to accept our own emotions, the more we'll be able to witness and allow for our child's feelings to process in a healthy way. This means that we stay with our child in their moments of meltdown, pain, frustration as well as joy, happiness and excitement WITHOUT trying to fix or change them. Just being with them in it. Can you remember a time when your feelings were dismissed or invalidated? How did that make you feel? Did it help the feeling pass or not?

Now, imagine yourself, experiencing a negative feeling, such as disappointment. Can you imagine someone just standing there next to you telling you it's okay to feel your

PARENTING

disappointment, without offering you something to change your feelings? To simply be in that discomfort? Perhaps, not even saying a word or just being there to listen to the frustration and upset? This is called 'holding space.' We tend to jump into distractions, advice, positivity or even food to calm the other down. Essentially, what this is doing, is telling the other that we're not okay with their thoughts and feelings & that it needs to stop or go away. This encourages moving away from our true self, seeking external distractions & sometimes leading to addictive habits, making us further disconnected from ourselves. We lose safety and trust with those around us that we are all seeking. This also creates more pain within the one who's struggling. When we allow for someone to feel their feelings, we are showing them that they are human. We validate their experience and calm them down, thereby allowing the feeling to pass. Just like the waves of the ocean, crashing in and out. Most times, feelings just need to be expressed and heard.

Something to think about: Have you experimented with 'holding space' for your child, with no other intention other than just being with them in their experience? Give it a try and please let me know how it goes! I can tell you that it's one of the most rewarding and gratifying moments in parenting.

NOTICE TRIGGERS...

Triggers are situations that can bring up intense emotional reactions within us, usually stemming from a past experience. These triggers are very unique to each person; what affects one parent may not affect the other whatsoever. For example, it could be that one parent gets extremely triggered to see a child messy or unkempt, while the other parent stays calm and doesn't get affected by it. Usually the parent that's getting so triggered over the messy child's behavior, is getting reminded of the messiness, disorganization or lack of structure in their own lives. If they haven't recognized this part of themselves to befriend the messiness in themselves or release the shame around it, the parent that's triggered reacts to the child by yelling, shaming or screaming at the child for not cleaning up or not being neat enough. Once the parent gains more understanding of the trigger and shows compassion for the trigger (with proper help), they can begin to accept the child for who they are innately. Hopefully, this can allow them to help the child in gentle ways with reminders on how to cooperate within boundaries, while accepting that not everyone is meant to be perfectly neat at the same time. Noticing triggers and responding to them rather than reacting to them is a lifelong journey. It's never about perfection; We will make mistakes, but we always have an opportunity to try again.

Something to think about: Notice and observe the triggers as they come up. When do they come up, and how do you react to those triggers? Notice how one child triggers you more than the other. It could mean that there's something there for you to address within yourself. It's an opportunity for your own development.

BRING G-D INTO YOUR PARENTING...

There were times when I felt like I was in charge of all the decisions for my kids and if anything went wrong or didn't go as planned, I'd blame myself or others around me. It was all about me and how I could perfect my life, especially the way my kids acted or looked on the outside. I was missing the point! All the perfection I sought on the outside was causing my relationship with my children more harm than good.

I would forget that G-d is in the picture and that He is part of my moment to moment, day to day occurrences. We are only in control of so much that happens for our children. When we can take our ego out of the equation in order to let our children be who they're meant to be, we begin to see their personalities develop in such a natural way. Even if that's an entirely different vision than what we had planned. We oftentimes believe that we own our child and whatever we say, goes, or whatever we have in mind for them, should be. However, our children were given to us by G-d.

I once came across a beautiful poem by Kahlil Gibran, which shares that our children come through us, but they are not ours to control. They belong to G-d and we are here to help them discover and nurture their special uniqueness and gifts so that they can thrive as G-d intended them to. Hashem is way greater than our minds, therefore, we can learn to trust Him and put our trust in His hands. Taking the load off of ourselves. This doesn't mean that we just sit back and let G-d do all the work, it just means that we work together with Him. We include Him in our worries, challenges and fears as well as all the good that we see in our parenting.

Something to think about: Where in your parenting are you having a hard time letting go of control? Usually, this is the area where we need to bring G-d in.

Shalom Bayit Tip

Moshe Enayatian

SHALOM
BAYIT

What does your wife NEED?

This age-old question has been perplexing men for thousands of years. And I'm not going to pretend like I have the answer to the question. What I can share from my experiences in dealing with young married couples over the past 13 years is what women CAN'T handle or DON'T need. Perhaps from that we can understand what they might need. Ten out of ten women would agree that one of the hardest things in a relationship is handling a critical husband. Women react to criticism in one of two ways, fight or flight. That is, either they push back so as not to accept the criticism or they believe the criticism, and let it negatively affect them. BOTH outcomes are negative for the relationship. (Just to explain, to the women out there, your husband often doesn't even know he's doing anything wrong. In his SIMPLE mind he's HELPING you by pointing out your flaws.)

Perhaps what a woman NEEDS is whatever is the opposite of criticism. Shockingly to some, the opposite of criticism isn't just compliments or encouragement. More than that, it's showing GRATITUDE. Which, according to Webster's Dictionary, is defined as the quality of being thankful; readiness to show appreciation for. That might be the secret we've been waiting for.

Before he passed away, Rabbi Jonathan Sacks z'l was in Great Neck for a Shabbat and I got a chance to walk him and his wife to the home they were staying at. I asked them what they attributed to their successful marriage. The answer they gave me was truly eye-opening: They said early in their marriage, they decided not to let a day go by without noticing something nice that the other did for them, and point it out to each other. What that does is it makes your spouse want to do more things worth noticing and maybe more importantly makes you notice and show gratitude for what they have done.

In conclusion, fellow men - rather than using your words to put your wife down (criticism), use them to lift her up (gratitude). I'm confident that if you continue to do that, you will slowly understand what women need, and that will lead to a happy marriage.

Baking Recipe: Bread Pudding

BAKING

Anat Kamali

Now that summer is in full swing, pool parties and get-togethers are always an opportunity to bring something easy and delicious to the table. This bread pudding is just that.

The ingredients you will need are:

- 3 whole eggs
- 8 egg yolks
- 2 cups whole milk
- 2 cups heavy cream
- 1 teaspoon of vanilla
- 1.5 cups of sugar
- 1 medium challah or 6 croissants
- *Chocolate chips optional

Mix all the wet ingredients with the sugar.

Once it's all combined add the bread, pour into a Pyrex and bake at 350 degrees for 45 min covered and 30 min uncovered. Serve warm or cold.

Enjoy this delicious treat!

Follow me on Instagram
[@mimisweetsny](https://www.instagram.com/mimisweetsny)

Israel: A Unique, United, & Unimaginable Country

Jacob Namdar



ZIONISM

In 1948, Israel declared its national independence, shortly after the tragic annihilation of 6 million innocent Jewish lives lost in the Holocaust. However, there has been a constant Jewish presence on this land for thousands of years, even before Islam or Christianity were founded. Over the years, Israel faced numerous wars against combined Arab armies, countless terrorist attacks, constant threats of obliteration from Iran, endless boycotts, and numerous attempts to cut the country in half. Surrounding Israel are many different enemies who, every single day, are planning deadly attacks with the goal of destroying Israel and wiping out the Jewish people. Despite all of this, Israel is somehow ranked the 9th happiest country in the world, according to the 2022 World Happiness Report. I believe this is because the Israeli people value life and growth, while their enemies value death and destruction.

Israel is a global superpower in many fields, primarily medicine and technology. Israeli doctors are constantly making efforts to discover cures for cancer and many other illnesses. During the COVID-19 outbreak, Israel was a world leader in confronting and defeating the pandemic. Many countries watched closely at how Israel handled the pandemic and followed their methods. And yet, The Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) Movement calls for the complete boycott of Israel. We should ask the question: how can any logical person boycott a country that is striving to find a cure for cancer?

The history of Israel is very bittersweet. Unfortunately, everyone in that country knows of someone who was killed in war or terror attack, whether it was an Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) soldier or regular civilian. Yom HaZikaron is a very solemn and sad day where the entire country comes to a complete halt as a siren is blown to remember all the lives that were lost. When a lone soldier is killed, thousands upon thousands of Israeli citizens from all over the country, with various religious backgrounds, join the funeral; most of them don't even know the soldier, and still they show that this soldier was and would never be alone.

Remarkably, the day after Yom HaZikaron, is Yom HaAtzmaut, which is an extremely happy holiday. We celebrate the birth and accomplishments of Israel, which only take place because of the sacrifices made by our brothers and sisters: the heroic IDF soldiers, may their memories always be a blessing. Today, the IDF is known as being one of the strongest armies in the world. There is tremendous worldwide respect for the IDF, Israeli Air Force, Mossad, and Shin Bet, who are constantly protecting all of the citizens in Israel, and have the ability to travel anywhere in the world to rescue Jews in danger.

Today with rising antisemitism around the world, it is more important than ever for us to support Israel. On this Yom HaAtzmaut, and every single day, I strongly encourage our entire community to support, visit, embrace, and love Israel as much as we can. We should be proud of our one and only Jewish homeland and its rich, vibrant culture and people. We should always defend Israel on social media, on our college campuses, and in our schools and businesses.

I would like to conclude with a personal story. Years ago, my grandmother was sitting on a crowded bus in Ramat Gan. All of a sudden, she felt very sick and was about to faint. The bus driver immediately stopped the bus, asked all the other passengers to exit, and drove the bus directly to the hospital, saving my grandmother. Since then, every year on Rosh Hashanah, my grandmother sends a Shana Tova card to this bus driver, thanking him and wishing him and his family a sweet new year, and the driver always responds with a card of his own. Israel is not just a country; it's an extended Jewish family. It is the eternal homeland of the Jewish people. It's the only democratic country in the Middle East; It's a safe haven for all Jews around the world that are facing antisemitism and persecution. And finally, it's a guarantee that the world will never face another Holocaust.



David Ben Gurion reading the Declaration of Independence of the State of Israel.
5 Iyar 5708 / May 14, 1948



Defense Minister Moshe Dayan (Center), Chief of Staff Yitzhak Rabin (Right) and Jerusalem Commander Uzi Narkis (Left) walk through the Lion's Gate into the Old City,
27 Iyar 5727 / June 7, 1967

An Integrated Approach to Understanding Health

Valerie Davoodzadeh

We are creatures of consumption and we consume way more than just the food we eat. We absorb information, media, vibrations, and light that is all transformed into the energy that we live off of. Yes, food is fuel, but what and who we constantly surround ourselves with are powerful determinants for how we move and show up in this world. The Instagram accounts we follow, our circle of friends, and even the lighting in our homes, are a few examples of aspects that impact our well-being. What our bodies consume from our environments have a dramatic effect on our health, one that food alone can never reverse.

As a holistic health coach-in-training at an online school, called The Institute for Integrative Nutrition, one of the first concepts introduced to incoming students is “primary food”, the nourishment of life that does not belong on a plate. Primary foods include cooking, home environment, physical activity, health, education, career, finances, and relationships. You can wake up and drink lemon water every morning, and eat vegetables with every meal, which will definitely help keep you healthy. The fundamental change happens when we assess the aspects of life that are feeding us off our plates. Doing so helps us recognize that sometimes, concerns we have about our health and well-being are stemming from more than our dietary habits. Food is only a small component when we look at our health from a holistic and big picture perspective. An unfulfilling career, studying for a major you don’t see yourself pursuing, and a dull home environment, are all detrimental to your health. Imbalances in “primary food” can manifest in physical symptoms; Financial stress increases the body’s cortisol levels which can lead to inflammation, anxiety, and digestive problems. Surrounding yourself with people who make you feel drained after spending time in their presence can actually cause muscle tightness and lowered immunity.

Let's take the example of a family member who is overweight. The first thought that comes to mind is that they must not be eating right. If you truly care about this person, you want to consider what's really going on, and you can start by asking about their sleep quality. By talking to them, you learn that this person has fallen victim to insomnia. Poor sleep habits cause changes in metabolism, and also interferes with the hormones that signal hunger and fullness, causing an increase in appetite. Yes, this person's weight concern might be from poor dietary habits, but food is not the source of the problem. Improving their sleeping habits gets prioritized because the underlying cause always comes first. Getting to the root cause involves digging beneath surface-level issues and being mindful of where you can make small shifts in your life, to become one step closer to the best version of yourself. Nourishment does not need to come in food form, and in fact, having a

HEALTH

healthy relationship with life itself is about finding nourishment in all forms. Nourishment can be enjoying ice cream with family or listening to your favorite music. It can be having lunch at the beach, making new friends at work, or organizing your home space. Tapping into your creativity is another exceptional way to nourish your body and mind. A creative person does not need to be an artist, chef, or fashion designer – we are all creative. We use our minds all day long to create ideas, interpret situations, and make decisions.

Here's a fun exercise: Take a walk around your house for 15 minutes with your Notes app open on your phone, and write out 10 random annoyances that seem to catch your attention. Then, take 10 minutes to create 1 solution for each annoyance. For example, if your living room is looking a bit uninspiring and you don't have the resources to redecorate, one solution could be to reposition your furniture to create a different atmosphere. Creative expression allows us to practice keeping our minds open to all options and possibilities.

Home cooking is another chance to channel your creativity and to learn to value progress over perfection. The difference between home cooked and store bought meals is that meals you prepare in your kitchen contain a special ingredient, Vitamin L, as in Vitamin Love. My talented mom, who many know as Heaven on the Table, shows me every day the positive effects of home cooking. I taste the Vitamin L in every dish she brings to the table, and being able to enjoy her creations as a family is the greatest blessing. Do you see how much nourishment transpires from the power of being creative?

Supporting our bodies with nutritious foods is undeniably an important piece of maintaining overall health. The function of food has the power to fuel our bodies, prevent illness, and manage symptoms of certain health issues. Still, food is not the only dimension of health because the complexity of human life demands for more. Viewing ourselves as a whole person is rooted in the understanding that being “healthy” requires taking a look at how one aspect of your life affects others, and food is just one piece of the puzzle. There are countless ways to transform your health that do not involve giving up on dessert or torturing yourself with a high intensity workout. Find at least 3 elements that nourish you off the plate, commit to them, and watch as they add quality to your life. Think back to something you used to do as a child that brought you joy. Try something new, and give it two chances until you are certain it does not spark energy in you. You might discover a new form of movement like yoga or pilates. Maybe it's a spiritual practice that brings you warmth and keeps you on track with your values. Whatever it is, as long as you keep your mind and energy open so that you can receive life fully, say “yes” more, pull on your strengths, and stay consistent, you are setting yourself up to find what lights you up.

Survey Results: Mashadis' Wedding Attendee Preferences

POLLS

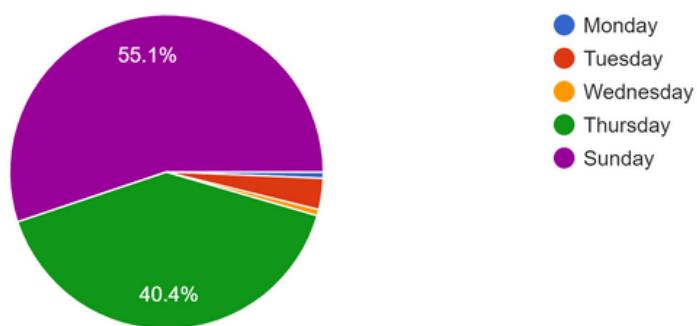
Megillah Editorial Staff

With HaShem's blessing, we hope that our community will continue to celebrate an ever-growing quantity of weddings. This poll was conducted, recording responses from men and women of all age groups, to identify the preferences of wedding attendees in order to provide guidance to families that will BH have reasons to plan parties in the future.

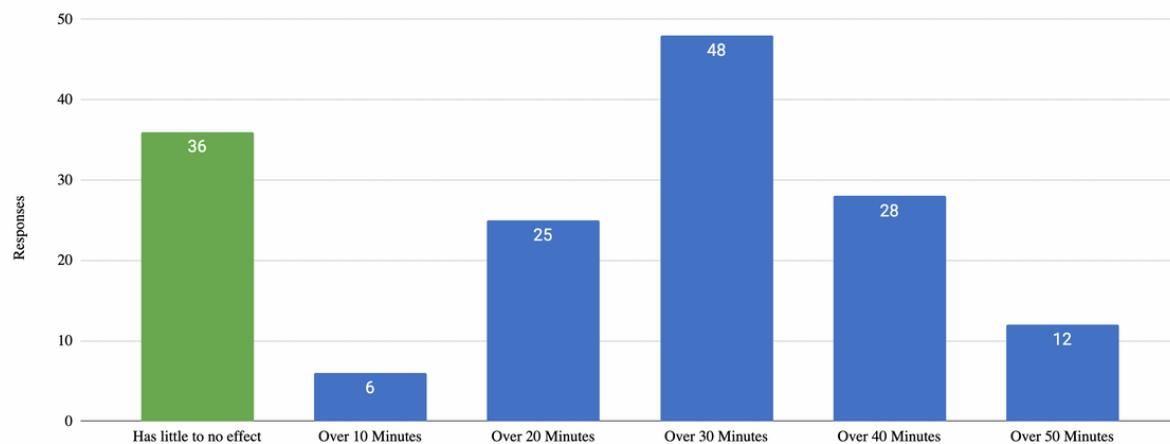
156 total responses

Preferred night of the week to attend a wedding?

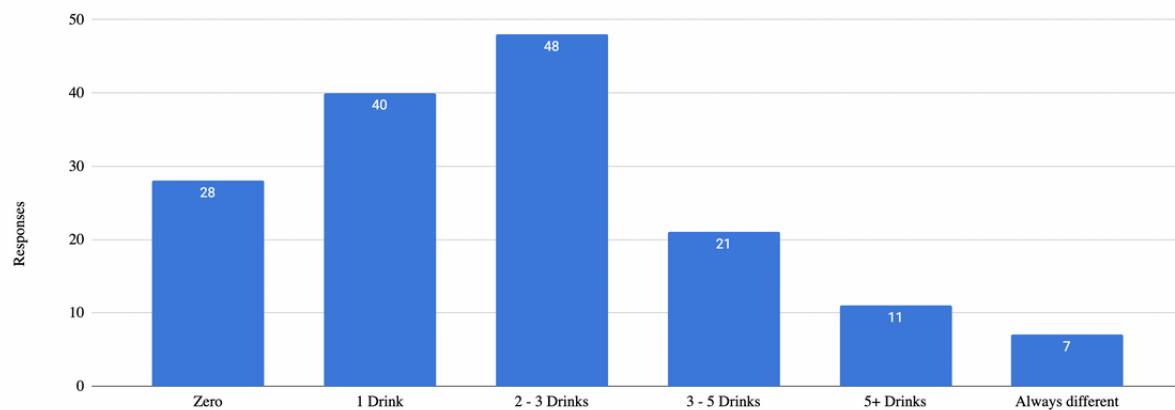
156 responses



At what driving distance do you become more inclined to decline an invitation ('javab')?

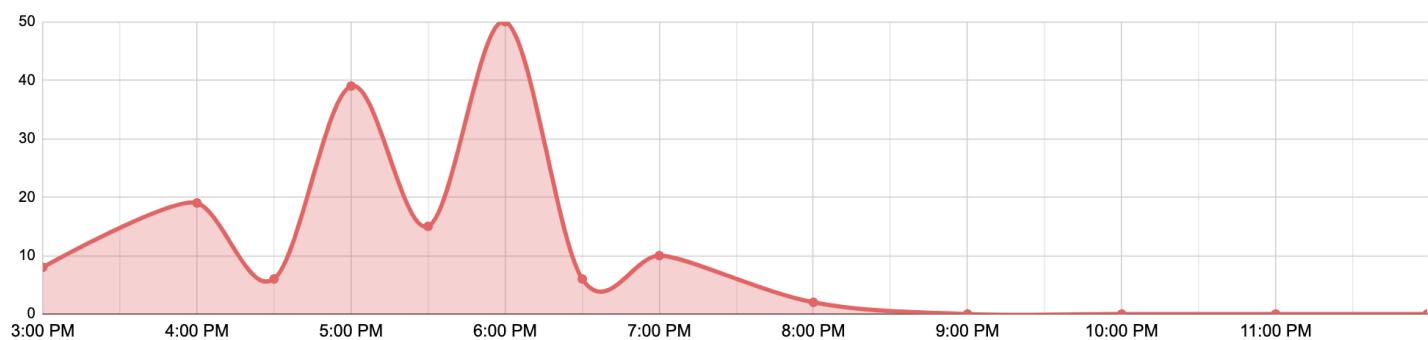


How many alcoholic beverages do you usually drink?

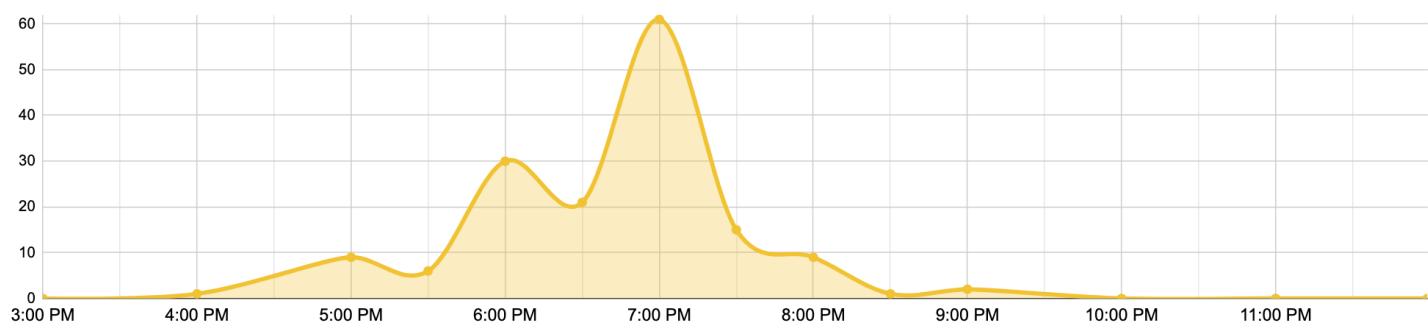


Timing Preferences

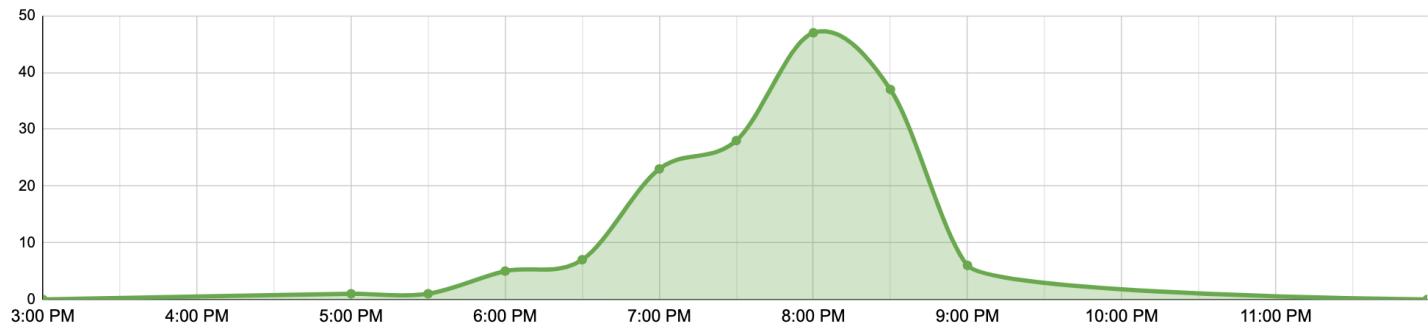
Family & Close Friends Photos



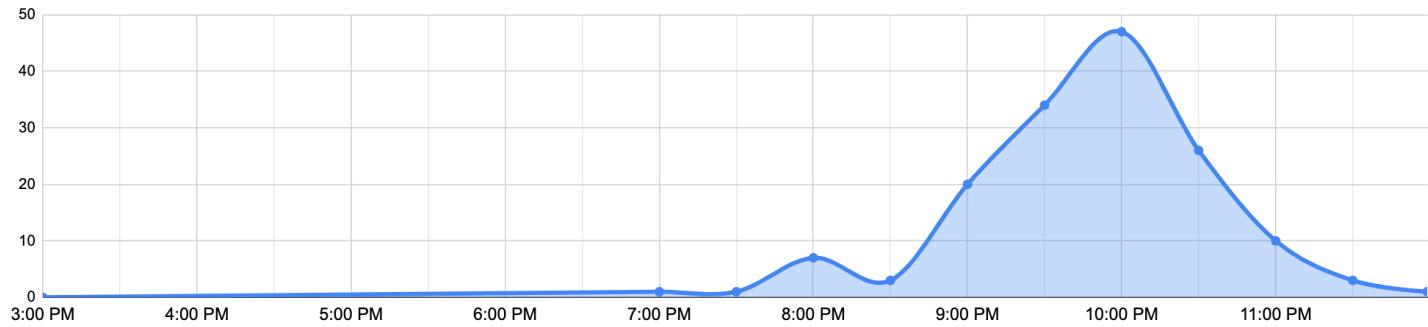
Reception / Cocktail Hour



Chuppa Ceremony

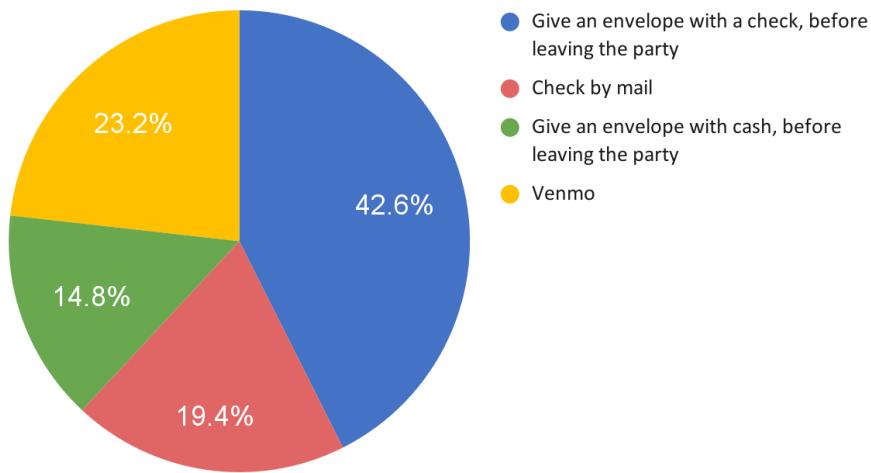


Dinner Served ('Halftime')

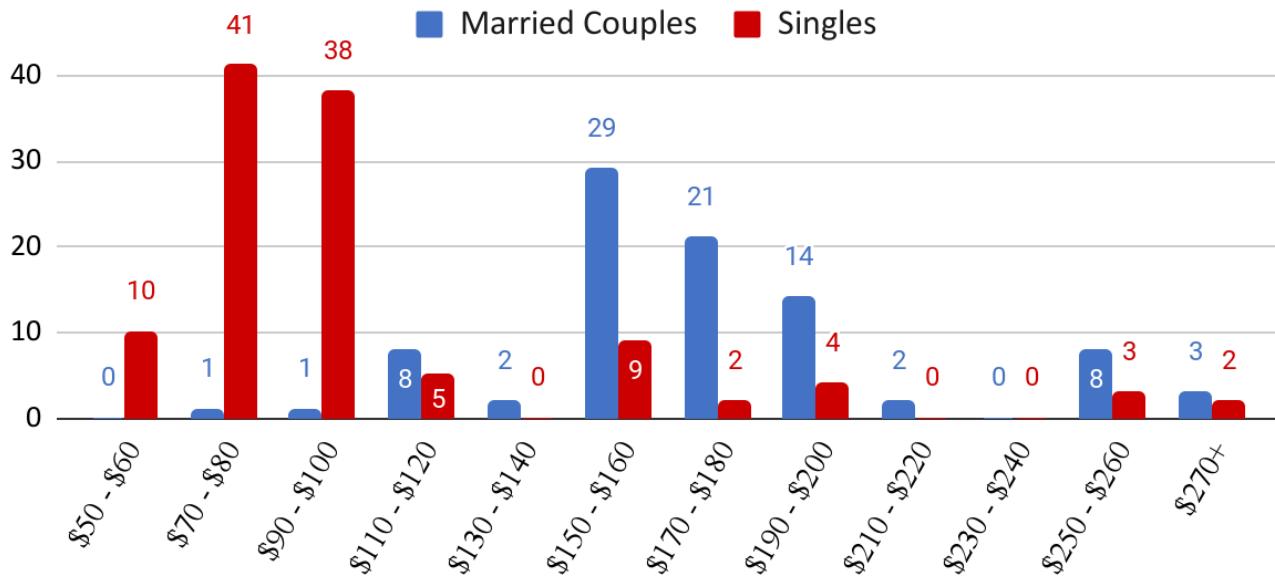


Gifting Preferences

How do you typically give your gift?



How Much do you Normally Gift?



Survey Insights & Conclusions

There are many insights that we gain from this data. It is clear that Sunday and Thursday nights are by far the most preferred by wedding attendees, and that long driving distances will deter many members of our community from attending a wedding. Notably, most choose to not drink excessively at weddings, drinking between zero and three drinks.

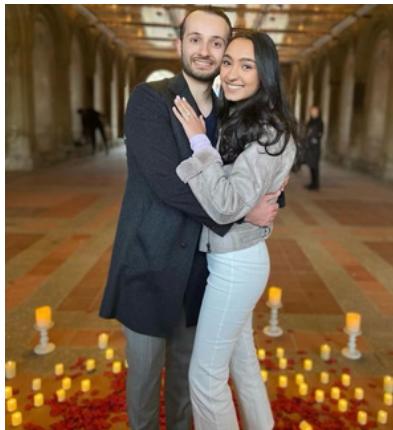
Most prefer later start times for as well. It seems that the ideal time for close family and friends photos is 6, reception at 7, Chuppa at 8, and dinner served at 10.

In terms of gifting preferences, singles typically gift with the range of \$70-\$100, while married couples normally gift \$150-\$180. It is also interesting to note how common it is becoming to gift through Venmo, especially for younger people. The Megillah editorial staff hopes that these insights and statistics come in handy when planning or choosing to attend your next wedding.

RECENT ENGAGEMENTS



Jonathan Hakimian and
Eve Azizi



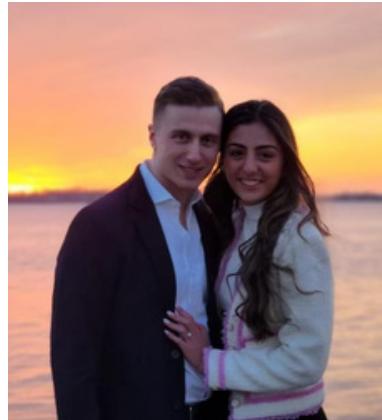
Justin Erfanian and Hila
Bessalely



David Levian and Natalie
Gohari Namdar



Matthew Hakimian and
Emily Hakimi



Joseph Sassoon and Tally
Soleimani



Darren Zar and Lexy
Roubeni



Arash Ouriel and Jacklin
Makabi



Noah Hakimian and Jada
Kashinejad



Elliot Moheban and
Ashley Bassal



Michael Livi and Naomi
Enayatian



Jeremy Oved and Yael
Livian



Yonatan Djourabchi and
Rebecca Kohan



Brandon Etessami and
Kailey Nasrolai

Recap of the 5782/2022 MYC Israel Discovery Trip

Deborah Etessami



June 27th, 2022, a day of great anticipation, a 60 strong group of Mashadi teens (aged 16 - 17) eagerly embarked on the annual MYC Israel discovery trip. We were accompanied by several amazing chaperones tasked with guiding us through the experiences to come: Michael livi, Arie h lieviem, Joe & Natalie Kamali, Melanie Namdar, Nadine Namdar, Debbie Aziz (and of course Alizah and Judah). Together for three weeks in Israel, we all had tremendous fun, learned a lot and overall had an amazing life experience.

Below, I've listed some of the highlights of our trip:

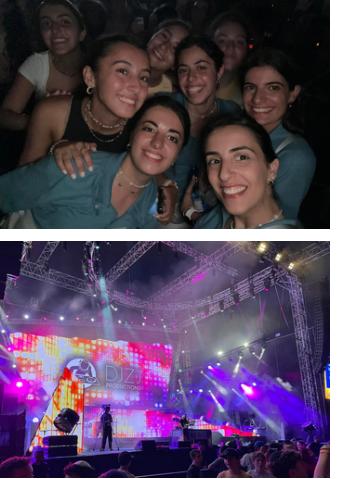
- Aqua kef (water activities on the kinneret) where we learnt about the inner ninjas amongst a bunch of kids.
- Emotional friday night by the Kotel (where Abby Livian, Rachel Tavazo and Leah Hakimian saw the kotel for the first time)
- Rotem waking us up after each bus ride by clicking his tongue on a microphone (followed by lots of explicit words)
- Walking around and drinking from our camelbacks
- The boys waking everyone up to Hatikvah at 4am
- When we were all out of our boats at the end of rafting and the Israelis were pulling us out like a claw crane machine.
- The Turkish group walking into our rooms and waking us up to Turkish chants
- Reuniting with the rest of the community at the shuk in Jerusalem.
- Mike and Arie h's chaotic and loud wake ups.
- Bedouin camps
- From what we remember on our 4am hike up Masada, the sun rose and Ouriel was insistent on Teva getting her water bottle mid proposal.
- Collectively enjoying the best nap of our lives after finally descending Masada.
- The chaperones pranked us that Mike and Arie h were being replaced because we were allegedly breaking a rule regarding forbidden beverages.
- Eilat boat night
- Bar mitzvah day at the kotel
- Meeting our new friend Benjamin that wouldn't leave the 8th floor hallway
- The South Africans that wanted us quiet at all hours of the day and called security on us numerous times.
- Singing "moo moo" on a regular basis
- Our top-secret roof-top hideout that we'd disappear to for hours
- Bravely eating spicy hot peppers on the salad trail followed by yelling and crying.
- Jon Zar ecstatic to see the "Joshua rock" while snorkeling
- Visiting the yad vashem museum
- Chopped cook-off competition
- Intense competitive hook games every night
- All of us driving very safely during go-karting
- Getting 'sturdy' after go karting
- Ishay Ribo concert
- Yom NCSY
- Our last time seeing the kotel before departure
- Our emotional goodbye to our Israeli chaperones as we entered the airport

These moments only begin to explain the amazing time we had on this trip. I believe all would agree, that it was a true once in a lifetime experience, that resulted in the forming of new friendships that with the help of HaShem will endure for many years to come. We also have a strong bond with Israel, as we have many fond memories that are connected with the beautiful State of Israel. On behalf of the entire group, I'd like to express our gratitude to Mr. Yossi Nassimi, who every year dedicates his time to plan this trip for the youth. We'd also like to thank the team at NCSY for their support.

MYC ISRAEL DISCOVERY TRIP: 5782/2022







BAR MITZVAH CEREMONY, JERUSALEM: 5782/2022





Better Together: A Recap of the 2022 UMJCA Olympic Games

Joshua C Namdar



A few years ago, a community leader presented an idea – “the UMJCA should host a community-wide Olympics event.” At the time, it didn’t seem very feasible for a multitude of reasons. Who was going to organize all the sports? We’d need a ton of manpower. Where would the games take place? We don’t have sufficient sporting venues. When could we schedule games? The community calendar is already fully booked (B”H).

Fast forward a few years and the UMJCA Olympic Committee was formed. With just a few weeks to plan, the committee put their creativity to the test. What was once a far-fetched idea was finally evolving into a reality.

This past July our community came together to participate in the first-ever UMJCA Olympic Games. Over a course of two weeks, we saw 300+ athletes compete in 15+ different sports. The UMJCA Olympics culminated with an amazing day of championship games, which attracted 1,000+ spectators between Shaare Shalom gym and Kings Point Park. It was yet another testament that our community is better together.

Looking back, it’s safe to say that the first go-around was a huge success! The truth is none of this was possible without the tremendous help of our Olympic commissioners, who arranged full tournaments in such a short window of time. To all the athletes who competed both on the court and on the field – we cannot thank you enough. Without you, the Olympic dream would have never become a reality.

Congratulations to all the 2022 gold medalists!

3-PT Shootout (Men's):

Jonah Carmili

3-PT Shootout (Women's):

Alexa Hajibai

Baseball:

Byron Hakimian, Jake Hakimian, Noah Hakimian, Aaron Kamali, David Kamali, Kyle Kamali, Daniel Mayer, Arie Nouriely, Giacobbe Nouriely

Basketball (Men's):

Daniel Levian, Jason Levian, Josh Levian, Steven Levian

Basketball (Women's):

Noga Arjang, Natasha Dilamani, Samantha Ebrani, Sophia Hajibai, Kayla Kamali, Shirel Kashimallak

Dodgeball:

Brandon Etessami, Elliot Levian, Jonathan Levian, Jason Levian, Josh Levian, Ryan Levian, Steven Levian

Flag Football:

Jonah Carmili, Eric Eliassi, Darien Hakimi, Benjamin Ijadi, Samuel Kashi, Luca Kashinejad

Ping Pong (Singles):

Zach Kashi

Ping Pong (Doubles):

Herzel Hakimi & Leor Hakimi

Soccer:

Damien Chafe, Sam Dadfarin, Sean Eliassi, Jonathan Erfanian, Charlie Hakimi, Andrew Hakimian, Ariel Hakimian, Nathan Kohan, Michael Liuim, Toby Nabavian, Arie Nouriely

Softball:

Byron Hakimian, Jake Hakimian, Matin Hakimian, Noah Hakimian, Aaron Kamali, Alex Kamali, David Kamali, Kyle Kamali, Arie Nouriely, Giacobbe Nouriely

Spikeball:

Cody Cohen, Kevin Rahamanan

Tennis:

Ariel Hakimi

Ultimate Frisbee:

Daniel Aghalarian, Sam Dadfarin, Jonathan Erfanian, Josh Hajibai, Sasha Kashanian, Nabi Nabavian, Aaron Namdar, Benet Rahamanim

Volleyball (Men's):

Cody Cohen, Jake Hakimian, Jared Hakimian, Warren Kalaty, Joseph Mayer, Marc Namdar, Tyler Rafinia

Volleyball (Women's):

Yael Bassali, Caroline Hajibay, Sophia Hajibai, Bailey Hakimi, Miriam Hakimi, Charlotte Hakimian, Lauren Namdar





SENIOR CLUB/SISTERHOOD COMMUNITY PICNIC



BAT MITZVAH JAMAATI: AUGUST 2022



Mazal Tov to all Bar Mitzvah Boys & Bat Mitzvah Girls!

Ethan Anavim
Gabriel Anavim
Elor Bendavid
Jeremy Dilmanian
Benjamin Ebrani
Zachary Edalati
Gabriel Ghassabian
Aaron Gorjian
Julien Gorjian
Baron Hakimi
Liam Hakimi
Yosef Hakimi
Daniel Hakimian
Deagan Hakimian
Eyal Hakimian
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Benzion Kashi
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Jacob Koren
Yonah Levy
Jacob Livi
Arieh Livian
Gabriel Nissan Liviem
Bradley Namdar
Brady Namdar
Asher Nassim
Noah Nassimi
Ariel Nassimiha
Maxim Nouriely
Chase Rafinia
Michael Rahmani

Rachael Aminoff
Diana Anavim
Ava Benilevi
Hannah Benjehuda
Joelle Ebrani
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Ariella Gohari
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Celine Hakimi
Hanna Hakimian
Shiri Kalaty
Sienna Kashanian
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Elisheva Levy
Sofia Loloi
Milena Namdar
Chloe Nassimi
Daniella Nassimi
Abigail Rahmani
Katia Shaer
Suri Shaer
Chana Siouni
Emma Soleimani
Isabel Somer
Sofia Somer
Ayelet Yaghoubi

Message from the UMJCA Supervisory Council

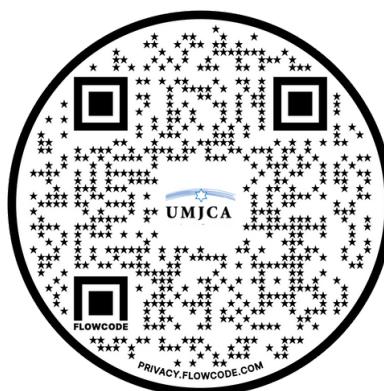
Cathy Banilevy

UMJCA Elections for the Central Board, Shaare Shalom, Ohr Esther, Shaare Rachamim Synagogue Boards and Mashadi Youth Committee are scheduled to be held on Sunday, November 20th, 2022.

All nominees for the Central Board must be at least 36 years of age, and candidates for Synagogues must be over 26 years of age. Nominees for the MYC must be between the ages of 16 and 35 years. Nominations are open to eligible candidates.

For more information, please contact the Supervisory Council at mashadisc2022@googlegroups.com.

To nominate the candidates of your choice, you may scan the QR code below and be directed to the official nominating form.




UMJCA 2022 Elections
#buildingthefuture
Building the Future!
Sunday November 20th, 2022

KANISSA BOARD – Suggested Tips for Future Boards, Gabbays, & Congregants

Michael Hakimian

Dear Reader, below are some of my own personal suggestions for future Kanissa boards, gabbays, and even congregants. I have learned all of the below content from others, but mostly I have learned them "the hard way" (by way of making many mistakes, upsetting people, and getting corrective tips). If you disagree with any of the below, please yell at the next kanissa board (just kidding).

PURPOSE. People join the volunteer UMJCA boards for many different reasons: To help propagate Jewish values and Mashadi traditions, to prevent assimilation, to strengthen the community, or to generally "give back". Some people join because they are harassed by the Supervisory Committee. Regardless of the reason, when you join, make sure you have a PURPOSE. Identify something that you are passionate about, and follow through (this can shift, evolve, or change completely during your term). Fulfilling your goals will be your motivation on days where nobody thanks you, as your compensation will be \$0 (even though the heavenly reward is abundant).

DON'T GET ANGRY. When you're passionate about something, it's easy to get into heated exchanges with people who have differing views or suggestions. Please never get angry, and never EVER get into a shouting match with a board member, congregant, employee, or anyone tangentially connected to Kanissa. Our Sages say: 'Anger will cause one to lose his wisdom, and a person who is destined for greatness will forfeit it'. It is the least productive emotion. Always stay calm, and walk away to cool off when you need to.

TRY TO SAY YES! People will come to you with various ideas, requests for programs, or suggestions for Kanissa.

Endeavor to say "yes" to innovation and change, as long as it aligns with our Mashadi and Jewish values. This is doubly so if it doesn't cost anything (and if it does, simply ask them if they can help fundraise and find sponsors for it). Some of the best ideas and initiatives in our terms came from congregants. Also, being static and stubborn in a dynamic and changing world is a recipe for losing interest and attendance (G-d forbid).

TIPS FOR DECORUM: (Writers preface: I failed quite miserably as a pseudo-gabbay, but I did learn quite a bit about how effective gabbays do their job). The overarching principle for being an effective gabbay is to remember that people aren't talking because they don't respect Kanissa or hate the Torah (G-d forbid). They come and talk because they love each other and are excited to be with friends. That being said:

- 1) Increase ENGAGEMENT, and do less shushing: Announce the page, and describe what part of the service you're doing. This is 10 times more effective than telling someone to be quiet.
- 2) Congregants DON'T KNOW that their private conversation impacts the service. A gentle tap on the shoulder or silently greeting someone with a smile will politely remind congregants that their voices are resonating around the room.
- 3) Be nice and respectful, and the people will be nice to you and (usually) treat you with respect. Maya Angelou famously said: "People won't remember what you said, they won't remember what you did, but they will remember how you made them feel." Try to make people feel good, and they will want to do the same for you.
- 4) Don't call anyone out by name; Besides resenting you forever, they will just start talking and complaining to their friends

about you.

THE IMPORTANCE OF FOOD. If you have complained about food, you are following a longstanding tradition of the Jewish people: We have been complaining about food since Hashem freed us out of Egypt. If you're a board member in charge of food, remember a couple of things:

1) Jews generally like 'free' food, and get raging mad when food runs out. With whatever budget you have, make the table as full as possible. You won't get a standing ovation for cholent, pasta salad, egg salad, tuna fish, cucumbers, etc., but if you put out half a table of poppers that finish in 10 seconds, you will get berated! One Rosh Hashanah, we spent a few extra bucks on food, and it ran out quickly. What one congregant said to me will stay with me forever: "If it's going to run out quickly, then better not serve anything at all." A personal suggestion that I have is, get medium-quality food, and a lot of it; If you can get a lot of high quality food (via sponsors, etc.), people will hoist you on their shoulders and parade you through the streets. If not, just don't let the food run out in five minutes.

2) Food brings people. People love coming when there are shiras because in addition to seeing a crowd, they get some delicacies. Don't be shy about asking for sponsorships for the main kiddush to enhance the day further, and use the SOCIAL HALL as often as you can. When people have a good crowd, some decent food, and some room to hang out, they will socialize nicely.

HAVE FUN! At the end of the day, you're volunteering, and if you're not enjoying it, you will naturally pull away. Have fun and lean into it. This is your chance to make a difference in people's lives. Most people

**COMMUNITY
SERVICE**

won't regret volunteering and doing something for others, even if it comes with its trials and tribulations.

BONUS: HOW CONGREGANTS CAN GET THEIR WAY. When a congregant passionately wants something (services run differently, a new program, a guest speaker), the first inclination is to complain or demand something from a board member. They may think, 'The louder and more often that I yell at them, the better.' However, when someone shouts or complains (at anyone, for that matter), the person on the receiving end will naturally put their guard up; on a chemical level, their mind will start to protect itself by filtering and escaping from the painful or potentially traumatic interaction. As soon as they walk away from you, their mind will start to try to erase the negative interaction. At best, they will avoid you; at worst, they will try to do the opposite of what you ask.

If you want a board member to do your bidding, be **CONSTRUCTIVE**. Approaching a topic in a friendly, and even collaborative, way. This will allow everyone in the conversation to keep an open mind, even if it is said passionately. In his 1936 book, which sold over 30 million copies, the first principle of Dale Carnegie's How to Win Friends and Influence People is, 'Don't criticize, condemn, or complain'. Effective sports coaches use the "Criticism Sandwich" on their players, which is a psychological trick that lulls the player into listening to a compliment, which is followed by a critique, and then followed by another compliment (hence the term 'sandwich'). As you can see, it all comes back to sandwiches.

BEST OF LUCK!

So You Think You Speak Farsi?

Ephraim Aminoff

PERSIAN

'Last night The Aroosi was so sangin". 'The band made it so garm'.

I often overhear our younger Mashadis' speaking in this sort of 'Farslish' language and it got me thinking about Farsi, and the fact that it already has many words that sound the same in Farsi and English. A few examples are:

Madar (Mother)

Dokhtar (Daughter)

Beradar (Brother)

Bad (Bad)

Naam (Name)

Chaaneh (Chin)

Dar (Door)

Moosh (Mouse)

Setareh (Star)

Goose (Ghaz)

Lip (Lab)

Stand (Istdan)

Then there is the Farsi-Italian connection:

Piadeh (A Piedi)

Dandan (Dente)

Bass (Basteh)

Javan (Giovane)

Galoo (Gola)

Kal (Calvo)

Liz (Liso)

This cannot be a coincidence, so I decided to find out the reason for this. The fact is that Farsi, English and Italian all belong to the Indo-European family of languages. The origin of this is thought to be in Turkey, and has since then spread out to Europe (as far north as Scandinavia) and east to India. As a result, common words exist within most European languages as well as Farsi, Armenian, Hindi etc.

The Persian language has undergone many changes and can be categorized into the following groups:
Old Persian, used by the Parsa tribe (550-330 BCE) using Cuneiform script.

Middle Persian, spoken during the Sasanian era. Examples are the writings of the Zarathushti religion.
Classical Persian, the language used by Ferdowsi and others.

Modern Persian or Farsi; this uses Arabic script (imposed by the Arab invaders).

As spoken today many European (especially French) words have come into use where there is no existing Farsi word, such as:

Radio Ambulance

Television Salon

Chauffeur Restaurant

Automobile Vitamin

Autobus Tunnel

Douche (Shower) Theater

Chauffage (Heater) Timbre (stamp)

Ananas (Pineapple) (and for some reason) Merci!

There is also a group of words that found its way into English from Farsi at a much later stage, because English did not have such words (mainly imported foods):

Jungle (Jangal) Pajama

Bazaar Spinach (Aspanakh)

Candy (Ghand) Sugar (Shakar)

Caravan Saffron (Zaffaron)

Kebab Shawl (Shal)

Khaki Checkmate (Shah Mat)

Lemon (Limoo) Pistacchio (Pesteh)

Orange (Narange) Typhoon (Toofan)

As you can see, Farsi is a rich language which has undergone many changes. Hopefully our future generations will try and keep it alive in the Mashadi community. Written Farsi will almost certainly die out in our community; Actually, it would be interesting to know if anyone under 40 years old can read and write Farsi. So, the next time you are sitting in the Kanissa listening to one of our eloquent Farsi speakers, try and pay attention - you might learn some new words! Personally, my Farsi has improved since I moved to New York from London. As for my English – well that's another story!

GUARDIANSHIP: What Exactly is It – and How to Avoid It?!

Abraham (Avi) Mazloumi, Esq.

The Netflix movie “I Care a Lot” and the documentary “Framing Britney Spears” recently put the spotlight on guardianships. This article is intended to give context to and explain the purpose and mechanics of guardianships.

When a person becomes mentally incapacitated (for example, due to a stroke, dementia, etc.), that person’s life, of course, continues. In fact, a person may continue live for decades, despite being mentally incapacitated. During that time, the incapacitated person’s affairs and assets have to be managed, bills have to be paid, decisions have to be made, etc. Essentially, whatever was going on in the incapacitated person’s life will now have to be taken care of by somebody else. However, just because the incapacitated person is married or has adult children, this does not by itself mean that the spouse or the adult child is legally authorized to make decisions on behalf of the mentally incapacitated person. As a result, caretakers oftentimes find themselves stuck, because third parties (such as banks, government entities, landlords, medical providers, etc.) refuse to take instructions from the incapacitated person’s caretaker.

One would hope that the incapacitated person (prior to becoming incapacitated) had signed a Power of Attorney (POA), properly executed and with sufficient powers, in which he or she had appointed trusted persons (such as the spouse, children, or a trusted friend) to act as “agent” on behalf -and in the best interest- of the incapacitated person. With a POA, the agent(s) can take over the incapacitated person’s affairs when needed. But not every person has a POA. And even if a person has a POA, it may not have been validly executed in compliance with New York law. Or the POA may be missing a particular power that now turns out to be necessary in order for the agent to take certain actions. So, what happens if an incapacitated person has no POA, or has a POA that, in hindsight, turns out to be invalid or lacking certain necessary powers? In many cases, the only solution for the incapacitated person’s caretaker is to bring a guardianship proceeding in New York Supreme Court, for the appointment of a guardian. Guardianships are governed by Article 81 of the Mental Hygiene Law.

Before the court can appoint a guardian for the ‘alleged incapacitated person’ (AIP), the person requesting the guardianship (the ‘petitioner’) must prove to the court at a hearing, based on clear and convincing evidence, that the appointment of a guardian is necessary. For the court to be able to appoint a guardian, it must make two (2) determinations: (1.) that the appointment is necessary to provide for the personal needs of that person, including food, clothing, shelter, health care, safety and/or to manage the property and financial affairs of that person; and (2.) that the person is incapacitated. But what exactly does it mean to be “incapacitated” within the meaning of Article 81?

In order to determine that a person is incapacitated, the court must make a “determination that a person is likely to suffer harm because: (1.) the person is unable to provide for personal needs and/or property management; and (2.) the person cannot adequately understand and appreciate the nature and consequences of such inability. See Mental Hygiene Law § 81.02[b].

During the course of the guardianship proceeding, which culminates in a court hearing at which various (and oftentimes opposing) parties will testify, the court relies on the recommendation and written report of a ‘court evaluator.’ The court evaluator is a neutral party, who will report to court all the facts and circumstances that the court may need in order to determine if the AIP is indeed incapacitated and if the appointment of a guardian is indeed necessary. To compile the report, the court evaluator is tasked with evaluating the AIP’s circumstances, affairs, finances, etc., including interviewing various parties (for example, the AIP, the petitioner, the AIP’s close family members, the AIP’s medical providers, etc.). The AIP’s family is not always happy with being subjected to a court evaluator’s scrutiny – especially when it comes to prior “financial or other transactions” that were not exactly intended to be examined by a stranger. Furthermore, the court evaluator may not think that the AIP is incapacitated within the meaning of the law, or the court evaluator may not agree that the guardian proposed by the petitioner is appropriate for the AIP. As a result, the outcome of a guardianship proceeding is oftentimes subject to unexpected surprises.

Furthermore, if the AIP expresses that he or she does not want a guardian, or if the court for other reasons believes that the appointment of an attorney for the AIP is advisable to protect the AIP’s interests, the court will appoint an attorney for the AIP (assuming the AIP does not have his or her own attorney). In contrast to the court evaluator, the AIP’s attorney is not a neutral party but specifically tasked with representing the AIP’s interests.

At this point you may be wondering, “Who is paying for all of this?” The answer likely comes as a surprise: even though the AIP did not request the guardianship, and even though the AIP may not even realize that a guardianship proceeding is happening, it is the AIP who is expected to pay for the guardianship proceeding, including for court fees, legal fees of the court evaluator, legal fees of the court-appointed attorney of the AIP, and even the legal fees of the petitioner. The reason for this can be summarized as follows: (a) New York does not want to discourage caretakers from bringing a guardianship proceeding when one is (truly) needed; and (b) it is presumed that if a guardian is appointed, it is (ultimately) in the best interest of the AIP.

Assuming the court determines that the AIP is incapacitated, it will grant the appointment of a guardian. However, this does not mean that the court will necessarily appoint the proposed person (often the spouse, child, etc.) as guardian. Indeed, in many cases it comes as a shock to the family when the court appoints an “independent guardian.” For example, I am currently serving as court-appointed guardian of several mentally incapacitated individuals. While one may wonder (or even question) why the court might decide to appoint as guardian a “stranger,” such as me, a few of the recurring reasons are as follows: (a) the AIP has no family member who is available, able or willing to serve as guardian; (b) the court believes the issues involving the AIP are too complex to be left in the hands of a family member; or (c) the court is - for whatever reason - not convinced that the family member is acting or will act in the best interest of the AIP.

Once a guardian has been appointed, all of the guardian’s actions will be subject to the supervision of the Supreme Court going forward. In fact, the guardian must report to court on an annual basis how the guardian spent the incapacitated person’s income and assets. Furthermore, major expenditures or actions (such as selling the incapacitated person’s home, or the transfer to a nursing home) require prior court approval. It is needless to say that having decisions constantly monitored by court can be very frustrating to family members.

Therefore, to avoid ever having to resort to the drastic step of requesting from court the appointment a guardian for your family member, never mind to avoid ending up as Britney Spears or the AIP in “I Care a Lot,” you should strongly consider implementing a contingency plan, which at a bare minimum should involve a POA.

Iranian Jewry: The End and the Beginning

Gideon Shirazi

HISTORY

On 16 January 1979, Mohammed Reza Shah fled Iran. He was the last Shah of Iran, bearing a title (technically, Shahanshah, ‘King of Kings’) that harked back over 2500 years. During the Iranian Revolution of 1979, tens of thousands of Jews left the country never to return. But this was not the first Iranian revolution. It was not even the first that drastically impacted Jewish history. This article sketches the first great Iranian war and its drastic impact on Jewish and world history.

Our story starts, for better or for worse, around 900 BCE. King Solomon, the last king of the unified monarchy had died, his kingdom split into two successor states: the larger northern Kingdom of Israel and the smaller southern Kingdom of Judah. Neither was a great world power. The northern Kingdom of Israel would develop significant international connections, especially under the Omerid Dynasty, which would last 50 years and see significant culture and international trade. But, even at its zenith, its broader influence would be limited.

The superpower of the day was an empire – the world’s first modern-style empire – called Assyria (or, to be precise, the Neo-Assyrian Empire). The fertile land around the Tigris and Euphrates rivers, known to the Greeks as Mesopotamia, had long been one of the centres of civilisation. Cities and kingdoms had sprung up around the region. Abraham emigrated from the Mesopotamian city of Ur Kasdim. Almost one and a half millennia before our story, Sargon of Akkad became the world’s first emperor, adopting the Earth-centric title ‘King of the Universe’ (an Earth-centric view less excusably shared by today’s Miss Universe competition). By 1000 BCE, the area now forming modern-day Iraq was dominated by two major powers. In the south, Babylon; and in the

In 745 BCE, a new Assyrian emperor (King of the Universe and Shahanshah, among other titles) came to the throne: Tiglath-Pileser III. Tiglath-Pileser III was not a man to be trifled with. Some say he seized power in a military coup; others maintain there was a peaceful succession. Either way, Tiglath Pileser III was to change the world. Not content with limiting his wars to the winter season, Tiglath-Pileser III set up the world’s first standing army, an army with a permanent cavalry unit and professional soldiers. It is hard to imagine the terror that must have struck an ancient city on seeing the Assyrian army arrive. Every man was a trained soldier; horses, chariots and armour shone in the sunlight. There was no waiting out this army. The men no longer needed to return for the harvest. Tiglath-Pileser’s army overran Babylon and beat all the neighbouring kingdoms. Now the undisputed King of the Universe, he conquered Aram-Damascus and Israel. Assyria had come to the Jews. For this, Tiglath-Pileser III becomes the first Assyrian Emperor named in Tanach: see 2 Kings 15:29ff.

Assyria was not like any enemy the Jews had faced before. The Philistines had been technologically more advanced than the Bronze Age Jews but had been a relatively regional society. Assyria was a superpower. Israel trying to fight Assyria was like the Panama of today trying to fight off the full might of the USA.

Assyria was not a kind ruler. The Empire ruled through fear, and fear alone. Its emperors demanded tribute and any rebellion was brutally suppressed. Thousands were slaughtered. Thousands were taken as slaves. Thousands starved. They came, they took, they did not ask forgiveness. In the capital, they delighted in public displays of torture of conquered people. Even their sports were

demonstrations of power. Where later rulers would hunt boars and deer, the Assyrian Emperors hunted lions, the king of the beasts.

In a time before modern machines, human labour was the most precious of all resources. The Assyrians went out of their way to utilise that resource. Conquered peoples were resettled in different parts of their empire, breaking their ties and restarting their lives away from the places they knew. It was under the Assyrians that the Ten Lost Tribes were exiled from Israel. Tens of thousands were taken, never to see their homeland again. Tens or hundreds of thousands fled to the southern Kingdom of Judah. Tanach describes this deportation in 2Kings 15:29, 17:3-6, 18:11-12 and 2Chronicles 30:1-31:1. One campaign was described by Sargon II, the Assyrian Emperor responsible for a major deportation in 722 BCE, in an inscription on the walls of his royal palace at Dur-Sharrukin (the new capital city built by Sargon II, now Khorsabad, in northern Iraq):

In the first year of [my reign] the people of Samaria [part of northern Israel] to the number of 27,290... I carried away. Fifty chariots for my royal equipment I selected. The city I rebuilt. I made it greater than it was before. People of the lands I had conquered I settled therein. My official (Tartan) I placed over them as governor.

The Jews deported by Sargon II were resettled elsewhere in the Empire, largely in the cities of Guzana, Dur-Sharrukin and in various cities of the Medes, the latter in modern-day Iran. The Jews had come en masse to Persia.

With this our story reaches a pause. To be continued...

*This article is written in British English, which follows a slightly different proper form of spelling than the American English otherwise used throughout this publication.

Yosef & Elul: The Building Blocks of Personal Growth

TORAH

Desiree Kashizadeh

וַיֹּאמֶר אָנָּי יְסֻף אֲחִיכֶם אֲשֶׁר־מִכְרְתָּם אֵתִי מִצְרָימה.
עֲתָה | אֶל־תַּעֲצֹבْ וְאֶל־חָרְבָּעֵינְכֶם כִּימְכְרָתָם אֵתִי הַנָּהָר
לְמִחְנָה שְׁלַחְנִי אֱלֹהִים לְפִנֵּיכֶם

"And he said, "I am your brother Joseph, whom you sold into Egypt. But now do not be sad, and let it not trouble you that you sold me here, for it was to preserve life that G-d sent me before you." (Sefer Bereshit, Perek 45, Pasuk 4-5)

When Yosef was sold into slavery by his own brothers, he was still just a child. He was Yaakov's favorite son, being the eldest of his most beloved wife, Rachel, and everyone knew it. Yaakov even gifted him a special colorful robe. But to make matters worse - he had two dreams, which he told over to his family members. Both of these dreams involved his brothers bowing down to and serving him in the future.

In the scene described by the quote above, we see Yosef decades later, second in command to Pharaoh. Egypt was one of the most powerful nations at the time. He was finally revealing his identity to his brothers, after putting them through various tests to see if they've truly grown and changed. But the most drastic change we see here is in Yosef. After 22 years of being estranged from his family, and all of the hardships he had to face during those years, one would assume he would be furious with his brothers. Instead, he tells them - "And now - it was not you who sent me here, but G-d" (Sefer Bereshit, Perek 45, Pasuk 8).

Yosef forgave his brothers, because all these years later he finally understood that this was Hashem's plan all along.

Hashem's involvement in Yosef's journey is made prevalent as we watch his story unfold. He is successful in every circumstance he is placed. He was sold into and put in charge of the household of Potiphar, who was a man of great stature in Egypt, as it says: "His master (Potiphar) perceived that Hashem was with him, and whatever he did HaShem made him succeed in his

hand" (Sefer Bereshit, Perek 39, Pasuk 3). He was also put in charge of the prison he was thrown into by Potiphar after he was wrongly framed by Potiphar's wife for having relations with her, as it says, "Hashem was with Yosef, and he endowed him with charisma, and he put his favor in the eyes of the prison warden" (Sefer Bereshit, Perek 39, Pasuk 21). While he served time in prison, he also successfully interpreted the dreams of the cupbearer and the baker of Pharaoh. The cupbearer was returned back to his position, while the baker had a less fortunate fate and was put to death.

His one mistake was placing trust in the cupbearer to remember him and mention his name to get him released from prison. As a result of not having enough faith in Hashem, he wasn't released from prison for another two years - until Pharaoh had a dream that no one could sufficiently interpret - and that's when the cupbearer conveniently "remembered" him.

Yosef has evidently learned from his mistake: before interpreting Pharaoh's dreams, he said, "That is beyond me; It is G-d who will respond with Pharaoh's welfare" (Sefer Bereshit, Perek 41, Pasuk 16). The final interpretation was that there would first be seven years of plenty, followed by seven years of famine. Yosef suggested that they should prepare for the famine by collecting food during the years of abundance, and he was put in charge of this preparation and of the palace, because Pharaoh saw that his word was the word of Hashem.

As we enter the month of Elul, we need to begin preparing ourselves for Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur - the days where the fate of the upcoming year of each and every human being will be determined. Hashem is the Creator — the King— of the Universe, and this is the time of year that we place emphasis on this. Not only do we have to focus on our internal growth, but we also have to look at the bigger picture.

Growth and Teshuvah is a process, and can span over long periods of time. We need to take steps towards becoming who we are meant to be; it does not happen overnight. But as long as we want to grow, Hashem will be with us and will guide us in the right direction.

Also, forgiveness is a crucial part of the process of Teshuvah because it recognizes that everything happens for a reason, and often what happens to us, in the hands of others, is really leading us to our ultimate destination. We see this very clearly in the story of Yosef: If he had not been sold by his brothers, he would not have ended up in Egypt, become second in command to Pharaoh, and ultimately save the nation from a huge famine. But forgiveness is also part of our personal growth, because holding onto how others have wronged us will only keep us stuck in the past, and we would not be able to move forward in our lives.

Mashadi Bikkur Cholim

Dr. Ariel Nassim

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!

Medical Referrals

Our medical referral subdivision partners with established Jewish organizations which have spent years vetting and researching physicians and hospitals to ensure each patient gets to the correct physician for their ailment. Calls are completely confidential, and community members can contact the following organizations for referrals to various specialists.

ECHO Institute for Health: 845-425-9750

Medstar: 718-787-1800

Chai Lifeline: 877-CHAI-LIFE

MEDICAL HELP

Medical Liaisons

Our medical liaisons are available for community members in their time of need, to navigate an ever-more complicated health care system. They work with the above organizations to obtain the most appropriate physicians to be seen, or sometimes in just connecting to another individual who has gone through a similar illness in the past. Any of the MBC volunteers can help to connect you to a medical liaison:

Neda Behnam: 516-652-8667

Brian Hakimian: 516-984-5869

Eddie LeVian: 516-707-5555

Melody Aziz: 516-410-6869

Bikkur Cholim

Our Bikkur Cholim subdivision assists with providing visitors with meals, local housing near hospitals and nursing homes, and adding names to the community Tehillim/Refuah Shlema lists. Additionally, our Rabbis of the Bikkur Cholim subdivision are available for hospital visitation of the sick. This subdivision has also been developing relationships with local hospitals and nursing homes/rehabilitation centers.

MBC has previously donated a Sukkah to North Shore University Hospital through the Bikkur Cholim subdivision. Our partnerships also brought about a donation of 2 AEDs for our Synagogues from North Shore University Hospital. For more information please contact:

Rabbi Mordechay Kohanim:

516-603-3441

Ramin Mardkhai: 516-423-1518

Janet Navaei Livian: 516-205-9606

Melody Aziz: 516-410-6869

Neda Behnam: 516-652-8667

Brian Hakimian: 516-984-5869

Email: bikkurcholim@mashadi.org to add a community member to the community Refuah Shlema lists.

Social Services

Call the social services subdivision for

confidential help and advice on navigating the myriad of free government programs, organizations, resources, entitlements, elder law, and many other resources that can benefit community members of all ages. Examples include: providing social workers, scholarships for Jewish Students or students with disabilities, as well as programs for low-income families. For more information please contact:

Anna Carmili: 516-313-8877

Senior Services

A subdivision with much overlap to our Social Services subdivision, senior services aides with much of the nuances in aiding with elderly community members' care. This is done through working with lawyers and social workers in introducing government aide programs, elder law, Medicaid, and many other entitlements available to our elders. In addition to our subdivision contact person, community members can reach out to any member of the Senior Club:

Anna Carmili: 516-313-8877

Cancer Support

As an extension of the Mashadi Cancer Alliance, formed by many current and former community members who have battled with cancer, this subdivision offers a confidential manner to gain guidance and support during the toughest days of a cancer diagnosis. If you or a loved one has been diagnosed with cancer, you can reach out to any of the volunteers below for confidential guidance and support throughout the entire course of your cancer care:

Neda Behnam (Mashadi Cancer Alliance):
516-652-8667

Brian Hakimian: 516-984-5869

Melody Etessami (Rafa Foundation): 516-376-0432

Melody Aziz (Fountain of Kindness): 516-410-6869

Eddie LeVian (Rafa Foundation): 516-707-5555

Janet Navaei Livian: 516-205-9606

Shiva Hakimian: 516-359-5887

Fertility Network

1 in 10 couples have faced infertility issues. You are not alone! Please contact any of the Mashadi Fertility Network volunteers to help navigate the complexities, and often frustrations of dealing with various aspects of female and male infertility. Mashadi Fertility Network helps guide you through the various fertility organizations to help you and your spouse in your path to parenthood. While much of the support is given in guidance and mentoring in the various aspects of infertility, whether it be getting initial fertility testing, hormonal administration education, or even in the financial aspects of fertility treatment, this subdivision is here to help.

We do not believe cost should be a limiting factor to any couple creating a family for themselves, and any couples who find the financial cost of fertility treatments overbearing are encouraged to apply for our financial assistance program, confidentially by emailing mashadifertilityhelp@gmail.com.

The Mashadi Bikkur Cholim, in partnership with the UMJCA Central Board, have sponsored our very own Rabbis Adam Sabzevari: 516-510-2981 and Moshe Aziz: 516-423-1939 in a year long course in halachic aspects of Nida and fertility. Please feel free to contact either of them, or their spouses Naomi Sabzevari: 516-423-9194 or Gabby Aziz: 516-592-3552 with questions.

For more information please contact:

Natalie: (516-776-4993)

& Joseph: (516-659-3881) Kamali

Carol: (516-455-0946)

& Ped: (516-242-7905) Nemati

Elisheva: (516-851-9235)

& Leon: (516-459-3395) Hakimian

Regina: (516-426-9858)

& David: (516-467-9742) Sianes

For confidential guidance, or applying for financial assistance, please email: mashadifertilityhelp@gmail.com.

Individuals with Special Needs

The Special Needs subdivision offers confidential help in navigating the resources, services, and programs available to individuals with autism or other developmental disabilities. Many have found remarkable progress in their loved ones after tapping into the resources available to help your family member reach his/her full potential. For more information please contact:

Hanna Banilevi (Namdar):

516-429-1322

Dafna Kordmany: 516-244-4486

Mental Health Services

Our very own Rabbi Bitton has taken the forefront in expanding the mental health services offered to community members. While all our Rabbis serve in a counseling role to community members, often times individuals need more. The Mental Health subdivision of MBC has collaborated with CAPE Commonpoint to offer broadened mental health services to all community members 18+ years old. Whether it be for marriage counseling, substance abuse, or psychiatric care, our mental health services can help you overcome the darker days with counseling that understands our Mashadi background and customs, as well as our longstanding traditions that too often mental health providers may not be aware of. CAPE Commonpoint is an outpatient mental health clinic based in Little Neck, NY. CAPE offers individual, group, and family therapy, psychiatric evaluations, and medication monitoring. An innovative partnership program has been established with the help of UJA between CAPE and members of the UMJCA for mental health services. Additionally, the Mashadi Bikkur Cholim has established a sliding scale for those without insurance coverage for services, as well as a formal process to subsidize any individuals who cannot afford his/her care. For more information please contact:

Rabbi Yosef Bitton: 516-382-4447

Rabbanit Cott Bitton: 516-382-4398

Debra Ilberman LCSW, Director CAPE Commonpoint Queens: 718-224-0566

CAPE@commonpointqueens.org (Please state you are a member of UMJCA)

B'nei Chesed

The B'nei Chesed subdivision provides our youth an organized way to volunteer to the extent available for our chesed projects. B'nei Chesed enables students to get involved in community service at a young age and fulfill community service requirements for school credits through their volunteering. For more information please contact:

Hanna Banilevi (Namdar): 516-429-1322

Dafna Kordmany: 516-244-4486

Melody Aziz: 516-410-6869

Medical Transportation

Our medical transportation coordination program helps families arrange private ambulances to and from medical facilities at either no charge, or reduced cost, oftentimes to have transportation covered through insurance. Please call Jonathan Aminoff: 516-884-4624 for more information.

Children's Chesed Fund

Our mission is to bring children a little joy during their hospital stay. We raise funds to purchase a wide range of items for local children's hospitals including wheelchairs, toys, games, books, school supplies, clothing, and holiday decorations. For more information please contact:

Jelveh Kamali: 516-729-7206

IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO BECOME A VOLUNTEER WITH THE MASHADI BIKKUR CHOLIM, OR WOULD LIKE TO DONATE DIRECTLY TO A SPECIFIC SUBDIVISION OF THE MBC, PLEASE REACH OUT TO ANY OF THE VOLUNTEERS ABOVE.

Affiliate Organizations

UMJCA Angel Fund

UMJCA Angel Fund helps Mashadi individuals and families residing in the United States with funds for emergency needs such as food, as well as counseling services for job placements. For more information please contact:

George Dilamani: 516-770-5635

Igal Namdar: 516-982-8111

Morris Aziz: 516-850-8787

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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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